

7-9-1999

Schoenthaler, Jim oral history interview

Mike Richard

Follow this and additional works at: http://scarab.bates.edu/muskie_oh

Recommended Citation

Richard, Mike, "Schoenthaler, Jim oral history interview" (1999). *Edmund S. Muskie Oral History Collection*. 354.
http://scarab.bates.edu/muskie_oh/354

This Oral History is brought to you for free and open access by the Muskie Archives and Special Collections Library at SCARAB. It has been accepted for inclusion in Edmund S. Muskie Oral History Collection by an authorized administrator of SCARAB. For more information, please contact batesscarab@bates.edu.

Interview with Jim Schoenthaler by Mike Richard

Summary Sheet and Transcript

Interviewee

Schoenthaler, Jim

Interviewer

Richard, Mike

Date

July 9, 1999

Place

Waterville, Maine

ID Number

MOH 121

Use Restrictions

© Bates College. This transcript is provided for individual **Research Purposes Only**; for all other uses, including publication, reproduction and quotation beyond fair use, permission must be obtained in writing from: The Edmund S. Muskie Archives and Special Collections Library, Bates College, 70 Campus Avenue, Lewiston, Maine 04240-6018.

Biographical Note

James "Jim" Courtney Schoenthaler was born in Skowhegan, Maine, on August 11, 1927. His father, Frank C. Schoenthaler, died when James was very young. His mother, Delia Schoenthaler, ran a clothing store where Jane (Gray) Muskie was working when she met Ed Muskie. Jim and his brother William attended prep school in Massachusetts. After prep school, he spent a semester at Boston College before transferring to Bowdoin, graduating with a double degree in French and Economics. He started working in the Maine Office of Economic Opportunity under Governor John H. Reed., then he worked in a variety of state offices mainly concerned with labor and employment.

Scope and Content Note

Interview includes discussions of: family political and social views; boarding school; Boston College and religion; Bowdoin College; growing up in Waterville, Maine; John H. Reed; Office of Economic Opportunity; Labor Department; Opportunity Industrialization Centers of America; minimum wage laws; marriage to Betsy Carpenter; Ken Curtis; James Longley; confirmation process; tripartite commission on labor; Jimmy George; 2000 election; Republican control of

Maine politics; Muskie as politician; recent jobs; Jane and Ed Muskie as friends; Ed Muskie's temper; first meeting of Jane Gray and Ed Muskie; Muskie's early political positions; Don Larrabee; Muskie's final years; arguments with Muskie; property tax; and Muskie's effect on the balance of political power in Maine.

Indexed Names

Bradley, Bill, 1943-
Clinton, Bill, 1946-
Curtis, Kenneth M., 1931-
Dewey, Thomas
Dirksen, Everett McKinley
Gray, Doris
Gray, Howard
Gray, Jack
Larrabee, Don
Letourneau, Gene
Longley, James, Sr.
Mansfield, Mike, 1903-2001
McCain, John, 1936-
McMahon, Dick
Muskie, Edmund S., 1914-1996
Muskie, Jane Gray
Muskie, Ned
Muskie, Stephen
Nader, Ralph
Reed, John H. (John Hathaway), 1921-
Reed, Ruth
Saulter, Leonard
Schoenthaler, Frank C.
Schoenthaler, Jim
Storer, James
Sullivan, Leon
Tripp, Linda
Truman, Harry S., 1884-1972
Walsh, Adam

Transcript

Mike Richard: This is July 9th, 1999. We're at the home of James Schoenthaler and this is Mike Richard interviewing for the Muskie Oral History Project. And Mr. Schoenthaler, can you tell us your full name and spell it, please?

James Schoenthaler: Sure. James C. Schoenthaler, S-C-H-O-E-N-T-H-A-L-E-R, middle name Courtney, C-O-U-R-T-N-E-Y.

MR: And what is your date of birth, please?

JS: August 11th, 1927.

MR: And your hometown or city?

JS: This is my hometown, but I was born in Skowhegan, which is twenty miles north of here.

MR: And when did you move to Waterville?

JS: I've always lived in Waterville.

MR: Oh, so you were just born there.

JS: Right, right. My mother and father lived in Florida for some time and she was back here on a vacation. And she was originally from the Skowhegan area, Norridgewock, and so she gave birth to me in Skowhegan at the hospital there.

MR: And when were your, what are your parents' occupations?

JS: My father died when I was very young. He was a, he had been sales manager of a food company in Chicago in his earlier years and he was in the service in WWI. My mother, faced with having to, being responsible for two children, went back to her early occupation which was millinery, women's hats. And she actually made them, made the hats. And she drew on that past occupation and started her own business here in Waterville. And that's the background.

MR: And what were your parents' names, and can you spell them please?

JS: Sure. My father's name was Frank C., same middle initial as mine, Schoenthaler, and my mother's name was Delia Bouchard, B-O-U-C-H-A-R-D.

MR: Thanks. And did you have any siblings?

JS: One brother, William. He is a year and a half older.

