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## Minkowsky, Carroll oral history interview

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## **Interview with Carroll Minkowsky by Greg Beam**

*Summary Sheet and Transcript*

### **Interviewee**

Minkowsky, Carroll

### **Interviewer**

Beam, Greg

### **Date**

June 20, 2000

### **Place**

Lewiston, Maine

### **ID Number**

MOH 195

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### **Biographical Note**

Carroll Minkowsky was born January 7, 1933 in Lewiston, Maine. His parents were Carroll John and Catherine (Bergin) Minkowsky. They made their living operating a grocery and variety store. He attended St. Patrick's school and Lewiston High School. He worked for WCOU radio for a time and studied briefly at Yale. He is married with six children. He served in the Maine House of Representatives from 1967 to 1969 and the Maine Senate from 1969 to 1985.

### **Scope and Content Note**

Interview includes discussions of: 1954 Maine gubernatorial campaign; Bergin block, 1897; 1940s Lewiston pool halls; recollections of World War II; John Minkowsky, his great-great grandfather, who was burned at stake due to actions against Russians in Poland during period of religious persecution; race relations/tensions in the military; prejudice in Lewiston of immigrants by "Yankee establishment"; Steve Minkowsky of the Maine Democratic Party and Deputy Director of the Maine Workers' Compensation Commission; Faust Couture and WCOU; Old City Charter of Lewiston; "Lewiston Days"; Bliss Business College; Sunday sales bill; Elmer Violette and St. John's Valley; Mitchell's 1974 gubernatorial campaign; and his perspective on Muskie's personality, work, and politics.

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## **Transcript**

**Greg Beam:** This is Greg Beam at the Muskie Archives in Lewiston, Maine on June 20th at 9:45 A.M. This is an oral history interview with Carroll E. Minkowsky, former Maine legislator from Androscoggin County. Now, could you please state your full name and spell it?

**Carroll Minkowsky:** My full name is Carroll E. Minkowsky, the spelling is C-A-R-R-O-L-L, the last name is spelled M-I-N-K-O-W-S-K-Y.

**GB:** And what does the E stand for?

**CM:** That is Eugene.

**GB:** All right. Now, when and where were you born?

**CM:** I was born in Lewiston.

**GB:** And when?

**CM:** And when was January 7th, 1933.

**GB:** All right, and what were your parents' names?

**CM:** My father was also Carroll J., Carroll John, and my mother was Catherine Bergin Minkowsky.

**GB:** All right, and could you spell Catherine Bergin?

**CM:** Hers was with a C, C-A-T-H-E-R-I-N-E, Bergin, B-E-R-G-I-N.

**GB:** Okay, now, what were your parents' occupations?

**CM:** They had a small grocery store and variety store.

**GB:** Did you -?

**CM:** My father also during WWII worked at the South Portland shipyard.

**GB:** So did you spend a lot of time in your parents' store when you were a kid?

**CM:** The answer is yes.

**GB:** All right, did you have any siblings?

**CM:** Unfortunately not.

**GB:** All right. Now, how were your parents involved in the Lewiston, or Lewiston-Auburn community when you were a kid?

**CM:** Basically on the Bergin side of the family it goes back to about 1897. And that's when Martin Bergin, who was a businessman developed, built a building on Lisbon Street, which was just recently torn down known as the Bergin block, that housed, the last owner was Sam Wise's Pawn Shop. And this was a historical building, which I was quite sad to see being torn down but I guess it was a necessity.

In addition to that, when St. Patrick's Church was built, or completed in 1897, Martin Bergin, the second had a large window. And I think this- I'm only bringing this up for the historical

value of the Bergin family in Lewiston going back at the turn of the century when my grandmother, Catherine Tierney came from Ireland and my grandfather William J. Bergin came from England. And subsequently their oldest son was quite a prominent fighter in the city of Lewiston during that particular segment of time. His name was Tommy Bergin and, better known as “Bear Cat” Bergin. And as an additional addendum to that Tommy Bergin, if anybody’s familiar with Graziano’s Restaurant, which I think everybody is, if you go into room or round two I think it is, you’ll see a large picture of Tommy Bergin on the wall. Later in life, from fighting, he became totally blind, and he, and of course as a child I used to bring him to various locations on Lisbon Street. And back in the early forties was a time when, I meant 1940, was a time when Lewiston was inundated with pool halls, and Tommy Bergin made the rounds and knew all the people by their names, and it was just a wonderful childhood experience to actually grow up with a person with a handicap and to become compassionate towards people who might not be as fortunate as you and I are. The Bergin family expanded to the Tierney family, which also had a small business in the city of Auburn known as a laurel shop, and a, aunt of mine named Sarah Tierney ran that particular operation in Auburn. So over the years the Bergin and Tierney family, and the Minkowsky family have been involved in the business community.

**GB:** Oh wow. So you have some strong roots in the city.

**CM:** I would say basically compared to many, the strongest, which I’m very proud of.

**GB:** All right, now, when you were growing up, well you mentioned your father working during WWII, do you remember the war keenly from your childhood?

**CM:** Only, of course I was only eight or nine years of age at the time, so I did not really recall the, but my father was a, I would say a person who was very involved in the political movement as a Democrat but not being a figure that was up front. And he followed the news very closely, and I would say kept me as a child very well informed as to what was going on and his point of view as to the direction it took, and also his experience coming from Europe and the problems that was going to be created and were created.

And one of the most important factors, being a totally American and being born in a society where we’re very materialistic, he made a prediction to me which stayed to me until this day: that America, as powerful a nation as it is and as compassionate a nation as it is, if it did not, if its people did not, as he said, go to the polls and vote for their candidates regardless of good or bad, vote, that his prediction was that the Chinese would overrule the world if we did not watch the direction we were going in. And that was back in the forties when that prediction came forth. And if you look at the world today and the problems that have been encountered and the compromises America has made towards the Chinese government, the reality of it is there if we do not pay close attention and change our attitudes towards a free society. It’s free because people like my father and Senator Muskie’s father, who came from the old country, recognized the trials and tribulations and difficulties they had and came to America and found their niche and developed that niche and produced children that were leaders of this nation.

**GB:** So you would say your father instilled in you very strong political and civic values?

**CM:** Precisely. In fact there was, at one particular point, and I had never really paid close attention to it, that I went to Braniewo, Poland four years ago with my wife as my daughter was in the Netherlands at Emerson College. But we took a weekend trip from the Netherlands through Germany to Poland, went to a small town called Braniewo, Poland. And I think for the first time, I had witnessed poverty in the United States, but I never witnessed poverty in the country of Poland, but yet the happiness of those people were outstanding. The point being, we also went to Auschwitz, to the prison camp, just to reinforce the tragedies that took place in the world.

