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Interview with Campbell Niven by Nicholas Christie

Summary Sheet and Transcript

Interviewee

Niven, Campbell

Interviewer

Christie, Nicholas

Date

June 20, 2001

Place

Brunswick, Maine

ID Number

MOH 283

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Biographical Note

Campbell Niven was born in Boston, Massachusetts on November 11, 1929 and moved to Brunswick, Maine when he was two years old. He attended Hebron Academy and graduated from Bowdoin College in 1952. He worked for Dupont Corporation in Delaware from 1952 to 1954. He was drafted in 1954 and was stationed in Europe with the Army until 1956. In 1961 he became publisher of the "Brunswick Record" and the "Bath Daily Times", which he then combined into the "Times Record", which he published until his retirement in 1999.

Scope and Content Note

Interview includes discussions of: Bowdoin College; fraternities; the Dupont company; history of local papers: "Times Record" "Brunswick Record" "Bath Times" "Maine Record"; Margaret Chase Smith; Brunswick area history and political atmosphere; Muskie on the campaign trail; Muskie after losing the nomination in 1972; and Nixon dirty tricks.

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Transcript

Nick Christie: This is an interview with Campbell Niven at his office at the *Brunswick Record* in Brunswick, Maine. The date is Wednesday, June 20th, 2001, and Nick Christie is the interviewer.

Campbell Niven: The name of the newspaper is actually the *Times Record*.

NC: *Times Record*. Mr. Niven, could you please state and spell your full name?

CN: Okay, Campbell Niven, C-A-M-P-B-E-L-L is the first name, Niven, N-I-V-E-N.

NC: And where and when were you born?

CN: I was born in Boston, Massachusetts November 8th, 1929.

NC: How long did you stay in Boston?

CN: Two years. Moved to Brunswick at that time, along with my parents who were moving here.

NC: So you stayed in Brunswick for most of your life?

CN: Yeah, yeah. I went to school here, went to Hebron Academy for a couple of years. Graduated from Bowdoin in 1952. Went to work for Dupont down in Delaware 1952 to '54. Was drafted in '54, spent most of my time in Europe in the Army, came back to Brunswick in 1956, became advertising manager of our local weekly paper, which was the *Brunswick Record* at that time. Five years later became publisher of both the weekly paper in Brunswick and the small daily, the *Bath Daily Times*. Both family owned, my grandfather had bought that in 18-, that *Bath Daily Times* in 1897. He died in 1960 and I succeeded him as publisher of that and then, eventually in 1967 merged the two papers to form the *Times Record*. So that's what where my active career, I retired three years ago, right after having celebrated a hundred years of my grandfather and myself running the paper in Bath. So (*unintelligible phrase*). He did the bulk of the work, sixty-three years. I only did thirty-seven, so.

NC: You're retired now.

CN: Yes.

NC: But you're still active in the office.

CN: No, well no, yes and no. I'm active in a variety of things. I'm on the board of the (*name-Curtis*) Library, the budget chairman of that. I'm on a national purchasing cooperative for daily newspapers. I'm on a committee at the college. I'm currently one of the two co-chairmen of a campaign to build a statue of Joshua Chamberlain in Brunswick, since he lived most of his life there. And a lot of other civic activities which are very interesting. But I don't have day-to-day responsibility, my son is the publisher. I've have that little hide-away office which has two chairs in it and that's enough. And there is a conference room here that, maybe have a meeting, but I play a lot of golf in the summer and my wife and I do some traveling and so forth. But, so this is a little nest to get away and do some things.

NC: Going back to the beginning, what were your parents' names?

CN: Paul and Dorothy Niven. The paper is, my mother's father was the one who had bought the paper in 1897. His name was Frank Nicholas. He also had a son who is my uncle and is going to reach the age of a hundred in December, and plays golf every day of the year that he can. Rainy days he doesn't play anymore, but otherwise he does and he enjoys great health and good mind and so forth and so on. We hope longevity is a continuing thing in the family.

NC: You grew up in Brunswick.

CN: Yes.

NC: And you went to high school here.

CN: I went to high school for three years and then a couple years at Hebron.

NC: How did you decide to go to Bowdoin?

CN: Well, it was a school obviously I knew, knew well. My decision came down to between Williams and Bowdoin. Williams was certainly an attractive alternative, but it wasn't as good then as it got shortly after that and became a super school I think. But the thing that decided me was that there was always the feeling in the back of my mind that I might come back to settle here and that relationship with the college would be a very pleasant one. It turned out to be that. In between, I decided I wasn't going to come back so that, but basically because of a political conflict, a generational conflict with my father. He was a conservative Republican, I was a liberal Democrat. He was, it was at the time when he wanted to conserve and not take chances, converting from a weekly to daily was a major change, and a dangerous one. So there were a lot of things that were going to be difficult for both of us. It was a difficult five years on both sides. At a point the family decided that I should be the publisher and that resolved it. And from then on it's been a very, very great time, and the Bowdoin connection has certainly been very helpful.

NC: What did you major in at Bowdoin?

CN: Majored in economics with an equal number of courses in government.

NC: So you had a political interest at a young age.

CN: Yes, yes. I had a brother who is now deceased, who was in journalism, he was, worked for CBS, worked with Ed Murrow and Fred Friendly and some of those others. Was correspondent for CBS in England, and Moscow, and Paris and so forth. And so he had been interested in that. But I'd been active, when we were youngsters up there, the only thing you could be active in if you were a liberal was to try to move the Republicans toward a more liberal group. Like Margaret Chase Smith, for instance, because it was all the old boy network and there were no, virtually no Democratic public office holders except in Lewiston and Biddeford and so forth. Very different from how it became.

NC: So you grew up in a conservative household, or a Republican household.

CN: In a Republican household, yes, yeah. And the battle, the political discussions at the dinner table usually led to difficult, difficult activities. Eventually we tried to avoid those but both he, my brother and I were actively items in activities.

NC: How did you develop what later became an interest in the Democratic Party coming out of

a family that was Republican?

