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Merrill, Phil oral history interview

Andrea L'Hommedieu

Interview with Phil Merrill by Andrea L'Hommedieu

Summary Sheet and Transcript

Interviewee
Merrill, Phil

Interviewer
L'Hommedieu, Andrea

Date
June 27, 2000

Place
Appleton, Maine

ID Number
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Biographical Note

Phillip Leroy Merrill was born in Portland, Maine on November 19, 1945, and raised in Cumberland, Maine. He was raised in a fairly democratic family and was interested in politics in high school, attended town meetings, debated, and participated in the first youth senate program, where he shadowed Edmund S. Muskie. He attended Colby College in Waterville, Maine and double majored in History and Political Science. He worked on Gene McCarthy's and Bobby Kennedy's campaigns while in college. After graduating, he attended the University of Maine School of Law and became a state legislator from Portland, Maine. Merrill was asked to research the Indian Land claim issue for Muskie. In 1978, Merrill ran against Brennan in the Democratic primary for governor of Maine. He ran in the Democratic primary for Congress in 1982, but lost to John Kerry. He also ran Joe Brennan's campaign for Congress in 1994 and 1996. At the time of this interview he lived in Appleton, Maine.

Scope and Content Note

Interview includes discussions of: 1969-1972 presidential campaign; 1976 senate campaign; Maine legislature 1974; community history of Cumberland, Maine; Sinclair Act; Hearst Foundation Senate Youth Program; fartless beans story; Big Box voting; Monk's debate challenge and Muskie's counter offer (campaign tactics); Louis Jalbert from campaign; Maine

Indian Land Claims case; Maine gubernational election of 1974; Potato Blossom Festival; Muskie's on the Vietnam War; Merrill working for Kennedy in 1968; and anti-Catholic prejudice in Maine.

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Transcript

Andrea L'Hommedieu: This is an interview with Mr. Phil Merrill on June 27th, the year 2000 at his brand new home in Appleton, Maine. This is Andrea L'Hommedieu. I'd just like to start by asking you to say your full name and spell it for us.

Phil Merrill: Okay, Philip L., Leroy, Merrill, P-H-I-L-I-P, L-E-R-O-Y, M-E-R-R-I-L-L.

AL: And where and when were you born?

PM: I was born in Portland, Maine on November 19th, 1945.

AL: And did you grow up in Portland?

PM: I grew up in Cumberland, small town ten miles, well it was a small farm town when I grew up there, ten miles out of Portland.

AL: And what was Cumberland like when you were growing up politically, socially, religiously?

PM: Well, it was kind of a typical small Maine town. It was Republican, very Republican. As a matter of fact when I registered as a Democrat, the town clerk asked me if my parents knew what I was doing. It was a farm community when I grew up there with a very stable population. We lived on Tuttle Road. My mother was born in the house that I grew up in; my grandfather had a dairy farm there. And, until I was about seven, we were the newest family on the street. So, it was a very established community. Now, it's completely different; it's a suburban community, and all the fields have been turned into houses, and it's a very different place, but it

was a rural town. The high school still had a agricultural course as one of the choices when you were a boy and went through high school.

Religiously it was a, church, it was a town, town built around a Congregational church, like so many Maine towns. The center of the town had a huge Congregational church, or big for the town. I lived kind of two or three miles, three miles from the center of town, and there was a Methodist church, a little Methodist church down there. So it was typical in that sense, the Congregational church in the middle of town and a Methodist church and a Baptist church on the outlying parts; very few Catholics in town. As a matter of fact, when we had our high school graduation, it was traditional then to have a baccalaureate ceremony, which took place at the Congregational church. And in those days Catholics weren't allowed to go into the sanctuary of other churches, and so a lot of us in our class, including Whit who is a friend here today, decided, well, if the, we had two Catholics in our class, we decided well if they can't go we won't have it, which caused quite a stir. In the end we did have it, but there was a very small Catholic community. Maybe, although I can't recall anybody by name, maybe there were a couple of Jewish people in town, but it was predominantly a Protestant Republican town.

AL: And what were your parents' names?

PM: Earl and Vena Merrill.

AL: And you said your mother was born right there and grew up there. Where did your father come from?

PM: My father actually lived in several towns around Portland, but he came from around Portland as well.

AL: And what did he do?

PM: He did a lot of things in his life. He was a welder at the shipyard over in South Portland during WWII, and after WWII he worked at W. L. Blake's pipe yard for a while, and then he was a school bus driver and a janitor in Cumberland, in the school system.

AL: And did you mention their, what were the, were they politically active or aware, or?

PM: Yes, they were both very aware. My mother was very active in local politics. Not active in partisan political politics, but my mother was, although I think she might have been registered as a Republican when I was little, she was actually always a Democrat. She was very much a, they had a very difficult time during the Depression and were very favorably disposed towards Roosevelt so. But they weren't extremely partisan and involved in that sense, you know. Like for example they didn't, they weren't so Democratic they disliked Eisenhower or anything like that.

AL: Now, as you were growing up what do you think your parents, what ideals did they impose on you or that you got from them? Do you think that your Democratic leanings came from your upbringing?

PM: Oh, I don't know. A small 'd' democratic, definitely. My mother is a very strong egalitarian. You know, the people in town that she thought, that in her mind thought they ran the town, probably in their minds too, she was probably right. You know, the kind of Republican, upper middle class or middle class clique that ran the town, she was very much against. And, I mean, I'll give you an example. When I was in high school, there was an effort to create consolidated school districts, which is actually something that Muskie initiated when he was governor. And they changed the school funding formula to encourage the small towns to get together and consolidate so they could have larger high schools and bring what they thought were the benefits of a larger school system. Because predominantly, before that in all the places except the cities there were one room school houses that people went through up to the eighth grade, and then they went to very, very small high schools, by and large.

So there was an effort in our town to have Cumberland and North Yarmouth and Pownal join together in a school district. Now, traditionally all the kids from North Yarmouth came to Cumberland; they contracted with Cumberland so that didn't represent any major change. Pownal was kind of split; half of them went to Freeport and half of them came to Cumberland. The people who were kind of, the people that my mother envisioned as running the town, big shots, were against the school district because they thought Pownal was not sufficiently middle class or sufficiently sophisticated or whatever to be part of a school district which involved Cumberland, and so they opposed it, and it failed.

And then my mother, really much on her own initiative, passed a petition to get it on the ballot again. She felt very strongly that, she thought that they had snubbed the people in Pownal, and the people in Pownal were just as good as the people in Cumberland. She got it on the ballot again. It passed in North Yarmouth and Pownal so it didn't have to be voted on again there, but it had to be voted on again in Cumberland, and she got it on the ballot again. It won this time in the initial count that was announced the night of the election by I think ten or fifteen votes. And over the night the head selectman of Chebeague Island, which is part of Cumberland, had some sort of revelation in the middle of the night as he described it, figured he might have forgotten some ballots, went out to his garage, opened up the ballot box again, and lo and behold, by his description, you know, found twenty-five more ballots, all of which were the other way around. And so they turned the election around, and it lost a second time, and they quietly had that selectman not run again. I mean it was, he was, it was embarrassingly overreaching even for them.

But Pownal never did become part of the Cumberland - North Yarmouth school district, and Pownal is the only single town school administrative district in the state. They kind of had to pass a special law because the idea was to force the towns to get together. Once you got together you had a better funding formula, and they decided it just wasn't fair to Pownal, given everything that happened, to punish them in that way. So Pownal is a single town school district, and that's what it's the result of. So those were kind of my mother's political leanings. And it was a town meeting town, and all my life when I was little I used to go to the town meetings all day on Saturday in April when they met. And that had an influence on me I think.

AL: So you were interested in that sort of thing? It was your choice to go?

PM: Yeah, oh yes, I was always very interested in it.

AL: Do you have any, well you would have been, oh, eight or nine during Muskie's first gubernatorial campaign. Do you have any recollections?

PM: No, I really don't. I remember him being governor, you know, and I remember people talking about it, but other than that I don't have any recollection of anything political really until, in that way. I mean, I remember Eisenhower and Stevenson running against each other, but just vaguely. But in 1958 when Muskie left to run for the senate after two two-year terms as governor, Clinton Clauson, the chiropractor from Waterville, ran against Horace Hildreth, who was a former governor who was from Cumberland. And of course Clauson beat Hildreth. Back then the elections were still held in September. And shortly thereafter my friend, Laurie Kineen, and I were like hitching a ride down Tuttle Road. Laurie's family was Democratic, lived right next to Hildreth, and Governor Hildreth stopped and gave us a ride. And we got in the car, and Laurie Kineen said, "Well, Doc Clauson really whipped you, didn't he Governor Hildreth?" And that's my really first major memory of a political event. That's really when I became kind of aware of what was going on, so I'd have been, you know, twelve or thirteen then.

AL: Did you have a sense at all what your parents' leanings were or their impressions of Senator Muskie?

PM: Oh yeah, I mean, you know, my family was very Democratic, and we had dinners together, and everybody talked about everything. So, you know, my parents liked, you know, remember they admired Roosevelt. My mother had an egalitarian bent, so frankly anybody that beat, you know, the Republicans and, you know, whoopped them, she'd have liked, you know what I mean? It could have been Jesse Ventura probably, you know, just because she gave him a . . . There were a lot of Democrats like that in Maine, you know, up into the seventies. A lot of people who were Democrats, partly just because they didn't like the people that ran things and wanted to whoop them if they could. You know, so, yeah but, but, so Senator Muskie was well liked and highly thought of, Governor Muskie then.

AL: Now when did you yourself become active in politics?

PM: By the time I got to high school I was very interested in politics. I can remember in freshman year in high school we had this debate. I think I had the debate, I think it was Laurie Kineen again, but I had to argue for Nixon and Laurie argued for Kennedy. At that point in time my own politics weren't firmly settled in my mind. I remember, you know, reading Barry Goldwater's stuff and being kind of interested in it. By the time I was a sophomore I think I was pretty firmly Democratic. And then in 1958, I mean, excuse me, 1963 the Hearst Foundation sponsored the first senate youth program, national program. And two people from each state went to Washington, and one of those people went, they were paired up with senators and just spent kind of a week doing a lot of things, but you spent some time in the senator's office, and I spent that time in Senator Muskie's office. And a young lady, I can't remember her name, from Aroostook actually spent the week with Margaret Chase Smith. So -

AL: What was that experience like?

