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Interview with Edmund S. Muskie by Chris Beam

Summary Sheet and Transcript

Interviewee

Muskie, Edmund S., 1914-1996

Interviewer

Beam, Chris

Date

September 3, 1991

Place

Kennebunk, Maine

ID Number

MOH 013

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Scope and Content Note

Interview includes discussions of: meeting Frank Coffin; China Lake cottage; maintaining various properties throughout the years; Muskie's public life vs. his private life; Muskie's first involvement with politics; Democratic progress in Maine in the '50s and '60s; Muskie's concern for environmental issues as governor; road building in 1954; Thomas Delahanty; Ken Curtis and Ken Colbath; and Dick McMahan.

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Transcript

Chris Beam: Okay, this oral history interview is taking place on September 3rd, 1991 at Senator Muskie's home in Kennebunk, Maine. Senator Muskie, what I wanted to do today in this next hour and a half, two hours, or however long we have to talk today, is, I want to do two things. One, I'd like to review, or ask some more questions concerning the period from 1946 when you became politically active, or were first elected to public office, up until your election in 1954 as governor of Maine, and then I would like to get into a discussion of your gubernatorial tenure from 1954-1958. Concerning the period from 1946-54, Senator Muskie, there's just a few of the, what I'd like to do is ask you about some of the personalities who were involved with you and your reflections on some of the people who worked with you in the Democratic Party between 1946 and [19]54, comment on the roles that they play, your relationships with them, and, you know, how they fit into the history, the development or the revival of the Democrat Party in the period right after WWII. And I think probably the first person to begin with is Frank Coffin. Now, he played a key role. When did you first meet Frank?

Edmund S. Muskie: Well, I met, may have met him casually earlier than I now remember, but I first met him in terms of all working together for the revival of the Democratic Party in Maine, in the summer of 1953 following my discharge from the hospital in Waterville. Let's see, when did that take place? Well, in the spring of 19-, wait, let me get my dates right. In the spring of 1953, actually in April I think it was, I sustained a fall at my home in Waterville which resulted in breaking my back. I was hospitalized for some seven or eight weeks and then I, the family and I moved down to our cottage on (*ringing phone - aside: well now, my wife said she'd answer the phone*).

CB: I heard somebody upstairs. I think she did.

EM: Okay. So it was in April that I was hospitalized. I think it was seven or eight weeks that I was in the hospital, this was Sister's Hospital in Waterville, and we decided to move down to our cottage on China Lake for the rest of that summer so that I could rest and recover fully, and while I was there I of course concentrated largely on my physical rehabilitation. I can remember crawling down to the shore of the lake to do some swimming, did that on a daily basis, and I

began to devote some thinking to politics.

1953 was the year that I did some lobbying in the legislature for a couple of clients, the Maine Central Railroad among them. And also the electricians of Maine, practicing electricians in Maine who put together a code for setting standards for the practice of, what could you call it, practice, anyway, for those engaged in electrical work. And I put it together and managed to get the legislature to adopt it. So I had that one year of practice as a lobbyist, which was interrupted of course by my accident in April and, but my work was virtually finished by that time, and I finished that, which was valuable in other ways. I got involved of course with the legislature in that year in a different way than I had ever been involved before. I was not a member of the legislature then but a lobbyist, and so I became very well known and got to know a lot of the people who were involved in lobbying the Maine legislature during that period. So I thought it was a valuable education. And also, the income, the additional income I earned proved to be helpful when I was hospitalized and not otherwise practicing law, so it was a different kind of a year than I'd ever spent before or afterwards.

And so my thoughts turned to politics quite naturally because I had some exposure to how little influence really the Democratic Party had had in the legislative work of the state. I think there were less than twenty-five Democrats in the Maine House out of a hundred and fifty-one. And I think not more than three or four Democrats out of thirty-three or thereabouts in the Senate. So the, I really got a taste of how little influence, little actual influence, Maine Democrats had in the Maine legislature during that period. So it was a valuable, I think it was a valuable experience considering what happened afterwards and also it kept my thoughts focused on political matters when I otherwise was not practicing law, worried about how my family was going to live. So that summer proved to be a very interesting, and enjoyable one actually. It was a much better place to recover than the hospital and, of course, all of the family, I had only two children at that point and Jane, so, and we liked, we loved our little cottage down there at China Lake.

CB: Can I, can I sort of deviate here? This brings to mind a question, and I might want to ask this again in other interviews, is, you know, the impact of your political activities on your family. You know, your financial situation and so forth. I mean, being OPS director probably didn't pay very much, did it, to sustain a family of two children at the time?

