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# Poulin, James E. oral history interview

Marisa Burnham-Bestor

# Interview with James E. Poulin by Marisa Burnham-Bestor

*Summary Sheet and Transcript*

**Interviewee**
Poulin, James E.

**Interviewer**
Burnham-Bestor, Marisa

**Date**
September 24, 1999

**Place**
Waterville, Maine

**ID Number**
MOH 151



## Biographical Note

James E. Poulin was born March 23, 1910 in Waterville, Maine to Dr. James Poulin, Sr. and Mary (McGinn) Poulin. His father was a physician and his mother was a nurse. He attended Colby College and then went to medical school at Georgetown University School of Medicine. He did his internship and residency at the University of Maryland and later went to The Johns Hopkins University. After college, James settled in Waterville to raise a family and practice medicine.

## Scope and Content Note

Interview includes discussions of: family background; Waterville community and education; Colby College; campaigns with Ed Muskie; dinner parties with the Muskies; community perceptions of Muskie; conversations with Ed Muskie; personal career and family life; Muskie's political work for Waterville and Maine; and local environmental effects.

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**Transcript**

**Marisa Burnham-Bestor:** The date is September 24th, 1999, we are in Waterville, Maine at the home of Dr. James E. Poulin. I do need you to state your name again and spell it for me please.

**James Poulin:** P-O-U-L-I-N.

**MB:** Okay, thank you. What was your date of birth?

**JP:** March 23rd, 1910.

**MB:** Where were you born?

**JP:** Waterville.

**MB:** Did you grow up in a house close to where we are now?

**JP:** No.

**MB:** What section. . . .?

**JP:** I'm on the same street but further down, way down.

**MB:** What were your parents' names?

**JP:** My father was the same, I'm a junior.

**MB:** I see, what about your mother?

**JP:** Her name was Mary.

**MB:** What was her maiden name?

**JP:** McGinn, M-C-G-I-N-N.

**MB:** Thank you. Did you have any siblings?

**JP:** Children?

**MB:** No, no, your parents, did you have any brothers and sisters?

**JP:** Oh yes, I'm sorry. I had a brother and a sister.

**MB:** What were their names?

**JP:** Catherine and Frederick.

**MB:** Where did you fall in the family, were you the first child, second child, or third?

**JP:** Where did I fall in the family?

**MB:** Were you the first born, the second born. . . .?

**JP:** No, I'm second born.

**MB:** Ah, so you're the middle child.

**JP:** My sister was older, my brother was younger.

**MB:** What were your parents' occupations?

**JP:** My father was a physician.

**MB:** Oh, same as you.

**JP:** Right.

**MB:** And your mother?

**JP:** She was a nurse.

**MB:** Can you tell me a little bit about your home life growing up?

**JP:** Well, where I went to school and so forth?

**MB:** Yes.

**JP:** Well, I went to school here at Waterville High School, and then I went to Colby College, which is here, located in Waterville as you know. And then I went to medical school, I graduated from Colby, and I went to medical school, Georgetown University School of Medicine, and graduated from there 1937. And then I had an intern-, a residency, no, an internship at University of Maryland and then a residency there, and a year at John Hopkins.

**MB:** How did some of these experiences, such as your college experience or your experiences in your family when you were very young, how did they change the way you thought and shaped. . . .?

