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Muskie, Edmund S. oral history interview

Jim Ross

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Interview with Edmund S. Muskie by Jim Ross

Summary Sheet and Transcript

Interviewee

Muskie, Edmund S., 1914-1996

Interviewer

Ross, Jim

Date

August 14, 1985

Place

Kennebunk Beach, Maine

ID Number

MOH 001 (MT 618-620)

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Scope and Content Note

Interview includes discussions of Muskie's early life, including: information about his parents, such as their religious and political beliefs; his father's work as a tailor; the economic and social conditions of his childhood; his relationship with his siblings; his extra curricular activities as a high school student, such as playing basketball; funding his college and graduate school education; working at Bates and during the summers between College; and his enrollment in the Navy.

Indexed Names

Breault, Elizabeth "Betty" (Muskie)

Muskie, Edmund S., 1914-1996

Muskie, Eugene

Muskie, Stephen

Paradis, Lucy (Muskie)

Transcript

Jim Ross: *(Audio note en route: This is Jim Ross going to interview Ed Muskie, former senator and secretary of state at his Kennebunk Beach home on the 14th of August, 1985, 3:00; the interview should run for an hour and a half.)* Okay, first of all, where were you born? Were you born in a hospital?

Edmund Muskie: Although I was present at the occasion, I don't really remember. I assume it was at home, because I don't think any of my, neither my brother nor my sisters were born in a hospital. I think that was the day of home births. The only one I remember was one child that did not survive. I didn't even know whether it was a girl or a boy. And it was the last child born, that I'm certain of, but I don't remember the birth of any of those now alive at all.

JR: Was that after Betty, then?

EM: That was after Betty, right. And she was, and that child was born at home on Hemingway Street. That I remember. Not that our parents, they never, as far as I know they didn't discuss the birth of each child with the living children, children already born. At least I don't remember it. I mean, as I think back, these younger sisters and brother just appeared and I can't remember a day when they didn't exist, you see.

JR: It said on your birth certificate that you were born at 4 Hemingway Street, or something to that effect. Or it said, it mentioned 4 Hemingway Street. Now, I've been under the impression 8 Hemingway Street was the place that ...

EM: Oh, I was not born on Hemingway Street.

JR: All right, well it said, all right, well then, what was this reference to Hemingway Street? It said 4 Hemingway Street?

EM: On my birth certificate?

JR: Yeah, it said something to that effect.

EM: I have no idea.

JR: Okay, well ...

EM: I don't know that I've ever seen my birth certificate.

JR: Oh, really? It says in the town register, I was in Rumford last week.

EM: No, I was born, and I can't, at the moment the name of the street escapes me ...

JR: Knox, was it Knox?

EM: Knox, that's the street that goes by the French, what would be now a Catholic church. The lower end of it, called the in-town end. It's where the church which was then a French Catholic

church, there were two Catholic churches in my boyhood, an Irish Catholic and a French Catholic church. Then eventually, long after I left, the diocese combined the two and used the French Catholic church building which was newer and larger and more impressive. The Irish church was a wooden building. So I was born in a, what we called a tenement house at the other end of Knox Street, and I don't remember which floor. As a matter of fact, I don't remember that, living in that house at all because we moved out of it before I was five years old. But I know that after I ran for the vice president, the then owner fixed the house all up because he figured that someday he might be able to sell it and make money out of the fact that I had been born in it. And then from there we moved down to, what was that other street now, Virginia?

JR: Spruce.

EM: Spruce Street. Spruce Street. And that house I remember. That was a tenement house and we lived, I think it was three, three tenements, three floors, and we lived in the middle one. And so I can remember living there at Christmas time, I can remember taking baths there, we took baths on Saturday night and my mother heated the water on the stove and we took our baths in the kitchen in a big washtub as I remember it. So we had baths once a week. It wasn't every day. And of course in those days in the winter time you wore long underwear to keep warm because houses weren't that warm. There was no such thing as central heating for people of our income, and there wasn't much central heating, so usually the bedrooms were kept cold, I was going to say cool but I'd have to say they were cold. And the kitchen and the living room, or the parlor as we called it, the kitchen and the parlor, two rooms that you lived in, they were warm. But I remember it as a very warm and cozy childhood.

About how long did we live there? We lived there until, I started school there in a school that was not far from Knox Street. What was it called? Pettingill School I think, and I think the building is still there. I think some of those schools, there were several of those schools that look very much alike and I think some of them are still being used as schools. This is, what, sixty five years later. But in any case, I started school there and I remember very well because I was very shy. I was unusually shy, and I don't think I went there more than two years.

So around the time I was eight, I guess, seven or eight, we moved up to Virginia to a house that had been owned by my father's sister and her husband, on Hemingway. That's how we happened to move into that one because they were, he was a laundryman, he ran that laundry (*unintelligible phrase*), he ran that laundry at the end of Hemingway. He's an Irishman, a very wonderful uncle, very, but they were moving to Jamaica Plain, or to South Boston where he had a job managing and running a laundry, which is what he did all his life, and so their house was up for sale and, wait a minute, I'm skipping a place. Before we moved, before we bought that house and moved into it, we moved up to Virginia in a tenement that was on, what was it, Prospect Avenue, is that the main street in ...?

JR: Your sister mentioned Pine Street?

EM: No, no, Pine Street was down the other end. No, this was ...

JR: It could have been Prospect. It was just for a short period of time.

EM: Yeah, we were there I guess it must have been a couple of years. My memory isn't that precise. But, again, I think we lived in the middle apartment of three and went to the Virginia School which was where the streets divide there; one goes up over the hill and one, and one of them is Crescent Avenue and one is Prospect Avenue. Neither one is truly an avenue in the modern sense, but it was pleasant, we liked Virginia, and we enjoyed that, we didn't call them apartments, we called them rents. We lived in a rent. And so in Virginia School I must have been maybe in the third grade, I entered that school somewhere around that, and then it wasn't very long after that that my uncle sold his house on Hemingway Street and we moved over there. So that's the house where we lived from that time until, well, my mother owned it until she died of course. And I left it to go to Bates and the longest period I lived in it after that was after I finished law school and lived there studying for the Maine bar examination. And I took the bar exams and moved to Waterville that spring to take over my law practice. So that was Knox, Spruce, Prospect Avenue I think, Hemingway Street, those were the places.

JR: Now, why, you moved an awful lot for, I mean, considering, in your childhood, you seemed to be moving an awful lot. Why was it that you were moving all over the place? Was it just ...?

