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Nute, Alice oral history interview

Don Nicoll

Marisa Burnham-Bestor

Interview with Alice Nute by Don Nicoll and Marisa Burnham-Bestor

Summary Sheet and Transcript

Interviewee
Nute, Alice

Interviewer
Nicoll, Don
Burnham-Bestor, Marisa

Date
November 18, 1998

Place
Augusta, Maine

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Biographical Note

Alice Nute was born July 25, 1915 in Houlton, Maine. Her father was a forester; her mother was a teacher who graduated from Bates. Nute went to Ricker Junior College and worked in the Kerry Library in Houlton. She moved to Augusta after college and worked in the state law library from November 15, 1943-May 12, 1978. When she retired, her title at the library was "Deputy Law Librarian." She married Floyd Thomas Nute, who was Muskie's press secretary around 1954 when Muskie was governor of Maine.

Scope and Content Note

Interview includes discussions of: the Maine Democratic Party, 1952-1954; the 1954 Maine Gubernatorial campaign; Muskie's first term as Governor; the 1956 Maine Gubernatorial campaign; Muskie's second term as Governor; Muskie's 1958 U.S. Senate campaign; liquor and financial scandals, the State law library; and the State House renovation.

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Transcript

Maris B: Could you please state your name and spell it?

Alice Nute: My first, my whole name? A-L-I-C-E G. N-U-T-E.

MB: Thank you. Where and when were you born and raised?

AN: I was born in Houlton, Maine, July 25th, 1915.

MB: How would you describe Houlton, Maine as a town when you were growing up?

AN: It was a wonderful town, it was just great. The first years I spent in school in Davidson, it was Township 2 Range 6, and my grandfather had bought the township in 1901. And my father was a forester and he worked . . . My grandfather was a lumberman and my father was a forester and he worked in the lumbering part, and my uncle worked sort of as managing, office manager. And we went to school through the seventh grade. And then for the eighth grade we went up to my grandparents' home in Houlton, so that we would have a year before we went in to high school with other children. And, Houlton was wonderful, and I loved it and I didn't ever want to leave it.

MB: Was it a small town?

AN: Yes. Oh, I don't know how many thousand but not, probably, maybe twenty thousand. I don't know, that's a guess. But it was a small town.

MB: Now you said your father was a forestry ...?

AN: Yes, he worked for the state for the last, I don't know, forty or fifty years of his life probably. But he, the state was divided into forestry, I think three forestry districts. And he had all of Aroostook County, from the east province of New Brunswick to the west, to Quebec. And he had the whole territory. This was unorganized towns that he had. And he did that, he was a supervisor and he did that for oh, well, until he retired in 1958 or around there.

MB: What were your parents' names?

AN: Rex Gilpatrick, and his wife was Louisa Watkins Gilpatrick.

MB: Did you have any brothers and sisters?

AN: Yes, I had five brothers and sisters. Three brothers and two sisters, but only one brother and I grew up to be adults. The others died when we were children.

MB: What was your family's financial situation when you were growing up?

AN: Well, I had plenty, due to my grandfather's business. But in the '30s, well we had, in Davidson, we had a wonderful dairy farm and it was large. My grandfather became interested in the dairy, in having the dairy to provide butter, milk, and everything for the lumber camps. And he had, he was well known for the way he treated the people in the lumber camps so that he never had any problem getting help, you know. And he, well he just had it all, with his grandfather before, his father before him had also done the same work. And so we had plenty when we were growing up. But in the '30s everything was gone just about, and the farm, the township was sold to, actually friends of my grandfather's bought it. And my brother was starting MIT. He had to leave; he couldn't finish but he got degrees. He just seemed to be interested, I guess he was a professional at getting degrees from this place and that. And I went to, because I was going to Mt. Holyoke, but I couldn't. So I went to college, to junior college, in Portland, Ricker Junior College. And then I came to the state library and my parents moved down here because my father was in the office of the Forestry Department in the winters. And he was up in the Allagash all, and on (*name*-- sounds like Umsaskis) Lake and, you know, from spring, early spring until late fall, and the rest of the time in the office here in the Forestry Department.

And I came to the state library in 1942 as an apprentice. And in those days they took one or two persons as apprentices, and if they liked you, I mean if they liked your work, you were sometimes kept on. And, because I think I had an advantage because I worked in the Houlton library, the Kerry Library in Houlton before I came here. So, you know, it was maybe easier for me than it might be if you just came to it cold. And Edith Hary had been an apprentice the year before I came; she's much younger than I, six or seven years younger. But she had finished her apprentice course and we became close friends then, and I worked there. I think in 1950 I went into the law section. Edith was in the law section of the library, and they asked me if I'd like to go, you know, be in that part of the library, which I was from then on. And I've lived here ever since.

MB: When you were younger, what were your parents' political and religious views? Were they involved?

AN: Well, my mother had been a Democrat because her South Casco people were firm Democrats. But my father's people were Republicans. And they weren't staunch, I know they voted otherwise sometimes. But my mother was always a Democrat and I was. When I first went to register to vote, my father went with me, wanted me to register. He had no idea, and so when they asked me what my affiliation was I said I was an independent. And he was shocked and he said, "Well, you're a goddamned independent," and he walked out. But he never minded and after that, by the time, oh, I think even in, Gov. [Louis] Brann was the first that I remember Democratic governor. And I think my father maybe voted Democratic then. He certainly did when Muskie was governor.

MB: What made you decide to declare independent?

AN: Just because I didn't, not because I knew that much about it, but I just didn't want to be what I was told to be probably, you know. But I did come to believe in, and I certainly do believe in that way.

DN: Could I drop back and ask a couple of questions, Alice? First, what was your brother's name?

AN: It was Ora.

DN: Ora, O-R-A?

AN: O-R-A, Ora Rex Gilpatrick.

DN: And what was his profession?