CN: Because the parents were so one-sided on it, particularly my father, who would say Franklin D. Roosevelt has never done anything good at all. So we would obviously read more about it and then we'd come back and challenge, and you just kept battering them. They would have answers that didn't make any sense. So you just keep, we just started boning up, becoming much more aware of what was happening in the political scene and so forth. And challenging all of these remarks that were made by the parents about the political (*unintelligible word*). So it was a, that inspired us greatly to do that.

NC: What was Bowdoin like when you attended it?

CN: Bowdoin was over the hill a bit at that time. We had a president who was, retired the same year I graduated. But he'd been in office for thirty-five years. And he'd done no capital campaigns and so, it was, the board was run by three or four senior board members who got lifetime tenure for trustees. They didn't have a mandatory retirement age so we had people serving long beyond what they should have been doing. It was a, I think, frankly two years into my career, I was so frustrated with the quality of the teachers that I seriously thought of stepping aside. I just thought it was a waste of, getting to be a waste of time. I actually went back to an old prep school teacher who I admired greatly and spent the weekend with him, and we talked about it and he convinced me to go back and finish up, which I did.

But it was not in good shape. Which did, got a little awkward because I knew a lot of the professors as we'd grown up, and Brunswick was a small town. There were only, oh, three or four thousand people at most at that time and, probably smaller than that, but the, so it was poor then. It really changed when President James Stacey Forbes took over in 1952. He was a chemist from Brown, had a lot of energy, built the high rise tower, senior center down here, the library, and did a major capital campaign. Got things going. He also set on, pushed people out that needed to be out, he did work on that area. Brought in a lot of young, interesting young Turks who were good faculty people. They eventually chafed under his strong leadership and some of them left. But that was a time of major change and major improvement.

But the era that will be long remembered is the one that just ended with Bob Edwards as president. Just an absolutely remarkable record of achievement in eleven years, just a marvelous thing.

NC: I was wondering if you could tell me about Herbert Ross Brown.

CN: Herbert Brown, yes, Herbert Brown was a charismatic teacher. I took his course for three days. The problem was that he was a member of the same fraternity that I was a member of. And I had been coming to functions long before I entered Bowdoin. But Herbert was the speaker at all kinds of events and so, and I had heard every story that he had ever told. And, I went to him after three days, I said, "Herbert, I just can't, I can't do this. I know the punch lines. I know every single one of those, and I just can't sit through a whole year of listening to those. They're wonderful stories and everybody ought to have a chance to hear them, but I can't take them, I can't take them again." So he was delightful, graduate of Lafayette, came here, was taken into

the fraternity here and was very active, interesting. Was moderator of our town meeting for a number of years when we had a, we had had a guy who was a lawyer and had been president, well, was the chairman of the, presided at the, moderator at the town meetings for fifty years. And then Herbert took over and did, I don't know, fifteen, twenty years after that.

NC: What did he teach?

CN: He taught English, first.

NC: As a side note, you mentioned the fraternities, now the fraternal system is no longer active on the Bowdoin campus.

CN: Right.

NC: At what time did that transition take place?

CN: Only (*unintelligible word*), about six years ago I think the vote was taken. Maybe five. There was a committee set up the year before to study life. Came to a recommendation to the board that fraternities be abolished within a four-year period of time. After the vote was taken by the board, no more students could be inducted into fraternities. That took place, it was obviously discouraging to some older alumni in particular, but it got, the vote was unanimous on the governing boards. Fraternities had gone from representing, when I was there ninety-eight percent of the kids were in fraternities and you got, the induction was done in the, the rush was done in the first week, so it was not a all jocks and all, scholars and so forth. So there was a pretty good mix in all of the houses. That changed over time. At the end they were only serving about thirty percent of the students. And it was, it was even more distorted for the females because out of that thirty percent it was thirty-five male and twenty-five percent female. So it was a very, it was not a, and the females were not treated equally. They just, they tried to enforce that but never really got it going. And the houses were just out of control. The alumni had gotten discouraged because the kids were vandalizing the buildings and so forth. It was a move whose time had come. Williams got rid of them in 1960 and so we were a long time behind them.

But, they've done it well, I think. They've acquired, or are acquiring all of the fraternity houses. Investing substantial monies, about two million dollars on each one, to renovate them and to meet the standards of the Disabilities Act and so forth. Each one now has to have elevators and (*unintelligible phrase*). And what they're doing, the system they've put into place is all the freshmen and sophomores live on campus in the old brick dormitories, which have been renovated over time. But each of those brick dormitories has a house to which they're assigned, and that's where they can go for social events and parties and so forth. And this gives them a chance to get away from the dorm. And I think at this point, by the end of this summer they will have six or seven of the houses set up for that and then I think the goal was maybe ten of them all told. And you will stay, in effect you'll be affiliated with that particular social house through your career at the college. And so, it's a work in progress, but it's gotten a lot of recognition by other colleges that are looking at the problems they're having with this. Each of these houses has students living in it. But there are also some upper-class men there who are responsible to the

college for what goes on in that area. So they certainly have the supervision, which just was not the case for them before that.

So I think they've, I think they've made considerable progress. And actually there was a group of about thirteen small liberal arts colleges who met in Washington for a seminar put on by one of the foundations to discuss this, and they went around, they asked each one what they were doing to try to improve student life and when, Bowdoin was the last one they asked to speak and tell them what they were doing. And Dartmouth, who had spoken just before that, said, let's hear from Bowdoin because they're the only ones who are doing anything that we know that looks like what we ought to be doing. And that foundation I think gave Bowdoin an eighty or ninety thousand dollar additional subsidy for, to try to help spread the word to other schools, on how they're doing it.

NC: Have you encountered Judith Isaacson through your work on the board?

CN: Judith Isaacson. Oh yes, sure, she was on the board here, yeah, when she did her book.

NC: I can imagine she probably had some strong feelings about fraternities as well, or -?

