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Muskie, Edmund S. oral history interview

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Interview with Edmund S. Muskie by Sally Davis and Virginia Ray

Summary Sheet and Transcript

Interviewee
Muskie, Edmund S., 1914-1996

Interviewer
Davis, Sally
Ray, Virginia

Date
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Place
Kennebunk, Maine

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Scope and Content Note

Interview includes discussions of: Russian law cases; Cold War era; Muskie's reception in the Soviet Union; Muskie family history; Polish influences; origin of Muskie's name; progress of the Clean Air and Water legislation; current environmental issues; and campaign fundraising.

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Transcript

Interviewer: . . . . . C-H-A-D-B-O-U-R-N-E.

Edmund Muskie: (*Unintelligible phrase*) P-A-R-K-E.

Int: What, if I, while they're organizing here, if I may ask, what sort of cases would you try in Moscow, in Russia?

EM: Well, we wouldn't necessarily try cases in Moscow. Although we would have to have I think Russian lawyers try cases. They don't have the kind of law practice that we think of in this country. But we represent clients who have business relationships with Russian business or with Russian lawyers, and we do the reverse, we also represent or hope to represent Soviet clients with international transactions. I think that if we wanted to get into litigation, or courtroom work, we'd have to at least initially have to work through Russian lawyers, as we do in the United Arab Emirates when you're associated with Arab, an Arab law court, because we're not allowed to practice directly under Emirate law. But there's still plenty of work for lawyers to do.

Int: Such as?

EM: Business transactions.

Int: Always in the business end, I mean, you don't take on a divorce, or ...:?

EM: We don't take, no, we don't take on drunk driving cases or divorce cases, things of that sort, no.

Int: You don't run into Japan?

EM: No, no, we don't have any law office in Japan but we went, I went there in April of this year and had many meetings with Japanese law firms, undertaking to establish relationships with Japanese law firms, participate in their international work. We think that that takes fewer lawyers on our part, but, you know, it spreads our efforts. And we think we made some progress in Japan. We're particularly interested in associating with Japanese law firms who themselves have an interest in pursuing business in the Soviet Union, or whatever it is then called. Whether or not we still have the name Soviet Union is . . . .

Int: What do you think is going to be the relationship between the United States and whatever it becomes in about four or five years?

EM: The Soviet Union?

Int: Hm-hmm.

EM: Well, I guess that depends on how they settle their own affairs first.

Int: How do you think they might settle them?

EM: Well, I assume that they are undertaking to put together a nation or nations. That question doesn't seem to have been resolved in the Soviet Union. Mr. Yeltsin and Mr. Gorbachev have approached that question from different perspectives, it may be that they'll reach agreement at some point on whether or not there should be one country or a loose federation of several countries. Every morning newspaper brings a different perspective on that question. This morning's newspaper, which I was reading when you arrived, had a different perspective than others, but we will be associated with whatever nations or nation emerges out of the present turmoil in the Soviet Union.

Int: Were you surprised by the events that, did you ever imagine that this could happen?

EM: I don't know of anybody who ever did imagine it, so I wouldn't presume to suggest that I was different.

Int: Yeah, but wasn't it, when you were, just the Cold War was such an important and deep rooted thing back in the '50s and '60s, it just seems like it would, some of us don't have a good feel of that because we were just children then.

EM: Well, believe me, we don't either. It was all a surprise to all of us I guess. I think the Soviet Union has proven to be much weaker economically than most of us thought it was during the period when we thought of it as a super power. Actually, it's economy wasn't, it was not an efficient machine even in the days that we considered it as a super power. I first visited the Soviet Union in 1959. I spent thirty days there at that time traveling fifteen thousand miles within the country learning as much as I could, and I'm sure we did not at that time perceive how weak the Soviet Union economy was, although we understood it was backward. But nevertheless, their ability to produce the military machine that they had produced they sort of fooled us, as to exactly... It took our economy to support the development of our nuclear weapon and all of the military side of our own country. So we just assumed the Soviet Union must have a comparable economic base in order to become the super power that we spent so many billions of dollars defending against.

Int: Except that we had a running economy, and people that worked and no lines in the stores.

EM: Well, we did have the Great Depression in the thirties, when I was going to school.

Int: That's true.

Int: When you were there in '59, were you there in an official capacity?

EM: Oh, yes, I was, it was my first year in the Senate.

Int: Oh, because that was just after they took over Hungary, I think, wasn't it?

EM: Fifty nine, well, it was in the '50s that they, yes, it was in the '50s.

Int: It was late in the '50s I think (*unintelligible phrase*).

EM: Hungary and Czechoslovakia, that's when they strengthened their hold on all of Eastern Europe.