And in a discussion with a first cousin who is now maybe eighty-nine years of age, and I could not, you really feel handicapped as an American going into a foreign country and not being able to communicate with them even though your name might be commensurate with the Polish nation. She indicated to me, "Did you ever realize that your great-great-grandfather was burned at a stake?" And I chuckled a little bit and I says, "You have to be kidding me," in my, with my translator. And she says, "No," she says, "I'm surprised your father never told you about that. That his grandfather, who was very deeply involved in the political movement." This was a time when the Russians were moving into Poland and that the instant law became, "You are no longer Roman Catholics, my friends, you are now Eastern Russian Orthodox." And his name also was John Minkowsky, and he protested. And he protested to such a point that he formed a coalition, and the only way they could overcome him was to actually arrest him and use him as an example and burn him at the stake. So that was one piece of the Russians, of the Minkowsky side of the family that I was never aware of until four years ago because that was never discussed.

My father really never really discussed the old country, shall we say, because he was so in tune with the American dream. And it's amazing how those who come from other nations can fully appreciate and understand the, what we have in this nation. And those of us who come up through the ranks, lived in a free society, and the attitude after WWII with most people was, especially in a mill community like Lewiston, the shoe shop community, which was major occupations back in the forties, is, "I do not want to see my sons and daughters work in the mills or the shoe shops. I will take what is necessary in sacrifices to get them into college." And that was the attitude that had people, beside buying homes, decided to fulfill their desires because of the way they were brought up very poor. And the ethnic background at the time, whether it be Irish, Polish, Italian, Russians, Lithuanians, what we had as a mixture in Lewiston at the time, they genuinely believed that they want their children to attain a goal or objective much more than they could.

And they also indicated very clearly; that's part of the reason why they came to America, because they did not enjoy being in a caste system in the old country. We know about the Indian caste system, but in ethnic groups, if your father was a carpenter, then you're expected to learn his trade. If he was a hand sewer then you'd learn how to become a hand sewer and so forth and so on. That's a synopsis of that part of it.

**GB:** Now you mentioned that your family in the old country was Roman Catholic?

**CM:** Oh, absolutely.

**GB:** Did your family remain Roman Catholic?

**CM:** All the way through to the present day.

**GB:** So your parents instilled in you also very strong religious values?

**CM:** From the Irish perspective, which was very, very strong on my mother's side of the family, and being Roman Catholic on my father's side of the family, the combination really, what you had reservations about growing up a young American you take for granted, the reinforcements were there, put on by the parents. And the simplistic thing, even though my mother was very fluent, naturally, she was born in Lewiston. But my father wasn't, and he, he was a strong believer in, I would not say from the viewpoint of being a religious person but believing in the values of his faith and simply saying you can go to any other faith but basically what your faced with is a decision, and that is based upon the Commandments. And he says, "If you live by those," he says, "you should have no problems at all." And really, you can have all the laws, we have millions of laws that either have been on the books or replaced over the years to suit changing times, but yet if you follow those particular simplistic rules it gets you through life very nicely.

**GB:** So what church did you attend as a child?

**CM:** St. Patrick's Church.

**GB:** Do you still attend St. Patrick's?

**CM:** Still attend, yes.

**GB:** All right, so where did you go to school, elementary school, and -?

**CM:** We started off, of course at that time it was like, I lived in Lewiston on South Avenue, we still owned a home there, so we started off with Martel School, but it was interesting because we also at that particular time had the beginnings of a Catholic School known as Holy Cross. But even though most of the neighborhood were young men and women who were from the French families that matriculated to Holy Cross, my father- mother felt it was more incumbent that I go to Martel. Spent a year in Martel, or two years in Martel, and then moved on to St. Patrick's School, what was then called Wallace Parochial School, and subsequently went on to, graduated from. Then moved on to Jordan School, graduated from the eighth grade at Jordan School in Lewiston, on to Lewiston High. And that was the time the Korean conflict was in place, and after graduating I had made a commitment for military service and within four days after graduation of June of 1951 went on to military service.

**GB:** Now, what were your experiences in the military?

**CM:** I would say that as a young person with limited life skills that it broadened your horizons tremendously during a short three-year span of time. I did not want to make a career out of the

military, but I felt it was a very important appendage to my life's experiences. The end result being that, number one, as a single son in a home, you leave home and go into, instantly into a military base. You're re-orientated to your regular values because this is a serious confrontation, or conflict as referred to at that time. But it was the experiences of getting up at five o'clock or earlier in the morning, of making your bed, following the rules and regulations, which were no problem, it was just marvelous. But it was the comradeship of all the guys from all over the United States that I was melted into, into a unit. And that experience was outstanding, really. Some of those people today I'm still in contact with.

**GB:** Where were you stationed?

**CM:** The first base was actually in Boston, and the second base was in Norfolk, Virginia. And from Norfolk we were able to work, they were looking for, well, actually I was on a, then they transferred me back to Portland, Maine, that's what it was. And we had a large ship called an ABP, which was basically a Coast Guard cutter weather ship. But during that segment of time also we were on patrol for foreign enemies lurking off the coast of Newfoundland, Iceland, Maine, all the way down the coast. So then we, and a second part of that duty was to provide weather information to the United States Weather Service. So you were patrolling the coast and then part of, and one of the crews that we were on, they were split up, they were put on to another ship, and they patrolled the coast of Korea at the time. I was looking forward to it just for the outside experience, and it never made, it was just, I guess it was a lottery that they held at the time, and certain names were selected, and mine was not. But that would have been an additional experience that I could have enjoyed.

**GB:** Did your time in the military have an impact on your political or social views?

**CM:** It had a tremendous impact on my, the social views because many of the young men I was involved with were black men. And being a northerner, you know, you just never paid attention to the war between the North and the South. You looked upon them as decent human beings with skills and talents maybe far superior than mine. And these people brought in their southern heritage and the trials and tribulations they went through, which, when I was in high school studying the problems of democracy in American history, you just got a cursory overview of the entire thing but not an in depth evaluation. So it was really, from that perspective you could relate more clearly to the movements down South, and especially during the Martin Luther King era when those movements really became extremely violent and deadly.

So a lot of those people were southern gentlemen that, I called them southern gentlemen, and one I was in the hospital with at the Norfolk, I was at the Marine hospital in Norfolk, Virginia. And I can recall walking outside the hospital with him, and he says, "Maybe we should not be seen together." And I'm saying, "Why not?" He says, "Well," he says, "you're white," and he says, "I'm black," and he says, "people will be looking and they're going to criticize you for it." I says, "Forget it." And I was only nineteen years of age at the time. I says, "My business, my discussion with you is our concern and nobody else's." If somebody says something, I'm prepared to address it. So that was, the change over, I came in at the ideal time really. It was not just reading about it and studying it, it was actually living it in the service, living with the people who were going through that transition.