EM: I don't really know. I would say that in terms of the quality of the neighborhoods, there wasn't that much difference. Knox Street was a street of tenements, or, there may have been a few single family, not many people in our class, income class, owned single family houses. Most of them lived in rents. I think that was true of factory towns, mill towns like Rumford, and I can't think of names of all the streets, but Franklin Street was a street where people who were well-to-do had single family homes. The streets around the then Rumford High School, I don't know if you had occasion to visit that school, but families in that area tended more to live in single family houses. Our doctor, Dr. Lowell, the doctor who brought me into this world, lived in a beautiful house there, adjoining the old high school. But those neighborhoods were not far from where we lived and the difference in housing didn't reflect any difference in status or acceptability or social standing that was evident to us.

My father was highly respected by everybody in town, including the professionals, because he was a master tailor, the only one in town. And they liked his work and they gave him their patronage so he was probably one of the most respected men in town when he died, as I remember it. But in any case, why they moved, my father at one time planned to build a house not too far from the, from Knox Street. He bought a lot and owned a lot there on, it's either the same street or the street back of the street that the Rumford Community Hospital is now located. It was a beautiful lot. It was his dream to build a house there, although he never discussed it with us much. And I suspect that my uncle's moving from, moving to Boston, precipitated his decision to own a house and he decided to buy that one and gave up his, he held on to that lot I think for some time, but eventually he decided I guess to stay where he was. And he bought the house next door simply because he could then control who lived in it ...

JR: Were the people that lived, by chance your sister mentioned it, Irene, that the people that lived next door were either on, it might have been on Knox Street or Spruce Street, but one of the places, they were very obnoxious, or they were relatively, um, kind of a pain to live next to.

EM: Well I, I remember that family vaguely. I think the family she meant. I wouldn't want to name the family because I know, I can remember the name, because that description doesn't fit all of them. Two of the boys, one was named Steve and one was named Donald, but they were boys I got along well with.

JR: Oh, so you would play with them?

EM: Yeah, I played with them. I remember the mother was, may have been a problem, from an adult's point of view, we never ran into it... But in any case, there was, I mean there's always, you know, there are always instances of unpleasantness between neighbors and it may have been exaggerated. But in any case, my father was doing well at that time, this was in the late twenties, and so he bought that house and that family moved out. And he was able to pay cash for it, and he was able to pay cash for the remodeling that he did to it, so that by the time it was in a condition to rent, he paid for it out of current income. My father didn't believe in credit, he didn't believe in bor-, in buying things on credit. He believed in paying cash.

JR: Why? Was it just ...?

EM: Well, it was just, you know, buying on time, you know, just was not a custom at that time, generally, but I think he brought with him an old world prudence too, about such things, and didn't want to be in debt, wanted to be independent, believed in saving, and always saved money. Even in the Depression when times were not good, by God, he saved money. And if he couldn't, during the Depression I remember he bought a second hand Cadillac in very good shape, a seven passenger Cadillac, in the twenties ...

JR: When was that? In the twenties?

EM: In the twenties, late twenties. It was always the vehicle we took Sunday drives in as a family. We used to visit people on a farm just outside of town where he used to have fun with his kids, and, but when the Depression came, he put that car up on wheels in the garage and he never drove again the rest of his life.

JR: Really? Why not?

EM: Because it was, he couldn't support it, pay for it, so he began walking to work. But he never took the car to go to work anyway, he walked to work every day. A mile, a mile and a half down to the island, and that was the way. And he believed in family responsibility - I think my mother may have thought that he was a little too tight with the dollar, because he insisted on controlling family finances, how much was spent or bought. And he did very well, I thought, raising six kids and leaving enough for my mother to live on after he died, so he managed pretty well.

JR: It seems from the people that I've talked to that Frank Anastasio, to, I guess at some point he'd, your father loaned Mrs. Anastasio some money so she could get a washer or something, a dryer, for her house, and things like that. It seems that you all were relatively well off. I mean, you weren't ...

EM: Oh, we were not poor.

JR: Yeah, it seems you all were very, you know, you know, you didn't have, you had, you always had enough to eat and you always had, you always, you were, you were, well, you were a medium kind of family. Very comfortable living.

EM: Of course the standards were, you know, the standards of what was comfortable in those days, you know, may look to people today like poverty. You ought to visit the Roosevelt Cottage on Campobello Island someday. You know, I'm chairman of that park, but now, he was a millionaire, and you look through that house, the bathrooms and so on, and, you know, a middle class family of today would insist on more comforts. The house itself, of course, is big, but it's simple, it's plain. I mean, it's obviously comfortable and a place of great joy and pleasure. And part of that joy and pleasure came from the fact that it made the simple life possible. There was no television, I'm sure, well, they didn't have electricity on Campobello Island when Roosevelt spent those years there.

JR: That's true.

EM: And I can remember when my father bought the first Victrola, that's what it was, a Victrola. I can just see it. He brought it into the house and set it up in the living room, you had to hand crank it, and quality, well, it sounded like heavenly music to us. By comparison, because I've played some of those old records, I think I've got some almost as old as that somewhere in storage, but we thought it was great. We used to sit around the parlor, that's what it was, listening to that. You have to crank the damn thing after every record.

JR: To get it going again.

EM: Get it going again. And I remember the first radio.

JR: When did you get the first radio?

EM: Well, it was in the early twenties because I can remember listening to the Rose Bowl game in 1927. We got that broadcast coming over, none of us had ever noticed that football was played in January. All of a sudden we were listening, because in the fall we used to listen to football games on that radio, God yes, that was one of the great thrills, but that was, so it must have been about twenty four, twenty five, something like that. And it had three dials that you had to synchronize. I mean, it wasn't one dial, so if you got a station, though it might be on ninety two on this one, and ninety five on another one, and ninety one on the third one, you know, because there were different air, uh, but that was part of the fun of it, you know. We used to have a book on the table every time we got a new station and jot down the three numbers so we could get it back again when we wanted to. Those things were a great thrill.

I mean, we enjoyed the advance of technology as much as people do today, but of course it was in a much more primitive stage of development. And my father cared, you know, he bought his first car in the early twenties, I think. I think it was, the first one was a Chevy, second one was a

Durant, and neither one, or both of those had side curtains, you know. Those were not enclosed cars and so if it started to rain while you were out driving, you had to get out and put up these, what did they call that, [sic] dreisenglass, isinglass curtains? Button them in place and, great addition. You had to crank those cars to get it started, which was dangerous.