MR: And what has he done for a career or occupation?

JS: He was in the textile industry for some time. He worked for Milliken Mills one time and I guess, most of his career I guess was with Milliken. He had worked for other companies as well. Then he went into business on his own in the retail business, actually taking over the shop that

my mother and aunt had started.

MR: OK. And what were your parents' political, social and religious attitudes and beliefs? I guess we can start with political if you like.

JS: Sure, my mother was definitely Democratic, more of a populist attitude. My father, I really don't know because he died before I knew him. And he wasn't from around here at all; he was from Chicago originally. Evanston really is where he was born and brought up. I can't tell you what his religion was. I don't, I think he, it was a Protestant religion of some sort, but I'm not positive of it.

MR: And your mother was . . . ?

JS: Catholic, yeah.

MR: And did she discuss politics or religion with you when you were children, at the dinner table or . . . ?

JS: No, not really, not really. I don't remember too much out of my mother as far as politics. Religion, yes. She was brought up in the Catholic religion, French Canadian background, and pretty strong, but yet lenient. Adhered to all the principles but made up her own for certain things. I mean for, she, in her later years going to mass was not essential to her. But she was pretty well groomed into the Catholic religion.

MR: And what were some influences on your development from outside of your family, in the community when you were growing up?

JS: Well, let me see.

Mrs. Schoenthaler: Well, you were in private school most of the time.

JS: Yeah. Well see, I can, can I cover that subject at the same time, okay?

MR: Yeah.

JS: Well, yeah, my mother as I've explained earlier, being a widow and having two children, two boys, and having to operate a business to make a living, saw fit to send us to private school, parochial school here in Waterville first, then junior high here in Waterville. Then she, we went, both went to prep school, boarding school, St. John's Preparatory School in Danvers, Mass. So I sp--, my brother and I both spent four years there, and I think that the opinions and early grooming came from the prep school more than any other place. I mean we met, naturally we met people here. But as far as I look back, they were pretty strong as far as their influence was, and I would say that would be the biggest to me.

MR: Was the transition to prep school in Massachusetts difficult, or?

JS: (coughs) Excuse me. At first, at first it was, because you leave at a very young age, first, your freshman high school, and you leave home then. It's a little bit difficult, a little homesickness at first. But then we adjusted, and I adjusted very well to it and I grew to like it a lot.

MR: And what did you do after prep school?

JS: Then after prep school, right out of prep school I enlisted in the Navy as a choice because I was about to be drafted; this is WWII. And I chose the Navy, and spent thirteen months in the Navy. And then the war ended, the war ended as a matter of fact when I was in boot camp in Great Lakes, Michigan at the time, and was sent to the Philippines and got pretty good experience there; liked it a lot. In high school I kind of excelled in sports, basketball in particular, and got some scholarships if I wanted to use them afterwards for college.

Spent a year at, not a year, one semester at Boston College where I had a full scholarship, and didn't like it only because I, well there were two reasons. And it's had an impact on me as far as religion is concerned. First of all, one aspect of not liking it was due to the fact that the classes were huge, five hundred in a, in a English class and so forth and so on, and lectured by microphones and so forth. I wasn't used to that. I'd been at a prep school where you had just a handful of kids with a lot of personal attention and got to like that, got to appreciate it. And I didn't like that at all. And secondly, and this has really had an impact on me, it, we, religion was a must; you had to take a religion course. Being a Catholic school, they were very, very demanding that you did. And so during that, during that religion class one of the professors, who was a Jesuit, made a statement to the class that if any student who had the opportunity to attend a Catholic college and did not do so, chose another, was committing a grave sin.

Three, four of us took real issue with that. That to me was a complete insult, and I made my feelings known to him. I made my feelings known to the dean, and the dean assured me that he would be reprimanded for that and he would publicly apologize to that class, and he never did. They sort of swept that under the rug and that really had an impact as far as my religion was concerned. Here are these people who are highly educated Jesuits, supposedly carrying the Catholic banner throughout the world, and to do that sort of thing, it just insulted me. And I pretty much dropped religion from that point on.

MR: And did you subscribe to another religion after that?

JS: No, no, absolutely not, absolutely not. I've come to believe that religion is all, religions do some good; they do an awful lot of harm as well. And I just, I, I've come to the conclusion that each individual must establish in his own mind what's right and wrong, and not have an external force, organized external force tell him what to do.

MR: And what did you do after you were at BC?

JS: I transferred to Bowdoin and I liked that very much, and graduated and finished off at Bowdoin, and I enjoyed that a lot. Majored in French and economics, and played football and basketball, enjoyed that. And later on I'll have a little funny story to tell you about, that relates to Ed Muskie. If you want it now I'll give it to you now.

MR: Oh, sure.