**JP:** They didn't change it. All my life I wanted to be a doctor, and that was determined by myself as a youngster.

**MB:** Were you taking over your father's practice, or was it. . . .?

**JP:** No, no, he died three or four years before I started to practice.

**MB:** Going back to your early years at home growing up, what was your family's religious belief?

**JP:** Catholic.

**MB:** And were they very involved in the Catholic community?

**JP:** No.

**MB:** Did you attend church?

**JP:** Yes.

**MB:** As far as the make up of Waterville, is it a very Catholic community?

**JP:** It's about probably fifty percent.

**MB:** And what is the other fifty percent?

**JP:** Mixed.

**MB:** Was your family very involved in the community other than the religious community?

**JP:** My mother was in the women's club and my father was one of the founders of the Thayer Hospital.

**MB:** What were your parents' political beliefs?

**JP:** Democratic, I believe.

**MB:** Were they involved?

**JP:** No.

**MB:** Would you describe your parents as having a very active social life in Waterville, or was it more. . . .?

**JP:** Social life in those days was not as active as it's been in the last ten years here in Waterville.

**MB:** Can you describe it, what was it like?

**JP:** You mean in the last ten years?

**MB:** No, when your, in the past.

**JP:** Well, we, after I was married?

**MB:** Sure.

**JP:** We knew a lot of young people, we'd go to parties and play bridge, have a few cocktails, and then go home, and we had a group of about fifteen to twenty people probably, and we'd rotate one house to another house, have a meeting once a week.

**MB:** And now how is it in the past ten years?

**JP:** It doesn't exist. There is no social life in Waterville any more. The two reasons I suppose. First of all it's very hard to get help to prepare meals and so forth, and secondly the price of liquor, which you have to serve has gone up very much, and it's much more expensive to have parties now. But the big problem was that, or is rather, that you can't get help, domestic help (*unintelligible word*) to put on these parties.

**MB:** Would you say that in the very early years, for you as a child, the social life was, how would you describe a child's social life when you were young?

**JP:** Sliding, skating, snowshoeing and swimming, canoeing, that sort of thing.

**MB:** Did the school offer after school activities?

**JP:** No.

**MB:** No? Do they now?

**JP:** I do not know, to be honest with you. Now if you're talking about grammar school?

**MB:** Grammar school or high school.

**JP:** Well high school has activities, let's see [*?*]. They have athletic activities, basketball, baseball, hockey and so forth.

**MB:** Did they have that when you were young as well?

**JP:** No.

**MB:** What were some of the ways that the values, what were some of the values and what, in what way did those values shape your life, that your parents gave you?

**JP:** I'm sorry, what are you referring to as values, the way we lived?

**MR:** Sure.

**JP:** Well yes, I think it did shape our lives somewhat. We all had a certain type of food and we had a routine life, and I think we, as I grew up and became married and had my own family, why I continued with that sort of life.

**MB:** Was your family's economic situation, how would that compare to other people in the community?

**JP:** Well, probably it was a little better than the average probably.

**MB:** Is that, was that true of you once you, once you began your own practice?

**JP:** No, I'm not quite sure I understand the interpretation of your question.

**MB:** Okay. Once, you had said that your family was a little better off than. . . .

**JP:** A little bit, yes.

**MB:** Right. Would you say that your family and, you and, once you had your own practice, was also a little bit better off than the rest of the community?

**JP:** Well I think we are a little bit better off than most of the community, the average. A good many of the people work in the mills around here, and I'm retired and haven't worked for ten years.

**MB:** The majority of the people are, work in mills?

**JP:** Yes, it's an industrial town. Unfortunately the major mills are now closed. The Lockwood Cotton Mill, which made fine cotton, is closed, and the Hathaway Shirt Factory which makes shirts is cutting it's production down a great deal. Hollingsworth & Whitney, which made paper, was the biggest employer, largest employer in the location and they are closed. And the railroad shop which repaired the railroad cars and so forth, that is closed.

**MB:** When did all of these closings occur?

**JP:** In the last five or six years.

**MB:** How has that affected people?

**JP:** It has, there is a recession of course that's existing in Waterville now, and business is not as good as it used to be in stores and the merchants complain about it.

**MB:** In the earlier years, was it a very thriving town, when. . . .?

**JP:** Yes, it was more thriving than it is today because the mills were all in business, busy.

**MB:** Politically, is this a Democratic or a Republican town?

**JP:** It's divided. Some years we have three or four mayors that are Republicans and then we have a series of years when the mayor and the council are Democratic.