**GB:** Did you encounter any racial tensions? I mean, I know you were aware that they were there and you met some African-Americans. Did you see the other end of it, other perhaps white -?

**CM:** White? I, the answer is yes. The reason being that these young men who came into the military service during the Korean conflict, they were brought up in an environment where you would be mean, you would abuse anybody else who was other than white. So their attitude was entirely different. They wanted to, they believed in segregation. But I did not hold that against them only because as young people they grew up in that environment. I did not grow up being a prejudiced person because I, you don't have to go beyond Lewiston, Maine to recognize being a very prejudiced individual. Look at our French population in Lewiston over the years that came in from Canada, and they were highly criticized by the Yankee establishment. The Polish were the same way. The Irish were the same way. So basically with all my background living in this community, I didn't have to leave the community to recognize the abuse the human being could be subjected to just from living in one community. And I really believe that made quite a difference in my whole attitude, being raised with people of different cultures.

**GB:** So where did you go after- how long did you serve in the military?

**CM:** It was three years.

**GB:** Three years. And what did you do after those three years?

**CM:** After three years I came back to Lewiston and, I got married during the interim period of time from 1951 and 1953, I was married, and went to work for a radio station, WCOU in Lewiston, owned by Faust Couture. And that was another great experience. And then I tried to take advantage as much as possible at the time of getting into college, and I was accepted by Yale University. I went there for about six months. But then, being a married man, we were expecting my first son and I had to make a choice, are you going to stay in New Haven, Connecticut or come back to Lewiston, Maine? So we came back and we took additional courses at the University of Maine at the time. We're just starting off with outside students.

So I worked my way through an associate degree and then continued on and never fully completed, within two semesters of getting my baccalaureate degree. But I felt I overcame that to a certain degree because then I, we had two children. Bear in mind, I'm a, we're at the typical French community where families were important and size of family was extremely important, and I'm proud to say my wife, being totally French, we raised four sons and two daughters.

**GB:** Now, what's your wife's name?

**CM:** Muriel, M-U-R-I-E-L.

**GB:** And did you get a sense of, you know, you said she was French, did you get a sense of her French heritage in Lewiston?

**CM:** Absolutely.

**GB:** She also grew up in Lewiston?

**CM:** She grew up, we went through high school together. And I'm proud to say that Muriel did, raising the family we had, did, through mutual encouragement of each other, did go to the University of Maine Augusta and got her associate degree. Then matriculated into the University of Maine Farmington and got her baccalaureate degree in education and was moving into the masters program and was a full time teacher in the Lewiston system as well as in the Buckfield-Hartford SAD 39 as a special education teacher, retiring just last year, besides raising six children. So when I look at her background being totally French, and the strong ethnic desire of her and her family, she was the only one out of the entire family that went to college and graduated. And I guess this was one thing that when her parents went to the University of Maine Farmington to see her graduation, it was a very moving experience for them because they never thought that their children would attain a college education.

And I guess basically this motivated my oldest son, Steve, who basically now is the assistant treasurer of the Maine Democratic party, who was also deputy director of the Maine Worker's Compensation Commission in Augusta, who, during the years I was in both the Maine house of representatives as well as the Maine senate, took my boys to Augusta as pages to let them see the political experience. To let them witness public hearings and to let them meet first hand the people who are making the laws. To meet the governor, meet the department heads. And I would say from that perspective, all four of my sons were exposed to state politics. And interestingly enough, three are working in municipal government today, and one is working in state government.

**GB:** All right, let's back up for one second. What did you do at the radio station, WCOU, COA, I'm sorry.

**CM:** No, it's WCOU.

**GB:** COU.

**CM:** Yup, COU. And basically that was, that station was named after a very prominent individual whose name was Faust Couture, and the COU came from his last name. And he was a Army colonel, a very, very regimented individual but a very warm, compassionate person. And for a short time I worked both in advertising in sales, writing copies, writing scripts, putting them on the air and doing some commercials, meeting with some of the radio personalities of the time, working along with them. So I did both air time work as well as sales work. It was a very interesting career, but I had to move on. And at that particular point I purchased, got involved in the purchase of a credit bureau, then two credit bureaus. And during the sixties, this is when the credit bur-, credit industry was changing dramatically, and it was an ideal opportunity to sell out

And that's when my, and of course, I have to go back, also back in the fifties, we're going back after I got married when Senator Muskie was running as a candidate for governor of the state of Maine. So between my own personal heritage and the influence I observed with Ed Muskie, I

think that really gave me the impetus I needed to simply say, if another Polish-American can do what he has accomplished, maybe in some infinitesimal way I can accomplish something on a local basis. Maybe not to the degree he did, but at least, we're looking at it objectively, that if you can be elected and serve your constituents in a constructive way ethically and honestly, then you will find that your small contribution contributes to the economy and to the evolution to the state of Maine and to the nation.

So I've got to look at my dear friend and say that, not the major motivating factor but as part of the political process, because when I first met Ed Muskie, he was just a charming, warm, compassionate man from Rumford, Maine who was very soft spoken, who had a clear agenda. And this is interesting because at that particular time, at least my recollection was of the formation of the Democratic Party. A lot of our local people, whether Judge Alton Lessard, who I knew quite well; John Maloney was another person. These were people, I was much younger than they were but I observed their strategies and their rationale and the development of the format as far as his campaign. And I think today when you talk to any one of the political candidates, they always look to Lewiston, Maine as where the Democrats are.

And, you know, it's interesting because the mill workers and shoe shop workers were Democrats and union people, but on the other hand they were nobody's fool. I would say one of the things that interested me with Lewiston was in Lewiston politics a statement was made that you can come to Lewiston, and our people in Lewiston will listen to you. They're glad to shake your hand and smile, but at the polls they'll shake your confidence. And I think that's been proven time and time again, that we are independent, we have our own particular agenda, we're proud of what we have accomplished. We do not want to be discriminated against.

And I believe compared to, and that was part of the rationale, I think, as to why I was easily elected both to the Maine House of Representatives and subsequently to the Maine Senate, running against the sitting mayor of the city of Lewiston at the time and prevailing over him two and a half to one votes on election day. That was unheard of at the time. And that was my, when my third, and in fact my wife was in the hospital delivering my fourth son, James Minkowsky, at the time. It was interesting that all I did is I, I had no campaign staff, I didn't, I think when I ran against the mayor of Lewiston and won, my total expenditure was three hundred ninety-one dollars and seventy-four cents. I thought I'd bring this out as a point of interest. And that was when I went into the 104th Maine senate, which was 1969.

