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Rines, Catherine (Kincaid) oral history interview

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Interview with Catherine (Kincaid) Rines by Andrea L'Hommedieu

Summary Sheet and Transcript

Interviewee

Rines, Catherine (Kincaid)

Interviewer

L'Hommedieu, Andrea

Date

July 11, 2001

Place

Chamberlain, Maine

ID Number

MOH 293

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Biographical Note

Catherine Frances (Kincaid) Rines was born November 17, 1915 on her mother's family farm in Leeds, Maine. Her father was a Baptist minister, and she spent her younger years living in various locations in the United States and Canada. She attended Houlton College in New York, majoring in vocal music and performance. Her education was interrupted by her father's illness, as well as meeting her husband, Fred Rines. They married in 1940, and settled in Gardiner and had two children, Brian and Kincaid Rines. Catherine was Jane Muskie's social secretary during Ed Muskie's governorship from 1955 to 1958.

Scope and Content Note

Interview includes discussions of: family background; being social secretary to Jane Muskie; Augusta social scene during 1950s; legislative sessions; legislative respect for Muskie; Blaine House; demands on Jane Muskie; Ed Muskie's personality; birth of Jane Muskie's children; Brian Rines; and Muskie as a statesman.

Indexed Names

Clauson, Ellen (Kelleher)
Coffin, Frank Morey
Cross, Burton
Goss, Harold
Gray, Doris
Muskie, Edmund S., 1914-1996
Muskie, Jane Gray
Muskie, Josephine
Muskie, Stephen
Nicoll, Don
Rines, Brian
Rines, Catherine (Kincaid)
Rines, Fred
Rines, Kincaid

Transcript

Andrea L'Hommedieu: This is an interview with Catherine Rines on July 11th, the year 2001, at her home, summer home in Chamberlain, Maine. Mrs. Rines, could you start by giving me your full name, including your maiden name, and when and where you were born?

Catherine Rines: My name is Catherine Frances (Kincaid) Rines, and I was born in Leeds, Maine, November the 17th, 1915.

AL: And did you grow up in that area?

CR: No.

AL: Where did you grow up?

CR: Well, my father was a clergyman, so when you ask children of clergymen where they grew up, I'm sorry to tell you that we were more or less nomadic in our home life in that we went where Daddy was called. And so I grew up in Maine for a little while. I was born, when I was born actually, my father and mother were at a parish in New Brunswick. My mother came home to have the children, as all of her sisters did that could, in the keeping room or the family birthing room at the old farm.

AL: And that was?

CR: And that was in Leeds, Maine. So then she took me back by train to New Brunswick, and then eventually Dad had a parish in Gardiner, Maine. And my brother in the meantime had been born, and my sister was born in Gardiner. Then we went to New Hampshire. Then he was called to be a professor, or to teach homiletics [the art of writing and preaching sermons] in theology and this type of thing in the Midwest, at a school where my uncle was the vice president. So we went trolloping off to Wausau, Wisconsin. And then Dad, I usually call my

father Daddy, but it sounds so infantile. But anyway, had a call, was very interested in going to a warmer climate, and so we went to Texas and we spent four, approximately four years, down there. I'm not too sure, but around that. Then he came back. Being a Scotsman, he kind of felt that the United States was losing its grip in many ways spiritually so, and he was having a yearn to get back to Canada where he had landed when he first came over from the old country, Scotland.

AL: So he was first generation.

CR: Yes. And his brothers were in Toronto and were well established business people, but my father eventually decided that he was called to the ministry. He studied there and then he came over and studied in the United States. And that's how he happened, he graduated from a theology school in the United States, and so that's how we happened to be sort of State side. So we went back to Ontario and eventually to Nova Scotia, and we lived in a delightful place in Nova Scotia for quite a while.

And I went away to school, and I was gone four years, in high school, and graduated, it's a private school. And then I came back to Nova Scotia to visit with my, stay with my parents for a while. Finally went to Houlton College and majored in vocal music. And I was a, they thought that I perhaps should be a performance major, so I was. And it doesn't equip you for very much unless you really are going to perform.

Then I met my husband, after a few whirlwind courtships with various very nice young men. I met my husband and we were married in 1940. And then I had two sons. One of the sons is doctor of psychology and is the mayor of Gardiner, Maine, which is rather significant that we, sort of things come around, don't they? And he loves Gardiner. And we've lived in the same house for sixty years and have just moved. Our son, Brian, this is the mayor, wanted us to move down to be, well, just wanted us to move next door to a house that he owned, next door to him. So we did, bag and baggage and, oh, terrible, terrible beyond anything I can describe. Moving sixty years of impedimenta, that's all I can think of now. But anyway, we're fairly well settled.

And we have a son that lives in Dresden and he is a, his name is Kincaid, and he has a daughter and she will be graduating next year from high school. And he is a carpenter and a, right now he is working head over heels in a antique dealer's place in New Castle, Maine. So, and it's very time consuming right now for him; very busy in the antique business right now. Everybody's on a roll more or less. So, my, Brian has three children, a boy who is, a man who is in Oregon and is finishing up his degree, possibly a B.A., next year. He also has a darling little son. And then we have a granddaughter, Emily, who has just come back from the University of South Carolina.