JR: Why?

EM: Well, the damn thing could kick back on you.

JR: Oh, okay, all right. Excuse this person from another generation.

EM: And learning to drive them of course, you had to, the pedals, the clutch, and you had to, and the shift, nothing automatic about all that, so we thought the skill of learning to drive was acquiring those skills. And I can remember when I got, when the automatic shifting came in, I didn't think there was really much to be proud of. I said, hell, what's there, what do you need to know about driving if all you have to do is steer the wheel? But anyway, we had cars, and the Cadillac was the third one. And that was enclosed, very beautifully built.

We took a trip to Buffalo, New York in 1927 or '28, that's where my mother's family was, Buffalo. That was quite a trip because you didn't have super highways then, you had a lot of roads under construction and you had to go, detours and all that business. How my father had the patience to take six kids on that kind of a trip, and it took, it took us a day to go to Boston. Visited my father's sister there en route. I remember we got to Boston late afternoon and then had to find the street where my aunt lived. I tell ya, took us two or three hours. Oh, God, my father wasn't accustomed to city traffic. And then I think we took two days to drive to Buffalo, where we stayed overnight, not in a motel, it was just in a house that took in tourists.

JR: Did you visit someone possibly in Pennsylvania?

EM: Yeah, we visited the place where, (*unintelligible phrase*), which I gather was the first place my father lived when he came over from the old country. As a matter of fact, I remember going out with him one afternoon and visiting the tailor he worked for, or worked with. I remember he left me sitting in the car and they spent all afternoon talking. I got so impatient, there wasn't a damn thing I could do about it. They were reminiscing and so, and ...

JR: Do you remember where in Pennsylvania that was?

EM: Well, that was on the trip back from Buffalo. Same time, '27, '28, something like that. So it was, you know, it was quite an adventure. I guess the occasion for picking that time was that one of my mother's brothers was getting married so that was my first exposure to a Polish wedding, which is something. The only thing that's more impressive is a Polish funeral. But ...

JR: What was a Polish wedding like?

EM: Well, all I can remember is that there were an awful lot of people and they had a room set up as a bar, and they didn't know what to do with the kids so they sat us in the bar. And I just

remember the thing went on until the wee hours of the morning. The adults were having a great time; the kids, my God, were being patted on the head, maybe given an occasional drink and all kinds of food.

JR: Now, you visited these people in Pennsylvania. Where was that in Pennsylvania, do you remember where that was?

EM: Yeah, that was a place called Dixon City. It was part, Dixon City is part of Scranton, and it was in the coal mining area because I remember the people we stayed with operated a saloon. We stayed above it. They put us up, how they ever did it with six, lots of kids, my father and mother, I don't know. But anyway, we'd go down and help serve the customers in the saloon just for the fun of it. And some of the patronage consisted of a lot of coal miners.

JR: Now, back to Rumford and that, when your father, now, he came to Rumford in 1911.

EM: That's right, this house was built in 1912.

JR: Was it really? Wow. You wouldn't know it, actually. I wouldn't have said that old. Anyway, well, anyway, what, do you have any idea what he did? Now, he was in Dixon City before that. I haven't been able to find out ...

EM: No, he moved from Dixon City to Buffalo.

JR: All right, now, he went to Buffalo right after that?

EM: Well, I don't know how long he stayed in Dixon City. That was before 1911.

JR: He came in 1903 to America.

EM: That's right. So he divided that time in between, as far as I know, I don't think there was any other place, between Dixon City and Buffalo. Dixon City first and then Buffalo. How he happened to move to Buffalo, I guess maybe the obvious reason is that Buffalo had a large Polish population. Probably mutual friends recommended it to him or whatnot. And I don't know where he lived in Buffalo, but that's where he met my mother, who was one of a large family of children. I think there must have been ten or eleven or something children. I think among the things at Bates is a picture of the family.

JR: Of your mother's family?

EM: Of my mother's family. And I think all of the children are in that picture.

JR: Is it, was it like a big framed picture, or was it just a ...?

EM: It was framed, it was, oh, I'd say about, maybe this size.

JR: They must, they've put that away somewhere. I don't know, I haven't seen that.

EM: They've got it somewhere because none of us have it. Well, Bates wanted to know how much, what things we wanted in the house and we finally decided we didn't want any. Oh, just one or two pieces my daughter wanted, but other than that we told Bates, take it all.

JR: So, when he came over, he probably came by himself from Poland, I take it.

EM: No, no. He moved from Poland to England first, when he was seventeen, and worked for a Jewish tailor and lived with the Jewish tailor's family in London. My impression is that that period was about three years. I can't be precise about these things but it's my impression, and when he moved there he could speak five languages. He could speak Polish, Russian, German, Yiddish or Jewish, and as far as that family was concerned, they thought he was Jewish. And then of course he learned to speak English. He never had more than a few, a handful of years in school because he was apprenticed to a tailor when he was twelve or thirteen, in Bialystok, in Poland, a Jewish tailor, and he worked at his bench, slept there and ate at his workbench.

JR: Really, wow. So his family in Poland then was, was it a relatively big family? Like, or was it, I mean, ...

EM: Well, I've never heard him speak of more than, there was only one sister who moved to America that was actually known to us. We know he had at least one brother, maybe two. I can't remember that he ever spoke of another sister, so it wasn't that large. His father was manager of a count's farm. I remember my father referred to the count as being the owner and employer of his father, so they were raised on a farm.

As a matter of fact, when I visited the village of Jasionowka, where my father was born, first, on the outskirts there was a state farm, which my aunt I think told me, was the farm that my grandfather managed. I don't know, she wasn't with me so she may, but I remember there was a duck pond beside the road which we went by in to the town, and he always, you know, he used to like to talk to us for hours on end about his life in Poland as a boy. I mean, he'd repeat his stories and after awhile, you know, we'd get impatient with hearing the same stories over and over again, but he so obviously enjoyed reminiscing, reliving those years. Always wanted to go back to visit, not to live. Never did. So, first chance I had I went back, you know, and I was doing so for him. So, his, he, and I have the vague recollection of before he left England to come to the United States, he went back briefly to Poland. But he left London on the day King Edward was crowned. Now, whether he came over with friends who were also coming, I assume that he probably did, I assume that he didn't make this trip alone. I assume that he made it with others, and I gather he went to Dixon City for whatever reason first, and then after a few years there, on to Buffalo.