EM: No, it paid about, my guess is eight thousand dollars a year. And of course I had to live, I had living expenses in Portland where the office was, and I commuted to Waterville where the family was; tried to do a little law practice on the side. But, no, we had, we were not a, we were a poor family I would say. I didn't make an awful lot of money, but we somehow got along and the hospitalization of course reduced our circumstances even more. So we didn't have a lot of money but we didn't, we didn't feel we were suffering really. We got by. Barely, I guess. But our cottage, you see our cottage didn't have, we didn't have, it wasn't heated except by fireplaces so heat was not a great expense. At that time, I guess by that time we had a small, I'm trying to think . . .

CB: Where on China Lake is the cottage, anyway? Because I was just up there a couple of weeks ago.

EM: Well, it's on the, I'm trying to think where west is; it's on, it's on the ocean side of China Lake, you know. What would that be? East I guess, the eastern side, down, not too far from South China Village.

CB: Okay, right.

EM: A mile from South China Village? We got ice, we got our ice from a farm very near by because we didn't have electric refrigeration. We finally had a small, I guess it was about this size, small electric hot water heater. It was quite a hardship washing diapers, you know, without some kind of electric heat.

CB: We were on Sheepsfoot Pond a couple weeks ago where my wife has a, my cousin has a camp, and of course the electricity there had been knocked out by hurricane Bob and so I have some sense of what it's like to be without electricity.

EM: But we didn't really feel that we were, that it was a hardship. We, the cottage was, well, about two thirds the size of what it ultimately became. When I was elected governor, we added quite a bit of footage to the ground floor so that we could have a dining room and a living room. So it wasn't one of, it was a very well built little cottage but it didn't have any extras to speak of really.

CB: When did you purchase that anyway?

EM: Oh, I bought it, I bought that in 1946, yeah, it was the same year that I ran for the legislature. I was then a bachelor, was not married in 1946, hadn't met Jane at that point, and I lived in a room in Waterville, which was very nice. I was very lucky in my choice of landladies and rooms so I always had a pleasant, you know, always had a pleasant room and a pleasant home in Waterville when I was a bachelor. I was a bachelor, pure and simple, didn't have a girlfriend really when I came back from the war. Starting life from scratch again in Waterville. And so I got a little lonely and I, it was kind of natural for me to look for a camp, and that's how we referred to them then. We didn't call them cottages. They were camps. And so I began to watch the newspaper advertisements and I forget exactly how I was attracted to this particular one, but I was. It had been built by, I think he was a plumber in Augusta, and it was very well built for a small cottage. It had two small cottages, uh, two small bedrooms at one end, barely, each of them barely held a bunk bed, and in between was a john, you know, but no bath, there was no shower, no tub or anything of that kind.

CB: So what'd you do, just do without?

EM: No, you went in the lake. You went in the lake. But we did have a john and the walls were sheathed, I forget, I think in plywood, so it wasn't like many of those camps with the open, old open, what am I thinking of, the two-by-fours and all that, it was sheathed. And the kitchen was tiny, and there was a little, a little dining room, and such furniture as there was came with the camp. There was a very nice glassed in porch that Jane and I used as a bedroom after we got married, which was a very pleasant room because then we used the two little bedrooms for the kids, when the kids came along. But we loved that little cottage and when we added that

additional room after I was governor it was a very comfortable place.

CB: How much land came with it? When you bought it?

EM: I think it was a hundred by a hundred lot, yeah. A hundred feet on the water and a hundred feet back. I eventually bought another similar piece of land in back away from the lake so I think it eventually was two hundred feet by a hundred feet. The last time I saw the place within the last five years. At that time there was an open field in back of the cottage, right back to the main road which was, oh, which was a quarter of a mile away from the lake, and it was a hilly slope down. It was a problem driving into the lake early in the spring because it was, the road was dirt and could be muddy and a problem. But the last time I went down that hillside, it was totally covered with pine trees. You couldn't see the top of the hill from the camp. And it's sort of deteriorated. I was rather sad to see it.

CB: The house itself was deteriorated, or just the . . . ?

EM: No, well, the area around it. It hadn't been as well tended, as well kept up. We didn't have a chance to go inside the cottage this time, we just peeked in the windows and it seemed to be a little shabbier and a little less well tended. We kept it immaculate, you know, before then. Of course we bought another house on China Lake before we moved down here to Kennebunk, but that perhaps ought to come later in this discussion.

CB: Now, how long did you have the camp? This particular camp that you bought in '46? You sold that when? Or, . . .