Int: But, were you well received then? I'm trying to do a contrast between

EM: In the Soviet Union? Very well received, which was rather surprising to us at that time. That was also the year that Mr. Kruschev came to the United States. As a matter of fact, he was flying across the Atlantic to meet with President Eisenhower at Camp David while I was flying east across the Atlantic to go to Moscow and Siberia. And then of course he went from the United States to China and that's where their relationship with China broke up. So he was flying west across Siberia when I was flying east across Siberia to go to Lake Baikal and the eastern areas of the Soviet Union.

Int: Isn't that the lake that's now polluted, or, is injured in some...?

EM: Yes, at the time we sailed on it, it was a beautiful lake. There's no water in the So-, Lake Baikal more than the five Great Lakes put together. It's over a mile deep and I think there's some three hundred odd streams flowing into it and only one flowing out of it into the Arctic Ocean. It's quite a body of water and it was beautiful and pristine at that time. But then they built a pulp and paper mill on its shores without protecting the lake. I really couldn't give you any way to measure the extent to which the lake has been polluted but it is a problem. Beautiful lake, we actually sailed on it, and you could, you know, drink the water out of it. And it was, as a matter of fact, Lake Baikal at that time had a commercial fishery of fish that wasn't found in any other waterway in the whole world. It was that big and that kind of resource, it was really something to see. Surrounded by snow-capped mountains.

Int: You could be out in the middle of the lake and not see any land if you got far enough out?

EM: Oh, no, no, no. You could see land, yeah.

Int: I've never been on a big lake so I don't know.

EM: I don't know how to make comparison to, if you look at a map of the Soviet Union it looks, the lake looks comparable in size to the Caspian Sea. The Caspian Sea of course is salt, a salt lake.

Int: Mr. Muskie, I don't want to monopolize (*unintelligible phrase*) the theme of Russia, do you think that this is really going to work, this new regime? When I was in Moscow quite a few years ago, it seemed to me there was more food than you see in the pictures in the paper now, and of course these people are, what, fourth, fifth, sixth generation . . . .

EM: They have the ability to grow food, and adequate food. Now, unfortunately, the distribution system is inadequate and in addition to that, with this tension between the republics and the central government, people are reluctant to ship their food to Moscow, to Leningrad. They'd rather keep it for themselves. There's the political problem and there's the problem of establishing a distribution system which will adequately carry food to places where it's needed.

Int: Do you think the Russians essentially are as able to cope with a more democratic lifestyle? The Chinese have coped very nicely . . . .

EM: They've never had it.

Int: But as they're given more freedom, do you think they're able to handle, or do you think it will create problems in the streets.

EM: It's still got to be tested, I think. My father was born in Russian occupied Poland back in 1881, and at that time, under the czars the system was as oppressive at least as the system under the Communists. And his father's sentiment, his father managed a farm for one of the Russian nobelmen, and he made up his mind to send my father to the United States, so he apprenticed him to a tailor in Bialystok when my father was about eleven years old. So that by the time he reached the age of seventeen, he was a master tailor. And seventeen was conscription age in the Russian army, so the moment to leave Russian occupied Poland, and he went to England first where he . . . .

Int: Did he go alone?

EM: Yes, he went to England first and worked with a Jewish tailor in London for three years, lived in his home. Then in 1903 I think it was, when King Edward was crowned, on the day that King Edward was crowned in London, my father left for the United States and never returned.

Int: He never went back to Poland? Have you been?

EM: I went, at the end of my Russian trip in 1959 I did.

Int: You went to your home town?

EM: My father's.

Int: Your father's home town.

Int: Did you have family there?

EM: I did run into family there. The American Embassy provided me with a car and driver and on the way to the town in which my father lived, (*name*) ...

Int: Which is spelled how?

EM: I'll be glad to spell it for you. J-A-S-I-O, let's see, oh, don't tell me I've forgotten it. Give me a piece of paper and a pencil and I'll, my Polish isn't any better than yours.

Int: Do you speak Polish?

EM: No, my parents told me that until I was four, Polish was all I could speak.

Int: Does it ever come back?

EM: No. All my mother's family lived in Buffalo, I'm not spelling this right for some reason. Well, it'll be close to that.

Int: Is it too small to be on a map?

EM: Jasionowka? Oh, yes. But, Bialystok is a pretty large city. (*Name*) is just a short drive from (*name*). But that's about as good as I can do for you. Do you know how to spell Bialystok? Well I'll put Bialystok on for you, I can do better with Bialystok.

Int: I've got some Polish friends (*unintelligible phrase*). That was very adventuresome of him, wasn't it. There were so many who came.