JS: Okay. Ed Muskie, being the strong Democrat that he was, an extremely, extremely loyal Democrat and really focused, always appreciated anyone who, another person who was a Democrat in, in a state that was completely dominated by the opposition, the Republicans, and pretty, well I hate to say, use the word "crooked", but I, it is true. They, they were less than honest about everything. And to see a guy like Ed Muskie single handedly, single-handedly take over a party that was so much in the minority and bring it to be a major party in the state as today, it's the majority, and he did that single-handedly. And I can attest to that; I saw it happen.

And, well one day, being with Ed somewhere, I forgot where it was, I was telling him about, stories about Adam Walsh. Now Adam Walsh was a very famous person in the athletic world. He was, he was captain of the all-time great Notre Dame team, seven mule, four horsemen team, and he, Adam was captain of that. Had also coached the Los Angeles Rams in California for a few years, so he was a very well, highly reputable source in athletics, and he was my coach in football.

And the day after Harry Truman won the election, and the newspaper print as you recall, well you don't recall, but history recalls, Dewey had won, *New York Times* carried that story. And so Adam Walsh had all of, we were practicing at the time, and Adam with a big heavy voice came onto the field and looks at all the, all his players, and said, "How many of you voted for Truman?" And three of us put up our hands. "Three of you sit down and relax. You lay down. The rest of you, four laps." I told, I told that story to Ed Muskie and I thought he, it took him a half hour to stop laughing. He enjoyed that so much. He was such a Democrat, you know, that that really, that, I still remember it, how much he got a kick out of that.

MR: Were there any other professors or students or groups that you were involved in at Bowdoin that had an influence on you or were important?

JS: Yeah, yeah, there were. There was some good, there was some good teaching there, good professors. The head of the French department was an outstanding young, not young, he was younger then of course, his name was Jarbonnet? And he came originally from Paris, and he was head of the Romance language department at Bowdoin, after that left and went to LaValle in Quebec City and became head of the Romance department there. He was very, very good. I enjoyed him immensely. Then there was another that, in languages, in French, and I, since I majored in French, took some Spanish as well, and economics. Abramson, Professor Abramson from Bowdoin was very, very influential as far as I'm concerned, he, in economics, and I liked him a lot. And then there was Jim Storer, who taught international economics, was also a good

influence. And I remember them very well, enjoyed them.

MR: And, now getting back to the Waterville community when you were growing up. What was the situation there like from an ethnic standpoint or economic standpoint, politically?

JS: Yeah, that's a good question. I, I've, that's influenced me a lot. This community had an inordinate population of Franco-Americans and they, though they had a lot of voice, there was a lot of discrimination, without question, and that irked me. Being half German and half French, my mother's side was French and my father's side was German, I didn't like that; I didn't like what I saw, a lot of discrimination. People made fun of French people; that irked me badly. And that stayed with me for a long time. The French Canadian population, the Franco-Americans, were pretty much Democrats. Once in a while there'd be a stray, but the great, the great majority were Democrats and so that, Ed Muskie, a person like Ed Muskie had a lot influence with them. He understood, being Polish himself, he understood, when you're in the minority the harm that's done by minority people, majority people I should say.

So I remember that. I remember that there was a mill town. I also remember that people worked very hard here for their money, and you know, as a matter of fact, still do. The wage level here with these manufacturing outfits that we've had here has been outrageously low. The per hour rate is, really does not make sense in view of the cost of living that's going on. It was bad then; it's still bad today. That's had some influence on me, because I've always been an underdog person. And I know that that type of influence as I saw it made a difference in my life, in my thinking, shaped my thinking.

MR: When you were a child growing up in your neighborhood did you notice ethnic tensions or discrimination problems like that?

JS: Yeah. I honestly can't say that I was discriminated against. And I have a reason for that, only because my mother, who was in the position that she was of running the finest fashion shop here, was very, very well-accepted by everyone. And so, somehow I never noticed any personal discrimination. But the grammar school that I went to, the French grammar school, there was obvious discrimination against some of those kids, because their English wasn't too good. And, you know, they were made fun of, a lot of them. And when I made the transition to junior high, that was evident to me. So that stayed in my craw for a long time too, and shaped my thinking.

MR: And what was the name of the French grammar school and the junior high . . . ?

JS: St. Francis, St. Francis (*unintelligible word*) School, parochial school. It only went up to the seventh grade, sixth grade.

MR: And the junior high was another parochial . . . ?

JS: Junior high was a public school.

MR: Public school.

JS: Yeah, and I, it was a great difference, the transition was a big difference because most of the language spoken at St. Francis was French, even back then, so. And some kids couldn't, you know, just didn't have it to make the adjustment, and the discrimination showed.

MR: And how would you say that the community then has changed over the time that you've lived here, like comparing it to the present-day situation?

JS: Well, that's a hard one for me to answer. The community definitely has changed as far as discrimination is concerned. Now, you don't see any of that any more. It's, you see very little of it. The, the rivalry between the English speaking and French speaking is not what it used to be at all. There's been a lot of intermarriage and there's been, it's been, it's watered down, so it has changed. But I have not seen good economic changes. As a matter of fact, we here are a depressed community right now. So I, it, as a comparison, I suppose back in the old days the economy was better than it is now. It seems strange, but that is the case. We've lost some key industries here that, and we've lost the good paying ones I guess. So, yup.