PM: It was a lot of fun. I enjoyed it very much. Muskie was very, Muskie was very friendly, and kind of involved in what we were doing. I mean, he was interested in it. And I remember when I was sitting having lunch with him, we had this lunch in this big room, and most of the senators were there, he'd point out the people that he thought I should go over and get their autograph. You know, so he was kind of into, you know, the fact that I was there, you know, he wasn't aloof from it or anything. Most of the time, except for these public things that we did with Muskie, you know, you'd be around the office and you wouldn't be with him.

But I remember one afternoon I spent in his office and Dave Stevens, who was then the head of the Department of Transportation in Maine, was down meeting with Muskie about that bridge between Kittery and Portsmouth, the new big bridge that then hadn't been built. And Dave wanted to characterize certain things that the state did as being part of their share towards the federal match, and he was anxious to get Senator Muskie to agree with him that this would be a proper characterization. And I remember having a lot of fun watching the conversation as Dave kept trying to trap Muskie into agreeing with him and Muskie kept deferring to Dave, you know. So Muskie would keep saying things, "Well, you know, if that's what you think, Dave, you know, you've got to do what you think, you know." Dave would say things, "Well, you know, what I really need to know Senator is, you know, do you think?"

"Well, Dave, you know, you've got the judgment on this." I mean it was one of those kinds of fun conversations, cat and mouse. But we had a good week, you know, we went and saw Kennedy at the White House and it was, but, so I was clearly Democratic by then.

AL: This would be 19-?

PM: Sixty-three. Yeah, it would have been. I think, yeah, it would have been in early '63. I remember a fun thing that happened during that. We, Senator Birch [Evan] Bayh [Jr.] had just been elected, the father of the guy who in politics now. And, he spoke to us and he started out with a joke, and I can't remember exactly the lead-in to the joke, but the punch line of the joke is, "Who is Lyndon Johnson?" Who of course he'd been vice president for three years at the time. Well, I often thought about that, you know, when Johnson became president about a year later, I often wondered if Johnson had heard that story and what price Bayh might have paid for that bit of humor. But it was, so anyway, I went down and did that and I was pretty, I was very involved in politics then, I was treasurer of the State Association of Student Councils, and then I was president, and then I was governor of Boy's State, so I was very involved and very strongly Democratic.

As a matter of fact when I was governor of Boy's State, the governor of Boy's State gets to make this inauguration speech. And the governor, Governor Reed was going to come to the thing, but a guy who later went on and served in the senate with me, oh I'll think of his name in a minute, from Orono, was one of the counselors at Boy's State, and he was a Republican. Curtis, Ted Curtis. And Ted called the governor's office and told him he shouldn't come because my inauguration speech was going to be like blasting all the Republican policies in the state. So instead he sent the adjutant general.

AL: So that was high school.

PM: Yeah.

AL: And then you went on to Colby?

PM: To Colby, yeah.

AL: And what did you do there?

PM: Oh, I was involved in, you know, all sorts of student activities there. I was on the student council for a while, and I worked on the newspaper and went to school.

AL: Were there any professors there that had a influence on you in con-?

PM: I don't think so, I mean, I think my ideas were really pretty formed, you know. There were some professors that I liked very much. Al Mavrinac, who was kind of involved in kind of a left handed way in state politics and national politics, was head of the Government department when I was there. And I got to know him and liked him and he ran for city council when I was there, and I helped him out in his campaign. But I don't really think any, you know, ideas were changed or formed there.

AL: And what was your major?

PM: Government and History, both.

AL: Now, after graduating from Colby where did you go?

PM: I taught school up here in Searsport for a year. I had originally intended to go in the service when I got out of, when I got out of college before I went to law school, but I'd become very adamantly against the war in Vietnam. And I wasn't willing to give up my citizenship or go to jail, and I wasn't a conscientious objector, but I figured the very least I could do is do everything I could to avoid being in a situation where I thought I would be doing something that wasn't particularly moral. So I taught school for a year, which gave me a deferment for a year. But while I was teaching school, Nixon ended all deferments, so they wrote the school and said I wouldn't get a deferment for the next year. And one of my students, actually, up in Searsport knew the first sargeant in the National Guard unit and gotten him into the National Guard, and so after I taught school for a year, that following fall, I went off and served six months active duty at Fort Leonwood. And then I came back and went to law school.

AL: And where did you attend law school?

PM: University of Maine in Portland.

AL: Now, when do you pick up your Democratic activity again?

PM: Well, when I was in college in 1968, I was very involved in that presidential campaign because, as I said before, I was very much against the war in Vietnam. And I was very anxious that the Democrats would nominate a president that would be against the war, in other words that we'd get rid of Johnson. So I went down to New Hampshire and did some work for Gene McCarthy though I was never really for Gene McCarthy; I wanted Bobby Kennedy to run. And after, after Bobby Kennedy got into the race I worked actively for Bobby Kennedy, and I was involved in students, you know, college students for Bobby Kennedy. I remember right after Kennedy got into the race, literally like two days later, Gene McCarthy was scheduled to speak at the University of Maine in Orono, something that had been set up for a long time. And myself and another student from Colby made this huge banner that said, "Thanks Gene, but now we need Kennedy." And we went up to the University of Maine and had that banner, and of course it got pictures in all the papers because it was the hot topic. I mean that's why we did it. But it offended a lot of the people at Maine who were for Gene McCarthy and, but that was okay with us, I mean, you know, we viewed it as politics, you know. So -

AL: So what did you do for the Kennedy campaign?

PM: Well, you know, all kinds of stuff that students usually do, which, I don't know if it amounts to much, but you know you send out mailings, and you try to organize kids at other campuses and try to have some effect on what the delegates in the area think. Back then delegates weren't selected on the basis of party preference or anything like that, delegates to the state convention. I went to the state convention, which was actually a state convention that was a very difficult one for Muskie, and created a rift between Muskie and Hathaway that never completely healed, because Muskie was for Humphrey. By this time Johnson had pulled out. And I think probably even had an inkling from Humphrey that if it was possible, Humphrey would give him the nomination for vice president.

And the party establishment all wanted to send all the delegates to the state convention dedicated to Muskie as a favorite son, in essence giving Muskie the ability to deliver our small votes to whomever he wanted to. And the Kennedy forces of course knew that Muskie would deliver to Humphrey. And so they wanted to get some, they didn't want favorite son, they wanted to get some of their own. Hathaway actually spoke at the convention in favor of letting people do what they wanted, which was seen by the Muskie forces as, you know, as a traitorous act. Of course those of us who were working for Bobby Kennedy were very much in favor of it and very much on his side.

I should back up and say that earlier in the year Muskie came to Colby to participate in one of these forums. The subject was completely Vietnam. Two things had happened right prior to the, to his coming. The Army had issued this white paper that attempted to summarize everything that was happening in Vietnam, and the Tet offensive had just happened. And as it turns out the Tet offensive really managed to contradict almost everything that was in the white paper. And one of the professors that was there had read, he was very, a very quiet person but very studious and very much against the war, and he'd read the total white paper and annotated it. And he, you know, proceeded to ask Muskie these questions in a very calm and deliberate fashion. Well, we know now, of course, that Muskie had already written a letter to Johnson quietly expressing his

concerns about the war in Vietnam, but Muskie was still openly trying to support the war.

And it was a very bad scene for Muskie. I mean, first of all he said all sorts of things that got contradicted, I mean by the white paper. They might have been right but I mean he'd say things like, in defending what happened at Tet, he'd say, "Well, you've got to understand, you know, that North Vietnamese people and the South Vietnamese people are really the same people. It's very difficult to prevent infiltration, you know. It would be like trying to keep northern Mainers, you know, how do you separate them?" And then this guy would quote the Army white paper that said, you know, "North Vietnamese people are a different nationality and look very different," I mean, trying to make the case, you know, that there was a rationale for separating the country. So he was constantly confronted with all this, you know, Army foolishness that, you know, the military position which was not a defendable position and he knew it. And he finally got so frustrated he just got angry and left. I mean it was not a good moment for him.

So anyway, he was really struggling with the war in Vietnam and it was causing problems for him, I know, as it was for all Democrats, particularly WWII Democrats, you know, who had this view, you know, that was founded by the people who didn't support President Roosevelt early on in WWII and were looked upon as having done some real harm. So anyway, he was working his way through that. So then came the convention. I didn't form any, you know, bad opinion of Muskie, I mean I still felt good when he got nominated, although I was very much, I was very much unimpressed with our choice of Humphrey. I mean, I had a lot of admiration for what he'd been, but what he represented at that time wasn't what I thought we needed. Of course the convention in '68 was a disaster for the Democrats. But, so I wasn't anti-Muskie, but I was certainly not a Muskie person, you know, at that point.

AL: So tell me what your next involvement was.

PM: Well, I went to law school, and Muskie of course ran for president in '72 and was the front runner early on. And of course I supported Muskie. He was from Maine, and I liked him, I admired him. By that time he was squarely out on the side against the war. Of course the McGovern people were organized basically around the idea that he hadn't been against the war soon enough, and that was kind of the division, you know. It was kind of a repeat, an unnecessary repeat probably of the battles of '68 but one that kind of, I suppose, in some historic sense needed to be done over because people weren't satisfied with the way it came out last time. So I was for Muskie. I was at law school. We had a Democratic caucus. I went to the caucus. I got elected as a delegate to the state convention. And back in those days, still, you didn't have to pledge to whom you were for. A lot of people knew, you know, they might know you, people didn't know me, I was new in the district, I had just moved to Portland in order to go to law school.