AN: Well, he, I don't know that you could say he worked. He tried, because he learned to fly when there was still opportunity. There used to be a lot of barn stormers around back in the early '30s, 1930. And he loved flying and made friends with them, and he learned to fly. And he got his license when he was in school, in college in Massachusetts. And, so when the war came along he thought that he would, you know, enlist and he could certainly get in the pilot. Well, he couldn't. He had, I think it was his eyes, but he was deaf, partially deaf in one ear, and he didn't get anywhere. He went to Canada and thought they would take him there anyway, but they wouldn't. And so he went in the Red Cross and he was overseas with the Red Cross. And when the war ended he worked for the displaced persons, I don't know what the official name was, and, for awhile. And then he, I don't remember how he happened to go with Corps of Engineers but he did. And he was in North Africa for quite a long time. And then from there he was back in New York briefly, and I don't know what he did when he was in New York. But then he went with the Corps of Engineers again to Greenland. And while he was in Greenland the Americans could do whatever they wanted to about taking medicines and things. And the Danish people there were required to take medicine because of the danger of TB and that sort of thing, lack of sun and everything. Well, he didn't and he developed TB. And so after two years there he had to come home and he had one lung removed. And then he was never well afterwards but he kept going and he kept going, and he kept taking courses, you know, going to colleges here and there, and he died about twenty years ago.

DN: And was your grandfather's lumbering operation within Davidson township?

AN: Well, it was, he bought Township 2 Range 6 in 1901. The whole township I think was twenty-five thousand acres. He had a lot of lumbering interests in New Brunswick, down near the (*name*) and he had a lot. He, as well as the lumbering, with the dairy he became so interested in the dairy farm that he, the cattle were taken to the Springfield exhibition. I have a silver pitcher, great big beautiful silver pitcher that one of the cows won. And he, they also went to Philadelphia; there was some sort of an exhibition there, and in Richmond, Virginia, those three places. And they, you know, it was thrilling. They loaded them all in the train. He was also a director of the B & A Railroad and he was a trustee of University of Maine, too. But ...

DN: And in the Depression the market dropped so that, I take it, he lost a great amount ...

AN: He lost everything, everything. And he was, he died in about 1931 but already I think that the rest of the family knew that, you know, everything was going to be gone, and so it was. They had a wonderful, where I grew up in Houlton, when we were in Houlton, wonderful big house, just beautiful. And all of those things had to go. My grandmother, they told my grandmother that she could, the bank holiday. I think when that came it made everything, you know, you knew the end was there. And they, the lawyers told her that she could claim this and claim that, but she didn't want to claim anything, so she didn't. I think she had probably two or three thousand dollars and that was all that was left. And of course the house was sold, she sold the house. But it was in a way I think to the, it was good. It's good sometimes when these things happen to you because you appreciate maybe more than you did before.

DN: Now, your father went to work for the state when?

AN: Well, he worked summers. When he was, when my grandfather had the lumbering operations, my father worked winters in that and he loved it, fall and winter. But in the summer he did warden service. We were right at the foot of Mt. Katahdin, looked right out, 2 Range 6 looks right out on Katahdin. I think we're fifteen miles from the foot of it. And he worked summers doing that and then the winter for my grandfather. But he started working right around 1932, '31 or '32, for the state, and he had done enough in the past so that he, you know, was given the job of supervisor I think about 1933 or '4.

DN: And when did he go to work up on the Allagash?

AN: Well, when he first became supervisor, and he was, that was his part, and he, for awhile he had his headquarters in Fort Kent. And then there was so much work, I mean so much activity down, that he went, he stayed at, he built a camp at Umsaskis and, so that my mother could go up summers and stay at Umsaskis. Well, she went up about as early as he, not quite. When the geese began to go over, in March or April, he began to get his things out and you could see them. He wouldn't be able to go for a few weeks but he had his things ready ahead of time. And my mother would go and stay with him. And I used to go up when I had vacations from the library. It's wonderful country. Are you familiar with it at all?

DN: Oh, yes. Now is this the forestry camp that was on the bluff or the one over in the cove on Umsaskis? There used to be one that was ...

AN: Well the fish and game warden's camp was at the foot of Umsa-, near the foot. It was around the corner from Rex's, from my father's camp. The, my father's, and then built a small camp and then (*sounds like: Willy or William)* Bridgey, Bridgey was the warden for that section. And they had a large, because they stayed there. Bridgey would trap all winter and then work for the state, you know, as a warden in the summer. And they had a lovely big cottage. But my father didn't need anything like that. And then after we left, I say we, after my father, before my father left, but maybe he had retired anyway, the International Paper built a big lodge just beyond. And my father went up every, after my mother died, he couldn't, he never did adjust. And, but he always went up to Umsaskis.

And the people, he was a character I think because if anyone did anything that wasn't right, he booted them out. And this is if (*unintelligible word*) anyone working, and I think that he was probably hard on people, you know. I know one person that was well-known and he took canoes and things, and my father knew it and he told him to get out. He tried to make trouble for my father but he didn't get anywhere with it.

But he went up every summer. And one, back I guess it was in 1973 or '70, no, it must have been '69 that he went up from here, he was awfully tired going up. And it was two hundred and fifty miles, or seventy-five miles from here to Umsaskis going through, up through the . . . Well he went to Jackman up that road, I can't think of the name. But anyway, he went up that highway and then back into Maine. And, you know, that was going up through Jackman and then back into Maine. And he, when he got into the camp . . . I know he stopped along the way because some of the people that he had known, of course he wasn't attached to the forestry then, and, but he'd stop and call on Lionel, can't think of his last name; and some of the other ones that had worked under him. And they all liked him I think. And when he got into camp he met some of the International Paper people and they asked him if he'd like to go down the river the next day with them. And of course he loved that. And the next morning that he, he didn't appear and they thought, well, you know, that probably he'd decided not to, he'd looked tired or something. And they'd also asked him to come over and have supper that night, so the next night he didn't appear and they went to investigate. Well, he was, they found him in the cabin but he was unconscious. And he had a gas refrigerator and he, they think that he, they found him, he hadn't taken his jacket off or anything and he'd just laid down on the bed. And they think he was tired and didn't bother. He was a great one for fresh air, and they think that he hadn't opened the windows of anything.