EM: Well, let's see. We bought that in '46, well, we moved down here to Kennebunk in 1965, or '66, '66, so that we had a total of twenty, twenty years on China Lake. I'm trying to divide up those twenty years now. Let's see, we bought another, we, it was sold, this cottage we've been talking about, and bought another one on China Lake on a very beautiful piece of land which was, which we called Birch Point. It was covered with birch trees and it was a peninsula. It had three sides on the water and birch trees that I couldn't put my arms around. It was a bigger piece of land, and we loved that one very much. It was an old cottage, that one. That cottage was really much older than the other one, but it was bigger and it was very attractive in its way. We spent a lot of money on it, improving it, but we never did manage, and never I think would have managed, to make it a year round residence. It was a summer camp, a summer cottage, but it was a little more comfortable than the other one and a hell of a lot of fun and bigger, had a nice shoreline. Well, it had how many beaches, one, two, three beaches. We bought a sailboat for our oldest boy and we had a lot of fun at that one, too.

CB: Did you have a motor boat?

EM: No, no. Well, we had an outboard motor, yeah, we had an outboard motor, and a boat, a rowboat, and a sailboat.

CB: Now, how often would you go down to your camp?

EM: Oh, we'd live there all summer.

CB: Oh, you did?

EM: We'd live there all summer, even when we were, when I was governor. We moved out of the governor's mansion and lived in those camps in the summer time.

CB: And did you commute to work, I mean to the Blaine House?

EM: To Augusta?

CB: Yeah.

EM: Yeah.

CB: And how about before then, while you were an attorney in Waterville?

EM: Oh, we spent the whole summer down there. As a matter of fact, when we were married in 1948 I was living, I can't remember where I was living, I must have had a room. I did not have an apartment. But anyway, when we came back from our honeymoon, instead of looking for an apartment we went down and lived in the first cottage. Wonderful, that sleeping porch was just terrific for a pair of honeymooners, it was glorious as a matter of fact. We had a lot of fun at that cottage, without the hot water and without a bathtub. It was one thing for me to go down and take a dip in lieu of a bath in the morning, it was a little rougher I suspect on Jane, but that's what we had. Every night when I drove in from the office, I'd stop at the farm and pick up some ice so we'd have ice for that night and the next day. And Jane was working at that point. She worked in a women's dress shop, a very, one of the higher class dress shops in Waterville, so we used to drive in to work together. Must have been a real burden for her to get ready for work in that kind of a shop without hot water and without a bathtub.

CB: Didn't you feel that was a burden? I mean, my impression of attorneys is that they have to be, you know, take a shower every day and dress up and so forth.

EM: No, China Lake was a lovely place to go swimming, I tell you.

CB: But you went down there, when? You went down there in the spring?

EM: Yeah.

CB: And wasn't it cold?

EM: Well, we were married Memorial Day, and we had a week's honeymoon up in the Rangeley Lakes, and from there we'd go down to China Lake and from, so that must have been, you know, the first week in June. Oh, I can't remember, we didn't consider it a hardship. And when September came, then we had to begin to look around for an apartment. I forget how long we stayed down there in September at that time, but we always looked forward to the summer.

Let's see, we didn't have, I'm trying to remember when Steve came, Steve was our first child and we did not have hot water when he was born, nor did we have electric refrigeration. I mean, we had the ice box and we had, you had to heat the water for the babies, for the baby, on the stove.

CB: How did you cook your food? Did you have propane?

EM: Oh, we had a, let's see, what kind of, yeah, we had propane, that's right. I had, I used to have to pick up those bottles, isn't that what they were called? Yeah, I think so, the propane bottles. No, it was a treat. I mean, going, moving down to the cottage was a combination of a summer residence and a summer long vacation. We never felt we were living in hardship. And, you know, we had a lot of friends who lived, who had summer places on China Lake. No, it, we had an awful lot of fun. And then of course when I was elected governor and we enlarged the cottage, and we could, then we had, began to get a few, you know, a few niceties, I guess that's what you'd call it. But we had an awful lot, (*aside: Oh, God, what is this thing coming in? Look at this thing backing in.*) (*Recorder turned off*). . . . to this house.

CB: Okay, now we're going.

EM: Now I, as I remember, that first cottage we paid four thousand dollars for. And I bought it under the G.I. Bill of Rights. Is that what it's called? The G.I. Bill? Yeah, G.I. Bill. And as I remember, I'm trying to think of the ridiculous numbers that were involved in that. I thought, I wondered how the hell I'd ever pay for it. I think we paid, I think I paid fifty dollars down and fifty dollars a month or something like that, for the co . . . and I wondered how the hell I was ever going to pay it.

CB: Now, how much were you making as an attorney when you bought that? What was your . . . ?

EM: Well, when I first went to Waterville, when I first began practicing law in 1940, I did pretty well. I would say that as long as we lived in Waterville, after I returned, I never made more than five thousand dollars a year. Because I had, net, net. I may have gone above five thousand dollars a year. But with that we bought a house eventually up there that cost us, as I recall it, eight thousand dollars. I forget the terms of that one. We bought that cottage. Now, when we sold that cottage to buy the other one on China Lake, I think we paid eighty-five hundred dollars for the other one, for the new one, the replacement one, and I think we got about seventy-five hundred for the first cottage, improved as we had done.