CN: Well, she, yeah, you know, she was dean up there and she had, yeah, she had strong feelings. There were a lot of us who just felt it became time to get rid of it. I happened to be on the selection committee that picked Bob Edwards. And Bob had worked with the (*unintelligible word*) and had been president of a college and (*unintelligible word*) so he'd had a lot of experience. At the first meeting, he came over from Paris to be interviewed, and his first... "What are you going to do about fraternities?" That was his first question. And it, each time we ever met with him, "What are you going to do about fraternities?" And so it was right out front that we all, there was a problem there. Who was going to lead it, and how it was going to get done was the question. He took a couple of steps to get it going and, but at the end he made a speech to the alumni on reunion weekend and outlined why he thought they, fraternities ought to go. But then he stepped back from that, just did not participate in the committee, with the committee that was studying student life. He did not come to any of their meetings. He did come to one meeting at the end of the session when they gave their final report and listened to that, but that was all. So he did the, I think just the right thing. He, there was no question where he stood, he was firmly anti-fraternity. But the committee was run by a board member named Donald Kurtz who's now chairman of the board of trustees, and just did a superb job, the whole committee did. They came unanimous, the boards were unanimous. It was just an open and shut case.

NC: Now, going back a ways, you said that you ended up working at Dupont for a while.

CN: Yeah.

NC: What did you do there?

CN: I went to Dupont as a management trainee. And went to work in a mill down south of, about eighty miles south of Wilmington where they, the big product was with nylon. But then

they were launching the Dacron products and so I was in on that, the start up of that, which made the work much more interesting. But it was a very interesting management training program which helped me immensely when we were running a business later on. It was a very helpful activity. I thought it was a very good company. I was, I got involved in things at my plant that, for instance, using an all girl crew instead of the men doing the heavy lifting and the girls, the men bitching because the girls were getting paid the same amount and things like that. So I set up a crew that, of women who said, "Well we can do that; we'll do that." So they did it for two weeks. Well, in that two weeks (*unintelligible word*) people from all over the company coming to see Niven's All Girl Dof Crew it was called because they were taking the yarn off of, doffing the machine. And so it got to be a very interesting activity, and then I went up to Wilmington to make reports on how this worked. And so after two weeks the guys said, "Okay, we give in, we know they can do it," we've always known they could do it but, you know, we just, it was just one of those (*unintelligible word*) things that they went through.

The other thing was, it was the first time I'd ever gone to work where you had a Black problem. And I got active in the Jaycees in there, but before that we got in the -

NC: What are the JC's?

CN: Junior Chamber of Commerce. But we had a very interesting time, we had, there were ceramic water fountains in the corridors, and they were black and white. And, so you know, the company recruited I've forgotten how many, maybe fifteen people in my class that came in at the time I did to start the management training program. And we were just appalled by this, all of us came from North. So we went to the general manager and said, now this, we just can't do anything, we can't have this. And they said, "Well, when those signs wear out, the black and white signs, we're going to replace those ceramic bowls with steel fountains inside the rooms along the way rather than being in the corridor." So me what of a safety function because people bump into them and stuff like that. So as soon as that, you know, that'll age eventually."

Well, we got the message and we came back and had a group meeting. And we worked a three-shift basis. You worked days one time and, four to twelve, and then the graveyard shift for a week or so. So we had a chance to walk through the plant during the night, and we took sandpaper with us and we would just go and do a little here and a little there, and about a month later, by God, the signs had disappeared. And we went to the general manager and said, "You know, the signs are gone..." By God he followed through, he said, "Okay." And that was one little step but it was sort of, it was an interesting one. But then we got involved politically at building a Park for the, in the town. And then the whole battle came down as to how many days a week would be for blacks and how many days it would be for whites. And that was the, that was the, that was a, we stopped progress on it because we couldn't get what we thought was fair. And the only question was, was it going to be four days for whites and three for blacks, or the other way around.

NC: This was who could use the park on what days.

CN: Yeah, it was going to be separate days, it was never, they said they would not have interracial park.

NC: Really?

CN: Oh, yeah.

NC: What years was this?

CN: This was 1952 to '54. So -

NC: In Delaware.

CN: In Delaware. And a little town called (*unintelligible phrase*). And eventually they agreed to a thirty-forty, a three-four. Actually the park, four to three was about right for the ratio of the white population to the black, but the whites had other opportunities that the blacks didn't have, and so we just insisted it be that and finally got that. Actually, we also had to get involved in elections to get one guy, get a new guy on the board to replace one who was against us. We finally got that, and so we did get it done but it was a, that was, and it was the first time I ever saw how politics worked. I always had wondered how do you guarantee that somebody is going to, if you pay him ten dollars, gonna vote.... And I got to know one of the Democratic politicians there and he said, "Come on over, I'll show you, come to the election Monday morning." So I sat in his car and what he did was, he went in and voted, and he used a blank piece of paper, put a blank piece of paper in, kept the ballot in his pocket, the blank ballot. So then he went back to his car, filled in the ballot the way he wanted. And then he'd call to the guys coming up looking for ten bucks which was going to be their party that night and so forth, and he'd say "Okay, here's, drop this ballot in and bring a clean one and here's your ten dollars." Simple as a whistle, and that's how you did it. I mean, that was the way they did it. And then, in the black community that night, the party was really roaring. It was just a wonderful time.

NC: So what, you mentioned that you were politically involved, or politically active when you were at Dupont in Delaware. What was your specific role politically when you were there?

CN: Well, there it was just in the local politics. It was in the Jaycees and trying to make changes and get that park through and to try to undo some of the other restrictions. And also to push Dupont on the fact that all the time I was there, the highest position that a black rose to was a cafeteria worker. There just were no opportunity for blacks to be moving upward. Toward the end of it they just were beginning to get some recognition on it.

NC: In '54.

CN: Yeah, (*unintelligible word*).

NC: Now in '54 you said you went to Europe, through the draft.

CN: I was drafted and, yeah, I spent, well, I took basic training at Fort Dix, clerk typist training at Fort Dix, and then went overseas. Went to Frankfurt, Germany for six months, where the Army had a public information office and I was assigned to that area, which was a very nice

duty. I had a car for six months and went down to the railroad station to pick up dispatches from Berlin and other areas. We did various and sundry tasks, but it was in a home which had a swimming pool and tennis court and so forth that had been taken over by the Army for them. Outdoor dining. And then when, they closed that down because the sort of peace treaty was signed, and the reason we were there was that the correspondents ran this club and they bought their liquor through the Army at discounted rates. So, and when that peace treaty was signed, or that document was signed, they no longer had that, got any benefit from that. So we were consolidated down in Hamburg, but that was a great place to be for a year or so.