**MB:** Would you describe it as liberal or conservative?

**JP:** Conservative.

**MB:** Ethnically, I know in Lewiston there's a large Franco American population.

**JP:** Yes.

**MB:** Is that true here?

**JP:** Yes. I'd say maybe twenty-five percent probably. I'm just estimating.

**MB:** Does that divide the community at all, as far as. . . .?

**JP:** No, they're intermingled.

**MB:** Oh, really?

**JP:** Yes

**MB:** So there's no prejudice or anything of that sort?

**JP:** No, no.

**MB:** Was there in the past?

**JP:** A little bit more than there is now, it was a little more prevalent.

**MB:** How did that manifest itself?

**JP:** Well, they had different churches to go to. And we have a rather large Syrian population

here, too, and most of those are Catholics and they have their own Catholic church. And I'd say maybe ten percent of the population is Syrian or, as they prefer to be called, Lebanese.

**MB:** Where did your family fall into that structure? Were you, are you of French. . . .?

**JP:** My father was French, my mother was Irish.

**MB:** So in the old days when it was a little bit more divided. . . .

**JP:** Yes. . . .

**MB:** . . . . what were some of the influences that had on you, did that change where you would go to church, or. . . .?

**JP:** None, none at all.

**MB:** No? Can you tell me some of your major memories from childhood, if you have any?

**JP:** I don't think (*unintelligible phrase*) go back that deep, I don't think about it.

**MB:** In school, when you were high school and primary school,

**JP:** Yes. . . .

**MB:** . . . . were you involved in any of the activities with other kids? You had mentioned like skating. . . .?

**JP:** Oh yeah, we had baseball.

**MB:** Was that very popular?

**JP:** Yes, it was, and it still is.

**MB:** Were there any other sports that were organized like that?

**JP:** Hockey. And that was pretty well attended, and I did participate in that. I was not a great athlete.

**MB:** You had mentioned that you had gone to Colby.

**JP:** Yes.

**MB:** How did you decided to go to Colby?

**JP:** Because it was right near by and it was very inexpensive. It was only about two hundred and fifty dollars a year because I ate at home. But if I'd gone to a school where I had to have

board and room it would cost considerably more, so I guess economically I went to Colby for that reason; saved my folks a lot of money.

**MB:** You had mentioned that you'd always wanted to be a doctor. Where do you think, what was the reason for that?

**JP:** You can't define that, you're born with it: desire. And you have to be an individual that is not afraid of blood.

**MB:** How did your political beliefs develop?

**JP:** Well, my family was Democratic so subsequently I just followed suit.

**MB:** It wasn't, there weren't any particular influences that caused that decision?

**JP:** No, no.

**MB:** Now you had mentioned where you went to medical school, where was it?

**JP:** Yes, Georgetown University School of Medicine, in Washington, D.C.

**MB:** So that's a bit further away from home.

**JP:** Yeah, it's nine hundred miles, something like that.

**MB:** How did you decide on Georgetown?

**JP:** Well, I knew I couldn't get into Harvard, so I applied to Georgetown and they were the first ones to accept me, and so I signed up right off. I paid a deposit, and several other schools subsequently accepted me, but I already paid a deposit there and I wanted to get away from Maine. So I settled for Georgetown and I'm glad I did.

**MB:** What was your experience in Washington, D.C. and far away from Maine like?

**JP:** Well, most of the time was spent in school. And I never had an opportunity to note the beauty of Washington, D.C. until my senior year because I was so busy in medical school, and I never saw the Washington Monument, the White House, or the Capitol, until my senior year, and I lived right there.

**MB:** So you lived off campus your senior year?

**JP:** I lived off campus all the years.

**MB:** Oh. What was different about your senior year that enabled you to see more?

**JP:** Oh, I had more time. We'd have, in the afternoon we'd get through at three o'clock, and

then I could take a bus and ride around the city.

**MB:** Was, that year that you were able to experience more, was the feeling in Washington, and kind of with all that goes on there as the Capitol, how did that compare to, you know, your experience in Maine?

**JP:** Oh, it was more political, and I think politics was much more corrupt. And I think there was more crooked individuals, I can say this, crooked citizens there than there are, would expect to find in a small community like this. The biggest part of our representatives, in my opinion, were dishonest, that's my own opinion.

**MB:** What year was that?

**JP:** Thirty-three, '34, '35, '36.

**MB:** You had mentioned that you chose Georgetown partially, in addition to the other reasons, because it was outside of Maine and that you were interested in getting away from Maine. What. . . .?