CB: When did that transaction take place? I mean, when did you move to the new cottage?

EM: That's what I'm trying to think, trying to think of exactly when that took place. Well, you see, we lived in that first cottage, improved, as we had improved it, through my governorship which would have taken us, uh, through 1958?

CB: Yeah. In '58 is when you went to the Senate, so . . .

EM: Yeah, but then we moved, yeah, I guess that'd be roughly it. I think that'd be roughly it. And we paid eighty-five hundred for the Birch Point property and spent some money on that. I guess that's about right. And then we moved to, to Kennebunk in 1966 when we bought that place on the golf course. Now, we paid roughly twenty-five thousand dollars for that place and I think we sold the Birch Point for about fifteen thousand, so that was an enormous leap in our obligations.

CB: Now, did you maintain a home in Waterville while you were in the Senate? I know . . .

EM: No, no we did not. We sold the house, we kept the house in Waterville and rented it, I think. But after, when did we sell that? We must have decided to sell that when I decided to run for the Senate and won because we had no use for it then. No, we used our summer cottages, you see, as our home back in, that was an easy way to maintain a residence back home while living with the family in Washington. And that's what we tried to do. But keeping a home, a summer home on China Lake was just too much of a burden for weekend commuting. And of course it was very lonely in all that we had a home in Washington after I moved to the Senate. In the summer time they still, the rest of the family still came to Maine and if I couldn't get up for a weekend it was rather lonely for them. So we did it, now when, but we did that, you see, my first year in the Senate was 1959 and we moved down here in 1966 so there were several years that we tried to maintain that schedule

CB: Your family didn't want to stick around down in Washington?

EM: In the summer time, oh, no. We didn't have air conditioning in our home in Washington when we started, although it was a brand-new house, it had never been occupied before. We did not have air conditioning and so I don't think, I, I'm trying to think when Ned was born. You see, Ned was born in Washington. Let's see, he was thirty years old this year so that must have been, that must have been 1961.

CB: Right, just after you got there.

EM: Just after we got there.

CB: *(Aside: Hi, how are you?)*

Jane Muskie: Excuse me for interrupting, I hope I'm not.

CB: Sure, no. *(Recorder turned off.)*

CB: You were talking about . . .

EM: Yeah, you see, the first house cost us four thousand and we moved up to, when we bought that house over there we had to sell our place on China Lake, and I think we sold it, did I say about fifteen thousand dollars? I think that's about right. And we paid . . .

CB: Twenty-five, twenty-five thousand.

EM: Yeah, well we, the first, with respect to the house, the other house, we rented it the first summer. We didn't know what we wanted to do, but we wanted to try renting a cottage down here on the beach to see how that suited us. So we were able to rent that house for a thousand dollars for a month, and they agreed to add the last two weeks in June because they weren't going to rent it anyway in June. So we got six weeks for a thousand bucks, which we thought was quite a deal. And we loved that house, and it came on the market about that time and I think they wanted thirty-two thousand dollars or something like that, which was more than we could afford, we thought. And we made them an offer, I think, of twenty-five, which they didn't even acknowledge.

And we went back up to finish the summer at China Lake. And that wasn't much fun, you know, the comparison, with all the activity here the kids enjoyed for six weeks, finally had to move up to that lonely place, that's the way it looked then, on China Lake. So we weren't all together, I mean, that made up our minds that if we could find a place down here it would be nice. Anyway, we were driving home to Washington and stopped at Jane's sister's house on the beach and while we were there overnight the real estate agent here called us to say that the owners would split the difference with us on the house over here. Well, that was roughly the difference between twenty-five and thirty-two, and we thought that was more than we could afford, so I made a counter offer, I said I'd split the difference again.

CB: You're quite a bargainer.

EM: So we, before we left, and I said, I hope you don't accept it because I don't know where the hell I'll get the money, but they immediately accepted the additional split, so in effect we got that, let's see, roughly twenty-six thousand or something like that. Then we, of course, we had to find a buyer for the cottage on China Lake and that's what we, what we eventually got was fifteen. So we added to our unfunded obligations as a result of that but we always loved that house and never believed we'd ever sell it. But then this, the opportunity to buy this house and twenty acres of land came up and we were again, we were again lucky. We were able to get this house and the land for a hundred thousand dollars, and by that time we were able to sell that house over there that we had bought for twenty-five, for ninety thousand. So that's how we finally got here. That's the trail on the summer residences that . . .

CB: And when did you move into this house?

EM: This house? Nineteen seventy-six. That was my last election year.

CB: That's right.