So anyway they, the forestry had him flown out to Presque Isle and called us and we went up. And the doctor said that it was, you know, that he had poisoning from the gas. And they told me that he would probably recover, but they said that he might have some brain damage. And, but he seemed himself and he came home. And he would come over to the State House every day to have coffee with me, and one day he met me along the street and he stopped and he told me he couldn't remember where he lived. Well, that frightened me, but, and from then on he went downhill, you know, just in his memory. And it was just like Alzheimer's, but I think it was brought on, and the doctors thought it was probably brought on from the gas problem. He lived with us for three years and then he had a stroke and had to go to the hospital. And he was in a nursing home a while, and he lived about three years after that. But he always knew us, of course, he'd, he would, well, it was difficult. And it was good when he went, just because he, it was so funny, he would tell me every day in the hospital that my mother had been there the whole forenoon. And I thought that was wonderful that he believed that. Anyway, that was ...

DN: So he was involved in the Allagash long before it became a state waterway.

AN: Oh yes, yes, and we had to sell it or, you know, give it back to the, no we sold it I think, not for very much. But it was a wonderful camp because whatever he did, he did to last, you know, everything was double.

DN: So this was his camp on, I assume, at that time, IP land.

AN: Yes, that's right. He paid, I think he had, they gave him, they liked him. He fought all of the timber companies all his life but they all liked him. It wasn't ugly fighting, it was just, you know, being against the whole . . . I can remember when I was a child he was on, you know, on who their . . . During WWII I remember they would, they were permitted to go up and cut timber, and they cut everything regardless of whether it could be used or not, and left it; took what was good. And that started, it was the beginning of his being so anti-lumbering. But we always, it's funny, in spite of that he kept up to our relationship with, I think he gave the Forestry Department a hard time sometimes, but my, just in, I think they liked him. Austin I think did in a way.

DN: Did he talk much about his relationship with either the paper company people or with the commissioner of forestry?

AN: Oh yes, Austin was commissioner for a long time, yes, and, oh, he was friendly with all of them. And Earl Crabb, I don't know whether you ever knew him. He was a pilot for years and he and my father were very close friends. And he was with the Seven Islands. Johnny Sinclair was one of my father's wardens when he was young and I remember he and, I can't think of his wife's name, but they lived at St. (*name*-- Palmfield ??) when, oh, when I was young. And I visited them once or twice there. But my father was very fond of old John, he came from Fort Kent I think. And I know, I remember he was thrilled when he was made part of the Seven Islands. And, who was the man he was very close friends with? Bradford, in Bangor, Grover, no, was it Grover Bradford? And they were good friends forever. And he was also with George Faulkner. I don't know, he was, George Faulkner was a forest supervisor for the, for postal area, for, oh, I can't remember what area but he was one of the three or four forest supervisors. And he was a wonderful person; he was a great friend of my father's. When my father was sick, George wrote to him. I always remember that he, he was a wonderful person and full of it. And he wrote to my father and he said all of his bad habits, he said, "Dear Rex, all of my bad habits are just happy memories." But, and Mr. Stubbs, Robert Stubbs, had I think part of what was my father's territory. It was south anyway; it included probably, well I can't think. My father's came down as far as Island Falls and west. And I think that Mr. Stubbs would have been south of there, maybe Franklin County. I don't know exactly but ...

DN: Cover Patton and that area?

AN: No, it wouldn't, Mr. Stubbs wouldn't. But my father would have covered Patton. Yes, and I think Hack (Tinguay??---sounds like *name*), I don't know what his real name was, maybe Harry. But I think he had territory somewhere up there, maybe that adjoined my father's in Island Falls. My father's went south to Island Falls. It didn't come, well, there was only a township or two south of that before you got into Penobscot County.

DN: But it was part of, your father's territory included part of Piscataquis County, because Umsaskis is right there.

AN: Yes, just barely, yes. A little bit but not very much I think. I should have that. Do you

have that book The Length and Breadth of Maine?

DN: Yes. And do you know who gave it to me?

AN: Who?

DN: Alice and Tom Nute.

AN: Did I? Isn't that great? You can get a lot of information from it. I use it even now, you know, I use it often.

DN: One other question, Alice; your mother's home, was she from Houlton?

AN: No, she came from South Casco and she, her father was a great one for education. And I remember letters, he died long before I was born, but I know letters from him that, to her, telling her she must get a firm foundation in Latin and Greek. And I thought, nobody would think of Greek certainly now in high school. She went to Bridgton Academy and then she went to Bates. And she went, her first year, she graduated in 1906 from Bates, and she went and taught at Guilford her first year. Well, she wanted to change, she didn't want to stay. She liked the people and all but she wanted something different. And she wanted to teach Latin and probably Greek.

And her principal or supervisor, I mean superintendent at Guilford told her that there was an opening in Houlton, they wanted a Latin and English teacher. So she applied and went, and she met my father there. She never went, we went summers maybe for a week or two to South Casco. But when we came back down here in the '30s, I mean in the '40s, this would be the '40s, she went over a lot. And her brother, all of her family were gone except her brother. And he was, I guess I told you he was always deaf, he had no hearing. I think he had scarlet fever when he was a child, baby. And he was a wonderful person, just wonderful. And he had that big, it was a tremendous house, I showed you pictures of it, and it was just tremendous. And so she went over there a lot and, except in the summer when she went to Umsaskis. But she never, ever missed a Bates reunion, she always went. And she had three friends and they always met and visited, you know, in the summer. I think they were all maybe from out of state. Maybe one was from southern York County.

But my father went and my father was elegant when he, you know, went to things. He was tops and she, they met and the last few years that she was alive, she had cancer, so she went to a couple of the reunions. But the last reunion she couldn't go, and they all came here. I mean, these three friends and their husbands, which was lovely for her. But she was a wonderful person, just everyone would say that often. She was unusual.

DN: What was her full name and her maiden name?

AN: Louisa Alcott, which she always used, Louisa Alcott Watkins.