NC: You were in the service for two years?

CN: Yeah, yeah.

NC: So when you came back in '56, you came here.

CN: Yeah.

NC: And what did you do?

CN: The area that was a big challenge was the advertising situation. Before I came back, if you wanted to run an ad in either of the papers in Brunswick or Bath, you had to bring it to the newspaper. And shortly before I came back, and the reason I did come back, was that there was a real panic up here because two radio stations had been set up. There'd never been any competition before in town, and so my father and the people who, at the Bath paper, my grandfather was still running that paper, just were panicked on what they were going to do. So that was, there was a real call for help and I came back and took over; did that job for five years before I took over the management of the paper.

And we were on, we were in rented buildings in both communities, with very old equipment. It turned out to be a wonderful time because the new technology world came in and suddenly I had to work from very archaic ways of printing, Gutenberg would have recognized everything we were doing, you know, it was heavy change. Then all of a sudden the whole thing changed, the need for, we had a, at the time we changed some new technology we had, we could have gotten rid of thirty percent of our employees. We chose not to, we chose to set up a division of print, other newspapers to print advertising circulars and that type of thing. So, we trained those people. But that was a major change for them because we had to go on a, in order to be efficient, get producing up and volume, you know, to take care of big customers you had to run twenty-four hours a day. Which we've been doing for years now. We did that, God, I've forgotten, '68, in '68 I guess.

But the, so it was a wonderful time to be in the business. We had, we did not have a union so we could make cha-, do things with management, approved and talk to the employees and outline how we were doing it and what we were going to do, and they saw that life was much better this way and cleaner and so forth. And so it was a wonderful time with bringing in new technology, and we were the twenty-first daily newspaper in the country to convert to offset printing. And so, you know, it's just a, it was a super time to be active in that. I've been active in associations

for, over time president of the Maine Press Association, twice president of the New England Newspaper Association, and the New England Daily Newspaper Association. And now I'm a founding director of a co-op for independent daily newspapers. We have four hundred and forty-seven daily newspapers that are members of our group and so forth and so on.

NC: A lot of them running out of Maine?

CN: Oh no, this is all over the country, this is all fifty states. We have members in each of the fifty states. And combined daily circulation of our group it on average be eight million two hundred thousand. That would put us third, I think third largest in the country. We're an independent group and people buy what they want through the co-op, we negotiate newspaper purchase rates and prices and so forth. But it's a, well the KJ is one of our member publications, the Gannett papers, all the Gannett papers up here are members of our co-op.

NC: So when leadership switched from your father's hands to your hands -?

CN: Yeah, well, I succeeded my grandfather in Bath when he died. And then a year later the family decided to, they made me publisher and my father became emeriti.

NC: And you both had very different political values. Was there any direction change?

CN: Oh sure, oh yeah, yeah. Well, you know, my father was on the board of Central Maine Power Company for instance. He thought Central Maine Power Company was just wonderful. And they, and he wanted, he would go to Florida in the winter for four weeks or five weeks, and he told me to write an editorial supporting Central Maine on some particular issue and I said, I refused. And, god, when he came back he called the family together, my mother and my uncle, the power holders at that point and, you know, he wanted me fired because I wouldn't publish the... They of course would not do that. But he, I remember him coming back one time telling me proudly that Central Maine had hired some consultants to try to improve their public relations image. They had quickly decided on some people, or gals to be hired to run cooking schools. You know, how to use electric ovens and this and that thing, and then he said that this company had also recommended that they get a Democrat on their board of directors, and he said, we went around the table and we all agreed none of us, none of us knew a Democrat qualified to be-. Ironically, my father eventually resigned his seat, he was retired, and Carlton Day Reed who was a Democrat was president of the senate at one time and made a dodge for the governorship, but succeeded him on that director's seat. But they, so, oh yeah, it was tough. But he also had a terrible turnover. In the five years I was here we had seven editors that he, he hired and fired. And he, another request he made when he was in Florida at one point was that I hire somebody, and I said, "No, I'm not going to hire somebody. This person will be fired after a few months, I'm just not going to get involved in that. You want to hire somebody, you do it."

NC: Was it because of managerial differences or political differences?

CN: Oh, no, he was a very tough manager. He was picky over everything. And if somebody in there was not to his liking (*unintelligible phrase*). So, no, John Cole and Peter Cox, I don't know whether those names mean anything to you, but they founded the *Maine Times*. Peter was

my editor in Bath, and John was editor here in Brunswick. And then when we went daily, they stayed on to do that and help us to make that conversion, and then they went off to start the *Maine Times*. And so, there was a great difference in the political philosophy of the paper. We endorsed Democrats on a regular basis. We did some, we endorsed some Republicans occasionally but, when it was appropriate. But yeah, we were known as a Democratic paper from then on.

As a matter of fact, *Editor & Publisher* has a year book and, and I don't know, I don't what my son's doing, whether he's going to change it, but I'm in for Democrat, you know, political affiliation of the thing, I wrote Democrat. Most of them are independent, you know, for all of these, "independent" which was horseshit because we were a Democratic paper and our readers know that. But this is a liberal community, too, so it makes a difference. But we have a, you know, a military group who generally tend to be conservatives so we hear from them on a regular basis.

NC: Makes for interesting reading. So you returned to Maine in the mid-fifties, just in time to really get a feeling for how the Democratic party was changing. In Maine I was wondering if you could tell me about how you saw that begin to develop.

CN: Well, I had gone to some Democratic meetings, oh, John Donovan who used to be at Bates and was down here at that time. So I used to go to some of the, they would have workshops on working out programs and planks and various other things. It was an interesting time. But I got out in '52 and went down to Dupont at that time and really didn't get active in the, I'd gone to two or three Republican conventions, too, because I was working for Margaret Chase Smith, I just wanted, I mean the three nincompoops that she was running against, '48 I guess it was. It was just awful, Horace Hill who (*unintelligible phrase*) at Bowdoin and big buddy of my father's. But they just were, they were just the status quo all the time. And so getting her elected was a major thing. So that was the only way of work.