Int: When he arrived, where did he arrive first in the United States?

Int: Ellis Island.

Int: Ell-, well, I know that.

EM: Close as I, I wasn't as good a questioner in those days, I should have asked my father a lot of questions.

Int: We all feel that way.

EM: But in any case, I think that he went to a coal mining town in Pennsylvania, it was near Wilkes-Barre, Union City, Union City, Pennsylvania, and he practiced, or he worked with a tailor in that coal mining town a few years and then he went on to Buffalo. Now why he went from Union City to Buffalo, I don't know, but he went to Buffalo, which is quite a distance from Union City.

Int: Also quite a terrible climate there.

(*Someone enters, general introductions and conversation.*)

Int: That was curious, if he went to Buffalo, how'd he get to Rumford?

EM: Well, I know that he got to Rumford.

Int: He was seeking out the worst weather he could find.

EM: (*Unintelligible phrase - a lot of background conversation going on.*)

Int: I have a couple of questions that are on a totally different subject.

EM: Well, let me finish (*unintelligible phrase*). Why he went to Buffalo I don't know, except I can only speculate Buffalo of course was, always had a large Polish population. As a matter of fact, at one point, and it may still be true, it was the largest Polish city in the world because they had more Polish people than any, I doubt that that is still literally true. But there was a large Polish population, and I suspect that he may have known of people who went to Buffalo from Poland and through those connections decided to go to ...

Int: There was probably more demand for proper tailoring, he obviously was a master tailor, than Union City which was sort of, you know, little limited to coal miner (*unintelligible word*).

EM: When I was about eleven or twelve years old, my father took all of us on a trip to, one of my mother's brothers in Buffalo was getting married so he drove us to Buffalo. Traveling by automobile in those days, which was about 19-, let's see, what would that have been? Nineteen twenty seven? There was no (*unintelligible word*), there were no motels to speak of.

Int: Was this, you were living in Rumford then?

EM: This is when we were living in Rumford, that's right. And then from Buffalo after the wedding, we really got a memory of the year because it was the year that Gene Tunney knocked out Jack Dempsey.

Int: Of course, it's a good way to remember.

EM: Well, as a young boy, you know, we all had a, our athletic heroes in those days as youngsters do today. Gene Tunney and Jack Dempsey, (*unintelligible phrase*), and the other, Gentleman Gene Tunney. We went through there, we drove from there to Union City and stayed with people there, and the people in Union City, in *Wilkes-Barre*, are convinced that I was born there. When I was running for president and campaigning in Pennsylvania, that was the story. Muskie was born in ...

Int: Is that right?

EM: Yes. Nobody tried to kill that legend, you see. And even we didn't either because if they thought I was a home boy, well, that (*unintelligible phrase*).

Int: Any vote counts. Where were you born?

Int: In Rumford.

Int: You were born in Rumford, I should know that.

EM: It was in Buffalo that my father met my mother. My mother's parents were immigrants, they couldn't, they could never speak English. I used to go, I went to Cornell Law School, and I used to go to Buffalo for Thanksgiving. There wasn't time to come back home to Maine when I was at law school, so we went to Buffalo. That's when I really got to know my mother's family, which is a larger one. I don't think any of them are alive today.

Int: Your grandparents, they were alive at that time?

EM: They were alive at that time.

Int: How did you communicate if they never spoke English?

EM: Through the kids. No problem.

Int: Oh, okay.

EM: You didn't need to talk to communicate with people like that, they just ...

Int: Eat together, and hug and ...

EM: Yeah. It was a very warm family. They're all gone today. I don't think they have any relatives. Well, you asked me about, did I run into any family in Jasionowka. Yes, I did. We drove to (*town*) and we were followed by the secret police in one of their black cars. I tried to take a picture of it through the rear window of our car but every time they saw me pointing the camera they ducked into the traffic so I wasn't able to get a picture of them. But anyway, they followed me right into Jasionowka and parked across the street from where we parked. And with the help of people in the, I guess it was the town office of some kind, we found a home, drab little home, where a very old lady, she had to have been in her eighties. She obviously was related to my father in some way because she went to a, I think a trunk that she had, and pulled out pictures of our family in Rumford that my father had sent. So he had been in correspondence with her. She didn't show me any letters, and I wouldn't have been able to read them anyway, that she had.

Int: Was your father alive at this time, when you went to Poland?

EM: No, he died in 1956.

Int: Oh, that's too bad. It would have given him great pleasure.

EM: That's right. (*Unintelligible phrase.*) But his sister, his sister who married an Irish

laundryman and lived in South Boston, was still alive. I showed her pictures of the church and the cemetery where there was the Muskie, our name was Marciszewski.