**GB:** Now, what originally prompted you to run for the House of Representatives?

**CM:** Part of the rationale at the time was being a, then I was a store manager for Montgomery Ward's before I got involved in the credit bureau movement. I found that we had many fine people in Lewiston, and I observed the make up of the old Lewiston city council, known as the board of mayor and aldermen, and what I found was many fine individuals that had good ideas but did not know how to articulate those ideas in a constructive way. And what that brought about was so much internal fighting in the community amongst those aldermen, and it was those jockeying for position, not looking at the needs of the people but looking out for their own particular things.

And being interested in public service, it was a matter of saying, well, I may not like what I observe locally. Because when you look at Lewiston, and a lot of people don't really look at this objectively, we are in a very dynamic community. We have here Bates College; it's been here since before Bates, just around the time Bates Mill was organized. We have Central Maine Medical Center; we have St. Mary's Hospital. We had a great nucleus of professional people and business people in Lewiston who did not want to get involved in Lewiston municipal government. And this reflected very badly when we sent state representatives and state senators to Augusta who really could not articulate our needs. They were just what I would refer to as conformists.

And as fine a person, I'm not saying anything against them, but they were not what we were looking at as, when you look at the Portland delegation, Cumberland county, when you look to Penobscot county with Bangor, at least they sent down people who had specific skills and talents that really knew how to communicate, where Lewiston developed a horrible, horrible reputation in Augusta.

And this brings to mind something that I never really understood until I went in the Maine legislature. I can recall, it was during the 103rd legislature, we were having a lot of bills pertaining to the old charter. And the politicians in Augusta, the state representatives and state senators, really did not communicate with the local officials. And when it came to union issues, it amounted to, don't get involved with our local representative; we will legislate a law for the firemen, for the police department, which circumvented the local people who were elected to serve Lewiston. That brings to mind what they then called "Lewiston Days". Did you ever hear that term, "Lewiston Days"?

**GB:** I haven't.

**CM:** Okay, Lewiston Days was when the Maine legislature recognizing the poor quality and the poor caliber of individuals we had in Augusta who came there with all their baggage of all these infinitesimal little bills, and the legislature would basically cease operation for two or three days and allow all these Lewiston bills to be heard. The committee would pump them out, they would go on the floor of the house and the senate, these guys would scrap and holler and scream and criticize and condemn each other. And then they would go in the senate and they would do similar things. And after that the legislature in its wisdom would just kill all the different bills off and go back to the peoples' business. Now that's sort of a sad commentary. That's what Lewiston Days were presented. When I first heard of Lewiston Days, I assumed what it meant that all the goods and products that were manufactured in our community were going to be on display in Augusta. Far beyond my expectations to find out what Lewiston Days really was all about.

Fortunately because of the diligence of the French people, the Italian people, the Polish, everything else in our community who did not like what they saw. And we have to give a great deal of credit to the teachers in the Lewiston school system during that segment of time who observed the very, very same things. They motivated, or they instilled public service. And a lot of these people went on to higher education, who could have been an asset to the city of Lewiston, to the state of Maine, but after attaining their objectives and higher education could

not make a living in the city of Lewiston or in the state of Maine. So then we were faced with an out migration of our skills and talents. Connecticut in particular, Massachusetts, New York, points west were the beneficiaries of what we produced in Lewiston. But at least the parents of those children who went on to higher education and subsequently great jobs did make contributions nation wide.

But they came back to retire in the state of Maine, or in the city of Lewiston. So we did not have access to their productive years, which was pretty sad. And, but on the other hand, you know, you really have to be objective and say that you just can't deteriorate in a certain, there was no other, there was no business growth taking place, not like there is today. And when you look at that part of the equation, it brings up a very important thing: we're in the northeast end of the country. Cost of goods coming in, cost of materials coming in, cost of transportation, wages, you are not in the hub where you can manufacture goods and distribute them in all areas. Like, if you're in Detroit, Michigan for example, you know, you can go north, south, east, or west. You can just, where do you go in the northeast? So you really were left with a small business community carrying the load, hopefully that you had an infusion of younger people coming in with new ideas to really generate interest and growth in the state of Maine.

**GB:** So you felt the obligation to better represent your community in the legislature?

**CM:** When you're young, in your thirties, the answer is yes. You felt that you understood the history and the trials and tribulations of the people of Lewiston. You felt that, you know, I'm not a Rhodes scholar, please believe me, and I could come nowhere near being a Rhodes scholar, but the bottom line is you had basic principles instilled and you felt that your communication with people was adequate, that you would listen to them and you would articulate those points of view. And sometimes, even as a Democrat in an environment like Augusta, you were considered somewhat of a renegade. Why? Only because the Lewiston agenda was far different than the Augusta agenda or primarily the Portland, Cumberland County agenda versus the Penobscot County agenda, Bangor, Maine.

So you really had to have a balancing act between the two of them, simply say, you know, this might be fine for the Portland people, who might be in leadership, who are developing their own agenda to grow their market, and the people in Bangor growing their market. But when it came to helping Lewiston grow its market, it wasn't there. The old term was, and I recall this very clearly because, when the Maine Turnpike Authority was going to be dissolved, I was the person who wrote the bill, sponsored the bill to dissolve the Maine Turnpike Authority, to matriculate it into the part of Transportation and to open the hundred six mile corridor, to open our industrial and commercial base along a hundred six mile corridor. And strangely enough I got it through the first year, and the second special session, which is a fifty-day session, the bill was killed. And I'm saying, "What happened to the Lewiston delegation? What happened to the Auburn delegation?" They were then a swing delegation. They swung to the needs of Portland; they swung to the needs of Bangor. And this became more, I was glad to see this come to a better light when the postal service decided to make a bid for Lewiston, using it as a ploy. And a lot of people never realized it was a ploy. And we saw Lewiston and Auburn unify. It was not the political part of the whole thing that unified; it was the nuts and bolts and the people that spoke out originally, the ones who run the community, the people who contributed to the community

merged their efforts together. And they negotiated, and they made their points crystal clear, but they lost. But it went to show how effective a group we are in the city of Lewiston and Auburn and in pointing out very clearly, we are just as good as anybody else in the state of Maine including the Portland group or the Bangor group. And I think this is the first time Lewiston really had a good understanding of what was taking place.

I had that experience many years back because they simply said, well Portland delegation, they don't want to get involved in the turnpike issue, the Bangor did not want to get, because they already had I-95 going through it, five exits going through Bangor, so they had everything going for them. We had nothing. And they simply says, "Carroll, this is really a Lewiston issue." So that really kills the whole thing right at that particular point. But when it came to their issues, the Democratic stronghold of the state of Maine, the city of Lewiston, was of paramount importance. You follow me?