EM: And it was nothing like it is now, of course, but we didn't make it a year round house until after I left the Senate, left public life, and we decided to make this a year round house, that's what we've done. So there's quite a change economically between that four thousand dollar summer cottage. If I hadn't bought that, I wouldn't own this. It was a very happy way to, you know, to, you always, if you're in the Senate, you want your people to think you still regard the state as your home and the summer home was our way of doing it. We couldn't have done it

with year round homes during that period, long period of time. But this way we did it. So this is the, this, this conversion of summer homes into a year-round home is, was the track on which we rode our political life.

CB: I was going to ask you this, concerning your, the juxtaposition of your private and public lives, did your family, did you ever feel pressure to drop out of public life, or not run for office, particularly before the governorship, and concentrate only on your law practice? I mean, did, was there a feeling that perhaps, I mean, a law practice would be more lucrative and that political activity and so forth, you know, especially with a young family would sort of create a hardship? Was there any . . . ?

EM: Well, I don't know that I'd put it that way. When I ran for governor I never, that decision was limited to the governorship. I didn't make a commitment in my own mind or any discussion with the family to convert, you know, to build a life in politics. We were running for governor, period. And it was logical to run for a second term since we were trying to build a party, logical to run a second term. But at the time I decided to run for second term for governor, I did not at that point give any thought to running for the Senate at the end of the, at the end of that second term. And as the second term approached its end, you know, I did not leap at the opportunity, if that's what you would call it, to run for the Senate. Normally these announcements are made, or at that time were made, you know, about January 1 of the election year. Well, January 1 came and went and I didn't, I didn't regard it as a time when I had to make that decision, so I didn't make the decision to run for the Senate until about April first which was about the time you had to have your papers signed and on file. So I sort of delayed it, I dragged my feet and finally I made the decision to run for the Senate because if I didn't that would largely be the end of the effort to make Maine a two party state.

At that point we had no candidates, really, lined up, although Frank Coffin had run for the Congress and won in '56, so he was, and we had first term, we had a congressman in the first district, we still were far from a majority in the legislature. So we really were at the very beginning of building a two party thing, and if I didn't run for the Senate, we'd probably had trouble finding anyone to run for the Senate who had a chance to win. So it was largely a question of continuing with the work we'd started when I ran for governor and was elected. We weren't really concerned about the impact on family life, that seemed to flow naturally. Of course, we had very young children when I was elected governor. The two oldest children, well, let's see, they were born in '49 . . .

CB: Yeah, that was Steve.

EM: That was Steve, and Ellen was born a year and a half after Steve was born, so they were young, and they went to school, the school that they attended in Augusta was at the back door of the Blaine House, so there'd really been no impact on family life. No pressures of that . . . that I can see.

CB: What about before you became governor? I mean, for example, in '52 when you were managing the Maine Stevenson-Sparkman campaign, state legislative work and so forth. Was there, did you . . . ?

EM: Oh, no, that was part time work. I mean, no, we didn't regard politics, my involvement in politics as an intrusion on family life at that period, at that time. It wasn't at all. The Stevenson-Sparkman campaign lasted from, well, from September to November. After that, you know, Maine Democratic politics wasn't that structured. Sure, we had, we really didn't have a full time chairman. We had a chairman but he, you know, he wasn't a take charge kind of a fella, and he wasn't, and he didn't have any particular skills. There was no Democratic party to take up my time or to take up my family's time, except to the extent that I wanted to devote any time to it. So it was not that kind of intrusion, or intrusive pressure that would have, it never occurred to me to think it was anything but a nat-, the natural kind of a thing for a young lawyer to do to begin to build his law practice.

As a matter of fact, that's why I became involved in politics when I came back from the war. I'd started the law practice in 1940 and had two good years before I enlisted in the Navy and so I had a secretary who, under the supervision of a fellow lawyer, kept my office, law office open through the war. There wasn't much left by that time, but she was still there and I had to come back and build a practice all over again. And doing it via the political route was the traditional way to do it. You got involved in community affairs, you look for visibility, you look for involvement, and politics was sort of a natural thing for a lawyer to do, so it wasn't regard-, I didn't regard it as an intrusion, I regarded it as an opportunity to build my law practice, to build visibility.

It never occurred to me that I'd be still practic--, that I'd still be involved in politics, you know, at this point, 1991. I, that, if I had considered it from that point of view and said to myself in 1946, well, do you really want to be involved in politics in 1991? Well, I might have turned back. No, I can never remember, you know, considering . . . I can remember, you know, several occasions on which, on which I considered whether or not to continue in politics, but not because of its intrusion on family life. I mean, when I got through, as I approached the end of my second term as governor, I gave some thought to the possibility of . . . As a matter of fact I was given, a very successful Portland law firm made an offer to me as my gubernatorial term approached its end, to join them. And that would have been probably financially much to my advantage. But I didn't hesitate when I finally decided to run for the Senate, I didn't hesitate about doing that because that offer was available. And I never again considered not running for either family reasons or for professional reasons. One election simply ran into the next one, sort of an inevitable flow.