Int: What was your name? M-A- ...?

EM: I'll have to write this.

Int: I have a pen. My father was asking me that question, what your original name was.

EM: Well, there's an interesting story about this name. This name was never my name because the name was not legally adopted by my father. (*Aside: that's the rest of the name at that time.*)

Int: I don't want to use up your whole pad of paper.

Int: Well, just write it down because I want that one.

Int: When you were born, you were christened Muskie?

EM: I was christened Muskie and that's how the town records, all of us kids, there are six of us in all, only two were christened Marciszewski, so when I graduated from law school and became a lawyer, my father then took me aside and he said, I've never legally changed our name, because I thought that you might want something different. The name Muskie, I've heard two versions of it, either that the town clerk in Rumford suggested Muskie, and that the immigration officials on Ellis Island had done it. But in any case, it was Muskie and my father always used that name and all of us kids did, even though only two, two of them were christened Marciszewski. No, he always thought that March would be a good name because it was the first syllable. Mark would have been good. But by this time I'd graduated from college, law school, and I said, look, my whole life is recorded as Muskie, I have no reason to change it. Well, he says, then change it for all the others. So I then finally legally changed his name to Muskie and changed my siblings' name to Muskie so we're all legal.

Int: It would have been hard to run for the nomination with Marciszweski because it would have been on a bumper sticker as well.

EM: Well, there's a lot of places in the country, they used a bumper sticker with my middle name, Sixtus was my middle name. It's a Catholic tradition to give a saint, give children a saint's name as a middle name. And Sixtus, we had six Polish popes, I don't know how many of them became saints, but for some reason that I don't understand, my parents picked Sixtus. I found Sixtus a very embarrassing middle name when I was a youngster.

Int: Is there a Saint Sixtus?

EM: There is a Saint Sixtus, yes indeed there is.

Int: What was he a saint of?

EM: Well, I don't know the history of saints that well. But you may remember that the Sistine Chapel in the Vatican is named for the Sixtus pope. Sistene is the ...

Int: Oh, wow, that's a good connection. What did they call you? I mean, what kind of nicknames did you get from having a middle name like that? Or did you ...?

EM: Nobody ever tried to embarrass me with it. They were puzzled by it maybe but it was really not, my youngest son, and I waited until my youngest to name one for me, has my full name, so, yes, Sixtus is a middle name. And he thinks it's great. He has learned to sign his name so that it looks like mine. He drops the junior, you know, so that, he likes the name. It's acquired a distinction from his point of view, that it might not have had when I was young. In any case, that's where the Sixtus came from. And if you believe in numerology, each of my names has six letters, Edmund Sixtus Muskie. Each of them has a 'U' which is rather odd. Yeah, the six, that had a sort of a magical texture. In any case, I had no desire to change it, and there aren't many names like it. I've never seen it repeated.

Int: I've never heard of anybody named Sixtus.

EM: So that makes, you know, from a political standpoint, that made the name a very easy one to remember.

Int: And did you say you had six siblings?

EM: Yeah, there were six of us.

Int: Then there's another one.

EM: In fact, I think we had one or two that died, too, so it may not have been precise. But we had only five children, I didn't go for the sixth.

Int: And the dog.

EM: And the dog. Let's see, what else can I tell you about?

Int: Well, let me ask one last question about ...

EM: You may be interested to know that as we approached Jasionowka, we passed a body of water, my driver told me that body of water was Lake Augusta. You can spell that one.

Int: You've been back now to Russia in, within the last year or so, haven't you?

EM: Let's see, last October I learned that I had prostate cancer so I've been undergoing radiation treatments and all the side effects so I haven't been traveling, but I am going to Moscow in October. The last time I was there, poor memory, it's certainly within the last two years, I've been there a couple of times.

Int: Did you meet with Mikhail Gorbachev?

EM: No, oh, I have met him, to shake hands, but I haven't had the chance to sit down and talk with him which I regretted.

Int: There's all kinds of things that happened before October ...

EM: Before this happened.

Int: Before you go back.

EM: Well, (*unintelligible phrase*), one, I am Chairman of the Board of our law firm, meeting of the firm in Moscow in October. And then also going over there as a member of a group that is working with a Russian group on issues dealing with the question of, well, they're interested in, as you know from reading the papers, one of the options they're considering is some kind of a federation. Not necessarily our kind of federation. So this group has been put together for the purpose of studying federal assistance as a possible pattern for the Soviet Union.

Int: And you, this might be an advisory thing?

EM: Well, it's not a, I don't want to deceive you, it's not, as far as I know, it is not an official advisement, but you know how these groups shape up, it might be useful. And the people who were, I think there were sixteen Americans who were going over *(pause in taping)*.