**JP:** Another reason was, it was a brand new school.

**MB:** Oh, was it?

**JP:** The college was old, but the medical school was a brand new building and we were the first class to occupy the new building. It was, everything was modern and very efficient.

**MB:** What, where did your desire to leave Maine stem from?

**JP:** Where did I desire?

**MB:** Why did you desire to leave Maine?

**JP:** Oh, well, there was no medical school in Maine.

**MB:** So, if there had been a medical school in Maine, would that have been more. . . .?

**JP:** I might have gone, I don't know. But there was none. And most of the boys from Colby that were in my class went to Boston University, and I wanted to go somewhere else, get further away, so that's why I went down to Georgetown which is quite a bit further.

**MB:** What stands out in your mind most about your experience in medical school?

**JP:** The strictness. First of all, we had to wear a white shirt at lecture, and a black tie, and a jacket. Today the boys that go there can wear anything. And another factor that played some part was that colored boys and Chinese boys were not accepted in the medical school, and there were no women in the medical school, it was just boys. But that situation has now changed and

it's integrated and there's a good percentage of colored there, boys there now I expect, and there are women in the classrooms now.

**MB:** What was your reason for settling down to start your family in Waterville?

**JP:** Well, I like Maine, and I didn't like the big city, and have to take subways and elevators and so forth. And I wanted to get away from the racial discrimination that existed in Washington. And so, I like hunting, fishing, and I could always do that here in Maine, and I like the change of seasons, which we have four of as you know, and that appealed to me.

**MB:** During the years that Ed Muskie lived here. . . .?

**JP:** Yes.

**MB:** How did he influence and change the community?

**JP:** Well, he lived on the street right in back of me, four or five houses down, and he and, I was, he and I, and of course a lot of others, went to a school board meeting at the South Grammar School which is down there. And he and I were selected as solicitors for some campaign to raise money for something, I don't remember which. So I got to know Ed quite well because we'd go around visiting different offices and business trying to solicit funds. And he, want me to tell you more about Muskie? All right. He had a law practice, which was not a thriving, thriving law practice, so he had a lot of time to spend with me going around seeing people. And about that time, I'd known him a couple of years, the election, state election came up and the state of Maine did not have a Democratic candidate to run, and it had been Republican dominated for many years. So I got after Ed and I says, you're a good speaker and you know a lot of law and you have a good education and you went to Bates, and he decided to run. He was the only Democratic candidate to run. And much to his surprise and the surprise of the entire state, he was elected governor for a couple of years.

And he would, and his wife, he married a girl by the name of Jane Gray, and they had two or three children, I don't remember which. And he'd frequently come to Waterville, and I was married then, and we'd have him over to the house for dinner and I got to know him quite well then. And he was al-, he was very intellectual, he knew an awful lot about international affairs and human relations and the state regulations.

And I think he served as governor two years. And he invited us down to the Blaine House on a couple of occasions, which was very nice. And then he was, then, then, he decided after, he served as governor two terms, two years each, and then he decided to run for the United States Senate. There was not a popular Democrat at that time running for the United States Senate, and he ran and much to his surprise and to the surprise of all of us, he was elected United States Senator, and I think he was reelected.

**MB:** I want to go back and ask a few more questions about some of that.

**JP:** Go ahead.

**MB:** What was the, you said that you would go around with him and solicit names for what again?

**JP:** Solicit money, to pledge money for some affair, I don't know what it was. I've forgotten what the affair was. Pledging money for cripple children or something like that, I don't remember it exactly, too many years ago to remember.

**MB:** And you had mentioned that you two would go around together.

**JP:** Sometimes we would, sometimes we'd go separately.

**MB:** What would you talk about or discuss, was he always very interested in. . . .?

**JP:** Well, he'd talk about his law practice and I'd talk about some of my medical experiences. And then we'd talk about, you think Joe Jones over there will pledge ten dollars towards this campaign, we go knock on the door and find out.