JR: And he was a tailor, I mean, that's what he did. He was a tailor all his life.

EM: He was a master tailor, he was apprenticed, then he went up the ladder until when he left Poland, he was a master tailor.

JR: Now, when I was going through the Maine Register for those years, like, after 1911, the

first encounter that I come across his name as being a merchant tailor. He was first a clothing and gents fashion, then it changed into gents, into, uh, a merchant tailor, but it doesn't come for, like, two years after 1911, or maybe around when you were born or a year later. And I read somewhere that it mentioned that your father had, did something with, besides tailoring. I'm not quite sure what, was there any ...?

EM: Not to my knowledge. Well, when he came to Rumford, I assume, and this is an assumption, it's not based on actual knowledge, that he'd already been to Rumford before he and my mother were married. Because I heard her say that after they were married, they headed for Rumford and she didn't really expect that that's where she was going to spend the rest of her life. But he told her that, she said she didn't know how to cook, he told her that she had to learn because we already had two boarders arranged for. [laughter] It's a good way to be introduced to your new life. And he worked for a tailor called James Shea. Jimmy Shea. And I have an idea that Jimmy Shea had a tailor shop in connection with a department store called C.H. MacKenzie, but then eventually they had a falling out. I remember all this vaguely, and my father set up his own shop, so that may explain the one or two years. But I've got one of his calendars in here in which he describes himself as a custom tailor which is meant to imply that the clothes are made, measured and made to order, you see. Because that was his capability, he was damned good at it, as well.

JR: Well, how would you describe your father? Over the things I've read and people I've talked to, he was, was it easy, did he show affection very easily? Was he, what kind of a person was he?

EM: Well, he showed affection in his concern for his family, his devotion, and he spent practically all his life with his family. He used to go down to the Elks Club to play cards occasionally, didn't gamble in any serious way at least, but the Elks Club was his one outside social activity. That was only occasionally. When he had, when he wasn't working in his shop, he was with his family. He spent weekends doing things with us, taking us for a drive up to the country or taking us to a lake. In summer time, go to the beach and to swim, go pick berries in the fall, and go to a corn roast on one of his neighbors' farms near Rumford, or, I mean, that's how he spent his life.

JR: And he took you hunting quite often, with Mr. Gagnon.

EM: That's right. Took me hunting and fishing. In those days the merchants of the town used to take I think Wednesday afternoons off, for field days. And they'd go out to a pond and, you know, they'd have organized activities of one kind or another and you could always go swimming. And if we weren't going to those field days, we'd go by ourselves to different ponds. One nice thing about Rumford, any place in Maine, is that there are usually a number of ponds where you can go and we used to go to Worthy Pond, Roxbury Pond, or Bear Pond; those are three that I remember specifically.

And then once a year for a number of years, when I was nine, ten, eleven, something like that, he and Mr. Gagnon, Alfred Gagnon was his name, used to go up to Four Ponds which was... You had to take the train out of Rumford, the train to Rangeley, the Rangeley Lakes area, and the last

stop before you got to Beamis, which is the southern most point on the Rangeley Lakes, was Four Ponds. There was nothing but a flag station there. And we would ride up there in the conductor's caboose because it wasn't a passenger train. It used to take fishermen in the caboose, drop them off at some, one year we went to Beamis, fishing. But it was always for a week and it was about a four mile climb, steep climb up the mountains. I know there was a spring halfway up there. We used to drop down gratefully after the first two miles to cool off and the water was wonderful I remember, and then we'd walk the rest of the way. And usually at the end of the lake that we reached there were boats tied up.

You had to rent the camps in advance but there weren't more than, I know on the lake where we stayed there's a Camp Helen and a Camp Gladys, and we stayed at one or another of those two. They were quite primitive and there were bunks built and I know we slept at the very top bunk, there were three. We had to climb up to it and we carried all our food on our backs, boys as, there were three of us, three fathers and three sons, Gagnon and my father and, who was the other one? We were all compatible. The fathers were compatible, the boys were. If we wanted trout for breakfast, we just got up fifteen minutes early and went down to the lake and caught them. It was a great, I tell you, I think we went three years running before I got to high school. Those were three glorious weeks.

JR: Really, going there. What about your mother? She seems like a great quiet influence on you but she seems like, I heard that you would often read in the kitchen when she, whenever she was around, you'd often sit and read. Wouldn't necessarily go out and play but just be with her in spirit and be with her there.

EM: Yeah, that's true. I think we all were. Well, I've described the houses. The parlor and the kitchen were the living areas really. And, well, the only table in the house at which you could study was in the kitchen. She wouldn't let us do that in the diningroom, although I'm not sure about that. The dining room was right, I think we were a little unusual in having a dining room. And Bates has got the table and the sideboard from those years. I remember my mother was offered five hundred dollars for that table the year she died, the year before. But that table is a round oak table, it had a couple of leaves, but when we were all seated around it it was crowded.

But I tell you the feasts that she put on that table were something none of us ever forgot. My sisters still cook the same things that she taught them to. But it was a real family house and my father provided. Always plenty of food. I tell you, the table at Thanksgiving and Christmas literally groaned, and afterwards, after Christmas dinner for example, we'd play cards the rest of the day, have chocolates and prizes. My mother liked the chocolate covered cherries, or brandy chocolates. Did you ever have brandy chocolates? They were delicious. But that's, we'd play all day long. We might have some neighbors in, the Gagnons would come in, and we'd play games all day long, play cards. My father was right there, and of course he was ready at the drop of a hat to tell a Christmas story about, about life in Poland. So it was in those ways that he expressed his feeling for the family.

END OF SIDE A, TAPE 1

BEGIN SIDE B, TAPE 1

You know, he never particularly hugged us nor showed physical signs of affection, but there was no mistaking it. My mother was quiet, but oh, God, she did learn to cook, she was one of the world's best cooks. You know, on Sunday mornings, she'd get up and make popovers for us, you know what a pop-over is? Imagine making popovers for six kids on a Sunday morning? And you know, she'd make fresh doughnuts in the morning for us, and homemade oatmeal in the winter time. She was overburdened with laundry and laundry was not an easy thing in those days, especially in the winter time because the laundry, it had to be washed, the house wouldn't smell very nice. But, you know, she'd wash them and wring them out by hand and hang them out doors where they'd freeze and dance like ghosts in the winter breeze and then had to bring them in and thaw them out and then iron them. I mean, you know, she had to scrub the floors and keep the house neat, and the house was always neat in spite of all the kids, and how she did all those things. But when life brought her to the time when she didn't have things like that to do, she was lost; lost and lonely. We all moved away and she still lived in the house but it was probably filled with ghosts for her. Not real ghosts because we were still alive, but ...