AL: Did she just graduate?

CR: With her master's degree. And she will, she is now working out of the University of New England. She is running an office in public health; she's a public health major. Then we have a Sara who is twenty-one today, and she just came back from Australia. Studied for, oh my goodness, it must have been a year over there. And she's going back to George Mason University in the fall to finish whatever she's going to do. So that sort of brings us to where we

are.

AL: Yes, and keeps you quite busy I'm sure.

CR: We have quite a bit of company and a lot of running in and out, which is nice. We never seem to have all this lovely leisure time that everybody talks about that they have, or that we should have. We don't have. But it's lovely anyway. I guess probably we wouldn't have it any other way.

AL: Now, tell me, now where did you meet your husband? Did you come back to Maine and met him?

CR: Yes. I came back and I was, I had been at school in New York, at Houlton, and I had come back and had gone home. And then I was coming on my, I was on my way back to school and I stopped in Gardiner with friends. And while I was there my father had quite a serious heart attack in Nova Scotia. So I felt that I really couldn't go on that year until I knew just what was going to transpire in the family. He was retired of course, and that made a great difference. And I certainly was very concerned that I wouldn't be an added expense and so on with my education. So I stayed in Gardiner and met Fred, whose mother was very prominent in the church even when my parents were there, Winter Street Baptist in Gardiner. And Fred was in the church, in the young group. They had a very, very strong youth group in the church at that time.

And I was a soloist and they asked me to sing, and I suppose that I stood up to sing and he thought, well, I guess maybe I ought to try to have a date with this person. But I suppose his mother had said something, she was the organist. And a fine one, too. And I expect that probably maybe she said a few things. I have no idea, but anyway we started dating and just, Fred did not want me to go back to school. I would not have gone back anyway at that particular time because of the situation at home. I just felt that I just couldn't possibly ask for, even if I could get help otherwise. So that's how it happened.

AL: And then you stayed in Gardiner at that point?

CR: Yes, and married Fred in 1940. I would have been in the class of '41.

AL: So what, how did it come about that you ended up in Augusta working as Jane Muskie's secretary?

CR: Well, when Ed Muskie was elected with this darling young wife, who obviously made it very clear that she knew not too much about how to handle an enormous place like the Blaine House, and also all of the . . . I'm sure every first lady felt the same way even though they were utterly used to doing many social things. I'm sure that it must have been a tremendous, not a fright, but Jane must have felt very, not really insecure, but she must have had some very serious thoughts about 'how am I going to handle this with two children, too?' you see.

Well anyway, so I, there was a mutual friend who was very prominent in politics. She was a very grand, rather grand daughter of a very grand woman. We were darling friends because my husband, when she and her husband were first married, when my husband was going to school in

Boston, he was doing his law in Boston, the husband of this grand lady, and all being Gardiner people more or less, I mean the man in particular, when they found out that Fred was coming up to Boston. Some way or other they let it be known that Angela and George would, you know, probably needed the money, and they'd like to have just boarders come, you know, and stay. Young men that they knew very well, knew their families well, and the parents knew the parents of the young men. So my husband stayed there for two years in all with them.

Then we stayed very close and dear friends, even though she was busy raising a family and certainly I was. But we were dear friends. And she knew a little bit about my background, or quite a lot about my background. And she called me and said, "I'm very concerned about where things are," because she hadn't heard about how the situation was going to be in the Blaine House. So she said, "Catherine, would you consider, a number of us have talked about it," I think this is about the way she put it, "and we feel that probably that we should put you forward as one of the people who might be a social secretary." And she said, "I think that you would have some abilities in that direction." So, well of course I was very flattered but I thought, 'Oh, mercy me,' you know.

I had come from a family that was very social, and by that I mean to say just loving to entertain. My poor darling mother always had to have something steaming on the back of the stove because she never knew who Daddy was going to bring home. And so in some senses I think that they felt that probably I might be able in some ways to help Jane. And also the type, I think, of person that they felt I was, that I would also not be a grand leader and come in and, you know, thrash around and make a lot of thisses and thats. I think that they felt that it had to be a very well organized but very quietly done type thing, if you know what I'm saying. And also that I would be perfectly able to follow anything that Jane would have in mind, perfectly able to. And also if Jane needed any input from me, I think they felt maybe I was able to give at least some. Although legislatively I hadn't a clue. I was a Democrat but I, you'd have to leave it at that. I had been in women's organizations and things like that, but I mean I was not a legislator. So that's how I got into it.

AL: Now, when you speak of they, who are they that put your name in?