MR: Okay. Moving on to life after graduating from Bowdoin with a French and economics major, what did you do then?

JS: I tried my darndest to get a job in, a foreign-type job that would use the languages and the business as well, and I hit a very bad time to get out. The jobs were very, very scarce, and that happens to a lot of people. The timing is everything. You get out, if they're looking for people you get hired; if you don't you don't. And I was unable to do that. And so I had to, I had to go to what, what else that I could do. And I, first job was to go back to my prep school, St. John's, as assistant football coach and head basketball coach, having done very well in basketball, and taught, I taught government, as a matter of fact, class, high school class. And I stayed there for a short time. I knew there was very little future there. Starving wages back in those days for teaching. It's gotten a lot better. Now that's improved. We were talking about the economy. There are pockets of employment that have improved markedly, but that has improved a lot, teaching. Back then they expected people to teach for nothing.

And so I stayed there. Then I went into a training program with the W. T. Grant Company, retailing, and stayed there for a couple of years, then went in with my mother and aunt's outfit here, and stayed there for quite a while. And I enjoyed that, except that it wasn't a big enough enterprise really to handle everyone that was in it, and I saw that. In order to be in that type of business, you need to have, you need to be in a populated area where you have a good draw of people. We didn't have that kind of draw. We had a good draw for what we had, but it wasn't adequate to handle three families. So I went out of that.

Done a lot of things since. I had this farm, this was a farm at one time, and we operated it as a farm. We had some poultry. Then we developed the golf course here, Pine Ridge which is right next to us, and a restaurant. And that was, that proved to be a very bad venture, in that we didn't

have the capital to handle that, so we failed with that. After that, I went into various things. Government is one of them. And I went with, this is kind of an odd thing, one of my wife's friends . . .

Mrs. Schoenthaler: You're going to mention John Reed.

JS: Yes, one of my wife's friends was John, was Ruth Reed, and her brother was John Reed, who was a Republican governor here. And when I found myself, I had to have a job after this failed, and so I called him up and I got a job right off there in the, in the war on poverty. And that was very, very interesting to me; that really was interesting. This is what, this was the first, we developed, well, put it this way, we had, there was a small office attached to the governor's office. Reed was the governor then, and it was called the Office of Economic Opportunity, modeled after the national, funded completely nationally. And we, two of us, single handedly, well one of them's gone now, a guy by the name of Bob Brown and myself covered the state and started, actually started the community action agencies that still exist today, the (*unintelligible word*). And we were ground floor, absolute ground floor. We were ground floor with all the equal opportunity programs: Head Start, the college one; I've forgotten the name of it now, Upward Bound, Upward Bound. And all those programs we were responsible for. And we were responsible for organizing them and we did.

And then what happened after that is a, stayed there two years and John Reed was defeated by Ken Curtis, Governor Curtis. And I stayed on, and I'm happy that I did, and ended up being chairman of the Employment Security Commission in the Labor Department for quite a few years, and after that, started the Manpower training programs. We were funded for that, and so I took that job and started all those, those, what was the name of the program? I've even forgotten the name of it. Labor Department, U.S. Labor Department funded program- funny, slips my memory completely, the name of it. But anyway, we had money to start all the training programs and we did, and stayed there for quite a while.

Then went with an outfit completely related to it, funded by the Labor Department. That was an all-black, all-black outfit called Reverend, Reverend. Jeez, that's funny. I, my age is getting me; I can't think of the names. Well, the name really doesn't make any difference. It was a Labor Department-funded program that was based on, oh, Reverend Leon Sullivan was the black minister's name, who was from Philadelphia, and started this, he started this program by virtue of the fact that black people in Philadelphia were not being let in on jobs. And I'm sure that still exists today, but back then it was very, very serious. And so he started, he boycotted two or three good-size outfits in Philadelphia, mostly food outfits, a chain, grocery chains and so forth. And it was so powerful that he got the attention of industry, big business, and they came to his rescue and really helped him out and formed a board, OIC, Opportunity Industrialization Centers of America; I've caught the name of it. They came to his rescue and really helped him out, people like GE, General Motors, Ford, all, your big companies, and backed him up with some real good funding and started some training programs for blacks in many cities. And I went with the national outfit and, in a regional headquarters in Kansas City, and then came back in the Boston area from it. And then after that went into, with the county, Manpower training program

in Kennebec County.

So I spent a long time in Manpower training, Manpower resources, got to know, got a real feel of it. And it's had a lasting effect on me in that I see so many pockets of favoritism in employment that is teetotally ridiculous in my way of thinking. Why should we pay certain people, extraor-, I mean enormous salaries, and, who really don't do any more than others who get very little? And this is, this has become I think a big issue today. We've got too many pockets of favoritism. And though the economy they say is very good, well for many, for a lot of people it isn't. And I think, my feeling, my strong feelings came from the background that I've come from in the Manpower training from way back.