**MB:** You mentioned that his law practice was not very successful.

**JP:** Well, I couldn't say that, but he wasn't terribly busy in his office, as busy as some attorneys that were.

**MB:** What would he tell you about his law practice?

**JP:** He didn't tell me anything about his law practice, but I'd go in there and meet him and I never had to wait. And some law practices, the offices were filled up. But he had a very brilliant mind, he knew a lot of law, knew a lot about the Constitution and a lot about humanity and people.

**MB:** Were you aware of whether or not he was involved in other organizations, such as the one that you would participate in together?

**JP:** No, I don't know.

**MB:** When he would. . . .?

**JP:** He was a, I think he was Catholic. I think, and I don't know about the other organizations that he belonged to.

**MB:** When he would come over to your house for dinner, you mentioned that the conversation would be very intellectual.

**JP:** Well yes, he'd talk affairs of the state and financial affairs of the state and the city of Waterville and what we should do and what we shouldn't do. And he had a very great mind and a good sense of humor and made friends with people very easily.

**MB:** So, he was just, in general his conversation was very civic minded?

**JP:** Yes, right, right.

**MB:** When, I heard that he had run for mayor of Waterville.

**JP:** You're right. He did run for mayor and everyone expected him to win, including myself. But he did not win and a fellow by the name of Russell Squire who was a Republican won by a very small margin. And he, Mr. Squire ran a women's clothing store here in Waterville, which is now extinct. But it was a surprise to everyone that he was defeated in this run for mayor, and I think that's the first time that Ed Muskie was ever defeated in any election that he attempted.

**MB:** Do you have any idea of what the campaign for that was like? Were you involved at all in his campaign?

**JP:** For mayor?

**MB:** Yes.

**JP:** No. Yes, they asked me to speak. I was on the school board then and they asked me to speak at different schools, but I had to be careful not to over emphasize his name because a member of the school board is supposed to be impartial. And you can talk about anything but occasionally I'd mention his name and I hoped that he would be elected. He was elected, no, I'm sorry, he was not elected, but he missed it by a very small margin.

**MB:** How did people in the community feel about his political views?

**JP:** Well they were disappointed that he was not elected, and very much surprised.

**MB:** When he became more involved in politics during the years that he was in Augusta and as well as his years in Washington, how would the community kind of. . . .?

**JP:** They were very proud of him, and he was regarded as an outstanding citizen of Waterville.

**MB:** Would there be a lot of community support during his campaigns?

**JP:** Yes, he had a very large following.

**MB:** Would that span over, would that following here in Waterville span over all the ethnic groups, all the religions, or was there a very specific. . . .?

**JP:** Yes, yes, I think it would.

**MB:** Once he was down in Washington, at that time did the people in Maine and in Waterville feel as though he was able to represent them?

**JP:** Yes, they felt that he represented us very well, and the state of Maine was extremely proud of him. And at that time Margaret Chase Smith was the other United States Senator from Maine and she was a strong Republican, and I guess he got along pretty well with Margaret Chase Smith, but he did a lot of good things for Maine and a lot of things for Waterville.

**MB:** What were some of the things specifically?

**JP:** That he did? Well he tried to keep the taxes down. And he tried to improve the parks, he tried to improve the schools and the streets, and he tried to improve the status of the political parties in the state of Maine, and trying to keep out corrupt politics as much as possible. And I think he was truly a very honest U.S. Senator.

**MB:** When he was in public office, what happened to his law practice?

**JP:** Closed.

**MB:** When he went to Washington, or when he was in Augusta?

**JP:** Both, both times, it closed. When he became the governor of Maine, he gave up his law practice as I recall.

**MB:** You had mentioned also that while he was governor you and your wife went to the Blaine House.

**JP:** Yes.

**MB:** What was that experience like?

**JP:** Well, it was delightful. The Blaine House is beautiful and they had lots of people to wait on you and a beautiful dinner and we were, he usually had a couple of other people too. But I think he was a little bit indebted to me, perhaps a little bit, and had my wife and myself down for dinner at the Blaine House. And it was quite an occasion because they had waiters and waitresses everywhere, which we don't have today.