CR: Well, I presume that Angela, as far as I know, Angela Hunt was probably the chairman at that time of the women's, we had quite a very strong women's organization at that time. The Democrats of course had just mulled along for many, quite a number of years sort of under the surface. But they, believe me, they were not as dead I think as they felt we were perhaps. But anyway, and then curiously the gal that was, my, she was a darling girl, too. Mrs. Cross' social secretary came to me one night and she said We were in choir together, I was the soloist at the Congregational church in Augusta, I was the contralto soloist, and she was in the alto section and we used to have a lovely time talking. And she said to me, "You know Catherine, I really think that you should be thinking very seriously about putting your name forward." I had said absolutely nothing, she just asked me if I knew who was coming in because of course they were going to replace her, you see. And I said I had no notion about anything, I didn't know a thing. She said, "I really think that you should put your name, make some move to let them know that you might possibly be interested." I said, "Well I really hadn't even thought about being interested."

And, well, so just all of this just sort of began, the pot began to boil a little bit. Now, the theys would probably be women, and I'm sure that George, her husband, probably had a great deal to perhaps make suggestions. And I don't know that her mother, who was a very grand woman, ever thought of me in any way at all. But I do know that Angela was the moving person in this instance. I mean, she was the one that seemed to think that it ought to go this way. And of course I didn't have a notion of any, I really wasn't terribly concerned. I mean, I was just interested but not concerned. So the "theys" were probably some of the women who got together and said, you know, 'maybe we could help a little bit by giving some names from our part of,' you know, 'of the state'. And that's all I know. I never asked about who they were, except that Angela was the one that contacted me. And actually I didn't, I just was very honored to think that she thought I could do something like this, and let it go at that.

AL: But then you heard something from someone and you had an interview of some sort?

CR: Yes, oh yes. Well, I think that they had talked to Jane. I think, you understand, this is a long time back and some of the details I'm not sure about. I think that my name came forward as being someone that they would like the Muskies to consider. And probably they told them a little bit about me, because Jane didn't seem to be terribly surprised about me. I mean, she, you know, she just seemed to feel, well I've kind of heard about you type thing, you know. But anyway, I think, isn't this awful, I can't remember, I don't . . . I almost think that I was the one that called her for an interview, but I do believe that the, that I had been introduced to them before that, if you know what I say. So I did go up and we did have an awfully good time talking.

AL: Was it just you and Jane?

CR: Yes. Had a lovely time talking, and we laughed a lot. And I don't know, I didn't have a notion of, I just thought, I'm doing what I've been asked to do and it's fine one way or the other because I was busy. And so, I had never really worked before. When I say, when I, had never really had a real job, going out and meeting the world and all this sort of thing. So I think I had reservations maybe about it a little bit. And yet it was a very intriguing thing. And so -

AL: So what was it like in the office, who else did you work with?

CR: Well, just Jane and I worked together.

AL: And she had an office. Were there secretaries for Governor Muskie that you -?

CR: Oh yes, he, across the, of course we were in the Blaine House, Jane and I were. Jane was in the Blaine House and I was there with her. And her office was there, and all of the governor's secretaries of course were working like mad. You just can't imagine what it was like because here this wonderful, young, charismatic man had come in, you know, and everybody was ringing his bell, so to speak, you know. I remember hearing one of the men say, he swore so I'm not going to say what he said about him, but he said, "He is such a hmm-hmm of a wonderful character that," and he was speaking to another Republican. And he said, "If you go in there,

hmm-hmm,” he said, “you are going to come out just exactly the way he wants you to because,” he said, “that guy is just so _____,” and then he put a few explicites [*sic* expletives] in, about his ability to convince people. And he had, he just had a way about him, and it wasn't preachy but it was just the way about him that when he said something, somewhere or other you sat up and paid attention. And you thought, well maybe he's right and maybe I could be a little less, you know, strong on my point.

AL: He could have the ability to change your mind or shift your opinions?

CR: This is exactly what this man said, only he said it in, he said, “You go in there,” he said, “and that hmm-hmm of a fella is going to change your mind.” And he was really in a way praising him, in sort of a backhanded way. I don't know how it came out, but I did hear one of the men say this to another man, and they had quite a laugh about it because they really knew how very persuasive this man was and how he knew what he was talking about, and very, very little malarkey. I mean, what he said was really pretty much on the line.

And so he was terribly busy, just, that first year was just awful. He said he just used to think, ‘Oh, I'll have all this time,’ he said, when I come, go down to Augusta and I'll be able to walk back to the Blaine House. He said, “All I've done,” he said, “is just race back and forth to that State House.” And he was complaining in a sense, but not complaining, you know. But his life had changed so completely.

AL: He thought he'd have more time and he had less time.

CR: Oh yes, oh mercy, I guess. It was a frantic year. And because so many Republicans voted for him, the whole complexion of the social scene changed because every Republican that ordinarily perhaps wouldn't feel comfortable perhaps being around. They were all greeted with just, you know, we just greeted the Republicans that came to the house like you would hardly believe because this was what he said: now, we have got a lot of people that are trusting and are responsible for partly us being here, and we aren't going, the attitude was we're not going to let them down in any way, and especially you girls over here socially. Now, you get with it. And so of course we had great long lists ordinarily. It was a hectic, really a hectic year. And the Republicans felt very comfortable. And even the council, very comfortable.

AL: The governor's council?

CR: The governor's council. Yes, I think they were very comfortable when they came to the Blaine House. Jane did everything possible to make them feel, you know, that this was very much a part of all that was going on.