And I could use this town as a great example. The doctors here are extremely well-paid, the lawyers here extremely well-paid, the, any, anyone who is a, in a managerial position in industry, very well-paid, but yet the minimum wage is totally ridiculous. And you have people working at these stitching out-, these shoe companies and the garment companies, really working hard, I mean putting in some real work, getting peanuts, what I call peanuts. Just the other day we were talking to, I can say this, my wife was in the personnel department at one of these companies here, at Hathaway. So she knows, she knows what I'm talking about. Yesterday we, a little side note to prove my point, we went to a bakery outlet here in Waterville, in Fairfield, that operates a, not first retail, it, what . . .

Mrs. Schoenthaler: An outlet.

JS: An outlet, an outlet for their products that are getting a little bit old. Not much, but you're just passing that mark a little bit, so they have to maintain the absolute freshness for the retailers, and so they have their own outlets. And we went in there and we got chatting with a gal in there. And my wife asked her, asked her, (she was the manager; she was the only one there that day,) "What happened to your little assistant, your help?" She says, "Oh, she left." And so we started talking, "Why did she leave?" She says, "I don't know why, they pay very well here." And so we got into it. She says, "Well they pay six fifty, paid her six fifty an hour, guaranteed eight an hour after one year." And so my wife asked her, "Well what do you get?" She's the manager. "I get fourteen something an hour". That's decent pay; that's decent pay. Now if you go to all of your supermarkets and all the people who are very capable in there, cashiers and you name it, they don't get half that. There's something wrong with the distribution of income as far as labor is concerned, and that's never been faced by anyone. The unions tried to do a good job at one time, but they've gone out of the picture. And, well anyway, so much for that.

MR: And, what was I going to say? Well, you've covered a lot. I've just lost my train of thought; I'm sorry. But, oh actually, talk about your marriage a little bit. When and how did you, did you two meet, or how did you meet your wife?

JS: Okay, my wife came from Skowhegan; I came from Waterville. My aunt, mother's sister, had a cottage on Lake Wesseronsett, where Lakewood is. Well, Lakewood doesn't mean anything to you; it doesn't to most people now. Back then it did. It was *the* summer theater in

the country at one time. You had huge names like Humphrey Bogart and people like that came up.

Mrs. Schoenthaler: (*Unintelligible phrase*).

JS: Oh sure, this was really some place. But anyway, it was a real classy place and it was nice. Anyway, on that same lake my aunt had a cottage there, as a little kid. I'm talking about four, five years old and up. We spent our summers there, my brother and I. And my wife came from Skowhegan and they had a cottage on the lake, too, and that's how we met. And my aunt knew her mother and father very well. She was a, my, this is another aunt who had a hat shop in Skowhegan, and she introduced us, right?

Mrs. Schoenthaler: Yeah, you tried to tip over my canoe one day, and I whacked you on the head.

JS: So that's how we met. That's how we met, and you know it's been a lasting thing ever since, ever since, you know. So she went her way for school, she went to Oak Grove here, private girls' school that no longer exists. But it was a nice girls' school, but...

Mrs. S: And on to Stevens College while you were in the service.

JS: Yup, and to Stevens while I, and I went to Bowdoin; well yeah, I was in the service. So that's how we met. So we've been together for a long time. And we were very good friends with both Jane and Ed Muskie.

MR: And your name, is it Betty again, Mrs. . . . ?

Mrs. S: That's, Betsy, B-E-T-S-Y.

MR: Okay, thanks.

JS: Carpenter is her maiden name.

Mrs. S: No, that's my maiden name.

JS: Well I'm saying, Betsy Carpenter's your maiden name.

MR: Oh, and that's what I wanted to ask before is, you mentioned you signed on, well you started working in John Reed's office? Was that, it must have been '63 or '64 (*unintelligible phrase*)?

JS: Yeah, it was just when the Economic Opportunity Act came about, was being administered. And, yeah, let's see, yeah that's about right. That's about, early 60s, yup.

MR: And then you worked on with Ken Curtis through his retirement?

JS: On with Ken Curtis, for a man-, oh, well that's interesting as far as the Democratic party's concerned. Clyde Bartlett, who was a very strong Democrat from the Portland area, and he was assistant superintendent of schools there for years, he was very, very close to Ken Curtis. And he came aboard as my boss in that Economic Opportunity Office. And so I liked him and I got to know them very well. And I found Ken Curtis to be a, and Clyde, both top-notch people and I enjoyed it. And that's when I got appointed to the head, the Labor Department job.

MR: And were you still working there after Ken Curtis left office?

JS: No, I left with, let me, jeez, let me look back.

Mrs. S: I think you went with OUI, didn't you, after that?