Int: ... my maiden name is Edmondson with an O.

EM: With an O, yeah.

Jane Muskie: You're going to have to come back to Rumford and get notes of his speech. Well, maybe you can say, no, you can't go back to Rumford if they can't spell your name right.

EM: Well, I thought they'd taken the sign down.

JM: Well, that's what somebody told us.

Int: Well, because they were replacing it.

EM: Yeah, well, that's a nice, what is the seal, what does that show?

Int: Did you see his mother and father?

Int: It looks like a lake, I mean a, you know, two points of land and a river.

(*Number of people speaking at once.*)

Int: And it looks like, is there a big river, like the Rumford falls? It may be the falls.

EM: Yeah, that's what it is, it's the falls, yeah.

(*Sounds like two separate conversations going on at once, one with Muskie and one with his wife.*)

JM: Oh, yeah, but this one arrived in the eighteen hundreds, ah, early nineteen hundreds.

EM: Well, they were buried in 19- ...

JM: ... because when his mother died, we were staying at a motel up in East Rumford.

Int: Yeah, (*unintelligible word*), Madison.

JM: Madison. And we were staying up there and he was climbing the walls and didn't, he said, I'm going over to my mother's house and cleaning the attic. Just for something to do until it was time for the funeral and all that stuff. So he found these in the attic and of course the minute he brought them home to me, every kid in his family wanted them. Too late. And then the little sleigh out on the porch he found, too, and he brought that home.

Int: They look so young.

JM: Well, they were young. They were young when they got married. These are, this is ... (*too many people speaking at once.*)

Int: That's a nice documentation.

EM: I've never seen that kind of treatment.

Int: That's very nice.

Int: And it's a nice documentation, having that. I don't really have any photos of my grandparents.

JM: Oh yeah, weren't they, they were just like this when you found them. See, there's no way to get anything in there, this isn't ...

EM: I'm just worried that they'll fade.

JM: Oh, of course they're not going to fade.

Int: If they haven't faded now, you know, they probably won't.

JM: And we had a terrible disaster two years ago, that our caretaker, who is one of the postmen here, mailman, he comes in and checks the house because we keep the heat on all winter. But on the third floor we don't keep the heat on because we don't use it, ever, and he forgot to turn on

the little sink that's up there. So we had a disaster that wiped out this half of the house. Had water coming, water, ...

EM: We had to have new floors put in, ceilings.

JM: So anyway, oh yes, everything was just hanging. It was terrible. And these were right there, they're the only thing left because the other pictures were all ruined and all of our books were ruined and everything in there now has been, it was like starting over again. The wicker fortunately loves water, so that was fine.

EM: Well, it had to be recovered.

JM: Yeah, it had to be recovered.

Int: You could have somebody take a photograph of this photograph, to have another copy, now, in case they fade later.

JM: I know it but how would you ever get anything done like that?

Int: You'd do it as a Polaroid. I did that for some old photographs in our family and it worked fairly well.

EM: It says Rumford, Maine, 1800.

(*Number of people speaking at once. General conversation re family photographs. Leave-taking of guests.*)

EM: ... where the Muskie building is, across the street. Really they ought to rip that ramshackle building down. Congress Street never looked like that when I worked in Rumford. It was a beautiful street.

Guest: Beautiful, the municipal building, I mean, everything went on there when I was there.

EM: Yeah, except for that one area now. Well, someday ...

(*General conversation and leave-taking.*)

EM: I couldn't find that, I'd started packing my stuff to take back to Washington and I can't put my finger on it.

Int: Oh, what the group was.

EM: Yeah, what the group was.

Int: Can I turn your attention to something different?

EM: Yeah.

Int: Okay, one of the things I was wanting to ask was, it's been about twenty years since you passed all the clean air legislation and I wondered about your comments about the progress that's been made since. Has the progress met with your expectations or exceeded them, or ...?

EM: I think it's been remarkable in the water pollution, in water pollution it's had more visible results. For understandable reasons, after all, rivers and, and so on are in fixed places and you can see whether they're dirty or not, you can measure the pollution, and I think in Maine the Clean Water Act has had remarkable results, so I'm very please with that. And again, at my mother's funeral, I guess that Mrs. Muskie talked about that, we stayed at the, we had a reception. You usually have a reception after the funeral, so we had it up there at the Madison, and the mill. They have on a continuous basis, space that they rent in that part of the Madison which is on to it. So I remember them taking me out to the porch at some time, in the back there, pointing at the river, and says, see what we've done? (*simultaneous conversation going on - Muskie unintelligible*) Never mentioning that it was done under the mandate of the Clean Water Act, but they were taking part in it. And I was, too, of course. So I think the Clean Water Act is credited, and we're going to have to celebrate that this year. Again, that's another organization whose name I can't remember, will celebrate this year, because across the country each year, the results of the Clean Water Act are quite measurable. Now they've also been remarkable on the Clean Air Act, but you can't see that, you know.