JR: Yeah, but, yeah, I understand.

EM: Because there was a lot of warmth and a lot of mutual enjoyment. My father used to spank us but the last time he ever spanked any of us, I guess I must have been eleven or twelve years old or so and I'd done something, because I did, you know, I did things. And he took off his belt and strap me with it, and it was only after he'd hit me several times that he realized he was hitting me with the buckled end. He never spanked anybody again after that. So he must have had a little of the Muskie temper, and he decided that that wasn't for him. Oh, he'd give us lectures, he was good at that, about what was the right thing to do. I can remember so many subjects - smoking, respecting neighbors, you know, if neighbors complained about us, he always assumed that we were in the wrong. He never assumed that the accusation was false, you know. He respected his neighbors, so when they told him we'd done something wrong, he disciplined us.

JR: But he didn't do that too often.

EM: Well, no, not physically after that incident, but, oh yeah, he'd lecture to us, oh yeah, and he could do a job of it, too. Oh, yeah, and you knew he meant it. He didn't have to have a strap, you know, when he was stern, I tell you, he could intimidate you.

JR: What characteristics would you say that you have of your father's that, you know, over the years you kind of see in yourself.

EM: Well, I have this strong belief in the importance of self discipline, and you build it. I believe that individuals can control their lives more than they're inclined to these days, and follow, you know, stricter standards of behavior than... I mean, I accept the fact that that isn't the world we live in, but I would feel happier about it if I found my kids had, not that I have any bad kids, they're awfully good, but, you know, they can't be the kids of my day because their parents aren't the parents of my day.

And I remember after I was elected governor, you know, the press interviewed him of course, and they asked him about how he viewed my election to governor and his comment, I'll never forget it, he said, I hope he can stay honest. So he believed in that sort of thing, respecting your neighbors. He believed in the golden rule literally. He believed in financial prudence, believed in saving, believed in looking ahead to the rainy day, responsibility. And in his own way he could, although I was very shy, and he was I think, although he, I can remember that when he died, of course I was then governor, I'd been governor a year or so. People noted his death more than they might have otherwise, but I can remember a newspaper comment which one woman who wasn't named, said she would always remember my father because every time he ever passed her on the street, he tipped his hat. Old-fashioned virtue maybe? Did you ever see a man, well, you never see a man wear a hat. And if they do, you never saw them tip it to anybody. So it was a different day, you know. There were some nice things about it. But I, you know, I don't have any nostalgia for it because I, you know, I was not an adult in that day. As I think back, and have thought back to things that I think of when I think of him, I find those qualities admirable and wished that I had some of them to a greater extent myself.

JR: Your relationship with your brother and sisters, how, well, first off with your sisters, how did that, how did you, like with Irene and all, you know, she being the older one, how did you, you know, when you were growing up, how was that relationship dealt with? You know, how sometimes boys, brothers and sisters aren't necessarily the kindest ones to one another. Was that a, did you get along very well with her? Was it a smooth relationship, or was it a ...?

EM: Well, I can't remember that it was an abrasive relationship. I mean, we had our falling out, because we all, at least I know I had a temper and maybe I had the worst temper in the family because I don't really associate any of them with having a temper, although we would argue. I just can't remember a single incident, maybe they do, instance in which, you know, we had a really unpleasant time that lingered or that, I don't know how to describe it.

JR: Was your sister protective of you? Or was she, you know, how, did she look over you or take, you know, watch out for you? Would she play with you or would they play with you at all?

EM: Well, I can't really remember the early years. But after we moved to the house on Hemingway Street, which is only my clearest recollection, you know, I tended to play with the boys in the neighborhood because there were enough boys in that area so we used to have, used to play pick-up baseball, games, football. We used to go to the swimming hole together in the summer time. I don't really remember much activity of that kind that I shared with my sisters.

JR: Well, then, all right, then, when, when ...

EM: At Christmas time and holidays and so on, I've already described... (*slight gap in tape*)... affair then. And of course, when we went, well, when we went to the lakes to swim and pick berries or whatnot, you know, it was always together and I think we, as I remember, we enjoyed each other's company.

JR: With Gene, how did that relationship work?

EM: Well, he was four years younger. Four years, up the age of eighteen, is quite a bit. And then I moved away to college. And in high school, you know, in high school I was intent on becoming involved in school activities because I wanted to get over my shyness, so I went out for sports, I went out for debating. Because I was a good student, I worked hard at my homework, I really did. I didn't need to because the studies were easy, but I did. And I think to a great extent getting involved in school, my high school, perhaps minimized the time that I got involved with my own sisters and brother. And that's only looking back. I think they took pride in what, none of them seemed to be as driven to excel in school as I was, because I truly was. Well, my second sister, Lucy, was a good student. She was, as a matter of fact, she was salutatorian of her class. She was, what, two years behind me, so she did well in school. But she didn't seem to have any great urge to go to college. I think they sort of assumed that, you know, only one of us could afford to go and they sort of assumed that I was the one to go. None of the others ever went to college.

JR: Did Eugene look up to you? Well, you two slept in the same room together.

EM: Same bed.

JR: Same bed, all right, now what, what would you, would you go to bed and like talk about what's going on, or would you just go straight to bed, that was that?

EM: I don't really remember, but I assume there was some discussion. He was an entirely different type than I. He was more outgoing, extrovertish, and he had his own friends. We got along amicably, but I, I mean, the four year spread was, accounted for it I think by and large.

JR: Yeah, I can understand that, I have a brother who's four years older than me. I can understand kind of what, there is, especially when you're younger. All right, now that I'm older I'm able to relate a lot more to my brother, I'm a lot closer.

EM: And my brother and I get along, of course he's on the other side of the continent, but when I ran for vice president he got involved in Labor's activities and traveled over the country for me. So I know there's real ties with affection.

JR: He never resented having to live up to your, I mean, reputation, you know, the ...

EM: I never detected that.

JR: Never?