JS: OIC you're talking about, we haven't talked about that, the black outfit. No, when he left, yeah, when he left I left. Oh sure, oh sure, oh God, that's a sour note, I've got to mention it, sour note. A guy by the name of Jim Longley succeeded Ken Curtis, and I say it with all sincerity; the man was insane. He, he was actually insane, and I have documents to prove it, the letters that were written to me. He took over and I, he was malicious and he, he was pro-industry, didn't care about people at all, and under the guise of being an independent was really a right-winger, a real strong right-winger. And I've never forgotten him, because I left. He fired me, and I stood right up to him. I just did not, I couldn't stomach that guy, never have then. And I've kept some of the correspondence that actually proved that he was insane.

And I'm not the only one who thinks that way. And, which is a terrible thing because you get politicians who do get in, and some merit their reputation and others don't. A guy like Ed Muskie stands out as being honorable, ethical, sincere man. I can't say the same for Longley.

MR: And how would you compare working under John Reed and his administration with working for Ken Curtis and his staff?

JS: John Reed was more guarded. He was a very good, I liked him, he was a very decent guy. But he was more guarded, he, you know, more of a poll-taker type, whereas Ken Curtis wasn't. Ken Curtis was, his was warmer, put it that way; he was a very warm individual. And also delegated and trusted you. John was apt to keep a closer rein through his administrative assistant, that I did like, guy by the name of Steve Shaw, was a very nice man. He had been in the legislature, and John picked him as his administrative assistant, but he was a good man. But anyway, Steve kind of ran the show, and he kept kind of tight, tight rope. Whereas a guy like Ken Curtis, if he liked you and if he, if he had some faith in you he'd give you some reins. Like, I can honestly say I never, never to this day remember Ken Curtis saying "Don't do this," or, you know, this sort of thing. "Do what you think is right"- type of guy, and I very much appreciated that.

MR: And who are some of the other people that you worked with in the office or during your time in the Labor Department who were important, whether Republican, Democratic or independent?

JS: Oh, gosh. Well I'll tell you, I'll tell you one of the horror scenes that I went through. And this was not easy to take, believe me. You have to be tough-skinned to go through this, and I really wasn't that tough-skinned. The Republicans were so imbued and so arrogant and so crooked in every sense of the word back in those days that, and they were completely sold, completely sold to the business interests, special interests. That's all they knew. In other words, "Well whoever comes in to, who wants to bring anything in to, as far as business is concerned, we're with him." No matter who they step on or what they step on, the environment or anything else. They were so bad that it got ridiculous. At that time they had a governor's council, and these were nothing but puppets to industry, puppets to the paper industry, openly, open puppets to them, and to any other industry, the shoes, the, you name it. And so I had to face those guys to be nominated or passed by them for the top job that Governor Curtis had engineered through government reform, government reorganization. And I was entrusted with doing all the Manpower programs, all the departments, consolidate them into one.

And so I was his chosen man to be the first one. And they stopped me, the Republicans stopped me because I had always been openly, openly faced them. And to this day I'm still proud of what I did. Many times I was approached by strong Republican figures to turn the other way on some issues - not once did I ever do that. At every Employment Security Commission meeting that I went to, I always asked the question first of the personnel man who was there, "How much do you pay your people?" And that insulted them, they didn't like it at all. I was openly anti-, anti- Republican, domineering industry people. And I made it clear, if they, if they wanted to play the game, the rules, you know, abide by the rules, fine, great. There were some people who were good. Not everybody, but in the great majority of them, they had been in control so long that they were arrogant. They ran the show, and they didn't care about people. They cared about industry.

Mrs. S: You should also tell him about Jimmy George, you know, when they found out that you found out that they were lying up there, because that's interesting.

JS: Oh yeah, well, it's, I could go into that. There's a lot of dirty pockets through my exposure there that I found. But I, you know, I, they, we had a tripartite commission. I was representing the public, and chairman, and we ran that department, Employment Security Department, which was completely funded by the federal government, Department of Labor, through payroll taxes. And what people never really understood is that any industry, back then, it's changed, but back then it was employers of more than four people, ten people, twenty-five people, and it sort of, it's down to one now, the coverage of this, they had to pay payroll taxes. Well, the point is they had to pay those taxes whether or not they wanted to or not, and that went to the federal government. And the federal government gives it back to the states to operate the departments, all the labor departments, labor statistics, all the employment offices, unemployment insurance. That whole thing was done that, that was the department.

So, it was, it was a constant, constant fight and all these Republicans and right wingers, (as far as I'm concerned I have got one word for them, they're right-wingers, to my definition of the word) all they were interested in is covering up everything. And they want to make sure that industry had a say as to, as to what the department was going to do. And they did not in any way, shape or manner conduct themselves honorably. Case in point: three people, tripartite, labor representative, industry representative, and public representative which was me, would meet on certain policies that were within our purview. Not all of it was, after all, all, most of the regimentation, most of the programs were set by the Department of Labor in Washington, but we had some discretion on certain things.

All right, here's what would happen behind the scenes. And we're supposed to have one voice, we're supposed to agree on one voice, and I'm supposed to be the voice. And we vote, two out of three wins, right? All right, now once you've made up your mind on any policy, that's it. Well, the industry representative, a guy by the name of Jimmy George, used to go behind the scenes at these local offices and tell people to do different things that we had already voted on and set. You know, you had to battle this. And any time that, if I complained in any way, they'd get back. He'd get back to his industry bosses, so to speak, and they'd kabosh everything, because they ran the whole show. That, it was corrupt. It's the only word I have for it; it's corrupt.