And Ed Muskie, in '56 when I got back, I got back in June and he was running for election and so forth, and I was asked to take him around the shops on the Main Street in Brunswick and to a shoe factory which was in a large mill building here. And that was extraordinary to see, he was just such a good person on the campaign trail. One of the things that was unique about him was his height. You really don't figure that in politicians as much, but for instance the worktables at the mill, and they could go down, and he could reach over and do both sides. You know, I mean, from one side he could reach over and do the other. And we had, I remember one guy, I was trying to think of who it was, it was some politician who was running for some, county commissioner or whatever, I've forgotten who it was. But he was maybe five-eight, something like that. Well, he had to run all the way around to get all the hands of people working at these things. And it just, Ed could do so much more. It was just, it was amazing. And then he just had the charm, these employees would be notified that Muskie would be there, and they'd have their cameras sitting at their, on their tables and so forth. And he'd, "oh, can I take you picture," and he'd say, "here, why don't I have one of my staff take our picture together." I mean, he just had this touch that was just so easy and relaxed and comfortable. It was just like a movie star coming in to the area, and you know, that hadn't been true for any liberals or Democrats for a long time.

So, I was not here for his first election, but that one I was working with him on that score. And very modest, just taking him around, introducing him. One of the more interesting times, on that, we had an old grocery store on Main Street, which was our biggest grocery store. And I happened to, I walk in with Ed and he was talking to some people, and I saw my mother getting out of her car to go into that grocery store and I walked down and I said, "Mother, Ed Muskie's here, would you like to meet him?" And she said, "I'd rather not, thank you," and she went on into the store. I told Ed that later on. She eventually voted for Kennedy and voted for Muskie, but it was a difficult transition.

NC: For her.

CN: Yeah, but she got there. She got, she listened to my brother and myself after. We helped to persuade.

NC: Interesting. This seems like a good time to ask about Paul Hazelton.

CN: Well, Paul, delightful professor, taught education, as you may know. A wonderful activist. I think he had a great relation with, I took one of his education courses. No, no I took it from his predecessor, I'm sorry, I took it from his predecessor. But Paul was just always active in the party and active in everything. Did good things in the community, Paul was just a doer.

NC: Did he have some connection with Muskie, or -?

CN: Oh I think, yeah, I think he was, he was always working on his campaigns and so forth and, you know, I think he was writing material and various other things. But a, a fine, nifty person. Had a retarded son who's still around, you know, a long-term problem, but he's here and still in town, and gray hair now and a sad case. So they, he had a burden to carry, but everybody has something to carry.

NC: So you mentioned that Brunswick is a -

CN: Paul was also a moderator of the town meetings in Topsham.

NC: In Topsham.

CN: Yeah.

NC: You mentioned that Brunswick is a liberal, mildly liberal town. Was it that was also in the fifties, or -?

CN: Yeah, yeah. It always has been a liberal town, because of the college, I think that's had influence. And the Democrat, I mean the workers in the mills were all in the Democratic Party, that was part of their strength and gave them some activity. And you had Bath Iron Works who had a lot of employees and they tended to be in that same area, in this area. So it, yeah, and then later in the sixties, we had protests on Vietnam on the malls.

David Graham was a columnist in our paper and John, John and Peter and I got into battles over that because I had finally put a limit on how many times he could write a column, he was our, a local columnist and in the week, particularly this was in the weekly before we made the conversion, then he was in there afterward. But I said, two columns a month is the limit on what he could do on Vietnam, he ought to be talking about other things going on, and I said, "Okay, if you won't do it I will, I'll fire him if that's what you want." Well, I did fire him. Then a few years later he came back and I threatened to fire him again and he's still working.

But it was, but he was, we were, the Vietnam thing was a big issue in Brunswick. They had silent vigils on the mall, there were all kinds of activity. I was on the, actually I was on the town council, the board of selectmen for three years during part of that. And there was a, we had to give permission, the selectmen had to give permission to have a protest vigil on the mall and they, so it was, there were three of us on the board who voted for it every time, and two did not vote for it. And so it was a close thing.

But there was a lot of protest and it was a, I think the town has been liberal. They did a lot of good things, they have a recreation-

End of Side A

Side B

NC: We're resuming the interview with Campbell Niven.

CN: So Ed got up and said that he, his speech was scheduled on tariffs on shoes, which was important in Maine. There was a lot of shoe industry and so forth. And he said, but he said, "I'm going to talk about civil rights and what's happening in this country on those areas." He says, "There are copies of the remarks I would have made out on the front desk and you can pick one up if you want on the way out." And then he talked for about an hour and a half, on a hot, steamy night in Maine, to an audience where you didn't have blacks anywhere around and civil rights was something that they really were not thinking about. And he just talked about the importance of this and the future of our country. The terrible things that were happening to blacks around the country why it was so vital to Maine and everybody else that we have this. And I remember walking out of that and talking with some people on the way out, and I says, "You know, I've come to an awful lot of these meetings to listen to politicians and so forth," and I said, "For the first time you walk away proud of your senator for having been that way and that strong."

The interesting thing to me also was the contrast of the years that Muskie and Margaret Smith were in office. And the huge difference in the way they ran their offices, or the way they ran their lives and did their thing. Margaret was secretive, you probably have this from all kinds of other people, but she lived in the same house that her administrative assistant did. And when she, one of the local TV stations did a day in the life of Margaret Smith, had her getting in her car and driving around and then stopping to pick up her administrative assistant there, in the same house. He had an apartment on another floor, but it was just bullshit.

But Ed was open and he, I went to him about, one time I got up, we got into a little problem out here with the Naval Air Station, and they wanted to build a new commissary and that was going to take a lot of grocery business from our local retailers and so forth, and a lot of other business. And a friend of mine was active in the Chamber, was active in the Chamber of Commerce committee, which was trying to work on that problem. And he asked me who he should contact in Washington and I said, "Well, I think you ought to contact Margaret Smith, she's on the Armed Services Committee and that's where this thing rests." And so he said, "Well, she never answers her mail." And I said, "Well, that is a problem." And I said, well at least send the same letter to the two of them at the same time.