AL: So as the governor's wife, Jane was responsible for a lot of these social events.

CR: Oh mercy, it was a legislative year, you see. The legislative year is, used to be sort of the horror year in a way because you entertained every, you entertained every one of these people that represented a certain part of the state. You entertained them with their, of course they gave you lists of course, you understand. And so every legislator, my dear, had an awful lot of, had a

great many people that he wanted honored because he was there because of them. And so we had many, many people, but of course the governor had been a legislator himself and knew many people, and they all respected and liked him very much. And Jane was absolutely charming and darling, and pretty as could be. And just, she just simply charmed them, absolutely charmed them and they just, oh, it was just a lovely thing to see.

AL: Yes, so you were a part of that.

CR: Well I was, I had, I was working at it, let's say. But of course I had to be on board, you understand. I will never forget, I will throw this in though, that the first time she entertained the governor's council she We had set up a lovely table and the girls in the kitchen and the maids in the dining room were all, and of course they had entertained these people many times under Governor Cross, because some of them were still on the council. And so they were very kind and very understanding. And Jane's menus were lovely, and I'm sure that the cook, you know, helped with many things, like we've done this before and, you know, just helpful things.

And, but anyway, we, Jane was, about two hours maybe before it was time she said, "Oh Cathy, I am," she was just really feeling very nervous because the governor's council was, believe me, pretty awesome, shall we say, you know, to any first lady. She said, "You wouldn't stay, would you, and have dinner with us?" I said, "Jane, I don't have any clothes." She said, "Never you mind, I'll get the, I'm going to get the driver right now, I'm going to send him down. Now make a list of things for Fred to get." So after that, of course, I always kept a dress I could get into that would be at least presentable for whatever. But of course I just had my office regalia on, you know, probably looked like I'd been through seventeen wars anyway.

So they sent the driver down and I called Fred in the meantime and I said, "Get this dress," and thankfully there was some order at least at home so that he could find a few things. Well, the funniest thing, we laughed more, the driver came back with a big paper bag stuffed with all my clean things I was going to put on, and probably a dress that was not stuffed in the bag. Well anyway, I got myself geared up and we went down to dinner.

And I think that Jane wanted it thoroughly understood that I was a married woman and that any bachelors who might be on a board or on anything, that I was just not looking for anyone at all. And so she did say, and, "Cathy is married". Of course a number of the people, the Gosses, he was secretary of state and of course they came from Gardiner anyway. Marvelous friends of my mother and father-in-law, so a lot of them knew who I was but she was going to make sure that the bachelor that was there, that I wasn't going to give him a hard time. Because there was some little talk about the fact that the former lady, social secretary, had sort of, had eyes in a way for this young man and maybe, whatever. And so that was going to be, that was the end of that right there.

So, but that was our first real experience of being, Jane felt that this was a very important time, that a lot of the feeling maybe that she was not adequate as a young woman. She had something to prove and I'll tell you she did. Yes, she was just marvelous. And she could have been forty-five or fifty in the way that she handled all of this, and she was probably something like twenty-four or twenty-five and she just did, she was just remarkable. And she came forward this way so

often. She just, if she had any inkling, if you thought she had any inkling of insecurity, when the time arrived, believe me, she was right on cue. She was just a marvelous lady, and is of course still, but I mean as first lady. And she charmed, she charmed the birds right out of the trees

AL: So how many years were you, through all the governor's years were you with her?

CR: I stayed four years with her, and then I stayed six months with Mrs. Clauson, oh, I'm sorry, not six months, six weeks with Mrs. Clauson, to help the new secretary. And she was a very capable woman, ever so much more organized and everything. She had run offices. I mean she was, and she was a real office person. She knew, as well as being a very charming person she also, and if I had had her for help when I first started it would have been marvelously easy, because I had come in not really knowing how, really much how to do things. But Jane and I got through; Don Nicoll was wonderful to us.

AL: Yes? What was his role, how was he . . . ?

CR: Well he was, oh my goodness, he was one of Governor Muskie's very, very close advisors. Now I don't remember what they called him, but he had a title. But let me tell you, that man, as young as he was, was just absolutely, I think probably he and Mr. Coffin, Frank Coffin, and one or two others, were such staunch supporters and had such wonderful ideas, and their visions were so broad about where Maine could go and how Maine should go, that I'm sure that Ed would say that they had been a great help in his, well he had quite a success with the year. And it was a, it was a hard year, there's no, I'd be very foolish to say that we sailed through without problems because we did have problems. And, but everybody was all in it for the same reason, we wanted it to be a really big success.

AL: What were some of the ups and downs that first year, what were some . . . ?

CR: Well the first thing that happened when I walked up over the stairs the morning of the inauguration, the inaugural, when he was sworn in. He came tearing down the hall swinging this beautiful gray vest that he wore under his morning coat. "Cathy," wild as a hawk. And I said, "Yes Sir?" "Get an iron, quick, and iron this out." He said, "There's a great big crease here," that when it had come from the tailor's or come from wherever. I'm sure it had been tailored for him; it must have been because he was a very tall, slender man.