Mrs. S: Caught him on one thing up there, (*unintelligible word*) or whatever, Jimmy George, you caught him on that. That made headlines in the paper.

JS: Oh yeah, collecting, he was collecting insurances falsely; I recall that. He, I don't remember the details and so it's not worthwhile mentioning. But anyway, I, you get the gist of what I'm saying. It was a lot of corruption, and they were completely, they were completely condoned by the Republicans, and they, they're the ones who did it. Matter of fact, good little, good little example. I remember that we had to change the rates, the taxation rates on unemployment, for unemployment insurance. In other words, how much each industry would be paying percentage-wise, and that was up to us to vote and change on it. Guess who, guess who ended up making all the decisions? A guy representing the paper companies would be sent by them and he would say, "Wells this is what we're going to do right here." I mean it was, it was all cut and dried. It was all cut, they ran the show. The power company, paper companies, and the shoe companies, people like, they ran the show.

And the, you know, it insulted me because government is for people, not special interests. But it's turned completely the other way, it existed back then. It's worse now, by the way, if you look around. Parties don't mean a thing any more; parties are one and the same thing. They've sold out, they've sold out to the special interests. Who's running everything today? Special interests. Lobbyists run everything. Look at the NRA; look at any of them. They get, campaign reform is the biggest thing. I, that's sickening. They know what the story is on that. They know that it's, the phony sound- bite ads, commercials, win elections. And they have a chance to change the system, they don't want to change it, because politicians stay in there, they get all

these big contributions. I, you know, right now I can honestly say I have absolutely no faith in either party. And I am hopeful that there'll be a third party that'll come in and clean it up sometime, or help clean it up. And right now my favorite man is a Democrat, Bradley. I'd just love to see . . .

Mrs. S: Or McCain.

JS: Or McCain in the Republicans. If you had a McCain and a Bradley together, I think . . .

End of Side A

Side B

MR: This is the second side of the interview with James Schoenthaler on June, sorry, July 9th, 1999. And we were talking about the corruption in the state government when we left off from the last side.

JS: Yeah, I'm saying that I look back and, I look back with disgust at the way the state government was run back when the Republicans had it lock, stock and barrel. They, they stood for one thing, to benefit industry, any kind of industry they would benefit at any expense. They didn't, they wanted people to work for nothing. I saw that firsthand. And they didn't care about environment. And I, the real culprits are the paper companies, power companies, shoe companies, all of them, put them together. There are good ones. But put them together, the lobbyists that rule, rule, the special interests rule through the lobbyists. And it's gotten worse now.

And I, you know, as I say, I would love to see a clean-up of that. I don't know how we're going to do it. It's got to start with campaign reform somehow. You cannot keep on requiring all the money that it takes to be elected, because you know darn well that the money comes to people not unencumbered. It comes with favors expected. And that's what's happening. All these laws that are being passed, or not passed is another way to look at it, is because the special interests are running the country. And I never know what people can do about that.

As I say, I was telling you, my favorite, my favorite twosome would be Bill Bradley be elected President, and McCain of the Republicans Vice President; that would be a nice combination. I think that, at least their message is there, and I think they mean it. I think they're very sincere people. And I see McCain bucking his party, and I know that Bradley dropped out in disgust along with other people, chose not to run again, because they're fed up with what they see. And there's no more civility left. Personal attacks is, and media jumps in and follows all that and, I don't know. Simply put, government should be for people, in the interest of the majority of people, not for special interests. And yet the other thing has transpired; the opposite has transpired.

And, getting, just to speak about Ed for a moment, is that okay?

MR: Yeah!

JS: All right. Well Ed, during his time, though he was a very strong narrow focused Democrat, he had to be for a reason. He had no choice; there were no Democrats. It was a hand-, just a handful of people against this strong corrupt machine, Republican machine. And so I, you know, I forgive him a thousand percent for the things that he did, because he had to do them to gain strength and to gain balance to the picture. But in effect, - let's be honest about it,- in effect, the party that he was so loyal to is not doing anyone any good today. And that's what it's come down to.

And I, I know the man was, he was very sincere. But I will say this, he was, just remembering, he was kind of arrogant in his own way. I mean he was extremely bright, extremely capable, and somehow you have to have arrogance along with that. You can't, you just, people just didn't measure up to him, it's as simple as that. So that you have to believe that he saw, and I, it was noticeable in a bigger picture all the time. His view was a macro view, not a micro view. He would, though he was very acquainted with details on many things, he wouldn't bother with them; that was for somebody else. He had a bigger mission. And that's what, how I remember him.