And it turned out we elected too many people from our precinct. And when we had the city wide meeting the next week, they sent us back for another caucus to do it over again and elect less people. And at that caucus I hadn't turned out anybody, you know, because I didn't know they were going to do this, there was no announcement ahead of time they were going to do it. People didn't know who I was, you know, the people in the caucus, and they were trying to get rid of everybody that they thought might not be a Muskie delegate, so I got unelected. And in

the end it didn't mean anything because we ended up having some extra unfilled seats from other parts of the city, and I ended up going to the '72 convention as a delegate and of course was in favor of Muskie. But that was my next involvement.

Also in 1972 I was very much involved in helping a guy named, who was a classmate of mine in law school, named Jim Tierney, run for the legislature up in, up in Durham, Durham and Lisbon. I kind of ran that campaign for him. And I also helped a friend of mine, Tom Peterson run for the legislature out in Windham. And also in '72, after McGovern got nominated, of course that year Hathaway got nominated to the United States senate. And so in the fall I worked in the Hathaway campaign. I did a lot of scheduling and organizational work for him in Cumberland County. Angus King was kind of the field director of that campaign. So that was my involvement in '72. I also kind of ran the Democratic headquarters in Portland in '72.

AL: So you were active all around.

PM: I was very active in '7-, by then, yeah.

AL: So you went to the '72 state convention. What was the feeling there?

PM: Well, it was a little strange. You had all these (*unintelligible word*) delegates who were for McGovern. Interestingly enough the ones from Portland, a lot of them worked for Model Cities, and Muskie passed Model Cities, and so there was a, it reflected the division in this country at the time. I mean, it's hard if you didn't live through the war in Vietnam to have an idea of how divided the country was, and, by generation, and it was, it was very bitter. A lot of my friends, their fathers literally didn't speak to them because they were against the war in Vietnam or they had long hair. I mean literally, for years they wouldn't speak. So it was a very divisive time and that was reflected in the politics of the convention.

The joke used to be that, you know, Penobscot County would take all day to caucus. Penobscot County was the most bitterly divided because Penobscot county, except for the university area, was quite conservative Democrats, traditional, very conservative Democrats. And then there was the university community which was, of course was very liberal and very, very anti-war. And everything, everything was a fight. If you decided you wanted to be secretary of county committee they'd want to know which side of the war you were on and, you know, whether you were Muskie or McGovern, and then it would be a war over that, you know, so.

So it was a very, very divisive convention. It was held at Colby. George Mitchell was floor managing for Muskie, and George is very effective, but George is, you know, George is a "win it all" sort of guy. Which as I say is, I don't mean this to sound like a left handed criticism, it's not. But I mean, it's a, I think it's the reason that when his name comes up to be appointed for him, all the Republicans in the senate always talk about how partisan he was as a floor leader. I don't think George is partisan in the sense of like being narrowly, like, you know, like his view is that Democrats are great and perfect, and, you know, I don't think he's partisan in that sense. But I know from watching him deal in those kinds of situations that if he's got the votes and he can get everything, he'll get everything. He won't give you, you know, an ounce to make you feel like you got an ounce.

So he, he, you know, floor managed for Muskie and they, and you know, I think he was determined that, you know, Muskie had been embarrassed in a lot of places but he wasn't going to be embarrassed in Maine, which was a good goal, but it left the McGovern people feeling sort of bruised. Not that I cared too much about them, I mean, because frankly I thought the whole McGovern thing was nonsense. I didn't think he could win the presidency, I thought Muskie could. I thought, you know, trying to split hairs between when people were against the war in Vietnam War was a foolish indulgence that we couldn't afford. It was clear that Nixon didn't want Muskie even before all the stuff that came out later. So that was good enough reason to think that Muskie was probably the best candidate. And Muskie, you know, had delivered that wonderful post, I mean election eve performance in 1970, the speech he gave from his house in Kennebunk. So I was very much in favor of him and very much for him, and not that sympathetic with the McGovern people. But a lot of the people I knew because they were younger people, and because of my involvement in Bobby Kennedy's campaign, were on the other side.

AL: Now, did you have friends that you had met in, at Colby or later at law school at U-Maine who became sort of lifetime political friends?

PM: Well, there's a lot of people that -

AL: There's sort of a famous group of people you went through law school with who are very active now.

PM: That's right, McKernan was in the class, and Tierney was in the class, and myself. Steve Hughes has served in the legislature. Tom Peterson has served in the legislature. I'm probably leaving out a bunch more.

AL: Janet Mills in that group?

PM: Janet Mills was one year behind us. I can't remember, but, you know, it was a, it was a, it was a large group. Ralph Tucker, is that, was never elected to, you know, major office but -

Another Voice: But he served as commissioner of his town.

PM: That's right, yeah. So it was a, it was a very active class politically. Oh, Doug Smith was in the class, and he served in the legislature, was chairman of the appropriations committee for a while. So it was a good group of people. And Charlie Priest served in the legislature for a few years, maybe eight. He was in the class. James Case, who you've probably talked to, was in the, and he was actually, I suppose, my best friend and still is one of my best friends, was in the class. He did all that work with me with Hathaway, helped me when I ran for the senate in '74, and then he went and worked for Muskie in Washington.

AL: So you ran for the [state] senate in '74?

PM: That's right. That was the year that I'd be graduating from law school. And there were

two, in those days there were two senate seats in Portland. There was the one that represented the peninsula, then the rest of the city, the more suburban area, the Deering High School area. And that seat had been filled by Joe Brennan for two years. He'd been county attorney, he took the seat for two years, and then he ran for governor. And I ran for that seat. I'd never served. The top vote-getter in Portland in those days from the house side, and the house ran at large. So eleven people ran in the whole city and got votes from all over the city, and the top eleven, there might be twenty-five on the ballot or thirty, the top eleven would get elected. And the top vote getter was this woman named Jane (*name*) Kilroy, who was George Mitchell's aunt, and I ran against her in '74. I wasn't given much chance by anybody of winning, I mean nobody else wanted to run against Jane, and other people thought of running so they had more claim but didn't want to run against Jane, figured they couldn't beat Jane.

And when I first started going door-to-door, you know, I wondered, I had some doubts because it seemed like everybody knew Jane, and she'd done favors for people, and she was that kind of representative, you know, that did a lot of personal favors for people. But it became clear to me without me saying anything that a lot of people also thought that Jane should be thinking about moving out instead of moving up. And so just by making myself frankly into an attractive alternative and never saying anything bad about her and meeting everybody individually. I had a pretty, for those days I had a pretty sophisticated door-to-door operation. You couldn't do, computers really weren't practical in those days. You'd have to use a bank computer, and, you know, it was expensive, and you could only get it during the days. And a senate district, you know, represents about one thirty-third, in those days, of the state. So it was a significant number of people to try to keep organized, the information.

So we got these old cards, you've probably never seen them because they were pretty, pretty awkward to use. They were just better than nothing. They were cards that had holes all around the outside. They were numbered. Then you'd have a little thing that would turn the holes into a slot and by punching certain holes you could, in essence, program the card. So for example, if they were home when you went to see them, you might punch fifty, and if they indicated an interest in education, you might punch sixty. So then if you put all the cards together and you took this thing that they had, it looked like a big knitting needle with a handle on it, and you poked them through that hold and you picked out the cards, the ones that didn't come out would be the ones where you'd clipped that hole, you see? So the problem is, of course, when you took all the cards say just for the Democrats in the district, you'd end up with maybe thirty groupings that were, you know, small enough so you could work the needle, maybe more than that, and a lot of sorts would require several. For example to re-alphabetize the list you had to do, I can't remember, like sixteen, sixteen of these things, you know, that would eventually get them. But we could sort them by, you know, whether I saw them, we could sort them by the issues they were interested in, and we could sort them by street, which is the way we organized them for when I went around. So, or we could resort them alphabetically.

And so we had a lot of volunteers, so we had a pretty sophisticated system that was really built around me going door-to-door, but then all sorts of activity around that to remind people that I'd done it and that I'd talked to them and whatever. And so in the end anyway we ended up beating Jane two to one.

And that was a primary that George Mitchell won, with very bad blood from the Brennan people in Portland. They were very bitter. Jim had helped me, and he helped Brennan a little bit. And the Mitchell people hired him, and he did some field work for the Mitchell people, which is how he ended up getting a job with Muskie probably. I mean, at least it helped. And the Mitchell people were, I'm sure the Mitchell people thought we were a little arrogant, and I thought they were a little, you know, they, they were in my opinion. The Republicans nominated Irwin, who'd lost two times before, and there were like three or four independents running, you know, so even if you gave some credence to Longley in the abstract, you had all these other independents rattling around there. And so they were completely convinced that he was elected, all the people that worked for him. I don't know what George thought because he didn't share his private thoughts with me then. But they were completely convinced he was going to win and they were basically on, you know, the coronation road. I remember, you know, going into their office in downtown Portland, and they'd be sitting in there like arguing about who was going to have what job, you know. This is in September.

And there was no real election for the state senate on the peninsula, and I was not going to take anything for granted. Remember that's the year of Watergate, and I just thought it was a year in which you could not afford to take the voters for granted. And so I wanted to have my own headquarters. We had some friction between us and, the regular Democrats and the Mitchell people over that. I mean, nothing that came out in the papers or anything, but it was a little unpleasant. In the end, you know, because my campaign was new, and local, and whatever, we had all the volunteers, so in the end the work got done out at our headquarters because that's where the people were. But that was the year that Peter Kyros [Sr.], who was an incumbent congressman, was running. And I remember sitting next to Peter Kyros at an NAACP dinner and Peter was saying, "You know, you just," you know it's funny because Judge Emanualson's wife, and I don't mean to be a sexist, but that's the only way she was known by anybody. And Peter said, "You know, you're making a mistake, you know, running as hard as you are. You're going to beat that woman, you know, and, you know, it's bad to, you know, like, look like you're trying to beat her into the ground." Then I expressed my concern, and I said, "Gee, I don't think this is any year to have the voters think that you don't, you know, really want their vote." Because Peter lost to David Emery that year, David Emery was a nothing. I mean, Longley was a little bit of a surprise on election night, but David Emery was a shock. I mean Longley you could kind of see coming, you just kind of figured he wouldn't get far enough to do it. But of course the Republicans in '72, you know, following Watergate just collapsed, they totally collapsed. Very reminiscent of what happened with Angus King following John McKernan. You know, the Democrat sort of held his own, but the Republicans just collapsed. So Longley got elected, and I went off to be in the state senate when Longley was governor.