Int: You can in Pittsburgh.

EM: Yeah, Pittsburgh is certainly, than it was in smoking days. Yeah, Pittsburgh, you can see in Pittsburgh.

Int: You can see the difference there. What are the, what are some of the biggest obstacles that you faced when you were first pushing that through, and do you think they're the same obsta-, are the same obstacles being faced today by efforts to put in legislation?

EM: Well, you get the same range of arguments from those.., and industrial and business sources that are the most visible opposition. They say there is no problem, or it isn't a problem that requires measurement, regulations, requires treatment... trying to eliminate the problem by throwing money at it. They find all sorts of reasons, why it isn't a problem, why it isn't a big problem, in the face of all the evidence to the contrary. Those arguments are still made, although I would say, because we have a lot of industrial crimes such as, God, where's my memory gone? But, even those industries that still resist expansion of those two fundamental pieces of legislation recognize that the public demands it now and that they have no choice but to include within their own organizations planning to provide, or going beyond what is now required.

Int: Because they expect that the legislation will become more ...?

EM: And a lot of them have been, they're convinced. The clearest evidence of what we're doing to the atmosphere is the hole in the atmosphere.

Int: In the ozone, yeah.

EM: The ozone hole. They're irrefutable. They're irrefutable. So, I think, and we started to raise alarms about the ozone problem twenty years ago. We didn't do much in the legislation to deal with it because the resistance was so strong we took what we could get. But the new Clean Air Act, it's more complicated, more complicated to enforce because it isn't a simple thing to deal with, it really isn't. Particularly the ozone problem. But it is now an accepted, accepted as a global problem and the United Nations has set a date in Brazil in 1992 to hold a global conference on dealing with pollution on a global scale.

Int: Air pollution or all pollution?

EM: All. Everything that they can bring into it.

Int: That's terrific.

EM: Well, I'm worried that the preparations that are being made are inadequate. And the United States isn't really addressing it with the kind of urgency that I think we should be. That will not be a long conference, and its success or failure will depend upon what is done between now and then.

Int: Preparing for ...

EM: Preparing, and preparing the documents, preparing the schemes for dealing with it. You've got to set up, you know, institutions on a global basis to deal with it. We really have no global enforcement mechanisms with the United Nations to serve as a pattern for enforcement, you know. What could we do for example with the Brazilian forests? You've got to depend upon enforcement mechanisms that will engage each country as the mechanisms to enforce whatever standards, you've got to use standards to set your environmental scheme, so that you have the same kinds of control in all areas of the globe, otherwise you don't have ...

Int: Just like the federal government setting standards for all the states.

EM: That's right. That's right.

Int: What do you th-, along those lines about environmental issues, what do you think about the efforts to change the EPA's classification of wetlands to exclude some of the drier wetland areas? Have you been following that one?

EM: Well, all it is now, unless you've got further information than I have, is a newspaper debate ...

End of Side One
Side Two

Int: Well, you probably have better information than I have.

EM: No, I don't have anything except the, I just ...

Int: I thought it was up to like sixty days.

EM: ... I just smelled these problems arising when, and I began to read about them and I, it just seems to me that somebody in this administration is undertaking to reduce the effort by excluding areas in the way that you described. Who was it who said that not every puddle is a wetland? Is that the language they used?

Int: Hm-hmm.

EM: Well, the moment I hear language like that I say to myself, those bastards, they're trying to, you know, this is another one of their schemes to avoid doing what they ought to do.

Int: You've seen one redwood, you've seen them all, right?

EM: That's right. Not every puddle, which is true, of course. Not every puddle is a wetland. But we can't reduce the problem to an absurdity and eliminate the problem. It's still there. And this is why I'm so delighted to be tied in with the Laudholm Trust and the Rachel Carson estuary area up here, have you ever visited there?

Int: Where's that?

JM: Just down the road.

EM: It's just down the road. Yeah.

Int: Oh, I haven't been to that one.

EM: The road to Laudholm Farm which is part of this, is this side of Route 1 as you drive out of, out onto Route 9. If you go from here to Wells, before you get to Route 1, the entrance to Laudholm Farm, ...

JM: Lord Street or Lord Place.

EM: Lord Street.

Int: Maybe I'll go walk the Muskie Trail on my way home.

EM: Well, it'll give you good exercise.

Int: Is it long then?