**MB:** Why do you say that he might have been a little in debt to you?

**JP:** Well, because I gave some donations to him, to run for governor. I gave as much as I could afford and he didn't want any of it but I made him take some money to help support his campaign.

**MB:** When there were the activities such as going to the Blaine House, were there any other activities that you and your wife were involved in with him?

**JP:** Well I think they had dances, and I think we would go to those. I think they were usually out in Augusta, and he was usually there. And he was called upon a great deal to speak at certain

occasions in Waterville, and all over the state I think.

**MB:** Would the dances be a benefit of some sort, to benefit something?

**JP:** Yes, yes.

**MB:** Oh, okay. So he would, it would be, would it be an organization that he was supporting and holding a dance for?

**JP:** Yes, yes.

**MB:** Okay. During his years in the higher offices, would the press of Waterville kind of follow his. . . .?

**JP:** Yes, and they were in great praise of him and were very proud of him, and his name was in the paper a great deal, in the Waterville paper. Because I don't think we'd had a representative in the United States Senate, in the United States government, for many, many, many years. I don't know if we ever had one.

**MB:** What happened to his home here?

**JP:** I don't know, he sold it I think.

**MB:** Did he sell it when he became governor or when he. . . .?

**JP:** He didn't live, when he became governor he lived in the Blaine House year round, so I don't know what happened to his house. I assumed he sold it. It was a small house, it was not a very large house.

**MB:** Do you remember how you first met him?

**JP:** Well, we first met in a school board meeting, not a school board meeting but a meeting at school, and they were trying to raise money for something and the principal just picked out me and picked out him, you two fellows are going to go around and see if you can raise money for this and that, so that's how I got to know him. And he'd say, well you take this street and I'll take the next street.

**MB:** How close was he with, well, what was his relationship like with his children and. . . . ?

**JP:** Oh, I don't know, I really don't know.

**MB:** What was your general impression of the family, were they. . . .?

**JP:** Well I didn't know the children at all. I knew his wife, she was very nice, that's all I knew. But he had two children I think, but I never met them, I didn't know them.

**MB:** Before we move on, I want to just know if you can name any other people in the community of Waterville who might be valuable sources of information, who might have known him or been on committees with him.

**JP:** Howard Gray was one. It's so far back, I can't remember that to be honest with you. Oh, it must be forty years ago.

**MB:** What year did you first meet him?

**JP:** Well, I would say maybe in the mid-fifties probably.

**MB:** To what extent did you follow his career once he left Waterville, what, did you follow it very closely?

**JP:** We communicated. He would write me a short note and tell me what he was doing and saying how glad he was to have known me and etcetera, and I in return would send him a congratulatory note with as much as I could afford (*unintelligible word*) money. He didn't ask for any money from me, I just donated it towards his campaign fund.

**MB:** Did your political beliefs ever disagree with his political beliefs?

**JP:** No.

**MB:** It was always. . . .?

**JP:** No, It didn't.

**MB:** Did his politics change at all when he moved to the, as he evolved in his career?

**JP:** I don't think so. I think he still had the same standing in his mind about the country and politics in general.

**MB:** You described a little bit about the content of some of the conversations that you had with him, can you remember specifically any of the things that he would have said, you know?

**JP:** Well, he'd always say let's work together, and, you know, and do something for Maine. And we can't forget our own hometown of Waterville, we got to do as much as we can one way or another for Waterville. But I can't remember the specific words that he used of course.

**MB:** Right, right. Do you remember any events or instances that illustrate his character?

**JP:** Well, I can say that I know he was very well liked by people of Waterville, and people of Maine. That isn't an answer to your question, but I can't directly answer your question.

**MB:** There are no funny stories that kind of come into your mind?

**JP:** No. Because I haven't seen him for God knows how many years. When he went to Washington, I saw him once. I was just, I was on my way to New York, I met him in the railroad station. We just shook hands and that's about all.

**MB:** What were his strengths, what would you describe as being his strengths?

**JP:** His strengths? His honesty and his integrity.

**MB:** And what about weaknesses?

**JP:** About what?

**MB:** Weaknesses?

**JP:** Oh, I don't know if he had any. Well I wasn't, he wasn't perfect, none of us are perfect, but his, he didn't have any predominating weaknesses that I know of. I don't think he smoked and I don't even know if he drank, I really don't know.