Well, we had setbacks in 19-, I'm trying to think. Let's see, my senatorial election was 1958, 1960 was our next election here in Maine, and that's when we had our big setback as a party. Frank Coffin ran for governor and lost, and of course he hadn't run for reelection to the Congress so we lost that, too. Jim Oliver, who was our second congressman, lost his seat in the first district. I forget what the numbers in the legislature ended up, but we were certainly far from controlling the legislature, so I was about all that was left after the 1960 election.

CB: Did the '60 election see a loss of Democratic seats in the legislature?

EM: Well, I just commented on that. I can't remember, I think it did. It certainly did not see

any gain. It certainly saw no gain. After all, in 1958 when I ran for the Senate and won, the increase, our increase in legislative seats wasn't all that much. I don't think we had forty members of the House by that time. Nineteen sixty-four was the election that gave us a big, big boost in legislative seats, as I remember it. That's when LBJ won. That landslide naturally gave us a big boost in our, I think we may have, I think we may have controlled the House, Maine House following the '64 election. And then we, the next time around, we elected a governor for the, again in 1966. I think that's when Ken Curtis won. Sixty-six, yeah, I think that's right. I think he, so he, Clauson won the governorship in '58 when I won the Senate seat. Then he died a year later and the . . .

End of Side One

Side Two

CB: We're on tape two of the September 3rd interview. Um, were environmental concerns at all in evidence when you were governor?

EM: Well, the problem was very visible but we weren't able to do very much with it at that time.

CB: Were there proposals from your administration or even from the legislature to try to do something about environmental pollution?

EM: Well, we concentrated of course on water pollution as we thought about it, because air pollution was not regarded as a nation wide problem at that time, in Maine or elsewhere. That was thought of as a Los Angeles problem in those days. Now it's fully recognized as a global problem. So these problems have developed. Water pollution of course was a very visible program, uh, problem, but the slogan that was, that industry sort of encouraged as a public idea, was 'jobs are more important than pickerel.' Did you ever hear that?

CB: I've heard paychecks are pickerel.

EM: Paychecks are pickerel, so that, that always put a dampener to debate about what the state ought to do about it. Well, about all we were doing about it at the time I was elected governor was to classify the quality, classify Maine rivers by quality standards. What it amounted to was that we spent a lot of money every biennium, you know, making decisions about what kind of quality a particular waterway was. Did nothing about improving it if it was below what people regarded as acceptable standards. So when I was governor in the second term, I proposed a very, what I considered a very minimal improvement in our law and that was to use some of those standards to try to upgrade the quality of important waterways. Well, I tell you, that got absolutely nowhere in the legislature, so we didn't do that.

Then we tried to pick up on what was the beginning of the current federal program, and that is to build a waste treatment facility. And it was in '56 I think that the first federal program was adopted, and even I was a little shocked at what the federal government had done. It had appropriated not a hell of a lot of money; I think about fifty million dollars, to stimulate cities to build waste treatment facilities, to clean up waterways. Well, so we did, let's see, we did, if I

remember here, yeah, I think we recommended, as this list indicates, a rather small matching program to supplement federal funds in the construction of sewage treatment plants. But there was very minimal, there was suppos--, before you made much of that you'd want to look at the amounts involved. But of course subsequently in the Senate we built on this, but we weren't able to do very much with water pollution, certainly nothing with air pollution. Tried to make a start and it didn't succeed.

Incidentally, this, this also lists several things that we did in industrial development. The Department of Economic Development apparently, ultimately we got the name finally changed to the Department of Economic Development, (*reads*) the Industrial Building Authority, that's right, that was a program designed to encourage the building of industrial buildings, I referred to that earlier; a permanent program of geological research; state support for and strengthening of the Maine Port Authority; a program of assistance to Maine business and the procurement of government contracts. That didn't work very well either, the Association of the Society of Industrial Realtors. Here, you'd want to go over that. I'd be glad to read that, when we get done with this, but . . .

CB: Sure, yeah, well, no, that's, ah . . .

EM: But there's quite a list in there and I remember preparing that speech trying to summarize all of the things that had been done.

CB: Did you have much help with that speech?

EM: No, most came off, my recollection was fresh then, as it isn't now. I think that was a, this is included in this program . . .

CB: So, you didn't have a speech writer?