Well, I thought, we did have an ironing room and, a little room that we could do odds and ends of things without rushing down to the big basement downstairs. So I went in and I fiddled around and I got an iron and of course I didn't know, I didn't know about the pressing cloths or anything like that. So I don't remember what I did because I didn't dare to get it damp in any way because he was going to put it right on. Well, and I thought if I scorch this, the most beautiful, beautiful wool, and I thought, if I do anything, I was just, I had ironed a few nice things in my life but I was kind of worried about ironing this. Anyway, I got the crease out. That was the important thing. And I rushed down the hall, you know, and he reached out and grabbed it, you know, and tried to get dressed. Oh, that was the start.

And I'll tell you, we had numerous scenes of great anxiety, you know, when Jane's lovely dresses

that were for a big trip and she was going to be elegant, *à la* elegant, and they didn't arrive until something like an hour or an hour and a half before they were to be on a plane or be somewhere, and I had to go to Waterville and get them. And I think that they just telephoned through and said that, 1EX was the car that I drove Jane around, because she didn't drive, 1EX is coming through, and I must have been going seventy miles an hour. Oh, merciful. Well, I had to get those clothes, get them back to the Blaine House, get them packed, or help get them whatever. And Jane was, I knew Jane was just, well she had planned this lovely wardrobe and it apparently had been held up somewhere. This was a very, very fine, I can't think, Delia was the last name anyway of this store, and she had worked there as a clerk.

AL: Oh yes, okay.

CR: And so anyway she, I got back without wrecking the car and destroying the clothes. And I don't know what was left of me when I crawled up over those stairs, but anyway the, of course there were people there to help me get the things up the stairs. And we got her off anyway, and she was going to be a sight to see I'll tell you, because she was going to be, they were lovely things. And so we had numerous things going on like that.

One time she called early, early in the morning. My goodness, and I thought, Jane, what is it? And she said, "Cathy, how fast can you get up here?" And I thought, 'groan', I said, "Well, I have a few things I have to do." So, and of course I had a family, too, you know, so, but they were wonderful. Anyway, it seems that the president of Haiti was coming for breakfast; his daughters were in that marvelous private girls school up outside of Waterville. Now ordinarily I could think of the name of it, but I can't right now. Oh, it's a marvelous school and very, very chic and girls -

AL: Was it Oak Grove, and the Coburn was the boy's, and then they merged.

CR: Yeah, well anyway, yes, but Oak Grove was where the girls were. And the president of Haiti was coming through to visit his daughters, and for some reason or other someone, someone invited him to breakfast at the Blaine House. Well, Jane, now that was one time when Jane was, when our cool was, and I thought, oh my goodness. So I rushed up. Well, what happened was, the fog was so terrible they couldn't land, but we threw together I'm sure probably one of the best international breakfasts that one could, and Jane did sort of (*sigh*) when she found out. Although he was very charming, apparently a very charming man. And I believe he was traveling alone as I remember it. And so we had, another time -

AL: Well, you know what, let me stop you real quick and turn the tape over.

End of Side A

Side B

AL: . . . B of the interview with Catherine Rines, and you were about to tell me another story.

CR: Yes. Jane said to me one time, she had two babies in the Blaine House, two pregnancies of the four years. She had very, very, I think it was a rather joyful time for her. I don't think it

was one of the, she had of course moments as any woman does, but I think that she was quite relaxed during these times. Probably not quite so much was expected of her, 'well you know, she is pregnant,' you know, this kind of thing. But of course society still went on, I can assure you. But I think maybe things weren't quite as demanding.

And so she said to me one time, "Cathy, you know what? When I stand out in front of those people and it's obvious I'm going to have a baby, I'm sure they're going to elect Ed, because they're going to say, 'poor fellow, he's going to need a job, another baby's coming'." But anyway, she'd say dear little things like that about, instead of being engrossed and saying, 'Oh, I have to go and stand up in front of all these people, you know, in my state of affairs here.' Never anything like that at all. Always, well, they're going to look at me and feel sorry for me, and they're going to feel sorry for Ed and, you know, I mean, just darling things she'd say. So I always felt like she was a real asset, she didn't, physically she was able to do it.

And after one of the babies, and I've tried to think, it must have been the first baby. I went over one night; I tried to get over as often as I could after I'd gone home. So I drove up to Augusta and went into the hospital and went up to her room, and the governor was there and he was twitching and sitting on, I could just see, I knew him well enough then to know that he was just dying to get out of there, for reasons that I'll tell you. He said to me after a while, he said, "Cathy, can you stay for a while?" And I said, "Well, yes." I hadn't a notion what he was going to ask me to do. I said, "Yes, I can stay." He said, "Well you know, I've got," and then he said a little word I'm not going to say. He said, "Do you see this envelope?" He said, "I have written, I have started my inaugural address on this envelope," and he said, "I've got to do something about the thing." And he said, "I've got to get home," he said, "because I haven't had a chance to sit down and get the thing together." He was not, he did not particularly like people writing his speeches at all.

AL: No, he liked to do it himself?