DN: Now, if I remember correctly, South Casco is where Nathaniel Hawthorne used to go.

AN: That's right, that's right. And some of the deeds to the, the property is mine now over there, all of it, there's fifteen acres and the big house and the little house. And the little house, in the Clarke, we always called it the Clarke cabin. It's a house, but it, the deed, the Mannings, Nathaniel Hawthorne's mother was Elizabeth Manning. And the deeds to some of the property, some of the deeds that I have are from the Mannings and company to my grandfather or great-great grandfather, I can't remember which. And it's wonderful property and wonderful trees, pine trees, a grove of pine trees just beyond. If you were going towards Bridgton, they're next to the cemetery on your left as you go up, and they're wonderful and I have all of it. My uncle deeded it to me long before he died.

And I had it nine years ago put into a conservation easement so it can never be, you know, nothing can be done to it. And the property on the far side from the 302 joins the Migis Lodge, which is a protection for Migas to have that property. And yet the trails and things on it can be, people can use those but they can't, nothing can be built and nothing can be destroyed. I have a friend who is a forester and he takes care of trees, you know, if they have to come down. And I keep in touch with it, it's the Loon Echo Trust that holds the deed. And you probably know you can't break it, it's part of the court records so it can't be broken. And I thought it would protect the people around there. They all worried, they thought I would sell it because I had, well, I had people in New Hampshire that wanted to buy it for a mini-mall. And then someone local over there, in Naples I think, wanted it for a sand pit, you know, they thought it would be good for that. And I still get requests from out-of-state people that want it.

So, and the people that lived right opposite, the little house, the Clarke cabin, they worried a lot, I know. I gave them a piece of property and, but they were so good to my uncle and by being good to him, to me, you know, they would call me if anything, if I needed to come. And working as I did, it was difficult to just go if they called, and so they were so helpful to me. And the children, their children were, I found all kinds of notes from the children to my uncle asking him to come down for supper. And they were all wonderful to him. So I have fixed it in my deed that Barbara, one of the daughters, will have it. She lives in the big house now, and so she can have it eventually. And so I feel the property is taken care of.

MB: Did your mother realize her dream of being a teacher and teach Latin and Greek?

AN: Yes, she did.

MB: Where? What school?

AN: In Houlton High School. I don't know whether she taught Greek, I can't remember that. I remember her father telling her to have a firm foundation in that, but I know she taught Latin and English in Houlton High School.

MB: While you were a student, or ...?

AN: No, this was, after she was married. Why, you know, she had six children. And also we lived winters in Davidson, we lived in the woods so to speak.

MB: What kind of student were you in high school? Were you a good student in high school? Did you, were you successful?

AN: Well, I was always amazed that I made the honor roll because I never thought I quite did, myself, I didn't think it. But I did all right.

MB: Did you have any inspirational or influential teachers that helped you decide what you thought you might want to do with your life?

AN: No, I don't remember that I did. I loved the French teacher, Madame Riggs was a wonderful teacher. And Mrs. Howe taught Latin and I thought she was wonderful. I liked both of them very much. I think I liked all of my teachers, but I don't ...

MB: Why did you decide to go to Mt. Holyoke?

AN: Well, I decided because friends of my grandfather's used to come up summers to Shin Pond, and they had two daughters that I, the younger daughter I played with a lot. And the two daughters went to Mt. Holyoke and I thought that that was the place for me. I don't know why. Just for that reason I suppose.

MB: What did you plan to study there?

AN: I have no idea, I don't remember. I don't know that I knew myself at that time.

MB: What were your interests? What activities or organizations were you involved with?

AN: Well, I think the library was the thing, books. We read a lot.

MB: Did you make a lot of lasting friendships while you were in ...?

AN: Oh, in high school, yes. I had, I just about three weeks ago, I've kept in touch with some by telephone and by letters. Not often, but now and then. And Lib Putnam and, the Putnam's lived next door to us and Albert and (*name*) Putnam were like brothers and sisters to me. They lived next door to us in Houlton and their parents were like second father and mother to me. And the Putnams were a large family in Houlton. And I've kept in touch, all of, Aunt Molly and Uncle Fred Putnam, all their family have gone except their grandchildren are alive. But the ones that I knew are gone. But then they had cousins, Lib Putnam, and Albert Putnam married a Madigan, (the Madigans were an old family in Houlton) married Lee Madigan.

Well, about three weeks ago the door bell rang and I went down and there were two women. I thought at first they might be, they didn't have Bibles but quite often we get people, you know, that come by, I think Jehovah's Witnesses. Very nice people. But I was, and I was looking because I thought two women, it probably is a religious thing. So I opened the door to welcome them. And they, one of them said, "We're looking for Alice." And I said, "Here I am." Well, it was Lib Putnam and Lee Madigan, now, Lee Putnam now. So I keep in touch in a way and we

corresponded, not regularly, but twice a year probably. And they've telephoned me now and then. But so many of my generation are gone. I mean, after all, I'm eighty-three, so one doesn't have that many left.

MB: Were your parents religious?

AN: No. They were Unitarians.

MB: Are you a religious person yourself?

AN: Well, when I go to church it's a Unitarian. I can go to any church. I enjoy going to the Catholic church.

MB: What did you plan to do after college when you graduated?

AN: Well, the library, because I worked in the library at Ricker when I went to, Ricker Junior College it was when I went there, and then I . . . Oh, I didn't tell you -- I thought to be a nurse because I couldn't, you know, I didn't have any gift and I didn't know what to do. We didn't have any, when we stopped having any means, I thought I could be a nurse. And my doctor in Houlton had said he could get me in at the, can't think of the hospital in Boston outside, Newton, Newton Hospital outside of Boston. And he did, and so I went thinking I could. I hated the idea of being a nurse but I thought I could, you know. And we had had some sickness in the family, so I wasn't unused to illness. And I stayed through my probationary term and the head of nurses, I was shocked because they, the girls, the student nurses would joke, you know, about the cases. Well, that was the only way I suppose you could do, but I was shocked by it. And I was not frightened but I was concerned all the time. You know, and I'd probably take three times as long to make the bed as there was any need of. And finally the superintendent of nurses, she had a horrible name, Miss Hoptettler or something like that, she called me in. And she told me that all the patience in the world wouldn't make me a good nurse because she thought I had lots of patience. And she thought that it would be wise if I didn't stay on, and I thought that was probably right, so I didn't. I went back home and worked in the library in Houlton until I came down here.