**GB:** Oh yeah, I follow you.

**CM:** And they, so they would always say this is the heartland, this is the nucleus of the Democratic Party; we need your support for Portland, for the airport expansion in Portland. We had the same opportunities back in the fifties when the Navy relinquished everything to the city of Auburn, for the airport, to get money going to develop that airport. It was a good central location. But you could, you had so much internal fighting, both at the local, is it going to be called the Auburn-Lewiston Airport, or is it going to be called the Lewiston-Auburn Airport? Who the hell cares, you know, as long as you can actually put the thing together. But this is some of the trials and tribulations that you are subjected to.

In answer to your question, I felt that I could make a contribution. To what extent I did not know, but at least I said, you know, I could go up there, read the bills, go to the public hearings, listen to the testimony, ask the necessary questions, provide the information I gathered to the local newspaper, and then get feedback from the public. And then make a, what I consider a valid decision. That was a very simplistic format to use. And in my estimation it was very effective. And if I had to do it over again, I think I'd maintain the same independence. Yes, I'm a Democrat, but I'm not a damn fool, okay? This is the thing that you really have to say. I have to really be able to justify in my own thinking, I was born and raised in this community, I'm proud of this community, and I just want to be sure that I'm projecting what I'm hearing. Maybe not the majority, but whatever person is calling me, their point of view as to the direction we should be moving in.

Sometimes as a Democrat you're criticized by the unions, you're criticized by your own leadership. But it's a matter of saying, I did what I felt was the right thing at the time for my community. And if more people would not become conformist and try to evaluate their responsibility as a legislator, they'd be more successful. And the other thing is, it was also a trial balloon. Why? How does a guy with the name Carroll Minkowsky in the city of Lewiston, a French community, make the inroads to serve that many years in the Maine legislature? The old scenario went, you have to be French . . .

*End of Side A*

*Side B*

**GB:** All right, go ahead, you were saying?

**CM:** There were fourteen Democrat candidates running for the house seats. There were six house seats in Lewiston at large, never had districts back then. And Ken Curtis was then secretary of state, and Bob Couturier was mayor of Lewiston, and I met Ken on a few occasions, but I really never knew him that well. And there were six seats entrenched with the hardcore do-gooder with his own agenda who basically wanted to be a figurehead to be glorified. I think it's a safe way of saying glorified. And I know Senator Muskie at the time came across that same element, and he had some very serious, the meek, mild, humble individual he was had some very serious run ins with that particular group, who simply says, "If you're in the city of Lewiston, you're going to do as we say if we're going to support you. Otherwise you're not getting out support." And I think in his own warm, compassionate way, maybe by not saying anything or maybe saying something. I understand in the past that he has articulated his points quite well. To hell with you guys, we'll do it our way. You either come along with us or follow your own trend.

And of those fourteen seats, a guy named Minkowsky I think was the only other than French name on that particular ballot, oh yes, one other, a gentleman by the name of Mr. Moore, were the only two non-French names. Six seats. I came in fourth in that primary election, out of fourteen candidates, at which point a certain individual had a fecal hemorrhage saying, "Who the hell is he? Where did he come from?" And made the point to call, and I knew of the gentleman, and I just listened but made no remarks. And I would say very proudly in the general election came in second. And from that day forward I had to be on my toes continually defending what I was doing.

And one of the, and this is an infinitesimal little bill, small but extremely important. We did have a college in the city of Lewiston known as Bliss Business College located on Lisbon Street. And Bliss College was made up of a board of directors of Jean St. Pierre, Dr. Norman Gauvreau, and Marty Rosenthal, and a Mrs. Remick and a gentleman by the name of Basil Seguin. Since 1897 they operated that small business. And this was, a lot of the business people who are presently in nursing homes in Lewiston or who have died, who were extremely successful, did graduate from Bliss College. But until I really took a handle on that particular bill, Bliss College was never an accredited institution. It never legally could use the term college in its name. And then what I did is I met with the board of directors. They sent me a letter encouraging me to sponsor legislation, two bills. One, that they legally use the name college, and number two that they could grant the associate degree in business or in science I think it was at the time.

And I researched, spent a lot, that was the first time I was on the education committee, which I was very proud of as a member of the city of Lewiston. Who from Lewiston ever made it to the education committee? That was really a great feeling of satisfaction. Anyway, the bill did not have the approval of certain political people in the city of Lewiston. That's what I'm saying about the trials and tribulations I went through. It had to be cleared by these so-called "influential Democrats". I didn't go to them. And the end result was that these board members were called by certain individuals and threatened. "{ Who do you think you were to give this

freshman legislator, this house member, this particular bill? You have to clear it through me, I am the senior member of that delegation.” He frightened those board members to such a point that they sent me a second letter saying, “Would you please withdraw the bills?” At which point I knew that that letter was coming from one of the board members. I just kept the letter, never opened it, and that letter I still have today, my son has it, it has never been opened. And that was the request to withdraw the legislation.

Why did I get involved with Bliss College? Very simple. It was the cheapest way our kids from poor families could go on to higher education. They could not pay the cost to go into the University of Maine system. They could not afford to leave home; they had to work locally. Can you think of a better way of having a local establishment where these young men and women could work in our community, could go to college, get their education, and then hopefully with the wisdom of the University of Maine system, those credits could be transferred into the University of Maine system. Reluctantly, but we got around it, too.

After that, I pursued going through the process of, and I debated that bill to the point where people were just sick and tired of hearing from me. I lobbied it until people would just simply say, “Carroll, just don’t talk to me about it any further. We’ll go with you.” Now, that bill came out of the education committee, and they only had ten members on the committee at the time, back in those days. Nine to one, ought not to pass, ought not to pass, and yet I got that bill through. Ought not to pass. I debated it on the floor of the house when Dave Kennedy was Speaker of the House, and I just made it very clear the trials that Lewiston had gone through over the years, that we deserved the opportunity to send our youngsters on to higher education. And if they were going to discriminate against Lewiston, then vote against this particular bill. If you believe in what I’m doing, then you vote for it and we passed the bill in the house.

But that was not the end of it, I had to go to the Maine senate, and some of the members on the Maine senate were on the education committee. Roger Snow in particular was an educator who articulated a scenario which was unbelievable about, ‘this is a college that doesn’t have a library, and this is a college that doesn’t have certified teachers. Isn’t it horrible to subject those youngsters to incompetence?’ At which point, when he mentioned that, I took him apart, literally. We had, no, we did not have certified teachers, we had all the retired teachers who taught thirty and forty years in the Lewiston and Auburn school systems who were then teaching the basics of accounting and everything else that you needed. We did not have a library, no, but they had access to the Bates College library, and they had access to the Lewiston public library as well as the Auburn library. They did not have their own endowed library like a lot of the institutions have; they were a very small institution.