CR: Exactly. And so that was going to be his job. And he showed me the envelope, scratch, scratch, scratch, scratch, scratch, and I thought, 'Isn't this wonderful?' A person so human and so, and doing so much of the things that we find ourselves doing, you know, scratching down little, and as thoughts came to him of course he'd put them down.

And Jane of course, I knew Jane was probably feeling as anxious as he was. So he said, "Now you stay and keep her company, will you?" And I said, I stayed quite a while, probably a little bit over visiting hours. Because many people of course didn't come to see her, because simply they'd say, you know, we don't go to call on the governor's wife in the hospital, you know, unless you were a very close friend or a relative. And I think maybe she was a little lonesome sometimes, you know. So I stayed and stayed. And finally I thought, well I think I'd better be wending my way home because there was a lot to do of course, when she wasn't able to. But we did keep in touch, and she was able to say what she needed to have done in the Blaine House, and she was really on top of it, quite amazingly.

AL: Did she have any friends from the Waterville area that remained real close to her?

CR: Yes, yes she did, and they were, they came down once, whenever, I think that they saw them more at the cottage out in -

AL: China?

CR: Yes, out in China. Probably life was a little less, you know what I'm saying, yes, I think they could get friends together that way; and family. And they were, although I know that occasionally she'd say, "Oh, I'd like to have a party Saturday night," you know, and some, of course their old gang would come down, you know, from Waterville. And the girls would come down when there'd be a card party or something special, you know. But, you know, Jane was so busy being hostess that in many ways she couldn't take time with many of her friends when they did come. And I think that people, you know, it's kind of a lonely life in a way because people think, 'oh, I can't go down and bother her, she's got so much.' And so, so many people say that and it, I think sometimes they must be lonely. Although I don't really think that Jane was one of these types of persons, you know, that allowed herself to be too lonely. But I do, I know that there were times that she must have missed some of her friends terribly. She had a lovely sister-in-, two lovely sister-in-laws and, Doris Gray and Maddie, I've forgotten her, Maddie's name, but they were lovely ladies.

AL: Now are they still living, either of them?

CR: I tried to get hold of Doris the other day and I called, oh well, quite a while ago, and I called and called but I didn't get any answer so I thought when I talked to Don I'd ask him, because he'd know. But they were, and of course Grammy Gray lived in, lived there in the Blaine House with them and she sort of oversaw the children, and they went to her lots of times when they couldn't go to their mother.

AL: Oh, see, I didn't know that.

CR: Yes, Grammy was very, very nice, and she, being Jane's mother of course she felt, she could take the liberties that a, you know, that maybe another person wouldn't feel that they could take with a child, you know what I'm saying. And then his parents were lovely people, Mr. and Mrs., now let's see, what was her name? I think his name was Stephen.

AL: Oh, Senator Muskie's parents?

CR: Yes, they were just lovely people. And I enjoyed them, they were, his father was extremely, not really aloof but he was a very dignified person that you might take for aloofness. And he was of foreign, they were Polish of course, both he and, I think it was Josephine. Anyway, they were darling people and came quite often. Not running in type thing, you know what I mean, like let's go see the family, but they came quite often and really they must have been very proud of Ed. But they never gave him any, you know, sweat, shall I say, about being *the* governor, you know, and this kind of thing. He was still Ed. And I'm sure they respected him very much, but they were just lovely people.

And then the sisters, I think he had some brothers or a brother, but anyway he had some sisters

that came whenever there'd be some sort of a big affair, you know. And they were nice, very nice. His family by and large were very gracious, lovely people. And of course her, he, the daddy of Mr. Muskie, elder Muskie, was a tailor of course, and they always looked so well put together I used to think, you know.

AL: Did Stephen Muskie, do you think he ever tailored some of Governor Muskie's clothes?

CR: Well as a child, growing up.

AL: As he was growing up.

CR: Yes, oh yes, and he taught Mrs. Muskie and believe me, she made almost everything for those young people growing up. Because he was a very conservative man as far as money was concerned, and I'm sure that he probably had had very, had to be, you know, coming to this new country and rai-, they raised quite a family. I don't remember just how many there were, but it was quite a family. And I remember one time at the dinner table that Mr. Muskie elder said, well you know there are lots, he found out that I was a Scotsman and he said, lots of Scotch people came over to Poland and settled, and I was surprised at that of course. And I said, "Well tell me, did they speak Polish with a Scotch accent?" Well, I thought he thought that was a very, very big funny. And I remember the governor just kind of laughing at that because, you know, the Polish language is rather difficult, and you can imagine with a little bit of a Celtic twist it would be But anyway, we had a lot of like happy moments there at the Blaine House. And he was stressed out a lot.

AL: Yeah. Did he have a, well he had a sense of humor, too, at times.