EM: Nor my sisters. They've always seemed to take a great deal of satisfaction out of, as far as what they might have thought about it I don't know, but, I wonder why they didn't resent it. Maybe if they'd had ambition to go to school they might have. I don't know whether I'm an oddity in the family, or, they're certainly not because they all seem to have, you know, led lives that have given them love and the usual set of problems. They've all had problems with children and so on. Who doesn't? But they seem reasonably satisfied with their lives. But you never can tell because to a great extent, you know, I spoke of my shyness, my shyness, I think all of us

have had a tendency to stay within ourselves a lot, and not really to talk about our innermost feelings.

JR: That's tough to do.

EM: Yeah, I think that's maybe a family trait because I can't, well, I can't recall even talking to my, as strong as my feeling was for my parents, I can't recall ever talking to them on intimate terms, even about my hopes. You know, I went to college because it was sort of assumed I should if it was possible, but it wasn't because I had expressed to my parents, I don't think I ever talked to them about my desire to go to college. Maybe I rather assumed that if I did well in high school, I would. But, you know, that kind of exchange, it was a loss, really, that it didn't take place. I don't recall it ever taking place so we had, it was sort of strange, we had a ... (*taping temporarily interrupted*).

JR: Would you have considered yourself, you said that you were shy as a youngster, did that, would that ...

EM: I still am.

JR: You still are. But would you consider that that was part of the reason that you studied, to go into the books, kind of ...

EM: Well, no, it's, the reason I went, well, no, I don't, no, I don't think so. I think that the fact that I was shy drove me to try to excel, and particularly to get involved in debating. Because I remember, you know, for years before I went to high school, sending in these coupons, you know, how to learn public speaking and all that business. I used to send them in, not that I could ever do anything about it, I, you know, they'd answer and send me their usual propaganda. It would cost you so much to do this or that, it never went any further. It was just, you know, I was searching for a way, and school activities were a way to get involved. Then Miss Cleary, who you've met I gather, she was the debating coach. She finally ran me down in my junior year, talked me into trying out for the debating team and I enjoyed it. It was also a way to get out of the shyness, and when I became valedictorian, when I had to prepare that speech, with the help of Mrs. Warren, I don't know if you've met her yet ...

JR: Lucille Hicks Warren [Abbott]?

EM: Lucille Hicks Warren [Abbott], and that went over well, I got a good write up in the Rumford Times, ...

JR: When, that was in '32?

EM: That was '32.

JR: Do you know where I can get that speech? I wanted to ask you about that. I ...

EM: Well, I've seen it within the last year. Well, yeah, the speech?

JR: Yes.

EM: I've got the speech.

JR: I would love to get that sometime and read it because I don't know where else to get it.

EM: Well, I'm not sure where it is, must be in that mass of papers there.

JR: Okay, is it? All right, okay, well.

EM: If it isn't, it will eventually get there somehow.

JR: I hope so.

EM: But, ah, ...

JR: So did you, what, you got involved in a lot of things in school. Was this a, difficult for you to do? I mean, were you, like, conscious of, like, all right, now, come on, go do it, and you were just kind of pushing yourself to go do that, to go try out for this or that, or were you, were you kind of, was it something that, kind of, people said why don't you come on over, try out for the track team. Why don't you come on over and try out for the track team.

EM: No, nobody particularly urged me to do that. I tried out for the track team, well, I told you that, you know, in the neighborhood the boys, we played baseball, football and all that sort of thing. And among other things we set up a high jumping stand in our yard and I don't know what attracted me to high jumping but, but I just did it for fun without ever thinking of trying out for the track team. When I tried out for the track team, I went in to the half mile and did pretty well at that, but it never occurred to me to try out for the high jump. But in the very last league of my senior year, somehow I was invited to try the high jump, and I'd never done it on the school grounds, and I won the event. Maybe practiced in my back yard, I may have that a little confused, but that's it, I mean, I started just for background amusement and eventually, then went over to Bates. I think I won the high jump at most of the freshman track meets. But then I decided to concentrate on debating at Bates, didn't continue my track career.

JR: Or your basketball career.

EM: Or my basketball career.

JR: Well, now, what was that basketball career like? Would you consider yourself one of those, a basketball player, you know?

EM: Well, I was too thin to be a good one. I enjoyed basketball and certainly tried out for the team. I earned my letter but not as a, not as a starter. I just didn't have the, well, when I graduated from high school I weighed about 155 pounds, six feet four, and I just couldn't last a full game, so I was a substitute. And enjoyed doing that and enjoyed their starters, it didn't

bother me. And a couple of times as a starter I was able to contribute to the successful result, but those games were not high scoring games. Games were decided by scores of twenty to eighteen, thirty to twenty five and that sort of thing, and you had the center jump after every score. But I enjoyed basketball, I even tried out for football but I obviously didn't have the weight for that, nor did I have the taste for that. Track I enjoyed, and I enjoyed the half mile. Again, I didn't have, quite have the stamina, that was one of my... High jumping was the one that required the least stamina, durability, so maybe that's why I rather enjoyed that, but on the other hand, I don't know why I didn't stay with it. I think I could have been a success at high jumping, probably. I got up to six feet I think.

JR: That's not bad.

EM: But, ah, I just couldn't cut out the other activities, that's all.

JR: You've been described by a number of your friends as one who, if he didn't fit, if you didn't fit in, if you weren't able to be the, you know, if you weren't great at a certain sport or a certain thing, you'd try. You'd, that was, you would work at it until you got it. Would that describe, is that a good description, is that something you'd do?

EM: Well, yeah, you know, I said earlier that I think by exercising will power you can accomplish more than you think you can. And I used to enjoy testing myself, memorizing things or, I can remember when I got my first library card. Rumford had a good town library, and I forget how, at what age you could get a card, ten or eleven, something like that, maybe ten. But anyway, the first, I think it was on my, on that birthday that I showed up at the library and then got a book, took it home, read it that night and went back the next day, and asked if I couldn't take two. I read the two of them that night and came back. I think I got up to eight, not that I read eight in one night, after all, it was about a mile and a half walk. Not that I minded walking in those days. But when I got up to eight, they called a halt to it. You've got to come more often. I just, you know, I was just determined to read everything I could get my hands on.

And so I read more than probably than I do now. But I saw it as a way of picking up a lot of knowledge and information that was useful, improve my vocabulary, and it was a way, as it turned out, of equipping myself to become a public speaker. Not that that was one of my motives at that time, but it helped. I liked math and was good at it. Math was probably the best subject I ever had, and I, because it involved the exercise of mental discipline and order and organization and so on. Yeah, the high jumping, too. I wasn't, I don't think a natural high jumper, but, no, I guess that would describe me and I think describe my father, too. Determination to succeed. The same was true with politics. I mean, I've always been driven by whatever it was that I wanted to do.