EM: Well, the whole trail system, I think there are what, four or five trails, the whole trail system is about seven miles if you walk the whole thing. The Muskie Trail finishes the gap, it

fills the gap in the seven miles. We drove down there the other day.

Int: Can you just walk a piece of it? It looks like you can.

EM: Oh, sure.

Int: That would be more my speed.

Int: As you go towards Route 1 on the left you pass the Rachel Carson, and just after that you come upon this Lord Street. If you miss it you can go in the other way around. After you get onto Route 1 you take the first left.

Int: Well, we'll have to take the kids down sometime. Maybe in the fall would be nice.

EM: We saw a deer down there yesterday. A lot of deer in there.

Int: Did you really? Do you know, I've been in Maine now for three years and I have yet to see a deer. I go driving at dusk and I don't see them.

EM: We used to have deer here. I remember early on when we first moved here, we came up for Thanksgiving one year and opened the doors and came in and Jane went off to the store to get some groceries for dinner, or for supper, that's what we call it here. I stepped out that back door and there were five deer under the grape arbor.

Int: Do you get grapes from the grape arbor?

EM: They're concord grapes, they mature really after we leave. We have never really managed them as we should. They come, we see them, and they'll turn purple, but by that time we're long gone and I guess the birds eat whatever is... But we just like the grape arbor.

Int: It's pretty. When you first drive in it's a real, um, I have a question that I thought of my very own self. No, it's, it's something that I've always wondered about, especially when you see somebody who's been in politics as long as you were and yet has seemed to have maintained a certain amount of integrity. There are a lot of people that are cynical about the whole political system and I know you made comments about that at the Board of Visitors meeting back at the beginning of our Institute. With all the give and take that has to go on in Congress and the efforts to get elected and stay elected, does the system, really over all, does it really still work?

EM: I think it still does. But there are dangers that they have to guard against. All this cynicism and all these questions, unfortunately many of them are justified. You know, part of it is the fact that it's so expensive. See, when I ran for governor the first time and I won, in 1954, my campaign budget to cover my campaign and three congressional campaigns, my campaign and the senatorial campaign, the total budget, our total resource was eighteen thousand dollars. That's what we spent.

Int: What was an average annual income at that time?

EM: For people? Well, I was a young lawyer practicing, I practiced before WWII and then I came back and started in again, a legislator in those days earned eight hundred dollars every two years. That was his pay. I think ...

Int: Eight hundred dollars every two years?

EM: Every two years. And I think my best year at about that time as a young lawyer would add about five thousand dollars.

Int: In '58?

Int: So you spent eighteen thousand ...

EM: Forty, forty, this was in, I was married in '48 and about that time we owned a house that I paid eight thousand dollars for, it was an old Cape Cod.

Int: That would, would that, do you think that would compare to the dollars these days, to spending something like two hundred or three hundred thousand on a campaign, versus the millions that ...?

EM: Well, the last time that I ran in '76 I think my campaign ran about three hundred and fifty thousand, largely because, you know, it was the thing to do. And television costs have grown. If I hadn't spent a nickel in 1976, I probably could have been elected. But, you know, I was running against a, in that election, by a millionaire, a young millionaire, Bob Monks, remember his name? And he spent, he became a candidate in February of that election year and he spent close to a million dollars in that period and I trounced the pants off him. So there was an advantage to incumbency which is true, and maybe that ought to be changed, that's one of the issues that's ...

Int: How much money is generated in the, on your income tax when they say, do you want a dollar to go to the presidential election fund, does that raise a lot?

EM: Well, it has raised a lot, yes, yes.

Int: And that's divided equally among all the candidates, right?

EM: Well, the two, the two major parties of course get equal shares. I forget what a new party would have to do to qualify.

Int: What about Norman Thomas?

EM: Well, he didn't exist when that presidential fund was created.

Int: Theoretically that gives a poor person a chance to ...

EM: Yeah, I think, I think in order to qualify, a candidate has to raise, I just happened to hear this on television the other night, five thousand dollars in each of twenty states.

Int: To show that he has some chance at ...

EM: Qualifying. And then they get a share.

Int: What about limits to campaign spending? Would that be an effective ...?

EM: Well, the Supreme Court has ruled that out. They say that's a, the Court held it, oh, when was that, in the '70s? But the Congress, the first law that we passed limited spending and the Court held that that was a violation of the First Amendment of the Constitution because of being, because it was a limitation on free speech.

Int: I hadn't thought of it like that.

EM: Nobody else ever had, at that time. But that's the big block now, that decision by the Supreme Court.

Int: It's just so unfair when you have a candidate who's backed by wealthy people, and you have somebody who's backed by Joe Worker and, you know, you need some way to ...