MB: When did you meet Floyd? Tom?

AN: Tom to us. Well, working at the state library and he was working for the Associated Press. That was in, he was just out of the Army. He was in the Army. He enlisted in 1941 and he got out in 19-, in the fall of '45. And it was, I don't know whether it was the next year or '47 maybe that he came up to Augusta. And I think he worked only during the legislature; no, I guess he worked year-round for them for about two years I think. Anyway, he, I met him. He used to come in the library for books and all. And I just, I don't know, got talking and chatting and that's the way it was.

End of Side One
Side Two

MB: So you and Floyd met while you were working in the library. What year did you go from the Houlton library to start working in the state library?

AN: Oh, I didn't. I went, I worked for the, what was it, Office of Pric-, OPA I think it was, here when I came to Augusta. I didn't have a job here but we came down because my father's work was here and we had to move; we had to leave the big house in Houlton. And I didn't get a job immediately but I did soon after, working nights, I worked something like nine o'clock at night until two in the morning, something like that for the OP-, OPA was it?

DN: OPA then. What year was that, Alice?

AN: That must have been in 1939 or '40. I think it must have been, I'm not ...

DN: Forty, yeah.

AN: Nineteen forty probably, and, yes it must have been 1940. And then in the fall of '42 I went to the state library.

MB: Why did you change and go to the state library? Was that, is that what you wanted to do?

AN: Oh, I wanted, I had my name in to be. And I was ill or something when, the first opening they had. And Mrs. Stubbs was the, she was a deputy librarian then, and she was anxious in a way to have me come. And the next year she called again and I, and that's when I went and started there. And I stayed there until I retired, in 1978 I retired.

MB: What were your duties at the OPA? What was that job like?

AN: Oh, it was filing. It was just a clerk, you know, clerk's job, filing. I remember when I first went with the state library I got fifteen dollars a week and it seemed wonderful. It was a tremendous salary.

DN: Quick question, was Mrs. Stubbs at the library related to Robert Stubbs?

AN: Oh, his wife. I mean, yes, his wife, yeah.

DN: So she knew your family.

AN: Oh yes, yeah. She was a wonderful person.

MB: When you met Floyd, what was his job at the time? Was he already a newsman?

AN: Yes, he wanted to be evidently. He did work, do some in Portland but I don't know for whom or for what. But anyway, he came as the A-, with the Associated Press and I think that it was, yes, he worked for them I'm sure. When he first came to Augusta he was doing that, working for the Associated Press. And then after, I don't know what year he worked. He was first a stringer for the, not then, I think that must have been in the '50s, in the early '50s, '49 or

‘50, for the *Boston*-, he did for the United Press, must have been in the ‘40s after the, the Associated Press. I don’t know whether he worked for them one year or more, and then he worked for the United Press. And, he was a stringer for the United Press for a while before, then he did it full-time I think. Funny, I’m kind of mixed up on that. And he wrote a column for the *Boston Herald*, a weekly column. And it was the *Boston Herald* as it used to be, not as it is now. I like to emphasize that.

MB: What did the *Boston Herald* used to be like?

AN: It would be like the *Boston Globe* now. They’ve just changed places, wouldn’t you think that, Don?

DN: Yes.

MB: What was Tom’s educational background?

AN: Well, he went to high school, Deering High School, in Portland, and he went to Duke University. I guess that was, I think he did something the year he got out of the Army in ‘46 maybe. He stayed in New York and went to some school in New York; I don’t know what it was but he did something.

MB: When did he join, when was he in the Army?

AN: He went in, I think he went in, he enlisted the day after Pearl Harbor but I think he wasn’t really in until January 8; it was something like that. Pearl Harbor was December 9th or 7th I guess, and I think that he was in the Army then. And most of his, he was in, until he was . . . It’s funny, I was looking at some of the things in one of his papers the other day and I think he got out in September of 1995 [*sic* 1945]. It was at the end of the war ...

DN: Forty-five.

AN: Forty-five, forty-five, and then he came up here soon after that.

DN: Where did Tom serve during the war?

AN: Almost all of it was in, down in the Caribbean and that way. He was on submarine watch most of the time on some of those little islands. And I think that was the better part of his service was there. I remember his telling me that, this was when I first knew him, that if you complained, your choice, if you complained about being there, because I think a lot of them did, you went to (*name*) Newfoundland. So nobody complained.

MB: When were you guys married?

AN: We married in ‘49.

MB: At that point, was he writing his column, “The State House Report” yet, or was that much

later?

AN: He was working, I don't know whether he was working for the Associated Press or the United Press then, one or the other but I don't remember which. I think United Press. Oh, I don't know, I can't remember. One or the other.

MB: Did he know many legislators at the State House through this ...?

AN: Oh, yes, you, yes, you know, I think they got to know him.

MB: Did he have a good relationship with most of them?

AN: I think so.

MB: Were any of them close friends to you, or was it mostly a professional relationship?

AN: I think it was mostly professional. I think you didn't get too close. I mean you were friends with all of them, but I don't remember ...

MB: And when did you guys decide to move into this house? Where did you decide to live once you were married?

AN: We lived, we were living at 128 State Street, which is a wonderful house. You remember it, Don, don't you? Because you used to come, when Ed was thinking about running for, when you were trying to encourage him to run, you used to meet, or some of the people did at our house on State Street, the third floor. And Ed came a few times, and Paul Fullam and there was someone else from Waterville ...

DN: That would have been Dick McMahon.

AN: Yes, that's right. And did Frank [Coffin]? Frank came once because I remember he came early once and we didn't, we couldn't get in. I didn't have my key or something. And he boosted me up so I could get through the ventilator ...