EM: No, I didn't have a speech writer. Never had one in, yeah, this was taken from remarks that I made at the Democratic Issues Conference on January 14th, 1962 at Augusta. Yeah, I tried to summarize, at that point, as I remember, we were very unhappy with the, with Governor Reed's performance and so I produced this speech as a way of contrasting what we had done before he came on the scene. Yeah, that's pretty complete, I think, except for the details which you couldn't have in a speech.

CB: Now, what about road building? That had also been something of an issue as I recall in the '54 election.

EM: Well, that was largely a matter of providing the money. And the big issue between us, between the two parties, I think, was whether or not you try to build highways on a cash basis or on a funded basis. So we were able to convince the legislature to, and I began this with, I began this with Dave Stevens, of course, first of all to, well, we were for extension of the turnpike in those days, and we were also for bond issues to build highways which meant of course that first you had to decide what you needed for highways. And what kind of a program you were ready to fund. If you were going to do it wholly on a pay as you go basis, we simply were not going to

get the kind of highways we needed. And so I think we finally, we finally accepted that, I think not only with respect to roads, but with respect to the state's other capital needs. We finally I think made acceptable the idea of borrowing money to build the capital needs, separate the two. So we did it. Now we've created a State Building Authority to deal with the state's construction needs. Part of that at that point included state institutions like the mental hospitals which the Kennedy administration finally eliminated. And to this day we have problems in this state.

CB: Well, I know there have been, in the '54 campaign, there had been a controversy over Governor Cross' proposed closing of two TB sanatorias.

EM: Well, that, whether or not we'll have to go back to those, but at least we delayed the day when they were finally closed. Well, they've been closed but now I gather that tuberculosis is reemerging as a, yeah.

CB: Oh yeah? That I hadn't heard. That's rather disturbing.

EM: It isn't a very visible, but you know that measles is coming back. There's no such thing as permanent solutions to some of these things. But we made a great deal of that issue. We weren't convinced that those institutions didn't have a useful role to play, whether with the disease for which they were built or something else. And so we were able to convert that issue into political capital and those areas where there were such facilities, in Presque Isle, for example, in, gee, there was one in Oxford County; there was one in Kennebec County in Fairfield. Um, so we spent a lot of time at those hospitals, looking them over and, with plenty of press along, and, yeah. And that apparently served a very useful purpose in raising questions about Governor Cross' priorities when it came to people, their needs and so on, whereas Cross fancied himself as a businessman who would be able to make more efficient use of state resources, that's how he approached the TB issue. You had to use some of those issues in order to, as a substitute for the research which we didn't have. It was a good issue. Not a major one, but a good one, and it got headlines whenever we moved into areas where there were TB sanatoria. I don't think any, I doubt that any of them are open anymore, for any purpose.

CB: I don't know if they are. I haven't heard about them.

EM: I don't think so.

CB: Well, I just want to wrap this up because I think we're getting pretty near the end of our time here, but, I had started off by asking questions about personalities like Frank Coffin, uh, how you ran into him. You also worked with Thomas Delahanty who ran for Congress I believe in '54.

EM: Who?

CB: Thomas Delahanty.

EM: Oh, Tom Delahanty? Yeah, he ran for Congress in the second district. Well, of course a lot of the people that I worked with in my early days in politics, you know, were local people.

We asked Tom to run. Tom really hadn't been particularly active in politics, but he was a Democrat and agreed to run for that seat when we couldn't get anybody else. And he added I think a great deal to the ticket, but he really didn't get involved in political work particularly. I mean, I appointed him to the Public Utilities Commission and then I think I later appointed him to the Superior Court, or was it the Supreme Court? Superior Court, I think. That was one of my last appointments.

CB: When you say he added a lot to the ticket, how do you mean? You mean in terms of just his . . .

EM: Well, philosophically. I mean, he did run a campaign, and he was a highly respected guy, very well liked, but he didn't get involved to the extent that some of the rest of us did on a day to day basis. I'm not saying it very well. He was very import-, it was very important to have him on the team and he was always supportive in every way that he could be, but he didn't throw himself into it to the degree that I did. I don't know how you would compare his, the actual time that he contributed to it. Well, I don't know how the hell to touch that subject.

CB: Another person is, who ran with you in '54, is Ken Colbath who ran in the third district.

EM: Yeah, well, he was a small businessman. I never knew him before that race. The people from Aroostook County recommended him and he was an enthusiastic Democrat and so he plunged himself into it. I don't know how much of his time he spent. It was just nice to have him on the team and traveling around with us when we were in his district, and he did a lot of campaigning on his own in his district, and that's true of Tom, too. Jim Oliver, of course, was a former Republican congressman and he announced his candidacy that year before we put our common effort together, really. He lost that year but he won the next time around, and I think he won, he won in '58, too. He and Coffin are the only congressmen that we elected as a result of that common effort. Colbath didn't make it. Colbath, I don't know if Colbath ran in '56?