We then moved from Lisbon Street onto Pine Street, and they developed a beautiful campus where now the Burpee Funeral Home is located and a couple of other buildings. And we brought in kids from not only Lewiston or Auburn; we had them from all over the state of Maine. In fact two members of the Maine Senate over the years that were not, they were students. The first class that graduated with the associate degree in science, became state senators. The Board of Education was influenced, the state Board of Education was influenced by the political delegation, and they really raised havoc with those two points: not an adequate library, not certified teachers. And some of the teachers they had in that institution were far greater than

some of the people we have today at Bates College. You want to use a good analogy between, because I'm in this area right now. And those people were dedicated. They motivated these young people, they guided them, they directed them because they wanted to see them succeed. And up until the time when small colleges were having a difficult, about 1965 or '66 many small colleges were going belly up because they did not have enough resources come in, they did not have endowments, they did not have grants, they did not have people making pledges to the community, to the college. And that was the end of Bliss Business College. Had it not been for the trials of the nineteen mid-sixties, that, it would have been a flourishing institution today.

So that is part of the, so the bottom line is both the degree was approved by the state and the ability to use the term college legally in the name was accepted. That was one of the beginnings of, say in Lewiston, I recognize what is happening, I recognize what we have for children. And you people will be far superior, but if I can, if I can just have a degree of influence in helping you move on to help you fulfill your dreams as well as the satisfaction of your parents by seeing you go on to higher education, then I've accomplished a lot. So that is one example, and I think this is part of the reason why I was successful in running for the Maine senate. Because I was able, because we had the local newspapers had article after article on their, people, testimonies, letters to the editor simply saying this is one of the best things that's happened locally. Other than having Bates College here we have now.

Bates College at the time would not recognize, talk about discrimination, would not recognize young people from Lewiston unless they had a lot of money that would come onto this campus. But the average person could not come into Bates College. So we can talk about discrimination from another perspective, in this area. And that was part of the motivation why I felt Bliss College should be another alternative as well as University of Maine.

**GB:** Okay, so what were some, during your time in the legislature at any point, what were some other important bills or issues to Lewiston or to the state at large that you tackled?

**CM:** I guess I, there were so many particular, I just, I, all, the major, the ones, the three that I can focus on quickly because I have lived it more was the Bliss College issues, those two bills, closing down the Maine Turnpike Authority when their bonds were going to expire and have it become part of the Department of Transportation with tolls, but opening it up to our people, and to have egress on and off the pike at a reasonable cost. And that was only primarily to keep up the, upkeep and maintenance of the Maine Turnpike because it was developed differently than I-95, and the federal government could not make any contributions to a private road, which that was back since 1947.

The third bill, which I found a lot satisfaction in, was the Sunday sales bill. And when you talk about the Sunday sales bill, most people would simply shun during that segment of time. Now the Sunday sale, what we're looking at at the time is retail Sunday sales were going on anyway in stores in the city of Lewiston or Auburn with five, and Portland in particular at the malls and the Bangor mall that had five thousand square feet or less. They could be open on Sundays from, a limited time, maybe from I think nine to one or twelve to five or something like that. And how I got involved in that particular bill was, as I was campaigning for the senate, people would say, "What's happening?" We can go to New Hampshire, and we can buy stuff on Sunday. And it

takes two of us in our family to make the money, and the only time we have together is Sunday.” So you have to look at this objectively, the influence of the religious community simply saying it’s a law in the state and the influence of the social community saying, that’s wonderful. We concur Sunday’s a special day, and we want it to remain that way, but we have to have access to goods and services because times are changing.

So I drove to New Hampshire to a small mall, and I saw busses coming in from Lewiston with all the senior citizens on them, and I, they recognized who I was and I simply said, “I’m down here for one reason: I’m going to write a bill and I’m going to sponsor a bill for retail Sunday sales in Maine on Sunday. Would you support it?” They said, “Why do you think we’re down here? We can’t get service in Lewiston, so we’re coming to New Hampshire.” And so I, then I met a gentleman from Rockland, Maine, and this really solidified the entire thing, who was loading a refrigerator on the back of a small pick up truck. And I walked up to him, and I identified myself, and I told him I was, why did he come to New Hampshire to buy his refrigerator? It just so happened he worked for the Dragon Cement Company on odd shifts, and his wife worked in a nursing home in the Rockland area. Now these people don’t even live in my senatorial district, just Mainers, and he says, “Do you think I would, do you think she’d allow me to buy a refrigerator without her input on it?” And the only time she had available was a Sunday. So that’s why they could not buy that refrigerator in Maine, so I looked at it from another point of view: this will boost the economy in the state of Maine.

Subsequently we put the bill through. I got into one royal battle with Robert Reny, who runs one of the largest retail stores, Reny’s Department Stores, in Maine, who was then president of the Maine Merchant’s Association, who was violently opposed to retail Sunday sales. “What you can do on Sunday, you can do on Monday,” was the answer. And so I persisted, and I got the committee to vote that bill as it was split, a split committee report. And I was able to muster up some people who warmly believed in it but really were afraid of their own political. That’s one thing about politicians is that they get fearful of their next election, and but anyway we were able to get it through the house and through the senate. So I did, I was the only, I’m the first person to actually have retail Sunday sales through legislation, bear in mind from Lewiston, not from Portland or Bangor, that allowed retail Sunday sales on a limited basis.

I debated this on Channel 6 with, well I was a proponent of retail Sunday sales, and Danny Wellehan, Wellehan Shoe Company, another Lewiston person, was opposed to retail Sunday sales. And Fred Nutter was the moderator for Channel 6. And that particular debate, me showing the advantages of Maine people, not only from an economic point of view but from a business point of view, really brought it about. That they, and I, and the final thing is I encouraged them, “If you believe in what I’m saying, call your legislator,” and they did. And we got, that bill went sailing through, signed by the governor.

Then of course two years later there was a referendum sponsored by Shaw’s Supermarket saying, we don’t want limited Sunday sales, we want to open up any time. And that went to the people, and the people voted then for Sunday sales. But at least it took, I felt very proud of the fact I was a nucleus behind starting it off anyway. Not because I was a promoter or prone to doing it year round, but on a limited basis. And it was done, one thing I did bring out, it was done on such a basis of, the most significant time of the year in Maine was from Thanksgiving until Christmas,

and we promoted on that particular basis and succeeded. There's been many others, but I, we don't have enough time to go through all those.

**GB:** Sure, sure. Now, during your time in the legislature, particularly your earlier days, who were some of the major players in Maine politics?