DN: The transom?

AN: Yeah, it was very funny. But, met quite a number of times there. And that house used to belong, didn't belong to the Tudor Gardiners, but they lived in it. I think they maybe rented it or something and it must have been when Tudor Gardiner was, before he was governor. But in that time before he was governor they lived there. And the nursery was on the top floor that we rented, that we had, and all around were these little marks on the doors. By the edge of the doors, there'd be a little pencil mark, and they were the marks of the children as, their height as they were growing up. And we never, we had a woman that cleaned for us sometimes and we always cautioned her never to remove those marks.

MB: How involved were you guys on the social and political scene at that time? You seem to

know ...

AN: Oh, we went to many, we went to all of the things, especially when Muskie was running. We went all over the, following, because Tom was interested, you know, for his, he wrote a column for the weekly newspapers and he had quite a number of them that he wrote columns for. So we went and followed all, way up into, I can remember going to Ellsworth to some of the meetings, going all over the ...

DN: You traveled with Tom quite a bit back then.

AN: Yes, and, well it was wonderful and it was thrilling really. And, but I think that, I remember that Tom would be in Portland and on his way back, weren't you at a station, a radio station or something?

DN: WLAM in Lewiston.

AN: Lewiston; and Tom would come home with [you]. He thought you were wonderful and, you were then, I think you must have been what got Ed Muskie to run, weren't you?

DN: Well I, no, actually I was pushing Frank first to run and then to get involved in the party. And the effort to get Ed to run came, that depends in part on time, but the effort to get Ed to run came in the spring of 1954 when there was only one announced candidate for the major offices. That was Jim Oliver, who was running for the first district. And all of the other seats, the second district, the third district, governor and senator were empty. We had no candidates. But it was about then, and actually I was still at the radio and television station then.

AN: Well, I think Tom used to stop in to see you because he was full of you, I remember; I mean talking, you know. He thought you were great at getting things going. He always thought that, you know, for the party.

DN: Well, it's nice to know that he felt that way.

AN: Well those were exciting times, weren't they? I remember going, yes, I remember when John Kennedy was senator he came up. And was it for Muskie that he came down at Rockland at the, what was that hotel?

DN: The Samoset. Not ...

AN: Samoset.

DN: ... was it the Samoset?

AN: Yes, and I remember he came. We went to it. And you were there, weren't you?

DN: Yup.

AN: And, the only time I ever saw John Kennedy.

DN: That would have been, I think, around 1958.

AN: It was. Then that was after Muskie was governor.

DN: Well, he was still governor but he was running for the Senate.

AN: Oh, when he was running for the Senate. I remember going all over the state, and I remember a fellow that had been in Korea. He was a doctor, Dr., oh, ...

DN: Dr. Pfeiffer?

AN: No. He wrote MASH. The doctor, I mean.

DN: Oh, oh, I know who you mean.

AN: You know who I mean, down in Waldoboro, (*unintelligible phrase*).

DN: And he later moved to Waterville.

AN: Yes. He kept the place down in, we saw a lot of him. And he was, we thought he was going to be a Democrat but he didn't. He was just the opposite. Dick, oh, isn't that, I knew his wife very well because she worked, while he was in Korea. That was where he was, in Korea. While he was in Korea she came to the state library and worked for two or three years. Oh, what was his name?

DN: I can't remember either.

AN: Well, ...

DN: It's a bit of trivia for you.

AN: Oh, I shouldn't be talking about other things.

MB: What was your relationship with the various people that you went to these meetings all over the state with? The different, like, Frank Coffin and Paul Fullam?

AN: Well, I think Frank was a friend, and we just went. Tom was just interested in covering the things, you know, it gave him copy. He went finally to work for the United Press here in Augusta and he covered the elections and when Muskie was elected. I remember that night so well because he couldn't, he had to cover it from the State House. And I went up to help him, you know, with phone calls and everything. And he was just, well we couldn't, we thought he was going to, he was calling in the report to, as the information came in, Tom had to call it in. I don't remember too much about it, but I remember how frustrated that he couldn't just listen and not have to make telephone calls.

DN: That was a one-person bureau at that time.

AN: That's right, yes, just one person and he did it. He was a wonderful man, and Harry van der -something in Portland, that ran the Maine United Press office. And then, what did he do after that? Well, I can't remember.

DN: You might comment on some of the other reporters who were at the State House that you got to know.

AN: Oh yes. Robert Crocker was in, and, there were ever so many; [Lorin] Doc Arnold. Doc Arnold told Tom that if he took the job with Muskie, he'd never get a job in news work again, and he was right. He said you couldn't do that and ever have any, you know, clout or whatever, I don't know what the word was. And Tom was undecided, I remember. But anyway, Doc Arnold was a nifty man. There were ever so many. And Bill Langzettel he was just great. And there were ever so many, but those are the ones that stand out in my mind.

MB: What made Tom finally decide to join Muskie's staff despite the fact that ...

AN: To what?

MB: To become Muskie's press secretary, despite the fact that he might not be able to work in press again?

AN: Well, I don't know. He thought about it and I know that we were going, I think we were going on a trip. I remember he stopped in Belfast. We were going to Cape Breton I think, and he stopped in Belfast. He had just about said he wasn't going to do it, and he stopped in Belfast and called back whoever it was that he would call for that, and said that he would take it. I don't know, he was torn; he believed in Muskie very much and he wanted to do it. So that was that.

MB: What were his duties as the press secretary? What did the job entail?

AN: I don't think I have, I don't know. I don't think I know what his duties were.

MB: Did he talk much about Muskie at home?

AN: Oh he was, you know, he thought he was always right; he did. He, you know, he was very loyal, Tom was. I think that he thought he was right always, but I don't know that he, I don't remember that he talked a great deal about it. I suppose he did, I just don't know.

MB: Do you remember what the major issues at the time were that Muskie was dealing with when he was governor?

AN: Well, I remember Vahlsing. You remember?

DN: Freddy?