JR: Did you, you said that, what was success to you when you were a little boy? Would you, you had a desire to succeed. What did you see, was it, to different people it means different things. Some it's money, some it's fame, some it's publicity, you know? What was it to you?

EM: Achievement. Excellence. I wanted to do things well. You know, when we played baseball I wanted to pitch. I guess I wasn't bad, my youngest son was all conference pitcher in

Washington, but I had an underhand throw as well as an overhand throw so in sandlot baseball, you know, I got to pitch quite often. To me that was the clearest place to excel and demonstrate excellence.

JR: Did you, you didn't have any, any intention of entering politics also, when you went to high school?

EM: No, no.

JR: You weren't, like, thinking ...?

EM: No, it never occurred to me. I was interested in politics simply as an observer. You know, I just, Lucille Hicks, you know, who taught American history and current events, you know, when I was a senior, got four, five or six of us. We used to meet in her room after classes and just discuss the current political scene, which was 1932, before that convention which nominated Franklin Roosevelt. So there was a lot to talk about. This was almost a nightly occurrence. But it never occurred to me that I would one day be running for office, let alone president.

And I continued, I think one of the reasons I was interested in debating was because, you know, what I majored in when I first went to Bates was mathematics. Same time that I was debating, and I found myself, although I did well in math, issues that we debated, politics and social events, were of more interest to me than the mathematics. And I just didn't want to become a math teacher, and nobody had thought of the space age in those times. So, then I changed majors after one year or two years to government history. And so, you know, doing well in school and, I know I was ambitious to be valedictorian.

JR: In high school.

EM: In high school, and I was determined that I would be. And it wasn't that difficult.

JR: Didn't Pearl Harvey give you a lot of ...?

EM: Oh, Pearl was good. She was second. She must have been because I think ...

(Interrupted by telephone call)

JR: All right, um, when you went to Bates, now, I, how did you, ah, pay for it? I mean, it's the middle of the Depression. Did you get a scholarship from Bates, or was there, there was a rumor that, it was suggested that the person who started Gould Academy, I'm not sure of his name, but that he might have ...?

EM: Bingham, no he had nothing to do with Bates; he did it with law school. No, well I did get a scholarship at Bates, I think it was two hundred and fifty dollars, but then I needed a job in addition to that and I remember going down to Bates and talking to Norm Ross and I think also Harry Rowe. Norm made suggestions about places in Lewiston where I might go looking for a

job. And I remember spending a day trying to, around the streets of Lewiston, looking for a job, without success, and, so finally, they, Bates offered me a job at the Commons waiting on tables. I think I worked my freshman year doing that. Then I worked summers down here at the beach, bell hopping. A classmate of mine at Bates, he had worked here the previous year and so he got the job for me. We washed dishes that year. Three summers we washed dishes, and then I was promoted to bell hop.

JR: So you worked at ...

EM: I worked here.

JR: ... during high school, too. Right? Or not?

EM: No, no. No, no. The first year was the summer we graduated, that summer. That was the summer before I went to Bates. And then, of course, the Roosevelt programs were, aid to college students, came into effect and I was a proctor in a dormitory at federal government expense. Waiter and later head waiter at the Commons, bell hop in the summer, and of course my father gave me some assistance, but at that point you could get through a year at Bates for seven hundred and fifty dollars. And I can remember that at mid-term, when I'd finally gotten settled in my financial groove, instead of getting a bill for the second term expenses, I would get a check for what I had earned above the....

JR: What would you do with that money, would you save it for next semester?

EM: Oh, you had to have some spending money. Didn't have very much in those days, but we got by with much less. You know, we didn't, maybe go to the movies once or twice a week, even though prohibition had lifted there wasn't, at least I didn't get involved with that much drinking in those days. Had a date once or twice a week, so you needed a little spending money, but it wasn't all that expensive because we did relatively simple things. You know, we didn't have cars, there were only two cars on the campus, at least, yeah, I think only two on campus, student cars. And we had the Saturday night dances and they weren't expensive, and so, you know, we were Depression (*slight pause in taping*).

We started in '32 which was the bottom of the Depression and we had learned austerity, periods of that led up to our college, in all our families. I mean, there were few families who weren't impacted, and my father fortunately was self-employed and he was self-employed at a trade that gave him continuing employment, even though it wasn't as flush as it was before. So we got by, and, it was a challenge. It wasn't a block to education. If you were willing to work and, and here again, if you excelled at your studies, I mean, you had to prove yourself to the Norm Rosses and the Harry Rowes, you had to prove that you had something. And if you had something, they'd do something for you. Norm Ross could have given me that job at college Commons when I first went to him. But he wanted to see whether I had the guts to go downtown and hunt for a job. And, then my marks, you know, indicated to them that continuing college was a worthwhile objective, for them as well as for me, so they made some of these pro-, after all, these federal programs weren't handed out willy nilly, so they were willing, you know, to be helpful. Oh, I had to prove that I could be an effective college, dormitory proctor and all that

stuff.

Well, the Bingham thing came in later. When I graduated from Bates, it never occurred to me to be a lawyer, that wasn't in my field of vision at all. But President Gray called me over to his office one day during commencement time, and he said that Cornell Law School, because of the excellent record that Bates graduates had made in Cornell, was making a scholarship available to anyone of his choosing and asked me if I wouldn't like it. And I said, well, I'm not sure, I'd never thought of becoming a lawyer. So I asked him if I couldn't have the summer to think about it.

JR: That must have just, just really, I mean, knocked you off your feet when you first, I mean ...

EM: Well, it was justification of my motivations up to that point. I mean, he wouldn't have made that offer if I hadn't proven myself through college. That's why I'm, you know, such a, I keep repeating it, it's been such a strong determinant. But then my, you know, second year, I needed additional financial help in order to stay in college and I'd heard of Mr. Bingham. He lived in Bethel. He was a very rich man and he made it, he had a hobby of helping people who had started school to finish school. He wouldn't help them get started, but he'd help them finish. And when I heard of him, he was helping about fifty students a year and he worked through a doctor who lived at Christmas Cove, aptly named, and, uh, Dr. Farnsworth, and so I wrote Mr. Bingham a letter. The very next day I got a call from Bethel. The very next day I got a call from Christmas Cove. Dr. Farnsworth asked me if I couldn't come down the next day. Of course, law school was about to start in a week or two, second year. So I went down, my brother-in-law drove me down, and spent several hours with Dr. Farnsworth. He later told me in a letter he wrote many years later, now that he, really the reason he gave me the help was because of my smile.