**CM:** In Maine, Republicans or Democrats?

**GB:** Either.

**CM:** Either? Okay, I've got to look at, since I developed a reputation of being a very independent thinker one of the, one of the major players, I have to give the man a great deal of credit. He is a very fair-minded, a very knowledgeable person, a man with a lot of charisma. He could, he could (*unintelligible word*) you very quickly, but he had a very, very pleasant smile. His name is Bennett Katz, K-A-T-Z. He lives in Augusta, Maine and he's a Republican, not a Democrat. And Bennett is one person that you could take an issue to and dissect it, evaluate it, analyze it, disseminate it, and he didn't care how you came, at least he gave you food for thought. So, because any piece of legislation you, there is innumerable variables- variations involved. There's no set way that you can say, you can't craft and say this one will serve everybody well, it just, you do the best you can in putting things together. And on many occasions I could not turn to the Lewiston delegation because we didn't have anybody there at the time that really could understand educational issues or economic issues. Again, it's not criticism, it's just I had to find people that I felt comfortable in discussing it with and that appreciated their assessment or evaluation of things.

Another Republican named Ralph Brewer, who was a senator from Bath, Maine, or Sagadahoc County, was another individual that was a very sickly man and spent most of his time in a chair in the senate retirement room, and when the senate was in session, would sit at his desk. But people missed a great opportunity by knowing Ralph Brewer because he was such a wonderful individual, a great listener but a guy who could put things in its proper perspective. And I guess it was my third term in the senate, he passed away. And I had served on a committee with him, which was a subcommittee from the committee on transportation. And he was just, let's see, Ralph, I think there was one thing, you just bring to mind something that.

In one day, of course being quite young at the time, and I felt quite aggressive, maybe dynamic in my own mind, maybe in the minds of other people I wasn't. I was sitting in the retirement room with Ralph Brewer, and he said to me, "Carroll, as a state senator what, how do you define politics?" And instantly, you know, you're looking for all the good, sound, logical, constructive reasons about politics. And he said to me, and again, this is only my second term in the Maine senate, he says, "Well," he says, "those ideas are good, but" he says "I'm going to give you the true definition of politics." So I listened very attentively; I never forgot it. He says, "Carroll, politics number one, is the art of looking for trouble, number two, finding that trouble everywheres, number three, diagnosing the problem incorrectly, and number four, applying unsuitable remedies."

Now you put that little formula together and correlate that with anything we see going on today

and a lot of those things really fall into place. That's one reason why lobbying is so intense today, that's why soft money is so readily available because it's not the legislators that's making decisions. It's this corporate interest, it's the vested interests, it's the professional interests, the hospitals, no matter who it is. Everybody has to have a, and they're paying big bucks, and these poor pawns who are elected by the people are the ones who are saying, gee, which direction do I go in so I don't alienate too many people and yet still get this money coming in, whether it's hard money or soft money? But, and when you put that equation into that particular formula that Ralph Brewer mentioned to me, it's more pronounced today than it was back in the sixties and seventies and eighties.

**GB:** Were there any other major figures that come to mind?

**CM:** The one, yes, I never understood northern Maine to any degree until I sat down with Senator Elmer Violette. And I could understand a little more clearly why the people of the St. Johns Valley felt highly discriminated against, not only because they were French but because they had a remote area. The largest county in the state of Maine, and they had to assert themselves much more aggressively than the average person. And there's one county that really sent quality people. I don't care what people say about John Martin. He's still a fine person; he was a very, he was a leader. He might have, people may not have appreciated at times his strategies, but as far as his people were concerned in Aroostook County, he took care of them.

Senator Elmer Violette, who just passed away, he was another person. He had a different character altogether, but a person who was warm and compassionate and could say that what is good for Aroostook County, or what is good. What they used to say I think was what is good for Maine is good for Aroostook county, and this is not so. Aroostook County has its own particular unique problems with its children moving on to higher education. They don't want to be into a system of just saying we're just potato farmers from the day we learn how to put a hoe in our hand until the day we die. We want to do other things. There's another person, I'm glad you brought that up, Elmer Violette was extremely important, and his son Paul that I also served in the senate with, who is now director of the Maine Turnpike Authority. The finest families, talk about the principles of family, the principles of those Ten Commandments we spoke about originally; these are people that could implement it and live by it. They had a, they were there to serve a particular useful, constructive purpose and that's just what they did. And they didn't horse around and simply say after the session is done we're going to, you know, spend out time at the Augusta House. And they had other things, they had worked, they looked at these particular bills, they researched them at night, they called other people, they had meetings together. I was part and parcel of some of those meetings, and if anything, that really broadened my horizons tremendously to see how other people worked, how they, how time management was important.

Even, we talk about time management in today's modern society because of computerization. But time management was just as important when I was in the Maine house and the Maine Senate. You had an agenda, you had to accomplish it. Many times you did not come in fully prepared because how can you address fifteen or twenty bills, that some are in the house and some are in the senate and some are in committee and somebody's holding up bills?

Anyway, Elmer Violette, I just cannot neglect to bring out. In fact there was a picture that appeared at the Democratic convention and it showed the mayor of Lewiston back in the sixties, Elmer Violette who was then running for congress, Bill Hathaway, and myself opening the campaign headquarters. It gave me quite a feeling of satisfaction to go up to the Democratic convention this year and also to see that people did remember that some of the old timers were very important in the movement of the Democratic Party.

But you could equate Senator Muskie's attitude with some of the people I just mentioned to you. And that's why Democrats and Republicans could always compromise because there was enough brain power there to simply say, let's formulate another strategy to work this out. Let's not just kill each other, say it's a Democratic issue or a Republican issue, let's find a middle ground. And I believe he was a great guy for finding that middle ground.

**GB:** Let's talk about Senator Muskie. What encounters did you have with him?

**CM:** Of course being married at the time, started raising a family, during the time that he ran for, I never knew much of him when he was a member of the House of Representatives. I heard the name but you, but who remembers all the different state representatives and state senators. But when our local newspaper was really bringing out that here is a strong candidate for the Democratic Party that is an attorney that really hasn't, if I understood correctly, did not have a big practice but was really struggling, and all of a sudden his name is Edmund Sixtus Muskie, my father at the time says, "He's Polish." And all of a sudden, as a person, I'm saying I Pollack running for governor of the state of Maine? I says, how come his name doesn't end with an S-K-I or S-K-Y? I said, "What nationality is Muskie?" And my father apparently knew the former name that Senator Muskie had because of friends that I think he knew in the Rumford area and mentioned, and I forgot what it was really at this moment [Marciszewski]. But I just got enthusiastic, I simply said, gee, you know, here they've been saying a guy with the name Minkowsky cannot make it in Lewiston and here's a man from Rumford, Maine, a smaller community, and I think his practice was also in Waterville, was it?