AN: Freddy Vahlsing. That was a big thing during Muskie's time. I remember some of the legislators, who was the legislator from Caribou? He became a friend of ours and I cannot think of his name. He was a marvelous person. And he was, but he was kind of a joker. He was a Republican but he was nice in spite of that. But he, oh ...

DN: This wasn't Collins, was it?

AN: No, no, he was independent. He was a Republican but he was independent. And he drove the Republicans to, oh, they were always furious. And you remember, he did that thing about, he did that joke in the, was he a senator I think? "I'm Valsing with tears in my eyes." Do you remember when Valsing was in such a ...?

DN: Trouble later on?

AN: Yes. Oh, isn't that dumb, I can't remember his name. But he was an interesting character. And ...

DN: When you were in the law section of the library, you must have had a lot of dealings with legislators.

AN: Oh yes, all the time.

DN: And in addition to the senator from Caribou, do you remember any leading legislators and what they were like? For example, what was it like dealing with Burt Cross when he was in the state Senate?

AN: Well, he was fine. I don't know that he used the library that much. I don't remember that he did.

DN: Which legislators tended to use the library?

AN: Back in those days, I don't, I'd have to give it thought. I can't remember really.

DN: Would somebody like Bob Haskell spend much time in the library?

AN: Oh yes, he did. And, oh yes, and that wonderful man from Portland, oh, came from Blue Hill originally and his sisters were authors, wrote books. Donna Leonaise was one, Chase, isn't that the last name?

DN: Chase, there was a Chase.

AN: Oh, he was killed. He and Tudor Gardiner were killed when they were, Ed Chase.

DN: Ed Chase.

AN: He was a wonderful legislator, just wonderful. And, they must have been killed before Ed was governor. They must have been killed in 1952 I think, flying. I remember, well, I guess you can tell that.

MB: What was the role of the law library? What did people usually use it for?

AN: Well, it was a law library. You, they use it to look up material for legislation and to find out what other states were doing and what they had done, and generally that was it. And the lawyers in town used it, always. That was so, I remember, one of the things, some of the lawyers, you had favorite ones because they, Justice Williamson, Robert Williamson, who lived right across on that corner, far corner from us . . . And he was one of my favorite persons to wait on because he assumed that you knew what he was talking about. And it was so easy to wait on somebody that didn't talk down, you know, that. And there were quite a few like that, like Judge Williamson.

The, another one that, the one that's blind; it's awful, my memory on names is not good. Cort Perry, he was another one that was interesting. He was blind and he would come in the law library and he would ask you to read; he had a reader who always accompanied him. And once in a while she wouldn't be with him, and he had this dog that would bring him in. And he would tell me that he wanted me to read. He was firm, he was not overly friendly. He was nice, you know, but he was very "sticking to business". And he would tell me to read right straight along and not enunciate anything and read just like this and he'd put in all the periods and things. He didn't want you to stop, he didn't want you to emphasize a word. It was interesting; I always liked to wait on him. He, I think some staff might have, you know, it might have bothered them.

I saw one the other day, a girl that used, she was just young, and she was speaking the other day to me because I hadn't seen her for a long time. And I met her in the market, and she asked me if I remember back and she mentioned him and how she was scared to death, you know, because of the way he wanted her to read. But, oh, there were ever so many of the lawyers. But I remember Ed Chase. He was a wonderful person to work for, and Bob Haskell was, too. They assumed you knew something. It was difficult to wait on somebody that didn't. Sometimes they didn't know what they wanted and that made it difficult.

DN: In those days there was very limited staff for the legislators. Sam Slosberg was the chief ...

AN: He was the reviser of statutes.

DN: ... and beyond that they had temporary clerks and the clerk of the House and the secretary of the Senate. So they must have been quite dependent on the law library.

AN: Oh they were, on the law library. And if they had a big problem come up, they would send down for Edith to come up and help them write it. She knew more than anyone, really. She had great knowledge, and even if they didn't know what they wanted, she could tell them what they wanted. You know, she knew what they were aiming at. But a lot of them it was a new experience, and of course now it's even more so with term limits. But, well it was all ...

DN: So you really served as a reference librarian for them.

AN: Yes. And I, Edith eventually made me a deputy law librarian. I remember a very funny thing. She took a, I don't know that you want funny things in your . . . She took a leave of absence for six months to go to England. This was back, oh, long ago, might have been in 1960 maybe. And I had to fill, and so she made me her dep-, she made me the, have her position while she was gone. And I had to fill out something and so I filled it out and I thought it was honest, and it was. And I said, "I can do everything the law librarian does except catalog." And Edith read it, she had to read it before it went in, and she said, "What am I doing here?" I don't know how I had the nerve to write that but I did when she was gone. So I just felt I was being honest. She laughed; she thought it was very funny. And then the last three years I was her deputy. But there were only, you know, a few of us, about five, in the law library I think when I left.

DN: When did the law library separate from state library?

AN: Nineteen seventy-one when the state library moved to the new office building. That's when we physically separated, and I think we were more or less, I don't know whether we did before then or not. We might have. When the legislature made us part of the legislative, what, part of the legislature I suppose, I don't ...

DN: Oh, the legislative non-partisan staff.

AN: Yes.

DN: That would be about the right time.

AN: I think it was '71.

DN: When, after Ed Muskie was elected governor, you and Edith put together a special book for him.

AN: Yes, it was the book of the addresses of former governors. And they started back in the early 1800s, and I think it was quite complete. There may have been some missing, but I don't remember.

DN: Why did you do that?

AN: Well, because I heard Ed speaking just maybe when we were, when I was present in, you know, when they, Ed and, maybe it was in his family quarters. It was at some point I remember hearing Ed not just once but two or three times, say what a wealth of information there was in governors' addresses. And I may just imagine it now, because I think one forgets and may be not accurate. But I feel as though he said that if you had a set of, I don't know that he said that, but I feel as though he intimated that to have all of the governors' addresses would be, give you information for all time. I don't remember how he expressed it, but I know that he said that.