AL: This is the end of Side A.

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

AL: We are now on Side B of the interview with Mr. Phil Merrill.

PM: The election in '74 was a shock for a lot of people. I mean, we elected an independent

governor, this guy Longley, who was a fairly strange bird. Kyros had beaten, had been beaten by Emery, which was a real upset. The Democrats took control of the house in Maine for the first time since 1964. Republicans still controlled the senate. So it was a pretty, and individually in a lot of races there were things that, there were a lot of upsets. You know, there are always a few but there were a lot. You know, my victory in the primary over Jane would certainly be seen as one, but there were lots of others. So it was kind of a, a year that kind of shook the body politic a little bit, and probably saved Muskie, because Muskie was smart enough to see the defeat of Mitchell as a personal warning signal for himself, you know, because Mitchell was very, very closely identified with Muskie. He really was seen by a lot of people as Muskie's man, as the establishment man. And you know Muskie could have rationalized and shrugged it off and said, well, you know, Mitchell just hasn't got the nice personality I've got or something. But he didn't, you know, and he started taking steps, and I think hiring Jim was one of those steps.

So as a wake up call I think '74 was very important for, the '74 election of Longley was very important for Muskie. And it made a great time frankly to go into the state senate, you know, because everything was up for grabs. I mean, the legislature for the first time ever in anybody's memory anyway was divided between the house and senate, and Maine has joint committees, you know, of house and senate. So there was a whole struggle over, you know, how that was going to work out. And then there was, you know, the struggle between the speaker and president and how that was going to settle out. And then you had this independent governor who was very, very popular with the people, who very quickly was viewed by most legislators as not too tightly wrapped. So it was, you know, it was wide open. It was a great time to be there.

AL: And in '76 did you work on Muskie's campaign that year?

PM: See what happened was this. In late, in summer of '75 there was a lot of speculation about who would run against Dave Emery. And my name was very prominently mentioned just because I, you know, I represented Portland and won an impressive victory and was seen as, you know, part of this young crop of people and etcetera. But there were a lot of people that were running and, you know, I'd gone to some real effort to win the senate seat and didn't feel like I ought to serve, you know, that after being in one session, that I ought to go off and start running, so I pretty much decided not to do it. And about that time Jim told me that Muskie wanted to meet with me and indicated that the purpose might be that Muskie wanted to ask me to run his campaign in Maine. So I gave it some thought and decided by the time that I met with him that if I was, you know, satisfied with what Muskie wanted to do, that I'd do it. And we met at the Eastland Hotel probably in August of 1975 and probably met for an hour and a half. And the upshot of it was is that I decided to run his campaign.

There were a lot of issues to get through at that meeting. One of the things that I remember because I was impressed with the way he handled it is, you know. One of the issues was is that I was being prominently mentioned for Congress, and obviously until that was set aside there would be a problem with me working for Muskie because everybody else that would be running for Congress would be upset by that. So it was an issue that Muskie had to figure out a way to bring up. Well, the way he brought it up was he said, you know, "Of course you'll be running for the senate again?" And I said, "Yes." And he said, "Well you know, you ought to put out an

announcement, you know, right away so that nobody gets in the race against you." He said it slightly more indirectly, but it was, you know, it was very, I thought very adroitly and very sensitively handled, you know, so as not to, you know. He deliberately figured out a way obviously to do it in a way where he wouldn't be giving me a directive, you know, but he could bring it around to, you know, getting this taken care of in his mind. That was always very, that was one of the most impressive things about him, was how intelligently he thought through how to handle things like that and did it, you know. And he was very, very good in that way.

So anyway, so from then, I ended up going to Washington very shortly thereafter and spending some time with the people down there that worked for him, and he had quite a crew, and then started setting up a campaign organization up here. First it was just me and then I hired Ginger, now Ginger [Jordan] Hillier, to be like girl Friday and, you know, hold the office together because I spent all my time for the first five months just traveling around the state meeting people.

I first went around and tried to meet all the people that were involved with Muskie way back in the '54 campaign and everything because I wanted to get to know those people and have them get to know me. I figured, you know, at the end of the campaign I'd need their trust because, you know, near the end you go back to the people you started with and try to get a sense of what's going on, and I figured that's probably what Muskie would do. And sure enough there was one of those moments near the end of the campaign. So I did that and then I went around and started meeting local active Democrats all over the state. And there was a lot of anger at Muskie. I'd say more often than not meetings with people were unpleasant in the sense that, you know, most of the meeting would be spent with those people just going over their grievances with Muskie.

AL: What sort of things?

PM: Well, I mean, first of all we've got to put it in context. Cohen was very, very popular at this point in time because he'd done the vote against Nixon, you know, on the committee. So he was this young, upcoming star. Muskie had, you know, run for president and failed, but he'd gone into a bigger sphere. You know, he's obviously, you know, when you get national your partisanship becomes more obvious to people where it can be a little more blurred when you're not that well known. And I think, frankly, there was an element of truth in it. I think that after the presidential thing, well, certainly during because he was running a presidential campaign. And then after there was a lot of kind of taking Maine for granted and not much tending the local political garden up here. And that's why I think there was a lot of legitimacy just in people feeling like they hadn't been treated as if they were important or whatever. I had all sorts of people tell me that when they saw him they were going to blast him and whatever. They never did, you know, when they met him, they were all mice. But it was important that, you know, somebody running his campaign was a fresh face so I had nothing to defend. You know, I didn't have to like be defensive about anything that happened, and I didn't try to be. And I could give them a chance to vent, which was an important part of the beginning of the catharsis, and make a judgment over what kind of treatment they needed, you know, to get them back. So that was an important use of my time.

And in that fall period from August to December we were very much in a race with Cohen. I mean, Cohen hadn't announced but he was up here all the time. It must have been before August actually. It might have been June, because I remember I went to the potato blossom festival in Aroostook, which is in July, and Cohen was there. And there was this great little incident where, you know, everybody knew that these two guys, or thought that these two guys were running against each other, and they had this beauty contest in the middle of the potato blossom festival in the evening in the big gym up there, and women wear mink stoles in the middle of August to a gym that's a hundred and twenty degrees. It's quite a thing.

AL: I've been there.

PM: Oh you have. Well, I don't know, was Dewey DeWitt still around when you were there? Dewey DeWitt used to come in a purple tuxedo. He was a local radio personality. So Cohen was introduced first because he was the congressman at the time. And instead of going around and going up the steps onto the stage, Cohen jumped onto the stage, quite athletic little move, you know, he'd been a basketball player. And I thought to myself, you know, how is Muskie going to handle this? He isn't going to jump onto the stage. And he's going to look kind of, you know, this is, this is, Cohen has done a clever thing to him here. So Muskie got introduced and Muskie made a big deal out of going up, you know, of course these lights are on him, he goes up, he gets a chair, puts it in front of the stage, you know, very, you know, overly dramatically, makes sure that it's all secure and everything, and then slowly steps onto the chair and up onto the stage. In other words, he turned the whole thing into a joke kind of maybe slightly on himself, but slightly back on Cohen, too, you know. It was brilliant, I thought, it was just brilliant.

But, so anyway, I spent all this time traveling around and trying to set up some organization for Muskie. And early on we decided that one of the things we had to do was kind of reconnect the Maine with Muskie, you know, we had to get Muskie back, and the people's minds back to Muskie of Maine and not Muskie the national politician.

AL: How did you do that?

PM: Well, I mean, first of all I argued all the time with the Washington people about the feelers they wanted to put out for him running for president, you know, there was a lot of interest in that, and I thought that was just bad news. Fortunately it never went anywhere, but there was a lot of flirtation with it. But we did things like, we organized bean suppers all over the state, which, you know, bean suppers were a traditional Maine thing. And we had these Muskie bean suppers, to which we got all the Democrats that we could find to come. And this is well out, this is like a year out from the election. And I remember we designed these little bumper stickers that looked like a Burnham & Morrill bean can label, you know, they were red and blue with a circle in it? In the circle where it says B&M we had Ed's, and so it said, "I went to Ed's baked bean supper," where it says baked bean. It looked very much, if you looked at it closely it looked very much like the bean label. So we gave those out at the suppers to the people that went which was an effort to, you know, kind of put those people in with Muskie again and Muskie in with Maine. And we had, we designed a button that year which we were going to use just early on and then we ended up using the whole campaign, but it was designed as a kind of an

insider button that had, "Ed" written around the outside of the button like this. So you could barely read the Ed, it looked kind of like a design on the outside of the button, and then very small Muskie and Maine in the middle and it was really, again kind of a, it was designed as to be kind of an insider's button, but again to bring them inside, you know, with him.

We had all sorts of glitz and fun that we did at those suppers, I remember we had all sorts of door prizes. We gave away those '76 flags, you know, with a circle. And we did those suppers all over the place and basically brought in all those people and more who, you know, who I had been going around seeing who were complaining about Muskie. And Muskie, who could always bitch and moan about having to go to a political event, loved them when he got there. You know, and he was always at his best, and he was great, and he was fun, you know. And his speeches, you know, maybe sometimes were a little long, but they were always fun, and people had a great time. And so they were back together with Muskie again and, you know, in another, you know, another battle. And so, you know, in short order the party started like getting involved instead of, you know.

You know it's, if you really support somebody and you don't get asked to help and you're not involved, you can sit back there and think, well, look at that damn fool, he's going to get beaten by this Cohen guy. But once you get asked to help and you're involved in it, you know, then it's just the opposite, you know, we're going to go out and beat that jerk. And so, you know, we kind of did, we turned that around in a few months and that was really the feeling. And, you know, Muskie edged up in the polls. He went up about five points over that time. The party was organized; we started getting some good press back in the state again, less stories with Democrats bitching about Muskie. And most instructive of course because Cohen was watching all this and seeing all the weak points kind of being filled in with Muskie's efforts.