Well he didn't, he wrote to Muskie because he, he'd written to Muskie before and he got an answer. And we went down to have a meeting in Muskie's office. And Margaret, the whole delegation came, but Margaret made this huge point that she was on the Armed Services Committee and she hadn't been contacted and she knew it was Cam Nivens doing, that this Cam Nivens was a friend of that guy at (*unintelligible phrase*), and she went through this tirade. And then she left before they, she just wanted to make her point. This was Margaret, Petty. And she had a place in Brunswick where she, she had a summer place here and her administrative assistant had a house next door. And we asked her one time to be a volunteer chairman of the summer time summer visitors campaign of the United Way. She, sent this letter back saying she didn't have any residence in Brunswick, she didn't have any, had no connection with that and so forth, and wouldn't have nothing to do with it.

I'd been to her house (*unintelligible phrase*) with my parents and, you know, I mean, the house was there and she lived inside that house and spent a good deal of time there for over fifteen years. Always denied she had it. Now, whether it was in some sort of a trust in which it belonged to somebody else, you could get away with that, I don't know. But it was her, that was Margaret Chase Smith's house.

And then there was a great vote in the senate down to a thing about who was going to be appointed to the Atomic Energy Commission. And at one point it got down to a very close vote, and Margaret was the next to the last person to decide how she was casting her vote. And she enjoyed all of the attention and she lived with it very happily, but of course what that meant was she didn't influence anybody else's vote by whatever statement she made at that point because everybody else had cast their lot. And that's just a, a sad way to run offices and so forth. Margaret made, I give her full credit for her declaration on McCarthy in 1950, but every time she was introduced to a Maine audience thereafter, either the introducer mentioned that declaration or she mentioned it. One or the other. You never went, and I saw her a lot of times at her appearances and activities, but that was her, the highlight of her career.

But Ed was such a shining star and had such great command of things. It was a very proud time. I was over in New Hampshire when he was campaigning over there, not at the time he got into the bruha with the *Union Leader*, but over to try to go and talk with news service people about who I was and this and that. And it was a delight to just participate in that modest activity because he was just a superb individual. And then what he did for our, in cleaning up the water, and not only in Maine but around the country, and all of the other landmark pieces of legislation that he got through. And then his term as the, brief term as the secretary of state. He never

would embarrass anybody in the state of Maine, he was such an outstanding person.

NC: Earlier you were talking about Vietnam and about civil rights and the environment. When he ran under Hubert Humphrey in the vice presidential ticket in '68, what was your perception of how people in Brunswick and how people in central or southern Maine viewed Muskie's attempts to go for a presidential ticket?

CN: Oh, I thought, I think, oh, I think they were very proud of him. You know, Hubert, I mean, Ed outshone Hubert, no question about it. I mean he was way head and shoulders above, and he damned near pulled the whole off. It was a hell of a comeback, for Ed to come back from the Chicago convention and that horrendous time and so forth. It was a, really a remarkable achievement and I take nothing but pride in his performance and his work.

NC: Then in '72 you have him running for the Democratic nomination for president. How did you see that campaign begin and how did you perceive it ending?

CN: Well, the, it started with his being the frontrunner. I guess it was, in '70 it was, he was featured in *Time Magazine* and so forth, this was the thing. Actually, I had a, was chairman of the New England Newspaper group and the Samoset Hotel burned down which was where we were going to have our convention, so we had to scramble to, and we put everybody on a boat out of Portland, you got up to Canada and back. So there was one night on that, and everybody at the Holiday Inn in Portland, and, the next night, and Ed was the speaker. And at that time that was, you know, there was a huge turnout because Ed was the leading candidate at that particular time. But it (*unintelligible word*), you know, started early on and what the Nixon White House was doing was going at this, Ed's breakdown, it was tough. But he was, he was an emotional guy, he had a temper and nobody denied that. But when they started attacking Jane he was really, that really got to him. But he had been, you know, there had been all kinds of things sent out, that he'd sent a letter referring to the French people as frogs and all this other. You know, some visual things he'd done, and he got to know what was happening but nobody would believe it, and that the White House was doing it and that this was an organized structure in the White House (*unintelligible word*). It was a, I think it was horrendously tough on him, and obviously it was, I'm sure there were a lot of things happened that he didn't know about at that point, but it was a very unfair, hugely unfair thing. And that sonofabitch Nixon got what he deserved, but fortunately for Sam Ervin and some others who carried the ball and got the, made sure the information got out.

NC: Now, you mentioned earlier the attack on Jane Muskie from William Loeb at the *Manchester Union Leader*. Being in the newspaper business, I was wondering if you could just touch on that newspaper and on Loeb himself.

CN: Loeb was a sonofabitch. Awful. He just had virtually no standards except that he was going to be the, he wanted to be the king maker in New Hampshire, and he certainly was. Everybody came and paid court to him. New Hampshire was the first in the Country primary gives him great advantage and particularly in Republican politics. I had dinner with him one night in a newspaper group in Boston, and must say as a dining companion, when he wasn't talking about politics, he turned out to be a reasonable person. But you just couldn't forgive

what he did in that paper, and what he did to the Republican Party having a jump into this thing. I was, delighted when Sununu was picked by Nixon and I told a friend of mine who was a banker in New Hampshire at that time that Sununu would be out within six months. It took a little longer than that, but I said, he'll do him in. And it, but (*unintelligible word*) just, one of the great things is in the business, you have to defend a guy like that. If you own a newspaper, you have the right to write what you want, and that's a great thing in this country. And I, you know, we've run against the tide in our paper a number of times but that's, you have to defend the right for people to do it. But the old saw is, never get into a fight with a guy who buys his ink by the barrel. And, you know, that is an important thing. So, he was a maverick, fortunately newspapers aren't in that, don't misuse their power as he did, I think. And, but he had to just live with that. And there are some strange ones around, a lot of them in the south (*unintelligible phrase*).

NC: Did you ever encounter Frank Coffin?

CN: Oh yeah, yeah.

NC: Can you tell me about him?