JR: Really.

EM: Yeah. I'm sure he was pulling my leg a little bit. In any case, he was, you know, finding out who I was. When I left that afternoon, I had a check for nine hundred dollars in my pocket, and he said next year you come back again. And then when I enlisted and it was, the terms were ten years, no interest, for those loans. Then I started practice, after two years enlisted in the Navy. Within a week after I enlisted in the Navy, I don't know how he learned about it, I got a letter from Dr. Farnsworth enclosing the first note canceled. He said I don't think you ought to go into the service with this burden hanging over you and he said, next year, we'll return the second, which he did.

JR: That's interesting. So, you ...

EM: So you see all of this was, my whole life has demonstrated to me, you know, that my conviction about proving yourself and achieving excellence, growing and so on, is the key to success. That involves determination and will power, you've got to face problems and overcome them, and you can't let yourself get discouraged. You've got to have resiliency.

JR: There's one thing I wanted to ask you about is the Mechanics Institute in Rumford, and I

know that that was a big social, well ...

EM: It was a great place.

JR: Describe that. What was that like? I mean, did you go there often, or ...?

EM: Oh, God, I think there was hardly a night, a school night in the week that we didn't go there. It's where the high school played its basketball teams and that's where we practiced. We didn't have a gymnasium in those days. So we practiced basketball in that little shoebox of a gymnasium. It was not standard size, but, great place. And you could, they had pool tables, billiard tables, and it was a decent place for kids to learn to play those games because it was well supervised. You know, it wasn't like the corner pool room or anything of that sort, it was just a very nice place. And then they had large rooms where you could just sit and read or play cards, and they had parties there occasionally. And this was not just for kids. All the young men in town went there; they had bowling alleys. The Oxford Mill, really, I think built that thing as a town resource for their mill workers, but you had to become a member. I forget how much it cost; it couldn't have cost very much or I wouldn't have been a member. Maybe two dollars and a half a year, or something like that, very modest. But it was just high quality, a high quality building, it was the nicest place in town for the kids. Clean atmosphere, there was no drinking, there was no bar, there was no, I can't remember about the smoking part. I assume there must have been because that wasn't the day that, you know, that wasn't today. But it really was, that was, I'd forgotten about that until you asked the question. It was a very important influence. It's where, I, you know, it's where I, I mean high school was one thing, but here, this was a social setting where you get to where, with the chance to meet a lot of people you wouldn't otherwise meet. So you could get used to dealing with different personalities and different people in an entirely different setting than school.

JR: Did you date a lot, women a lot in high school?

EM: No, I was very shy. No, I think, I don't remember if I dated a girl before I was a senior or not. Yeah, I think I did date a girl when I was a junior, I remember. I've gotten a, I think I've gotten a message from her in the last couple of years. She lives out on the West Coast somewhere. Of course, they hear about me when I don't hear about them. Of course I dated girls at the beach after, but that was after high school. And another girl I dated was on the debating team. She was a year ahead of me in school, so, she left and I had to find another girl my senior year. But there are only the two of them that I dated. As I say, I was very shy and I suspect I was not a very hot date. I was rather in awe of girls, truth be known.

JR: I think there's a little bit of that in every male. You know, what the heck. Ah, with a... You were always expected as kids to go to church and I have a feeling that with you it almost, it was, it meant, it really meant something as a child, to go to church, instead of, did it? Is that true?

EM: Well, I think it became a very strong habit because my parents were very church oriented.

End of Tape 1 of two

Tape 2 of two

JR: You, ah...Everyone was expected to go to church. And I have a feeling that it really meant something as a child to go to church.

EM: Well I think it became a very strong habit. Because my parents were very church oriented, although my father very clearly believed in separation of church and state. Because he used to tell us stories about arguments that his father had with the local priest about the proper area of the priests to intrude. Of course they didn't have, they don't have a constitutional principle of separation and state. Nevertheless, as he put it, you give to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's. That's a biblical quotation. But he insisted that we go to church and, well, we accepted that. I mean, there was never any argument about it. And so, and then of course the church's requirements in those days were much stricter, you know? Today you don't fast Fridays and that sort of thing.

I can remember, I guess it must have been the Pope's jubilee year that the church added to the calendar compulsory attendance. I can remember, you know, where I was going to school in Virginia at that time, running to church, which was at least two miles away, every night after school to go to the jubilee services for what seemed like weeks on end. And I think there was sort of, there was sort of the impression around, you know, that I was going to become a priest. Well, that really, I never really had any call for it, but we used to go to Sunday school, and that was not just an after mass affair, we'd also go at other times. And so I was very conscientious about it because, you know, that was what was expected of me. I accepted it, it wasn't any... but I suspect that the priest, who was a Father Flanagan, that's not the Boy's Town Father Flanagan, another Flanagan, thought he had me lined up as a possibility.

JR: What was your last, this whole bit, your father's store, what, now, the one ...

EM: It wasn't a store, it was a tailor shop.

JR: It was a tailor shop, right. The one that, it burned down, the one on Congress Street, right? Do you remember that?

EM: Yes, it took place when I was in college.

JR: All right, what, how did that happen? I mean, what happened?

EM: I don't know how it happened. It might have started in the shop if an iron was left on. My father had big heavy irons to do the pressing work. It might have been that. There was a little shed out back where he used to do cleaning. That involved gasoline, that involved something that inflammable, that might conceivably been involved in that. But I don't really know. I don't know that I ever saw the cause described.

JR: There was a fire in, that mentioned in the town reports, on River Street and it mentioned, and then it had owner or proprietor your father. What was on River Street?

EM: Well, River Street is the back street on the island, I don't remember my father ever owning, of course the back of the building at which his tailor shop was went out in that direction, but it's never been described as being on River Street.

JR: Because it mentioned, it mentioned River Street. It also mentioned there was a chimney fire in your, in the 1920's, '24 maybe?

EM: Chimney fires were quite a common thing in those days because people all burned wood as well as coal. But chimney fires today I gather take place now because a lot of people got back to burning wood. Especially if you burn pine, anything with resin in it, rosin in it. We don't burn pine in these fireplaces. Got a lot of it.

JR: Well, yeah, understandable. Okie doke, well, that's it.

End of Interview