So the second time that Cohen did a statewide poll, his decision poll, he stuck Hathaway in the poll and saw that Muskie was very problematic. I mean, they always characterized it as though they could win, but it was going to be close and hard, and Hathaway appeared very vulnerable and weak. And Hathaway and Cohen were close, they rode to work together. Hathaway had been urging Cohen to run against Muskie because he didn't want to have to run against him himself. Some people say Hathaway was like in a deep depression for like a month after Cohen announced in January that he wasn't going to run against Muskie because, you know, he didn't announce that he was going to run against Hathaway; it was clear what was going to happen. So, you know, in a sense we ran two campaigns in that campaign, and the first one and the hardest one was against Cohen, and that was over with by the beginning of January.

Just about the time that Cohen pulled out we'd set up the announcement tour for Muskie. And again we wanted to be back in Maine and focus on the fact that we were back in Maine so we did this week long announcement tour following a TV announcement where we went all over the state.

And I remember we went up to Aroostook, and it was one of those spells in January where it doesn't get up any higher than forty degrees below up in the valley every day. It was really cold when we were up there. And then we flew from Aroostook, we. Well, while we were in Aroostook we stayed, we stayed at Rock's Motel and Hotdog Stand in Fort Fairfield. And the

guy came up, there wasn't any phone in the rooms, and the guy came up from the hotdog stand and said that Muskie had a call. Muskie had already gone to bed, so I thought, oh Jesus, it's probably one of these jerks in Washington calling up to tell him nothing, so I'd better make, find out before I wake him up. So I went down and it was Mansfield calling up, the majority leader.

AL: Mike Mansfield?

PM: Yeah, so I went back up and got him. He went down and Mansfield had called him to ask him to give the answer to the state of the union speech.

So anyway, then we flew down to Campobello, which of course was kind of his pride and joy, and we stayed there for a night. It was a wonderful time. He showed me all around the cottages even though they were closed up. We opened, you know the (*unintelligible word*) opened them up and went in. Then we had a nice dinner over at the Prince cottage and the woman who worked there was the cook, actually had worked for the Roosevelts. And a guy named Red Pike, who was a botanist and a friend of the Roosevelts, and his brother Sumner Pike served in the Roosevelt administration, came over and we had dinner with Red Pike.

So that was a very memorable night, and that was the first night of the first episode of the Franklin and Eleanor series, which was on TV and we watched it. Kind of a memorable evening. And then we went, from there we went across from Campobello in a boat over to Eastport and picked up the tour again and went around. But that was, that was like a victory lap in a sense because, you know, Cohen had pulled out, so I mean although we expected somebody to run there was nobody, there was nobody in the state except maybe Ed Muskie who was comparable as a political figure at that time to Bill Cohen, so it was a nice thing to have over.

AL: Did Muskie seem much more relaxed at Campobello? Was there a difference?

PM: Oh, you know, Muskie at Campobello was like a person at his favorite place that he'd built. You know, I don't know if you ever heard the story that Muskie told about how Campobello came about, but his story, and I'm sure it's true, is that in 1961 or '2 John Kennedy was going to come up to Maine, land at Brunswick and go fishing. And he wanted to do a news release in Maine, for Maine, when he got off the plane, and he called up Muskie and asked what he could do. And Muskie said he'd think about it and get back to him. And Muskie remembered that he'd just read in the paper that the Roosevelt house was up for sale and people didn't know what was going to happen to it. And so Muskie suggested to the Kennedy White House that they have the president call for an international park at Campobello, which he did, and as a result of that, you know, the Campobello Park Commission got created and the Peace Bridge got built. And, you know, Muskie was always chairman of that commission the time that he was in the senate. He was either chairman or vice chairman; it went back and forth between us and Canada, but he was always in that position and was very involved in it. So, you know, he was involved in all the decisions and had a very, you know, proprietary feeling about the place.

A funny thing that happened, you know, Red Pike came over and he was a lot of fun, but Muskie had been telling me for months while we were having these bean suppers that we ought to have Red Pike's fartless beans at the bean suppers, and he assured me that there was such a thing. So

on this occasion, of course, we had Red there, and Muskie, you know, asked Red to tell the story of his discovery of fartless beans.

And the story, which I guess is absolutely true, is that Red Pike was working on a bean that would be hardy enough to withstand Maine and Vermont winters but wouldn't have too much of a shell around the outside because he thought that that would make it a less tasty bean. And he developed a bean that he thought was pretty good, and just by coincidence a neighbor got some of these beans and cooked them up and ate them. And this neighbor had had a colostomy, you know, had a bag on the side and wasn't supposed to eat beans because of their gaseous effect. But he had these beans because he loved them so much and reported to Red Pike that they did not have this effect. And, which, you know, prompted Red to go try them out on some other friends and became convinced that they did seem to have less of that effect than other beans.

And about that time he read about a study that was being done on the west coast, maybe at UCLA, I can't remember for certain, into what caused people to have this, to fart, not just with beans but with anything. And he sent these beans out along with a note about this potential discovery. And they reported back that in fact they were far less gas producing because it was the skin of the bean, which is very difficult to digest, and consequently because it isn't totally digested, causes these other side effects, and that because this had this thinner skin that in fact the bean was less gaseous than others. So anyway, that's the story. But Muskie was much enamored with this concept and with Red Pike's contribution to science. And so we had a great evening actually just sitting around. It was wonderful.

And Red had a lot of stories, you know, because they'd been involved on Campobello for a long time. I remember we met with the *Quoddy Tide*, the newspaper up there in Eastport. And the guy from the *Quoddy Tide* brought a newspaper story, a clipping, and gave it to Muskie, of an interview, I guess that's the right word, with President Roosevelt when he was sailing off the coast when he was up there one time when he was president. And this interview, this story, I should say, told the story of three local Democrats who got some lobsters and paddled out to Roosevelt's boat, which was, you know, becalmed, it was in a fog and he was out there anchored just on board. And they rowed out, and they gave him the lobsters, according to this story. And Roosevelt, you know, was joking with them and said, "Well, you guys seem like pretty smart fellows and all the papers have been saying that the next thing I'm going to do is this," I don't know, something to do with the banks or whatever, or, "I'm going to do this or I'm going to do that. What do you think my next move is going to be?" And according to the newspapers story, one of the fellows says, "Well, you look like a pretty smart guy, Mr. Roosevelt, so I figure your next move is going to be for them lobsters." So that was the story that got reported in the *Quoddy Times*.

So anyway there was, you know, Muskie kind of brought out people like, you know, people sought him out, he was enough of a personage in, you know, a national personage so people, I mean a lot of things like that happened along the way that were fun.

After that a guy named Bob Monks announced. He'd run against Margaret Chase Smith in a primary and actually was so sure that he was going to win had changed the Maine ballot through an initiative referendum process. The old Maine ballot had a big box at the top and the

candidates were listed in columns by party. And he thought Muskie was going to be nominated in '72, and there was no way he could be elected into the senate with Muskie at the top of the ticket in a big box. So he put this initiative referendum through which got rid of the big box in Maine. Of course the irony was he didn't get nominated, and McGovern did instead of Muskie, and there was no way Hathaway could have possibly won for president [*sic*] [senate] if there'd been a big box because Nixon clobbered McGovern in this state. So it worked just the opposite than what they expected.

But anyway, Monks announced that he was going to run against Muskie. And as it turned out I, he announced at the State House, Monks did, and I got a tape of his announcement. And Bob Monks was a guy who, is a guy, who viewed himself as being intellectually superior and more willing to speak candidly I think, you know, maybe than other politicians. I think that was his self image, and so in this tape he kind of questioned Social Security, I mean he, and I don't think it would be unfair to characterize it as he raised the visage that maybe it was time to get rid of Social Security. And he said that we needed higher energy prices. And this was at a time when energy prices were very, very high already and people were -

AL: This was in the seventies.

PM: Yeah, and this was, you know, in Maine. People are poor and drive a lot and have a lot of heating costs. So I happened to fly down to Washington that night, and I get into Muskie's office at about seven-thirty at night. And he was sitting there, and it was quite, it wasn't well lit; it wasn't dark, but he only had one light on. And I went in, and he said, "Hi Phil." And I said, "What kind of day are you having?" You know, he says kind of a, wasn't, it hadn't been a great day. And I said, "Well, I've got something to buck you up," and I put the tape on, and I played the tape, and he listened to it. And when it was all over with, I turned it off, he said, he said, "You know, Phil, I've based a whole political career on the stupidity of the Maine Republican party, and by God they haven't let me down again."

So we ran against Monks and, you know, he ended up putting on a credible campaign in a lot of ways and, you know, for a while looked like he might be able to take advantage of some of the unsettledness there was among the Democratic Party in mill towns, the conservative kind of backlash, conservative Democratic backlash that Longley had taken advantage of at one point in time. We saw some movement in the numbers in those places. But in the end we were able to, we were able to get that back. We had Pat Cadell polling for us in that campaign, and he did a pretty good job. And we caught it, and we were able to deal with it. It was a, and it was a good campaign in the sense that, in the sense that you knew if you did everything right you ought to win and you had a better candidate.