CN: Well Frank was, Frank was marvelous. A wonderful lawyer, he was about the stiffest campaigner, when he ran for governor, I've ever seen. It was, Frank thought if you wrote down everything you thought you ought to do for the election, and talked about each one of those points, and I think at one time there were twenty-seven or twenty-eight points that he wanted to do. Well, the eyelids would droop and so forth. But Frank as a person, there was just no finer person, and he should have been sitting on the Supreme Court, he ended up, you know, on the court of appeals. He still lives in, has a place in Harpswell, Maine down here and he's written, revised his book two or three times to update it with new things. And lawyers I've talked with just say it's the best book on the appeals process and appellate court. He's just a charming guy. And he was, but he, he brought the party back. He was the guy that, Muskie wouldn't have been there unless Frank Coffin had been there and had his wisdom.

I guess one of the things I was amazed at about Ed was that he had a very tough time financially, and it's one thing for somebody to be at ease when they have good salaries and comfort and, you know, various other things. He and Jane just had, it was a struggling time and he was, took up Office of Price Administration or some job up in Waterville, and then he ran for the legislature and that paid virtually nothing, and so it was a very tough time. And, I'm sure you've got it from other people about when he was offered the secretary of state's job by Carter, he had to call Jane to see whether he could take it because it was a lower salary at that time. It was some peculiarity that the cabinet people didn't get as much as the congress were making and so forth and so on. So he would be taking a pay decrease, and it was, I've forgotten what it was, three or four thousand dollars, but that was a major thing as far as they were concerned. And Jane got back to him and said, "Well, you know, we can do it." And until he retired a year later, he'd been in tough, it had been tough for him. And then suddenly he got some wonderful paychecks and good days and so forth. It was just great fun to see him enjoying those.

He had a tough time trooping around the golf course. He had a temper when he wasn't playing

well, which was frequently the case, he was not a happy camper. And he was always, I think, frustrated by Bill Hathaway, who's such a great golfer-.

NC: Really?

CN: Oh yeah, he was I don't know, three or four handicaps. And he played a lot. But Ed was not happy at the golf course at that particular point. But he, even in those times, he just always seemed comfortable, very comfortable with himself.

One of the times when he, I was walking him around Brunswick and went over to the house of a, somebody that had a house on a mall in town. And I said, "Ed, how can you do this campaigning day after day. I just think this is, I think it would just be boring. Not physically difficult, but just boring." And he said, "That's the most difficult part of everything, all of the time out here campaigning, say it's six weeks, and you really, you don't have time to use your creative processes to accomplish anything of any note." He said, "You're just going around shaking hands, making the same speech you made." He said, "You don't have time to address anything." When you come from the Senate where you have a chance to do all kinds of things, and you've got people approaching you and suggesting this, that and the other and you're sifting ideas and, you know. And he said, "We come up here and for six weeks you're shut away and you're doing nothing, not anything in that range at all." Somebody calls you from the office and tells you, you know, should we send a letter to so and so, or should we do this, or something, you know, it's housekeeping details. But, he said, "You just, you disengage your mind for that time." And he said, that's the tough part of it, to do that for that long a period when you know there are so many things you could be doing and accomplishing at that point. Interesting observation on the campaign.

But he had awfully good people, Shep Lee and Don Nicoll and all. You know, just, he had good people and used them well and occasionally gave them holy hell, but over time he got great results from the staff.

NC: Did you have contact with Ed Muskie after, in the seventies or eighties?

CN: Yeah, yeah, we did, yeah. Frequently at functions. And I'd gotten to know Jane comfortably, and I would occasionally ask her about his, is he still enjoying this work with the law firm and all these other things. And she, he loves the money, he loves the money and, she said, we both do.

Now her brother, whose name was Howard Gray, who was, ran the Waterville paper for many years. And so I've known him through that and also Jane, so I had a special feeling on it. But Ed would, and as I had a little longevity in his head and so that frequently at functions he would see me or somebody, we'd talk about the old days which was sort of a fun thing. But he'd come here every, maybe twice a year he'd come here for an interview with our editorial staff so we saw him at that point. He just went around the state and did that with all of these papers. As did Bill Cohen and Hathaway. Margaret didn't, of course, she marched to a different drummer. But, so that you saw these people on a regular basis. And George Mitchell, George went to Bow-, he was at Bowdoin at the same time I was. And so I've known him for a long time. So there was,

you saw those people on a fairly regular basis.

NC: Did you ever get a feeling for what sort of effect the '72, the lack of a nomination in '72 had on Ed Muskie?

CN: I never saw, I never saw a negative thing on it. I would have thought he would have had that, but I didn't see it and I... You know, you would have thought after All the President's Men came out and so forth at that time, it would have been a time when he might have, I think he just wanted to concentrate on what was ahead. I'm sure you've got the, you've had the people telling of the battle when, when Ed was offered the secretary of state's appointment and had a meeting at the Naval Air Station with the governor.

NC: No.

CN: Well, Joe Brennan was governor and if Ed resigned to take the post of Secretary of State Brennan would have the opportunity to name his successor. Ed requested a meeting with Joe at the Naval Air Station. And the session went on for five hours. And Joe had other people he wanted to nominate for that post. And Ed said, if you don't appoint George Mitchell I will not resign. And that was the deal. And it took a long time for Joe to, and I don't know, I've heard that he wanted to appoint Ken Curtis or others, but in any case it was a, that was. So here he was, you know, having the chance to take a job that he was obviously interested in and was a nice, would be a nice final feather in his cap and so forth, but he was not about to let the state of Maine down. So there he was, you know, right, and that was 1980 that he was doing.

NC: He had priorities.

CN: That was what he wanted. So he, I don't know, he never backed away, there were things where, you know, he got involved in some other areas where he was on special three person committees and so forth to make reports on. I think on some of Reagan's stuff and so forth. And he just, he just stayed with it and continued I thought to be right, till he left the Senate. And certainly as Secretary of State he did a good job. So I just never saw that thing, and it would be easy for somebody to run and hide. But of course he had the Senate to go back to, and that made, that makes a big difference when you still have your authority and power in that body. And he used it very effectively.

NC: When you think to the sixties and the seventies, particularly in Brunswick, of the Democratic Party and the general atmosphere politically, and then you think about the late nineties and now, do you see a major contrast?