CR: Wonderful, dried, funny, and sometimes you'd almost have to be aware of the fact that he was kidding, you know what I mean. Because, and he was really more or less a I think if you could have met him just socially away from everything, not the stress of being the governor or that he had so much waiting for him across the street, I think that he would just probably have been just an enchanting person to be with and talk to. But I didn't really have this opportunity, because he came over for meals. And they did ask me to be at the table with them at lunch, and it was just talk, you know. If he brought someone with him, it was legislative talk or, you know, some kind of talk I never remember. I remember one time, and it scared me to death, I thought, boy, you'd better sharpen up lady. He said to me, "Cathy, what do you think about us having a death tax, a tax on burials and funerals?" See, they were trying to get some, get out of the hole more or less, or something, I don't know. Well, it just shocked me so that I said, "I don't know."

AL: Because he didn't usually ask you about those things, did he? Okay.

CR: No, and actually I don't think that when he was in private with his family he talked much about this at all, no.

AL: Right, so what happened when you said, "I don't know?"

CR: Well, he said, well I think it was Frank Coffin, and I thought a lot of Frank. And he said,

“Well there you go Frank, she doesn't know.” But I had to say what I, you know, anyone coming at you that way. Now I'm sure that if I had had five minutes to think about it, I probably would have said, “I think we're taxed to death and never mind about after death.” But I didn't think of it there at the time.

But he did tell me one time, he had flown up from Boston, I think was when he was in the Senate, and he'd flown up from Boston and the condition of the atmosphere and the leaden air that, he just was so depressed. And of course they, someone called him Mr. Clean, you know, because he really did fight so for the environment. And he felt that the air, it was so murky looking out the windows, you know, and, that's not the word I want to use, is it. But anyway, the atmosphere and everything seemed to be so, you couldn't see the lights down below and -

AL: Heavy.

CR: Yes, yes, and he was, and so I said to him, after he spoke I said, “I really understand what you're saying to us.” And he said, “Well Cathy, I don't feel like I did a very good job at all.” This is the way he felt sometimes. He did, he scared the living daylight out of us because he told about where we were coming if we didn't start cleaning up our environment. Of course, he was one of the first big, big leaders.

AL: Yes, he was.

CR: And he said, “I don't feel like I did a good job at all, Cathy, tonight.” And I said, “Well, I don't know how you feel but,” I said, “I know that the rest of us were very impressed.”

AL: Now what year was this?

CR: Well, this would have been when he was in the Senate, the first, his first, I think his first term when he was really first beginning to get this thing going. He'd come back to Maine, perhaps not totally for that that I know of, but he had come back to Maine. And he was, part of his itinerary was to speak at some big gathering, and there again I don't remember what it was. But people were very impressed with what he had to say.

He was very, I think he was very sure of himself, and yet he was so humble. I think he was so sure about how he felt about things that it gave him an assurance about himself, about how he was going to get this across. But there was this humility about him that was terribly engaging. I mean it made you almost feel like saying, “Oh,” you know, “don't feel that way.”

But he was really a very extremely popular man, and he was the kind that walked old ladies across the street, as we used to say. And he thought so much of my mother-in-law because she was the mother of the year for the state of Maine. And I found a letter that he had written to her, the other day. And he said, dear, I almost, I don't know if he called her dear or Aunt Ruth, or if he called her Dear Mrs. Rines, but he said, “I almost feel, I have heard so much about you through Cathy that I almost feel as though you're one of my aunts.” Isn't that sweet? And she, of course these things just brightened her life very much. And he was so proud, you know, that a woman that in some ways he's had contact with was the “mother of the year”. I'm sure he was

proud of all of his Maine women that were mothers of the year, but particularly this one. And so, we had, we really had some very good

I remember one time that he would, they were going to have a big thing at the State House, and I'm not sure what it was. I think all the legislators were going to stand up and bring forth things that they, I don't think it was a session, I think this was something besides this, because Jane was going to go over. And she didn't, I think she thought she might be called upon to say what she thought her husband had done. She said, "Cathy, what has he done?" Oh, she was so panicked, and so busy bringing up the family. She said, "What is it that . . . ?" I said, "Well he's done" Thank goodness for just a moment I had a streak of brilliance go through my brain and I could remember three or four really big things that he had brought forward and had gone through the legislature sailing. And I was able to think of three or four things. And she said, "They ever ask me to get up and talk about it" And I said, "Well, this is, you know, you'll be all right." She was. I don't know that she was, but this was sort of the thing in which people broke down and talked about things that were nearest and dearest. Now what it was I don't remember, but it was some big thing at the State House, and Jane was not going to stand up and not have it all together. And so between the two of us she got quite a number of things together. Some things of course she remembered, but there were two or three things that she knew were terribly important she ought to say.

And so we had some, we had some really great trips. I had to go with her on a number of trips because usually the governor was always so busy he couldn't go with her places, on a trip I mean, if they were side things. And really the governor's wife did not travel alone. And she really didn't have friends that were free enough to go with her on most occasions, so I traveled with her a great deal and we always managed to have quite a nice time.

AL: After Edmund S. Muskie went to the Senate, did you continue any sort of relationship with Jane and Ed?