We had a business over the debates as you always do when you have a well known encumbent versus a challenger and Monks wanted to have, wanted to have a lot of debates, and he wanted them to be wide open. And so I met with, I was the negotiator for the Muskie people in the debates, and of course we wanted them to be basically press conferences, we wanted them to be non-events because we didn't want to give Monks any opportunity to open anything up. Muskie was ahead and better known. And we pretty much got them to agree to most of our stuff, so much so that Monks actually changed his negotiating team and sent in this businessman friend of

his, Goldfarb, who he thought could be a tougher negotiator for him. And right about that time Monks put on his first ad, which was, had a bunch of people saying critical things about Muskie. I didn't think it was that bad, but, you now, Muskie didn't like it. And, so Muskie, I talked to Muskie, and Muskie said, he said, "You ought to go to the next meeting and say, 'Look, let's forget all this stuff that we've talked about as far as what we're going to talk about in the debates. Let's just have a debate in which Monks, you know, defends what the people are saying in this ad and, you know, and I, you know, defend myself against these charges.'" Muskie always liked to get things around to him being the wronged person, you know, he dealt pretty well with that. And he said, you know, "If they don't go along with it," he said, "leave, you know. Don't say this is it or this is over with, he said, "just leave." So I went to the meeting and I suggested it. Of course it was right out of left field. They didn't agree to it, so I said, "Well, I got to go," so I left.

And I got back to the office, the meeting was down on Exchange Street and our office was up in Monument Square, I got back to the office and I said to Ginger, I said, "You know, they're going to go to the press right away and say that we broke off, you know, talks about the debates because we don't want any debate." So I immediately wrote this letter to this guy Goldfarb saying that, you know, I was sorry that they wouldn't agree to, you know, defending what they were saying in the ad. It seemed to me that if a person was paying a lot of money to make a charge against somebody that had a long record like Muskie, they ought to at least be willing to go on and publicly defend it. But that if, you know, on reflection, you know, Monks agreed that he wasn't willing to do it, in other words if they were representing him when they refused to agree, that we ought to get together again and, you know, figure out what they would agree to debate. In other words, I wanted a letter on the record that made it clear that we weren't against debating. And I had somebody run down the street and deliver the letter. But meanwhile they'd gone to the press, and so the press called me up and said, "What is this business about you, you know, refusing to have Muskie debate?" I said, "Oh, quite the contrary," I said, "you know, let me shoot over the letter we just sent that kind of summarizes my view of the meeting." And so over the weekend we had this long running story where Monks himself was on saying that Muskie was refusing to debate, and then they came on and quoted from the letter that I wrote, and I was on saying that Monks was, you know, paying all this money to put ads on and he was refusing to face Muskie, you know, wasn't man enough to stand up to Muskie and say it to his face.

So we, I thought that was a great exchange because, you know, if you believed Monks, if you believed that Muskie wouldn't debate, which, you know, for most people isn't a very debilitating charge, it's kind of a 'so what?' And if you believed me then Monks was kind of a sorry sonofabitch, you know, would say bad things about somebody behind somebody's back but wouldn't say it to his face. Well, in my opinion that's something most people can relate to. We all know people like that, we've all been wronged in that way. So I thought that was an exchange that Monks lost. It was really, you know, triggered by Muskie's idea, you know, which was to turn this issue around on them.

AL: What did you think of Muskie? What were your impressions of him and what? Did you get a good sense of his personality and -?

PM: Yeah, I don't think, you know, it would not be fair to say that we became bosom buddies or anything, but we became pretty close. And you know, it was, as he campaigned more and more I saw him all the time. And you know, every night I'd be the guy to go and bring him up to date with what had gone on in the day, and I'd be the guy to talk to him about his schedule and some, I traveled with him some. And so I felt like I got to know him very well.

The criticism that you'd hear of Muskie then and, I suppose, now if people didn't selectively remember was that he tended to be very critical of people that worked for him. He had a temper, and he'd get mad, and he'd criticize ideas that people brought up, and he was kind of hard on people, which was true. On the other hand I never saw it as any kind of a problem at all. I mean, I like to argue too, I didn't see it as like serious, I mean I never saw him like fire somebody because he didn't, because they disagreed with him. So what if he yelled, you know? I can yell, you know, I mean I didn't mind it. It was kind of his way of, you know, working off his energy, and he liked to argue, he liked arguing with people, just loved it.

And you know, I used to, we used to argue about his schedule. Sometimes I'd argue with him about it, and then sometimes I'd do what I called cheating, which is I'd agree with him. So he'd say, "Jesus Christ, Phil," you know, "tomorrow you've got me going to the tannery at seven. And then you've got me going, you know, here at eight-thirty. I'm going to have to take, change my clothes; you know how it stinks at the tannery. For Christ's sake Jesus, doesn't anybody take me into consideration, blah, blah," you know. And so when I was in a mood to cheat, I'd say, "Oh well," I said, "you know, nobody knows we're going over there tomorrow except two people." I said, "I can call up and cancel that, that'd be no problem." "Well, no, you know, they're expecting me." "No, nobody's expecting you over there. You know, you don't have to go over there, if you don't think it's important, don't go over.

Well, you know, I'm down here anyway. I'm . . . " You know, you'd always have these things where if you really, if you were in a mood not to play the game and you just switched it around on him, and then he'd, you know, because it was all, you know, part of his just working through what he had to do, partly to see if you'd figured out what you were doing and partly because, you know, there's a lot of frustration to having every moment in your life scheduled. And if he wanted to have an afternoon with a friend or something, he had to like schedule with us two months in advance. And that's the way it was all the time because he was so busy in Washington. So I was pretty, you know, sympathetic with the frustrations that led to it. And you know, a lot of people were kind of intimidated by it, and I wasn't. Maybe because I really wasn't dependent on him for anything, you know, I didn't work for him. I mean, I worked for him in the campaign, and they paid me, but it isn't anything I sought out. I didn't have like anything in mind that, well, I'm going to, you know, he's going to make me the head of the budget committee staff or something, you know, like most of these people. You know what I mean? In my own mind I was very glad that he'd asked me to do it, but I figured I was doing him as much of a favor as he was doing me, so.

And, you know, with the exception of that I found him to be, and I shouldn't say the exception to that, I mean if you want to say it's an exception, but I found him to be great to work for. As I said before he was very careful about the way he made suggestions and told you what to do. He was deferential, you know, even though I was much younger than him and obviously much less

accomplished politically, he was very careful to treat me as a, as a peer when he gave directions and stuff, you know, to do it in a way that was considerate. He was very intelligent; he was wonderful to work for from the standpoint of what you'd learn working with him. And he made decisions very quickly. Sometimes a decision would be to tell you how you ought to go about getting the decision made. In other words sometimes a decision would be, well, you are going to talk to this one, this one, or this one.

I remember one time I became convinced that we had to freeze Louis Jalbert out in Lewiston because Louis was a major political problem up there. And he told everybody that he'd gotten Muskie started and bought him his first coat, which was all a mess of crap. He was actually against Muskie the first time Muskie ran. But a lot of people believed it, and people like Georgette Berube and stuff, said that they'd only support Muskie if he'd stand up on the city hall steps and denounce Louis Jalbert. I said, you know, come on, you know, here this guy's running for president, he's going to denounce Louis Jalbert? I mean, you know, you'd make Louis into something more than he is. But I mean that was the kind of the mood, so I figured the best approach with Louis was just ignore him. You know, not to answer his calls, you know, to have Muskie answer his calls, not to have Muskie see him, you know. He could go to events but, you know, just have Muskie ignore him because that would be obvious.

Well, Jesus, I got, you know, people in Washington, I told Charlie Micoleau that's what we were going to do, that got him wicked nervous. And so he said, "Well, you got to write a memo to Muskie, you know, outlining why you think that." So I wrote this memo about, probably about four pages long, and I picked him up one day, and I was driving him, and I asked him to read it. He sat there, he read it obviously very carefully from beginning to end, put the memo down, and he said, "That's not the sort of stuff I usually get involved in, is it, Phil?" I said, "No." He said, "Okay." So I read that as a clear signal to go ahead and freeze Louis out, and it would a decision that I made. So if he ever wanted to tell Louis it was me and not him, then he could. So that's, I found him to be a real joy to work with that way, you know? As I say there was not a lot of time, I mean he made deliberate decisions but he made them intelligently and quickly. And when it was your decision he clearly let you know. It was, so I found him to be very enjoyable to work for.

AL: And what happened, the end of that story of Louis Jalbert?

PM: Oh, we froze him out. You know, basically the campaign had nothing to do with Louis. He'd call me up and swear and yell and, you know, say, "The goddamn Pollack," this and that. But you see Louis couldn't afford to have the breach be very public. The breach could be public to the point that he'd go around and complain that, you know, Muskie hadn't called him enough. But see, Louis could never go and say that Muskie was totally ignoring him. It was too much of a, too much of a shattering of the myth. So instead Louis would go around and say, "Well, Muskie called him two weeks ago and Dick told him, the sonofabitch, that he was doing this wrong and that wrong." You know, I mean that would be, but that was okay. As long as Louis wasn't saying that he was in good with Muskie we could deal with Lewiston. So, you know, it came out fine. I mean Louis didn't have anything to deliver at that point in time, and he didn't have any choice about where to go, you know what I mean? We handled, there was no real, there was no contest there because Lewiston was and probably still is the soft underbelly of the

Democratic Party in Maine. It's where Cohen cut in to beat Elmer Violette; it's where Longley beat Mitchell. You know, Lewiston was a problem that we had to deal with from the beginning. They had a mayor that was, you know, very much pro-Cohen and anti-Muskie, this lady mayor. So, you know, Lewiston required a lot of attention, and one of the things we had to do was to freeze Louis out. And Louis was, Louis was a problem. He was kind of a colorful fellow but he was basically a problem, so that's what we did. It worked fine.

AL: Did you have any contacts with Muskie after the '76 campaign?

PM: Yes, at the end of the campaign Muskie asked me if I would look into the Indian land claims claim that was being made against the state by Tom Tureen and write a memo for him. And so I went around the state and met with several of the principles involved in the case, and I studied the state's position, and I studied Tom Tureen's position. And I wrote this memo to Muskie saying that it was a case that had to be settled, that there was no way we could get rid of the case with early motions, so it was a case that would be litigated. And even if the state ultimately won, and I thought that was far from a certainty, that we were in for seven or ten years of a bigger and bigger cloud over the title of the land over half of the state. And that given the fact that the whole thing came about is because of a federal law that had never been enforced nor repealed, that the federal government had an obligation to at least take the lead in settling it. And I met with Muskie about the memo, and, you know, he didn't just accept what I'd written. He was pretty, you know, he went through his usual critical analysis, you know, of questioning me.