**MB:** I wanted to just back up a little bit to when you began your practice. What was it like to open up a practice in Waterville?

**JP:** It was hard, very hard, because there was a lot of competition and there was a lot of people. I was Catholic, a lot of people, the people that were not Catholic, some people were very biased and disliked me because I was Catholic. That sounds strange, but that's the way it was. And doctors were unfortunately very jealous in those days and they wouldn't help young doctors like they do today. I remember that after, when I started in practice, this is nothing to do with Ed Muskie, but when I started in practice, if I was to do any sort of major surgical procedure, I had to have an older doctor be with me whether he knew anything about it or not. That was the law in the state of Maine, and it applied to the old sisters' hospital, which doesn't exist now, and to the Thayer Hospital. And so, the head sister, Sister Superior of the sisters' hospital, told me the only way I was going to get out of this was to become a member of the American College of Surgeons. There was only four in Waterville. Of course this has nothing to do with Muskie. So I had to go around and get recommendations from the four of them, the four members of the American College of Surgeons in Waterville would not give me a recommendation. One wouldn't because I was Catholic and he was definitely Protestant. So I went ahead and took the exam myself and passed it, I'm happy to say, and it didn't help me in my practice but it gave me a little more prestige and it gave me a little more privileges in the hospitals.

**MB:** So your practice was within a hospital?

**JP:** No, I would go to the hospital, all the operations and treatments were at the hospital.

**MB:** So were you, was your focus as surgeon, or were you. . . .?

**JP:** I did ear, nose and throat.

**MB:** So you weren't a general practitioner, you were very specified.

**JP:** No, I was not a general practitioner.

**MB:** I see. Where, did you have a family, children?

**JP:** Yes, I had a boy, have a boy and a girl. The girl is married and the boy is married. The girl lives in Camden and the boy lives in Skowhegan. And my daughter, very smart girl, she graduated from Smith College and she teaches school down in Camden, and my son works for Thons & Bethman Co. on Main Street.

**MB:** What are their names?

**JP:** Their names. My daughter's name is Terry Ann. My son's name is just like mine. He's a junior.

**MB:** Where did they attend college, university?

**JP:** Terry went to Smith in Northampton, it's a very fine school, and then she went on to Boston University to take a year in postgraduate work. And my son Jimmy went to Colby College, graduated from there, and then he went to Boston University, business administration, to get some experience and knowledge in business administration.

**MB:** Had your father also gone to Colby, or?

**JP:** Yes, wait a minute, he went to Bowdoin.

**MB:** Was your father raised in Waterville?

**JP:** Yes.

**MB:** As far as your son and daughter, how do you think that their experiences growing up in Waterville differed from yours?

**JP:** Hard to, well I think they had an easier time of it because, I just think they didn't have as much hardship that we had to go through. I had to help take care of the house and the furnace and all that sort of stuff when I was young, and when my kiddos were growing up they didn't have to.

**MB:** How did you meet your wife?

**JP:** We were in high school together but we weren't friendly. And, but I was attracted to her, I was attracted to her, and I convinced her to marry me and. . . .

**MB:** One minute, I'm going to change the tape.

*End of Side A*
*Side B*

**MB:** Please continue.

**JP:** Yes, where did I meet her? Well, we went to high school together but we didn't go out together. But after high school we both went to Colby and I met her at a college dance, we were in the same class at Colby. And then we went out together off and on and we were married in 1937 I'll say.

**MB:** And did she have a profession outside of the home?

**JP:** Did she have a profession?

**MB:** Yes.

**JP:** She taught school.

**MB:** What. . . .?

**JP:** She taught English.

**MB:** At the high school?

**JP:** Winslow High School and Waterville High School.

**MB:** And you said, however, that your children didn't have as many responsibilities at home.

**JP:** Well no, we had more help. We had someone to, a housekeeper, and we had someone to do the lawns and things like that.