EM: The effort has been to equalize resources rather than to limit spending.

Int: Apropos of that question, when Heinz died, John Heinz died last spring unfortunately. People said he was the one honest man in the Senate for the reason, and I heard this repeated over and over and over again, he was so frightfully rich that he could afford to be judicial, he had no vested interest, he didn't need a plum here or something there. And that was sort of an interesting comment and I thought, well, just as Rockefeller has done in West Virginia, he can focus on the problems that affect his state and be a philanthropist about it, really, is how it ends.

EM: The interesting thing is that the first public concern, you know, about excessive spending in campaign rose out of the senatorial campaign in Pennsylvania. Just coincidentally way back in 1910 or eleven, one of the first laws we've had, and the excessive spending at that time took the form of excessive spending by a rich man with a lot of money. The idea was, well, if you had a lot of money you could buy an office.

(*All speaking at once.*)

EM: It was regarded as a form of corruption for a rich man to spend all his money to get elected to the United States Senate. And yet when the Supreme Court took the question and settled it in the 1970s they exempted that from spending limits. Or held a law which Congress had enacted to limit spending unconstitutional as a violation of the free speech provision of the Constitution.

Int: So that law was repealed?

EM: So that law, the Court made it moot so we haven't been able to limit spending. Even spending for any particular form of advertising. Television, or ...

Int: If the networks could just give everybody, promise them equal time and then say, but that's all you get. But I know that would be a problem.

EM: That's an awkward thing to do. Not all states are the same size. Television isn't the same cost in all states. And then how do you deal with all these other, what candidates are you going to permit to have that kind of right? Candidates for selectmen, candidates for county, I mean, there are so many candidacies that, how do you divide the limited amount of time?

Int: Senator Muskie, would you be willing to project who might run on the Democratic ticket in the next election?

EM: Well, I saw a list in yesterday's paper that's longer than most people seem to think it is. Tsongas is the only one that's announced so far, and Senator Tom Harkin is being very active, it looks as though he's going to be a candidate. Who are some of the others?

Int: Do you think it'll be an equal election, or do you think Bush is, can you make any projection that way?

EM: It's the thing ...

Int: Desert Storm, watch out.

EM: It's the thing to say that, you know, because of today's polls that it'll be a lockaway or a runaway or whatever you want to say, for Bush. But on the other hand, Eisenhower won by the largest landslide in history at that time, in 1952, and he carried Maine in good figure. And two years later I ran for governor with a kitty of eighteen thousand dollars, and I won.

Int: Well, mustn't forget Truman either.

Int: And there was the Dewey - Truman upset.

EM: Yeah, there's that one, too, but this idea that a landslide by one party in one election, you know, will in effect drown out, defeat the other party in the next election, I think it's unreal. I mean, you're going to see a lot of focus on domestic issues, depending upon what issues are real issues a year from now. Domestic issues always tend to overpower foreign policy, or usually, in elections. They may not this time. But I would not, I would not assume that Bush is unbeatable at all.

Int: You sound hopeful.

EM: Well, it's because of my own experience. I mean, I ran against a state Republican Party that was unbeatable.

Int: Did you have a pretty substantive platform?

EM: No, basically what we had was the fact that Maine people were restive about the kind of government they were getting which was this, you know, one party controlled Augusta, the legislature, for so long. And a lot of young Maine people had served in the military in WWII, they had just come back in 1946, '45, '46, and they began to make comparisons to conditions in Maine and conditions in these other places in the country which they had been privileged to see, and around the world. So they began to feel that Maine should have a better, you know, a more competitive system of government. Basically, it was that. It was the state of our economy, when you get down to specific issues, the state of our economy, the quality of other state services. Just, people just had the sense that Maine was falling behind the rest of the country and in part because we didn't have a political, a competitive political system. That's what we focused on. And we, you know, we dealt with education, we dealt with health care, we dealt with all of the same qualities and the same issues that campaigns are now involved in, really. Well, you have to constantly change if you want to stay on top of the problems as they change.

Int: How did Maine get into so much trouble financially?

EM: At this time?

Int: I never heard of a state closing itself down for days and days.

EM: It'll be interesting to see what happens in the next election. Maybe both parties will improve.

Int: I've heard that from people, that they want the whole legislature replaced, Democrat and Republican.

EM: It's that sort of thing that happens. In 1950, you may, you remember this, in the 1950s when there was the liquor scandal, so-called, and the [Bernard] Goldfine scandal, so-called. And the Republican Party was, you know, the Republican primaries were the scene for Republicans to fight each other, to ignore the Democrats.

(*Taping stops abruptly halfway through side two. Never resumes.*)

End of Interview