**GB:** Yes.

**CM:** Yeah, that is running for the governor. So it motivated me and it inspired me to simply say, name recognition is important. It isn't the pronunciation, it is not the spelling of the name, it's the individual. And I formulated my particular strategies based on Senator Muskie's observations. And my conversations during that segment of time were just observations because I was really fearful of politicians to a degree because you heard so many different. And yet on the other hand when you heard him speak at different groups, and I think in the city park was one place I heard him speak. The way he handled himself in a positive tone was that, he had credibility, he was believable. And then I had to think back, why do we send to Augusta from Lewiston, who is not running for governor? And it was some really some questionable individuals. So I followed through the newspaper the different places he was talking in the state. And I made it a point, I was registered at age twenty-one at that time to be in the Democratic party. I had never been anything but a Democrat. And I had discussions about, with my wife, you know, do you think he can make it? But when you're looking at the strong Republican candidates, I think it was Horace Hildreth, was it?

**GB:** I think so.

**CM:** Horace Hildreth was the, who represented the Gannett newspapers who was really a prominent, who had all the inroads possible.

**GB:** Are you talking about his original, his gubernatorial?

**CM:** Yeah.

**GB:** Oh, he was running against Burt Cross actually; he [Cross] was the incumbent.

**CM:** Oh, Burton Cross, yeah, Burton Cross, sorry. It, the thinking is if you hear enough people say, "He doesn't have money, he doesn't have name recognition, he's not going to make it. Why waste your vote?" My family, my wife, my father, myself, always took on the different, let us research the qualities, the capabilities of that particular person. Let us follow the newspaper accounts, let us follow his statements on radio, before television. And then try to meet the person. Yet I was shy; I was there in some occasions where he was present, but I would just stay back and just listen, I would not say, "Hey, my name is Carroll Minkowsky." No, I mean, no, it was just one of these things that you had all the do-gooders, the ones that say, "Hey," you know, "I've always voted for you. I'm going to vote for you, and you know, you got a job for me?" That's the third question they ask you. I had never approached it from that particular point of view.

But I would say during the, during his career as governor of the state of Maine, and of course I really haven't thought about this a long many years, but him raising a family, and I guess we looked at the family. His son I think became a photographer, now works for one of the magazines, *Downeast Magazine* or something like that as a photographer. You're always looking to say that here is a person who was in a high position and you would think that their children would be in high positions. No, that's not the case at all, you have to be very realistic. You're doing one thing, your kids want to do something differently. But are his contributions fair? Are they well thought out? Did he develop a good coalition amongst Republicans and Democrats? The answer to all those questions is, most definitely, yes. He, in fact I almost think that George Mitchell learned a great deal from Senator Muskie because I worked in George Mitchell's campaign when he ran for governor of the state of Maine against Jim Longley who was right here from in the city of Lewiston. So it goes to show even though you're from Lewiston, and another candidate came from Lewiston, you have to look at the individual as to their credibility and what they represent.

And the years I was either in the house or in the Maine senate, any time I went to Washington I would, it was very easy at the time compared to today, is to have a page bring your business card to Senator Muskie. And he would, I would, I remember he was in one particular meeting, this is on the federal appropriations committee, and I was just in there with a couple other state representatives and a couple of the senators. And I saw this page, and I gave my senate card. He left that meeting to come up and talk to us because we were from Maine, not because my name is Minkowsky. We were from Maine, we are his constituents, and he wanted to give us a, basically

a welcome to Washington, and where have you been, and is there any place you want to see that I can help you with inside? Congenial, warm, friendly, accommodating, constituent concerns, Social Security which as a state senator you can't really do much. At least if a person called you and simply say well who do I go to, how do I try to resolve this constructively? Let's call Senator Muskie. Got answers.

People used to put a lot of pride, say, well Margaret Chase Smith, she's a wonderful lady but, you know, when it came to senior citizens issues she was always there. I would say Ed Muskie was there also. Any issue pertaining to any Maine citizen. If he did not have a dir-, if he had an inquiry in his office, and I got a follow up, he'd still follow on both of those. Nothing was put aside, it was always done as fast as he could do it, in a timely fashion. I really don't know how much more I can say about the gentleman. He's just a, he is what I maybe consider a classic example of the skills and talents we have here in the state of Maine that have not been fully realized. And I think George Mitchell fell in the same category. I think Bill Cohen falls in the same category. When you look at Maine, the northeastern part of the world, producing the caliber and the quality of person in Senator Muskie and all the way down, let's include Margaret Chase Smith, these are really people that I'd say grew dramatically, far beyond their own expectations because of their involvement in the federal government.

**GB:** What did you think of Muskie's politics?

**CM:** I loved his politics. You never knew where he was coming from. You could read an article or you could talk to him and depending on how he sized you up, he was a great one for doing that, he could lead you to believe he's in full concurrence with what your thinking is, and on the other hand he says, "There's other variables to this, and I'm exploring other alternatives." And he did it very successfully without offending anybody. That was a skill I think some politicians do have that others do not know how to handle at all. They just sort of, "No, this is, my final answer's no. There's no other options." He doesn't say that unless he's really, and I think the term is, and I, really irritated, I'm just trying to use a different word, if he's really irritated at a person and you want his point of view, you'll get it... in depth.

**GB:** Was he involved with, that you know of, any legislation that was of particular interest to you?

**CM:** The answer truthfully, I can't say, I don't recall. I'm sure there was, there's been a lot of communication over the years with him. In fact I brought along with me, I was requested by, this took place March 25th, 1994, Ginger Jordan Hillier, Maine Democratic staff person. This was Senator Muskie's eightieth birthday, and what I brought along is they asked me to send him a congratulations. And I don't know if this is in the archives but I -

**GB:** And this -

**CM:** I was called about the Democratic Party as a state, as a retired state senator from Maine to articulate a point of view on Senator Muskie during, for his eightieth and his participation with those key people in the city of Lewiston during that segment of time.

**GB:** And these are photocopies here.

**CM:** Yeah.

**GB:** And you have the originals?

**CM:** No, I gave, at his birthday party, I made copies but the originals were given to the family, I believe, during his eightieth birthday celebration. But those are the cop-, and I and just happened to think about that so I went into my archives, which I was very fortunate to find, and took out the copy of the letter I had sent at the request of the Democratic Party, representing the county of Androscoggin. He got a letter from all sixteen counties, and I was privileged during that, during his eightieth birthday presentation to write that letter.

**GB:** I see. Well, I think that's a good place to stop unless, do you have anything to add that we haven't covered?

**CM:** I think we've covered a lot.

**GB:** All right, well thank you very much. I guess we'll stop right there.

*End of Interview*