**MB:** Was that reflective of a difference in economic situation, or was that just. . . .?

**JP:** Yes, I think so. On the times.

**MB:** So when you were growing up it wasn't as common to have that sort of help as it was. . . .?

**JP:** No, it wasn't.

**MB:** Getting back to Ed Muskie. . . .

**JP:** Yes.

**MB:** . . . . what would you say were his greatest influences on Maine?

**JP:** Well he was loyal to the people of Maine, and he was always trying to better the situation in

Maine. Better the living of the common person and helping with the public works in, through the state of Maine.

**MB:** I know that he was very involved in environmental concerns.

**JP:** Yes, he, I guess he was. I didn't know too much about that. I don't think he was extremely involved, but he was involved some.

**MB:** When you, you mentioned his efforts with public works. What sorts of. . . .?

**JP:** Well, like cleaning up the situation on the Kennebec River and improving the status of that, and improving our school systems as much as possible.

**MB:** Would he do that through funding or. . . .?

**JP:** No, do it through his public speaking. No, he didn't have any money, I mean he was always, I shouldn't say that, he was always a fellow that couldn't afford to give money away, but I don't know about his later years of life. All senators have money.

**MB:** Was the clean up of the Kennebec River and so forth, was that something that was very important to the people?

**JP:** Yes it was, in a way it was. Well, it improved the community and, he did things of that sort, public housing and helped with, advocated.

**MB:** How did that, the cleaning up of the rivers and so forth, how did that impact the paper mill?

**JP:** Well, it made them adhere to stricter standards. This committee I guess that he was on helped to establish rules and regulations that the mills had to go by in reference to the river.

**MB:** Do you think that that hurt the mills economically?

**JP:** No, no I don't.

**MB:** You had mentioned the closing of several of them.

**JP:** Yes, and no one knows why. Business just went down, or the demand for paper went down and the United States was buying paper from Japan and European countries and, as well as cotton goods from European countries. And the shirt factory in, old Hathaway had been involved. They were buying foreign shirts because they could get them made cheaper than they could have them made in the United States. In foreign countries they're probably made by young children, young girls, whom they paid a minimum wage.

**MB:** What has the current, I guess, elected officials, what have they been doing to help alleviate the recession in this area?

**JP:** What has Waterville been doing to help the recession in this area? Nothing that I know, can specifically state on, no, I can't say, I don't know.

**MB:** There hasn't been opening up of new commercial. . . .?

**JP:** No, no. Well, we have shopping centers and that has been approved by the city, and I think that helps the city. There are a couple of shopping centers here, and that helps the city.

**MB:** What economic level is this community considered? Is it. . . .?

**JP:** It's not depressed. It's not, well it's not like Portland, but it, it's better than average.

**MB:** Middle class, or?

**JP:** It's better, for instance, than Rockland, Maine. I think the standards here are pretty good. And we have two educational facilities, well we had Coburn that's gone now, but Colby College which is increasing in its opportunities and the facilities all the time. And that plays a big part in the function of the community. Colby is very active in the community. It's getting larger every day.

**MB:** Have the students at Colby always been very active in the Waterville community, or is that more recent?

**JP:** No, I don't think they, well, they put on plays and all that sort of thing, but I don't think they do in the city, no. And of course, the college is not taxed by the city for all its land. But it has nice functions that stimulate the citizens of Waterville, it's always putting on some function free, a play or something, for the citizens.

**MB:** Is there anything else that you would like to add that you feel, any other recollections of Muskie, or. . . .?

**JP:** I would say that he was one of our most honest senators, and I still feel that way even though he's long deceased, been deceased for two or three years. And he was one that you could talk to, and he was one that would listen to complaints if there were complaints, who wouldn't postpone things. And he was friendly to the common man.

**MB:** One actual question just came into my mind. When he was running for vice president, during those years, how was that different than his past elections?

**JP:** I can't honestly tell you that. He didn't have enough support to win, I don't know, I can't answer that question. No one can.

**MB:** Thank you very much for your time.

**JP:** Well, you're welcome. I don't know if I did any good or any help but I just told you what I

thought.

*End of Interview*