And it was sort of a hard thing to believe on the face of it, you know, that you could have a claim that was two hundred years old that would be exhausted somehow. Because of course we have lots of principles in the law the purpose of which is to prevent this from happening, this sort of mischief where somebody comes back two hundred years later and says they made a claim. I mean, it's a doctrine of adverse possession, and there's a doctrine at the law of equity called latches, both of which mean that if you sit on the right for a certain period of time, you give it up. Well, the problem was is that the federal law that got passed with Knox's initiative specifically said that the Indians' claim could not be set aside for any doctrines in law or in equity. So all the traditional things in the law that protect us from this result, which seems an unjust result, no matter what justice would have been two hundred years ago it's unjust now, were removed from the courts as a means of dealing with this matter. The state had already conceded that the Indians were a tribe, which was an issue that we might have had some chance in litigation on, a tribe within the meaning of the law. So we were really in a pickle.

Now Brennan was governor at the time, I mean attorney general at the time, and was, you know, riding this issue to the governorship. And so he was just, you know, adamant that we're not going to settle this case, we're going to litigate it. And he was really, I thought, you know, not doing anything to help the situation and was exacerbating a situation that was, in some aspects was getting ugly. But in any case Muskie became convinced, either because of my memo or other things, that that was the right course and managed eventually to convince Carter to offer up a settlement proposal. The first proposal that Carter offered left out all the paper company land, and so it was adamantly opposed by the paper companies and by Brennan and by Cohen.

And an interesting thing happens at this point in time because I'm getting ready to run for governor at this point in time, and Carter was going to come to visit Maine as president. He was going to come to Bangor. And I became convinced, you know, all this criticism of Carter was out in the paper over this Indian lands claim thing all generated by the paper companies and their friends. And I thought it was pretty unfair to Carter; I didn't think we should endorse the proposal that he made. I thought that was bad politics, but I thought that we ought to at least, you know, compliment Carter on recognizing that the federal government did have principal responsibility for settling the case, that that much he should get thanks for.

AL: I'm going to stop you for just a second.

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

AL: We are now on tape two of the interview with Mr. Phil Merrill.

PM: So anyway, I thought that, that just for good politics plus keeping President Carter committed to working on solving this problem, which I thought was essential to the future of the state, that Carter shouldn't come up here just in the face of all this unanswered criticism. So I got in touch with Muskie and with, and with Hathaway to tell them that I was going to issue a press release, you know, thanking Carter but stopping short of endorsing the proposal. And I did that, and Muskie did it at the same time, and Hathaway actually put out a release that endorsed the proposal, which in the end was a real problem for him getting reelected. I mean Cohen just beat the hell out of him with it. Why he did it, I don't know whether it was lack of attention to detail or maybe it suited his own sense of justice, but I thought it was weird at the time. But anyway, so I had quite a bit of contact with Muskie around that issue and lots of other things, you know. And then I ran for governor and ran in the primary against Joe Brennan in '78, and Muskie was very friendly. You know, he didn't publicly endorse me or anything, but -

AL: He was supportive?

PM: He was supportive, and I think he voted for me. I mean, I'm sure he did. He wasn't that close to Brennan, and Brennan wasn't that close to him. Brennan was kind of an anti-Muskie sort of guy, and so, you know, so I was pretty close to him. And then he became secretary of state, and I saw him a few times when he was secretary of state.

AL: You ran, so you ran against Joe Brennan in the primary. Were your thoughts or your political leanings that far away from Joe Brennan's?

PM: Well, I guess the answer to that question is yes and no. I should go back and say that as we postured ourselves for the Muskie race I was very, very much anxious to highlight the things that Muskie had done, really working with Al From. You know who Al From is? Al From is the head of the Democratic Leadership Council, that group that Clinton was the president of, and he's seen as a moderate, you know, guy in the Democratic Party and, you know, and created the moderate group in the Democratic Party, that's Al From. Well, in those days, Al From was the head of one of Muskie's subcommittees, the government operational subcommittee and in that

job he did all sorts of very creative stuff because Al's a very creative guy. You know, he worked on the original revenue sharing and then counter-cyclical aid. And the budget committee, stuff that created a budget committee, Al From generated, and Sunset legislation was an Al From creation. And the speech that Muskie never gave to the New York liberals, but that got widely reported because it was released to the press even though he couldn't make it up to the meeting, in which he asked the question, "What's so liberal about wasting money?" All of that kind of, I would say it was repositioning Muskie consistent with the Muskie that people in Maine knew when he was governor and things, you know, because he was very, he was always very careful to be a, you know, a financially prudent liberal.

Well anyway, but all this kind of moved him back into that view, and so I was very anxious to emphasize that with Muskie because it reflected my own view. My own view was is that Longley and others had been successful because people had a view that government itself needed some fixing, and I thought that that view was right. And I was suspicious of a lot of government benefit programs. I mean, I wasn't anti-welfare but I was, you know, Kennedy had called for changing the welfare system, Bobby Kennedy had, and I was very much of that mind. So in some ways you could probably view me as more conservative or New Democrat than Brennan. But on a lot of other issues like labor issues and issues like this Indian lands claims case, which I viewed as a, among other things I thought that, my quarrel with Brennan was that he was literally race-baiting in the race. You know, going to places and saying that it was great to be in part of the Maine the Indians weren't trying to take away or, you know, which was a standard opening that he gave when he was outside of the . . . And there was a lot of anger, and there was a lot of, there was a lot, it was getting a little ugly.

I mean, it hadn't gotten to the point of getting real ugly, but I remember I had a coffee down in Bucksport, and somebody made a statement about how the Indians ought to all be sent back to the reservation or something. I don't know what it was, but it was an anti-Indian remark. Well it turned out that one of the guys there, the woman that he was with was an Indian. She wasn't obviously Indian, I mean, but she was, and there was practically a fight. That's pretty unusual in Maine politics to have like a fight at a coffee in somebody's house, but I mean there was really a situation where people had to physically separate people. And it was getting ugly.

And, so, you know, I was very, very, first of all, I thought Brennan's position was bad law, and I thought that he was irresponsibly exploiting it. It's very difficult to deal with that issue politically. I didn't feel I, if I had been smarter, I felt like, by the end of the campaign I figured out how to deal with it, but early on in the campaign I indicated that I thought the best settlement was to, the best result was to have the federal government settle it early on, which Brennan took exception to. But of course in the end, of course, what happened was once the federal government offered up a settlement that took care of the paper company lands, then Brennan and Cohen endorsed it like that (*snaps fingers*). All these people that were arguing philosophically against a settlement, suddenly when the big guys were taken care of, collapsed like a cheap car or moment in cynicism in my opinion. But anyway, so some of those issues. Politically the race divided, although I was much less known than Brennan, and, you know, that really was, I think, probably the biggest factor. But politically it did kind of divide, you know, the principal people supporting me were the old Muskie wing in the party, and the principal people supporting Brennan were the, was the other wing of the party.

And the party was always more divided than it appeared because Muskie essentially organized the Democratic Party from without. Muskie, you know, Muskie's campaign didn't originate in the core of the Democratic constituency in Maine that always elected people to the legislature, you know, the Lewistons and the Biddefords. And those people didn't really want Muskie, didn't view him as one of theirs and probably had an investment in losing, you know. And so Muskie, you know, made a deliberate effort throughout his early political career to keep some separation from them so he could be viewed as something different because he knew that was a formula for losing, if you were just a, you know, an ethnic politician from Lewiston you couldn't win in Maine. Muskie never hid the fact that he was Polish or Catholic, but neither did he, did he, tell anybody. I mean I think most people were surprised when they woke up and they had elected a Catholic governor because Maine was pretty strongly anti-Catholic. I can remember in 1960 when Kennedy was elected my grandfather sitting at the Thanksgiving table, Kennedy had already been elected, saying he couldn't be president, he wouldn't be sworn in. It was unconstitutional, a Catholic to be president. You know, Maine was, the Ku Klux Klan was big in Maine, just anti-Catholic. We didn't have any blacks to be against.

So Muskie was never close to that wing of the party, and from time to time they'd get out of line, you know. They nominated, they nominated, in the year that Dubord was the Muskie candidate for governor, which was around 1962 I guess, yeah, '62, they nominated Dolloff, the other wing of the party, as kind of way of telling Muskie he wasn't in charge, and Dolloff was head of the grange. I guess he was a nice fellow, but even the people that were instrumental in nominating him, once he got nominated said they had to turn around and figure out how to beat him. So, I mean there was always a little division, and that race, you know, among other things represented that division between Brennan and I.

AL: So do you think there's still that division?

PM: Well, there is still, there is- it's different now, but there is still the traditional ethnic Democratic vote, which in primaries can be very different than the rest of the vote. You know, Brennan became very popular with that constituency, always was very faithful to that constituency, and can win a primary any time he wants to in Maine because he dominates that constituency so much. So there is still that, if you want to call it division, you know, there's still that factor in Maine politics. And then you have the whole rest of the Democratic Party, which are people who are basically Democrats because they support, you know not so much because of ethnic background but because of whatever. They're spread out all over the rest of Maine. So it's still here. I mean it's not, it's very seldom been debilitating, you know what I mean? It's not, it's nothing like some of the other, you know, things that the Democratic Party has had to get over in order to be successful but it's there.

AL: I know we need to wrap it up for today. Is there anything that I haven't asked you that we haven't talked about that you feel it is important to mention? Stories, a particular story about Ed Muskie that illustrates his personality or an aspect of your relationship with him?