CR: Yes, I, we first of all, when they first went we of course went to Washington and of course we stayed, not with them, but of course we visited with them. And he took us, of course, out to dinner which, poor fellow, he had to take all of his people that came I suppose, and we didn't really expect it. But our boys were thrilled. Our older son had just graduated from high school and he was thrilled that we were going to go; he decided that he would not go on the class trip, which of course, you know, all seniors take. He decided that he, we were going to Washington and he decided he wanted to go with us and that was fun. And so I remember that when we were, I don't remember where we went, the restaurant or anything, but I'm sure it was a very nice, agreeable place. And our youngest son wouldn't order because he didn't want to charge the governor. And he was one of these little boys that always was thinking about he didn't want to be a nuisance or a bother. And so I think that the governor made him either share his dinner, or there was something going on at the table which was really, you know, really funny but kind of In a way I felt a little bit embarrassed because of course the boys did know him, you know. Not intimately, but they did know him. But no, he wasn't going to charge the governor for -. So, well I've talked your head off, haven't I?

AL: Do you, well do you think that your son Brian, that he got his political awareness and

interest from as early as your time in Governor Muskie's office?

CR: I am sure, I am sure that he, we were always a family that discussed current things. And Brian, bless his heart, when, he's been elected now I think this is his fifth term.

AL: How many years are the terms? Two years?

CR: Two. And he, I think so, and we stayed, and we usually try to stay for his swearing in. And every time, and I'm so touched, he will say, "I want to thank my parents for the fact that they took such a civic interest in our city and our, what was going on." And he said, "And we discussed it at great lengths." And I do think that the fact that I had been so close to power, although you understand it didn't make that much difference in my life, but I think that he just sort of caught that. And he's always, my husband's always been very civic minded and always run for city council and the school board, and he's been in so many different things. And I have been, I'm a DAR member and have served with the state committees and this kind of thing, and also regent of (*unintelligible phrase*). And the fact that it was a patriotic and very up front type of thing for women, you know, to keep alert and, you know.

And I think the fact that we had always been sort of political in a way, although Fred being on the council and the, he was president of the water district for years in Gardiner. And also on the, he was a member of the executive board of the bank and always had his hands in something. He was a postal employee and worked himself up to being postmaster eventually. And after he got through with his postal work he, the bank asked him to come aboard and be one of the administrators. And so there were seven of the men that, who, locally, that were in that, that sort of ran the bank, if you know what I mean, Gardiner Savings. And so the boys always realized that we felt that we had something to, that we should give back. And many of the things that you do you are not being paid for, if you know what I'm saying. And that we should give back. Brian seemed to have this very strongly entrenched in his mind in a way. And I do think that of course they, as young boys, must have thought Governor Muskie was just whoop-dee-doo, you know.

AL: Well, we're interviewing Brian this week.

CR: Our Brian?

AL: Yes, I think tomorrow.

CR: What are you doing?

AL: Yes, I'm not interviewing him but one of my students is.

CR: What's she going to do, what's he or she going to interview him about?

AL: Well, about his being, probably politics in Maine and in Kennebec County, he probably knows a lot of people. Is there anything that you think would be important for the student to ask him that would really bring out something special that he might know that we wouldn't know to

ask?

CR: Well, I think that, of course his, the very (*sound fades*) . . . remarkable person, and our other son is an extremely outgoing man, he's an artist model. And the artists love to have him model for him, he models for a number of artist communities near Round Pond, Round, yeah, I can't think of it, in Damariscotta. And he does Bates, models over at Bates, he models in Norway, he models, has modeled at Bowdoin; he modeled for a large group in Portland. They say that he has a back like one of Michelangelo's, so of course I don't know about that. He's very slender and quite tall. So, and he's very outgoing. But he doesn't have the push to do the things that his brother does. Brian is really very, very definitely, just simply gets his eye on something and away he'd go. And so -

AL: Well, to wrap up, are there any other impressions or recollections you have of Jane or Ed Muskie that we should add to the record?

CR: Well, probably I told him one time, I said, "I don't want you to think of yourself as a politician. You are a statesman." And I think there that that would just about sum up this man. Now, when I say statesman, I am using that in absolute highest, I don't want to use the word accolade; I'm using this in the highest sense. A very polished, extremely well thought out, knew what, did his homework, knew what he was talking about. But with all of this, this great love of humanity which every statesman who ever amounted to anything had. History will tell us the true statesman is a man of great humanity, and he was a man of great humanity.

And Jane, for all of her youth and inexperience and, well, she really hadn't had much in the way of this type of living that she was going to be confronted with. I think Jane was probably, if I had to rate her, I'm going to say she's ten and a half, and possibly more. And she rose to the occasion. Now, when people rise to the occasion, they have to have something pretty special, and she certainly had it in spades. And she was not petty, nor vindictive, and she had a limited vision simply because she zeroed in on what she felt to be her position in life. She was not tinkering off here with some kind of a thing going, you know, some kind of a big do politically. And she's not one, a great person to go out and crusade, and that's what I say when I say her vision was limited. But she saw what she had to do, and she zeroed in on that with every bit of her heart and mind and strength. They were both people of great faith. Ed Muskie had a great faith. He believed that as a Christian man he had a very special touch, and I think that she felt the same way. They brought their children up in this manner. And I just think that history would write them down very well.

AL: Great, thank you very much.

CR: You're welcome.

End of Interview
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