CN: Well I think we, I think the area that I think of right off the bat is cleaning up our rivers and doing that. The environmental change has been huge. It was just a wonderful thing. It got started under his leadership as far as I'm concerned, and so that that is, that's just a marvelous thing. We have an old walking path out here along the river in Brunswick. It's just a great delight for people. And we've just, two major buys of land, putting conservation (*unintelligible word*), we're going to have a path that will go from the river down to the ocean through, near the college, and the college has given some land and others winding through and so on. And just to

accomplish this major effort and time. Preserved a farm two or three years ago at the southern entry was to Freeport, to the town, on a hundred and sixty acres and a farm and so forth. And all of these, it's just things that have gone from one to another. And I think, I think that's the legacy that I think is most noticeable.

The economy here has been, in this area, has been pretty good. We've had the Naval Air Station, we've had Bath Iron Works, we've had L.L. Bean and various other things, we have an L.L. Bean factory in town.

NC: In Brunswick?

CN: Yeah. And so it, this has been an awfully good place to live. And the college, of course. It's sort of interesting, but Brunswick is unique in the fact that there's no dominant force. Bath is dominated by Bath Iron Works, Freeport is dominated by Bean. Here people listen respectfully (*unintelligible phrase*) the business community, to the, to Leon Gorman if he speaks, to the president of the Iron Works if he speaks, the president of the college if he speaks, but nobody dominates the community.

NC: There's a discourse.

CN: There's a discourse going on. And the college recently built a building, an administration building, on the main street on a piece of land the town had bought. It was going to be developed somewhere and they wanted control of the property. And the first client to build in there was the college who were crowded on the campus. This is administration offices, treasurer's office and public information and all kinds of related functions. And a great spot for the college, at least within the (*unintelligible word*) of good working space and convenient parking and so forth, and it's just half a block, a block from the campus. But it took a lot of cooperation and so on. But that also forged a group cooperative here between the town and the college and it's been going very nicely and the college has opened up the process to the community. When they were going to build this building, should you have brick-, first should you have hardwoods or whatever it was and so forth, and we all thought it was going to say brick, and the neighbors said there's not a brick house in our neighborhood. The only one's that are brick are the Shop 'n' Save Supermarket and so forth, we don't want that, we want wood siding and so forth, and so that's what they got. So there's been cooperation I think a lot.

The employment is something I think is something that's going to be difficult. We've ended up with a huge number of jobs like these call systems, you know, Envisionet and that kind of thing. That's a real problem. MBNA pays pretty good salaries. And for a place like Belfast, who's had tough luck with chicken, the poultry industry. Poultry was big when I came back here, and faded very quickly. But the call centers certainly were a major improvement, but it was a long time before they came. And the potato industry is dying out. You've got the, certainly the two different Maines. You got the, you know, it's a fact of life, and it hasn't been changed very much. (*Unintelligible phrase*) decreasing populations in Aroostook county, and downeast, tough and serious.

My grandfather came from, and my grandmother, came from down in Cherryfield, way down

east. And I'd go down there occasionally on a family island, the Campbell family had an island off the coast. And it's tough, hard scramble living down there. And it's certainly very different. If you talk about life is from Sagadahoc along the coast, Knox county and Sagadahoc and Lincoln and Cumberland and down to York, life has been pretty good for all of us. Life has been pretty tough for the other part of that state, and still is. And I don't see many things happening to change it. I think Angus is great about that, I think getting these computers into, into kids', you know, better training for the jobs of the future is, could be a major step. Which unfortunately the legislature has hemmed and hawed so long that they won't have the same leadership in the country that it would have had. But I think that's important. We do have, because we skipped one generation of network telephone communication, we step that generation and move to a new one, and so we're better off than most states and that's a major asset.

Then you (*unintelligible phrase*), people find it a very attractive place to live. And retirees are moving in and they don't burden the school systems. And they also bring with them, in a lot of cases, considerable wealth and which they're willing to share with people and do a lot of things, and that's going to help over time. And so museums and aquariums and things like that will come along and there'll be a strong support for people, for doing, preserving the way of life, many areas. So I think that in some part of the state things are, in the coastal part, it's going to be pretty bright and good. I think the rest of the state will continue to go down, be difficult.

NC: In terms of living as a citizen and a newspaperman in Brunswick, it must be exciting to in some sense act as mediator between the various powers that work around Brunswick that you mentioned, and the citizens. I mean, it must be a pleasure I would think to try and make the two groups work together.

CN: Yeah, it is, it's been fun to, you know, obviously you get caught in the middle sometimes. But one of the things about coming back here, which attracted me, that you could be, make a difference in the community. (*Unintelligible phrase*) I was active in trying to expand our new library in Brunswick, it's a, our library is a marvelous building. I'm on that board and chairman of the budget committee. Raising that money was a challenge, and we got that done. I was chair of a new committee to build a, building a new hospital in Brunswick and. The first new hospital built in Maine in twenty-five years. And that was right when I was active (*unintelligible word*) Bowdoin capital campaign. There's certainly, there are lots of things you can do and enjoy. Saving Joshua Chamberlain's house was one that, I was chair of that campaign sixteen years ago when the house came on the market. And that's great, you know, and it, so yeah, there are a lot of enjoyable things on that score, to try to do a little work on activities. And you can do it in a small town. And the board of selectmen had fallen into very sad shape at one point. And that's why I ran for that. It was my one and only term because it just, the board is loaded with bad people and, so, but as I say, I only ran for one term but, and that's what I did just to get off it. There was a great conflict of interest obviously in being on the board and paper so, John Cole was our editor and I said, "John, as long as I'm on that board, any talking about municipal editorials, you write the editorials and you determine the policies." And that was just, that was a very easy way to handle that I was comfortable with that and John was comfortable with it.

So we've, you know, it's been great we have great management in town. We have the town manager who preceded our present one was here twenty-eight years. And the present one has

been here eleven years and done a great job and so forth and so on. So it's been a great place to be a manager of something, there's been good support. Got a new high school five years ago, which took us a long time to get where it was going to be, which was a great problem. But, yeah, it's been a, it's been a refreshing, and we have a nice mix of some industries that helped. BIW, got a lot of work ahead of it, I think, I assume, unless George Bush tries to shut it down or do something evil, we were just very fortunate to have what we've got.

NC: Well, unless you've got something else you'd like to add -

CN: No.

NC: Okay.

CN: That's fine. Enjoyed talking with you, I always enjoy talking.

End of Interview
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