PM: I don't know. There was a fun point in the campaign, I don't know if it illustrates anything about him, but I mean it's one of the reasons that I thought that he was a good fellow to

work for. There was a point in the campaign where Bob Monks had announced that he was buying some half an hour slots to do TV. And of course when Muskie first got started Muskie was like one of the first politicians in Maine to use TV. And the way they used TV back in those days is like buy an hour, and they'd go and be in the studio for a whole hour, and they'd, you know, first Ed would talk and then Fred would talk and then, you know, because people would watch anything on TV back then, you'd watch the screen test pattern, so it was successful. And there came a time in the campaign when people were concerned, you know, Monks had some momentum, and he was buying a lot of television because he had a lot of money. They became concerned, and they wanted us to buy half an hour slots of our own. And all of these old supporters of his, you know, that remembered what they did in the old days and thought that the answer to all of this was to have Ed go on, you know, and be on TV for an hour or half an hour and just, you know, tell people how things were, and that was going to be how he'd win the campaign. And, you know, I was pretty convinced, along with the other people in the campaign, that there was no need to do that, it wasn't going to be successful, and, you know, it was just that day had gone, that was good politics. But the fact that Monks was doing it and that, you know, that he'd gotten some increased recognition and everything made everybody nervous.

So we had a big meeting up in Lewiston right before the Jefferson-Jackson banquet, and all these people are in a room, and Muskie asked each one to speak. So we went around the room, and all these old guys who I'd gotten to know, all of whom I liked and all, you know, said, "Ed, he's coming. I have people talking Monks up there, and he's going to be on TV for half an hour, and you've got to go right on there like you did in 1954, and you got to tell people where the bear shits in the buckwheat. And then when you got that taken care of, this election will be over with, pussyfooting around." So they went all around the table, and all these guys did that, you know. And then Muskie asked me what I thought, and I said, "You know, that, you know, that we'd been concerned a little about the movement, but the movement was over and that we had good ads up and that they said what we wanted to say and that the half an hour format wasn't going to work and it wasn't going to work for him and he wasn't going to get any viewership. And there was no reason that we should vary from what we'd planned to do; we should stick on course."

And so after I spoke Muskie said, "Well," he said, "you know back in 1954 I had to count on you guys, you know, and you were out there doing the work and I just had to count on you," he said. "Now this time around you all know because you've seen Phil, he's the one out there doing the work, and I got to count on him. So that's what we're going to do." Now he obviously made his own decision but instead of telling them, "You know, I've gotten to a point where I'm not going to listen to you old friends any more," you know what I mean? Instead of putting it that way, he just said, well, you know, he just put it a different way, which is, you know, you got to, you know, when you hire somebody to do something, you just got to, you know, you got to listen to them in the end. And, you know, they all felt fine about it actually. You know, I expected maybe a little bitterness, you know, here I was this young guy. But I think the fact that I'd met with them and that they'd had their meeting and they'd had their say. There was no like, you know, like at the end of the meeting there was no, well God dammit we're going to lose now. There was still maybe a little revisiting it during the evening, somebody would come up, well now are you sure (*unintelligible phrase*) Ed. He can go on there, you know.

But then Monks did it and it was absolute disaster. I mean I was little nervous about it just

because I thought that if Monks, I wasn't nervous about it from the standpoint of a change in the campaign, but I was nervous about it from the standpoint if Monks did a really good job that the whole thing would start up again, you know what I mean. Even if nobody watched it, if five people watched it and it looked good, you know. But it was a disaster. I mean his kid went on there and said he didn't know if he was going to vote for his dad, and it was just, oh, it was just, it was awful. It was beyond awful. I mean, I started watching it, and within five minutes into it I was just, I was just, you know, overjoyed.

So, we had, I guess one other incident that was fun in the campaign, is, the history of the campaign, is that we had an office in Lewiston, and we discovered in Lewiston that they were going through our trash. We discovered it kind of by accident, but then we watched, and sure enough, the Monks people were going through our trash. So we had discovered that when Monks ran against Margaret Chase Smith that he'd gotten this huge contribution from his secretary, and it was obviously some money they channeled in from somewhere because she didn't have any means of support. We kind of checked it out, and there was some thought about, some people thought we ought to use it. And I was not inclined, and Muskie wasn't inclined to use it, but it was there. And so when I found out they were going through our trash, three days before the first debate, I put a memo in the trash saying that, written supposedly, I can't remember who it was written to but it was a memo, and it said that in the debate, it purported to be an outline of our strategy in the debate, that in the debate Muskie was going to bring this up against Monks and that at the end of the debate, right in the television studio, Brennan was going to send somebody in to serve papers on Monks right while it was still on TV, that that was our strategy. And you know, they bought it, they were all nervous about it I know from, you know, afterwards. And of course it was a complete charade, you know. But that was a fun thing that we did in that campaign.

But other things about Muskie, I mean, you know, I'll tell you one other fun thing about Muskie and then we can end. When I first started working for him, he had this tradition back then, he brought his car up in the summer time. And then his car would go back in the fall, this old, even then it was like this old Buick I think. And so after I went on the campaign somebody asked me if I'd be willing to drive it down because I was going down to Washington anyway, and I thought that was great. My first wife, Linda, had just had our first child, Sam, so we thought, well, we'll drive down in the car. So we went down to Kennebunk, and he's loading up the car, and she's loading up the car, and of course my wife and I and the baby are going to be in the car too. It was a big car. Every single thing that went into the car they debated about. I mean, major debates, you know, trade off debates, you know. "God dammit, if you're going to put that big God damn plant in the car," you know, "then I'm going to put my," you know, whatever it is in the car. And, you know, every once in a while when they'd really get desperate, you know, they'd each pretend to be the advocate for the little baby. "Well, Jesus Christ, where do you think that poor little baby's going to be if you're going to stick that God damn thing in there?" The whole, that was kind of, you know, his and Jane's relationship.

One time we were riding along after some political event, and I was driving the car and Muskie's in front with me, and Jane was in the back seat. And Jane said, "After this campaign's over," because he always talked about the fact that this is his last campaign, she said, "I'm officially moving my voting address to Kennebunk." Muskie said, "What in hell do you want to do that

for?" he said, "My voting, you know, my, the core of my constituency, you know, is in Waterville." He says, "Those people down in Kennebunk, you know, they aren't, you know, supporters of mine, you know. We can't be from Kennebunk." And she said, "Well, I don't care," she said, "Kennebunk's the place that I live, and it's the place that I care about, and I want to be able to vote in local things in Kennebunk. And that's where my friends are; I don't have any friends left in Waterville. I'm going to live in Kennebunk, and if you don't move down there, you know, change your address to there, I'm going to change my address to there anyway." Muskie said, "You can't, it's against the law, right Phil? The wife has to, wife has to be registered where her husband," he tried to bring me into it. I said, "Senator, if I was stupid enough to answer that question, I'd be too stupid to be running your campaign."

AL: So they said what was on their minds didn't they?

PM: Well, they were kind of like the Dickersons. But there was a lot of affection in their relationship and everything, they were very close. It's just that Muskie liked to argue, and she probably did anyway, but you'd have to anyway. I mean the only way to deal with Muskie was to argue with him because he liked to argue.

There's this story, and I wasn't present for all of it, but I had met Muskie one time in a plane when he was in the State Department, and we ended up in an airport together for a little while, and it was right after the Russian invasion of Afghanistan. And Muskie was taking the position, and everybody with him was taking the position that the Russian invasion of Afghanistan was an act of aggression beyond just trying to control the situation in Afghanistan, you know, something that required some greater response from us. And I wasn't very convinced of my position, but I was skeptical of that, you know. And I took the position I wasn't sure of that, that I wasn't sure Afghanistan was on the Russian flank and that, you know, that I wasn't sure that it represented anything except maybe a wrongful headed policy on their part. But I didn't think that we necessarily had to respond to it as if it was the first thrust into, a bigger thrust towards our Mideast interests. And Muskie argued vehemently against me, you know, again you know, just completely, you'd have thought that he thought my idea was the stupidest idea and I was the stupidest person.

And so I had to leave, I had to go catch a plane, so somebody told me afterwards after I got the plane that they kind of like, kind of reiterated his position again and made, you know, maybe some slightly disparaging comment about my position or something, like maybe, you know, isn't it too bad, you know, we got to worry about, you know, people that, you know, something. To which Muskie turned on him and said, "Well, you know, his position isn't completely wrong," and then proceeded, you know, to get into an argument with that guy taking my position vehemently against, you know, his position. And that was, you know, that was, that was how Muskie thought things through, you know, it was. And he liked arguing, I mean beyond the fact that I think it served him, he liked it. So I don't think there was any way Jane could have survived if she just, you know, sat there like this. You had to, you know, you had to like, you know, stand up to him.

When we did the bumper sticker thing, you know the bean bumper sticker? I didn't tell him about it ahead of time. I hadn't worked for him very long, and I worried about the Washington

types down there because they were very much. You know, any time that we referred to him as anything except Senator Muskie for example, they'd get all padithered. And Senator Muskie wasn't going to do it in Maine. You know, he had to be Ed Muskie again or we were in trouble, you know what I mean? And they'd get all worried about that, you know, refer to Senator Muskie as Ed Muskie. So a lot of the stuff I just stopped, you know, paying attention to. I figured we had to do it, and if somebody said you can't do it anymore, then, you know, I'd take a hike because, you know, in my view it was clear what we had to do. He was plenty senatorial, you know, we didn't have to worry about that side of it. We had to worry about, you know, the people that had thought of him as having some proprietorship in him had to feel like they did again.

So anyway, I just did this bumper sticker thing, and I was concerned with how Ed might react, and I was concerned a little bit with how Jane might react. But Jane got a hold of one of these bumper stickers and she loved them. She came home and said, "Geez, you got to give me some of those so I can give them to my friends down in Washington." So that went over, that was fine.

But there was always, you know, some tension between, there is always in the best of campaigns between Washington and the local place. And Muskie had all these people that were part of his big staff, and then he had a lot of people that were really around him because they thought he might be a president or a vice president (*unintelligible phrase*). And of course in '76 at the Democratic convention there was a lot of interest in him as a vice president, and of course ultimately it went to Mondale, but so.

AL: Well, I've kept you much longer than I said, so I'm going to stop now and thank you very much for your time.

PM: Good, thank you.

End of Interview