And I know that when I had brought home from my uncle's some of the things they had, their attics, there were five attics in the house in the long set of buildings and all of them were filled with old newspapers and magazines and especially with things, state things. A lot of Blaine papers and things. And I think I gave some of those, or gave all of those away maybe. But there were some governors' addresses and I think that I thought of that, you know, that Ed had made that [comment about the governors addresses]. Not that I ever imagined that it would be enough, that he would, that there would be enough in that [my uncle's] house to fill his needs. There probably weren't half a dozen, but I brought them home, as well as a lot of agriculture reports. They were wonderful.

And, then, when we were weeding and putting in order the things in the law library that were in storage, and when I came to the governors' addresses and saw how many we had, you know, we had, sometimes you would have just three or four, and sometimes you'd have a great many. And I mentioned to Edith that, and she thought it was, you know, if we couldn't take some out to go, put mine, the few that I had. And she thought that it was a great idea. And she said we'd get them together and she would have them, see they were bound, go to the bindery I suppose with our books that we were, we had a bindery done every, I don't know, maybe twice a year. And that was a, that's the way I remember it. But Edith would be, her memory certainly is far better than mine, so.

DN: Do you remember the first use made of that book?

AN: No, I don't think I do.

DN: In his inaugural address, the wonderful quote that he used from Governor Chamberlain?

AN: Oh, from, yes, from the Civil War.

DN: Eighteen seventy-one address to the legislature.

AN: Yes. I don't remember it.

DN: "Government has something more to do than govern."

AN: Oh, oh yes, I do. Well, I'll have to go back and read that.

DN: And that probably wouldn't have found its way into the inaugural address if you hadn't given him the book.

AN: Well, isn't that, that's wonderful.

MB: Do you remember what the atmosphere in the State House was like when Muskie became governor? Was it ...?

AN: Oh, I remember when he was inaugurated, it was the most wonderful, it was thrilling. And

I remember that his children, sitting there. And, I think one of them called, 'daddy', or something right, as he was taking the oath of office. And remember Harold Goss? And I remember at the end, Muskie was the first Democratic governor and all. And he said, "God," Harold Goss in that booming voice said, "God, save the state of Maine." I think that was it; it was very funny. But people, I think, one of the things I remember about the inauguration was the warmth, the feeling that all the people had. Republicans, even though they'd lost, there was a feeling that was different, an atmosphere. Do you remember that at all?

DN: Ah, yes.

AN: I remember it so well.

DN: You would remember the election of '52 and Burt Cross' inauguration in '53, and the mood then.

AN: Yes, yeah, all the difference in the world. And yet Governor Cross, he was really a good person. And he was wonderful in local government, just wonderful. I have gone to the, in the past years, not recently, but oh, ten or twelve years ago gone to council meetings in the city council meetings, and Governor Cross would sometimes go. And he was an old man then, wasn't as old as I am now, but he was old. And he was wonderful on financing things, and he would point out all, sometimes they paid attention and sometimes you could, really want to tell the people to be quiet because they were not always, you know, paying attention to him. Just, and he had wonderful ideas, he really did about finance. And, not ideas but things to tell them and say to them. He had, you know, he was, well, he was, when he was governor it was different.

DN: You had a chance, you've mentioned the mood at the time of Ed's inauguration and indicated that it was very different when Burt Cross was inaugurated. Do you recall the mood in the legislature in those years? Let's see, you went to work for the library in '42. From that period let's say up to '54, do you remember how legislators seemed to interact with each other, how the two parties worked or didn't work together?

AN: Well, I don't know. When I first went it was just after the great scandal of '39 was it, or '40? You know, the liquor scandal, and finance, it was finance I guess in those days. Yes, it was in finance. And all of the heads of the departments were, many of them were involved, and it wasn't a pleasant time. That was probably in the '40s, '40 and, maybe early '40s, but I think it was in 1940, '39, '40, '41, right along there. That would be before your time. But you remember the financial scandal. The heads of some of the departments were involved, William Deering, and I can't remember what department he was in. And this was Lou Barrows, was Lou Barrows governor then maybe?

DN: Yes.

AN: He followed Brann, didn't he? And really the state almost came to a halt in those days. So many of the officials were involved or seemed to be. And Bill Runnells, he was one of the ones that, he was, I can't think his position, but he was one of the top officials in state government,

and he died in the midst of it. Remember? Can't think whether he, he didn't commit suicide I don't think, but he died. And those times were not pleasant times at all. And then the next genera-, it couldn't be generation, a half a generation after, it must have been in 19-, around 1950, the liquor scandal. And that was the next big scandal. So we had in less than a generation two big [scandals], the financial scandal and then the liquor scandal. And I think that people were so taken up with that that I don't remember the feeling of, the mood of the legislators at the time. But Edith would know, she would remember that much better than I do. She has a very good memory, I think, of such things. But I do remember that, I remember one of the legislators was, I can't remember his name. He was from Houlton, Jerry; he was a great friend of the Sewall's, Governor Sewall. Isn't it funny I forget ...

DN: Well, it's an awful lot of names to remember from way back then.

AN: It is. But Governor Sewall, and Jerry, what was his name? They were great friends. It was rather fun to think back. I hadn't gone back that far in thoughts for a long time. I remember that Ed Chase used to write a wonderful poem, a Christmas poem, and give it to all the newsmen. And I tried to find, Tom had one, I tried to find it because it was simply marvelous, it was a wonderful one. I wonder if anyone has copies of it. It was just great.

DN: He did these for the reporters?

AN: Yes, he sent all of the reporters one, and they were very amusing. They were, you know, they were just amusing, sort of like <u>The New Yorker</u>. You know <u>The New Yorker</u> sometimes has that, they're often good. And Ed's, he was just a marvelous person. It's funny, one of his sisters, Mary Ellen Chase, is that her name, I guess ...

DN: The author?

AN: She wrote that book, small book. And if you've never read it you should read it sometime, it's: <u>Merry Christmas</u>. And that was the name of the person in the book. And she was a peddlar who went through the town of Blue Hill, that's where the Chase's came from. And it's just delightful. And if you ever have a chance you should read it.

End of Tape
End of Interview

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