CB: Yeah, I don't recall.

EM: I don't remember. But they were all part of the team in the sense that, you know, they were willing to be part of the team, to run whatever kind of a campaign we wanted to, to pool our resources together, even though they weren't all that great as I've told you before. And so we pooled our resources, focused, emphasized, everybody emphasized the governorship as the important race, and none of them had any problem with that. They were running to add what they could to the momentum of that race, and so it was, those two or three efforts of the '50s were a model in my judgment for the kind of effort you needed to wage in this state with scarce resources, with small parties. Common efforts were the way to do it.

And those three, we did it that way, pooled our resources, distributed it in accordance with the priorities we commonly agreed to, and presented a team picture to the public. These are the young Democrats, these are the fellas who are trying to remake our political system here, these are the efforts that are being made to make the Democratic Party a responsible party, these are the kind of people they have, you know. That was the kind of presentation we were making in the '50s, and successfully so. And we didn't all expect to win the first time, or the second time,

or the third time. But they were willing to be part of it, contribute their own resources to the extent that they could afford to, contribute their time to the extent that they could and still make a living. I mean, it was just a very attractive team effort and they all added their own particular kind of appeal. That's what it was. I mean, what the hell, if an eighteen thousand dollar effort isn't very massive, so you had to make the most of what you had and these fellas were an important part of what we had, just being who they were, what they were, because of their appeal in their own communities, their own neighborhoods, they were all well respected, well liked, and they just made a good picture, that's what it was.

Nobody contributed a lot of money. Nobody contributed much of any money. And some of them were more enthusiastic, frankly, about they themselves winning. I don't think Tom Delahanty had any desire to go to Congress. Ken Colbath may have, and of course Jim Oliver really wanted to go because he wanted to pick up the rest of his pension eligibility.

CB: What about Paul Fullam? How did he fit in this?

EM: Well, Paul Fullam, Paul would have liked to go to the Senate, I think, but he didn't really entertain any, and then he, God, he really campaigned hard when he shouldn't have. He may, he really captured the attention of the press running against Margaret. And Margaret that year had already had a hard, what appeared to be at least a hard primary fight in her own party against young Bob Jones. And we threw Paul Fullam at her in our race, and Paul was just ideal for that purpose. You couldn't conceivably think of him as someone who was running for selfish reasons. Nobody had any idea he'd win. Yet he campaigned as though he could, and he was very impressive. He reminded people a great deal, I think, of Adlai Stevenson's style of speaking and he just added class, he added class to the ticket. And although he didn't expect to win, you'd have never thought that he didn't expect it from the way he campaigned. It's hard to describe that campaign really, really hard to describe it.

There was the five of us and Frank and Don Nicoll, who didn't get paid a hell of a lot of money, I don't think, and we put it together with the help of a lot of other people who also added class on a local basis. You know, after awhile it seemed as though we had a real party and when you tried to count them up on the fingers of your hands, there weren't as many as there appeared to be. But I tell you, we made an impression, and I got to go to the john again. (*Recorder turned off.*)

CB: Well, you mentioned Dick McMahon and called him your man Friday. In what sense was he . . . ?

EM: Oh, yeah, he drove my car, he traveled with me everywhere, he was combination politician, public relations, I mean, he was just a natural politician himself. He was city treasurer of Waterville; he was part of the Dick Dubord political team that put Dick into office as mayor of Waterville. Dick became treasurer, he was active in the American Legion all over the state, well liked, you know. He handled the nitty gritty details of campaigning, trying to find a meal for us, a place to stay overnight, driving the car, taking care of all of that housekeeping.

CB: You didn't stay at Holiday Inns?

EM: No, we didn't stay at Holiday Inns, we didn't stay in many, but the, I mean, it was all these people who were volunteers who, and then there were so many of them. It was amazing at how they turned out around the state as, you know, as our message began to spread and people began to talk it up. It was just amazing, the people, old line Democrats, secret Democrats who turned out and wanted to help, who'd put us up overnight, you know, give us a meal occasionally. There was so much of that that I couldn't possibly remember the names, you know, whatever kind of effort I exerted to do so.

CB: Now, when you were campaigning, did you get much help of that sort from disaffected Republicans? I know Neil Bishop had this Republicans for Muskie organization going.

EM: Yeah, we sure did. There were a lot of them. And their names weren't as familiar or visible as Neil's, but he had that particular area. (*Aside: Want something?*)

JM: Half an hour over.

CB: Okay, well, we'll just wrap it up right now. Actually, I think we'll just conclude right here. We covered the period from 1946 to '54 I think pretty thoroughly and gotten into the Repub--, your gubernatorial period and so I want to thank you and call it quits here.

End of Interview