He was extremely capable, in fact the most capable guy I've ever met. Can I tell you a little story about one of the things that I really liked? We were at, we were invited, the wife and I, to be guests of Governor Muskie and Jane at a dinner in Monmouth. And we were to attend the Monmouth Theater that evening. And we were to be wined and dined by a Bates professor by the name of McMasters at his home, summer home, or it might have been his permanent home; I'm not sure, in, yeah I think it was his permanent home, in Monmouth. And Monmouth Theater, which is now the Shakespeare Theater in Maine, and it's a good quality, good quality theater, was struggling, very struggling back then. And somehow McMasters figured that, gee, the governor's presence would help things.

But, and so he was willing to feed us and, you know, show us a good time, then we went to the theater. That's what it was going to be. Not once, not once was it ever mentioned that Ed would have to say or participate in any way; he was just there as an evening off, as a guest. Well they pulled a quickie, McMasters pulled a quickie on Ed. During the show, why he, in the intermission, yeah, the intermission, he says, "Governor Muskie, would you mind saying a few words?" Now, he, he, at least if he had told him to be prepared; he never did. But do you know something? Ed Muskie walks up there, charismatic, Lincolnesque as can be, walks up there and gave the best little speech you ever heard in your life. And he tuned in somehow, (I don't know how he knew it because he hadn't been asked to speak; no preparation), he tuned in to the struggles they were having and mentioned a couple names and so forth. He walked out of there like God. And that will attest to the ability that that man had. Absolutely no problem with that. He just walked off and, just as though it was nothing. To anybody else it would have been fearful, you know. I mean you just don't, you can just throw around generalities. But that wasn't Ed Muskie. He'd zero right in on some stuff, and he did. And I've never forgotten that.

MR: And, now getting back to your career. After you left the Labor Department when Ken Curtis' term was over, did you continue in politics or government from then on?

JS: Yeah, went with, that's when I went with the OICs of America, and the, why can't I think of the name of the Manpower training program that was big then? CETA, Comprehensive Employment Training Act. Well, I started all the CETA programs and went with the, I had the state one, got that going, then went with OICs and then came back and went with Kennebec County, all in the CETA programs starting (*unintelligible phrase*). Kennebec County, at my suggestion by the way, went out of it. I never believed that counties should have been running that. It should have been strictly a state, state situation. And yet the politics got into that, and every county wanted a bite of it and they wanted to run their own show and so forth. So I got caught up in that, but I had, I'd done the state one first and I saw too much duplica-, too much petty politicking in it.

But it did some good. Yet, it was very difficult to administer, extremely difficult, because you had to have this maintenance of effort clause in it, which simply meant that you could not open up a job or fund a job that was already being done. In other words, these were supposed to be new jobs for people who couldn't find a job. Well, guess what the county governments did with that? You can read that. They first of all funded every one that was there first. And you know, that wasn't meant to be. It was clear. And the federal government was totally ridiculous in having minute stupid regulations that you couldn't, no lawyer could read it. And it, it was, it got to be just a boondoggle, is all it turned out to be. And it's too bad, because that could have done some good had it been done properly, I think, as intended.

See, that's the trouble, and I've always said that. The trouble is that politicians such as Ed, now let's face, elected politicians get elected and pass grandiose acts, and mean well, I mean mean well. Then the bureaucracy takes over to administer it, and now that becomes something else. As a matter of fact, when I was with this CETA program in particular, I was in Washington trying to get some answers to things. This was for the state now, state of Maine. You know that the Labor Department had, actually had people in these offices that would let, well, I kept saying "Well, Senator Muskie can look into this, I'm sure." You know, trying to get them to act on something. They'd laugh at you. They'd say, "Well, he's around for a while; he'll be gone' just like the rest of them." Which leads me to believe that federal bureaucracy runs the show, because they know that elected officials are temporary, and they don't like to deal with details, so.

And I actually saw this in the federal Labor Department, U.S. Labor Department. After an election, when parties change, change hands, the ones that are from, that are in, that were in I should say, hold their jobs for quite a while. And you have these, there were floors of them in the Labor Department in one of the buildings, they have all these plush offices, and they're actually given nothing to do, hopefully to get them to resign, drive them mad. And that was going on, and I was there asking questions. I said "What, what's this all about?" "Well, he's with the last administration and he doesn't want to leave, but he will, he will." And we have a lot of that. And these are high paid people; I mean these are-, well, it reminds me of that Linda Tripp salary

that I saw that I couldn't believe. Did you see that, what someone like that's making? Big money. What, what was she . . .?

Mrs. S: Ninety thousand.

MR: Something like that.

JS: I mean, totally, you have people like that floating around Washington, part of . . .

Mrs. S: Doing nothing.

JS: . . . part of the bureaucracy. And so I saw a lot of that. So I, you know, I, Washington needs to be cleaned up; there's no two ways about it. But the present system's not going to clean it up, because each party holds on to the spoils that they want when they get in. And the same thing was going on in the state, too, state government. I saw that.

Mrs. S: (*unintelligible phrase*) ice coffee. You're sure you don't want anything?

MR: Oh, I'm all set. And you were involved with this work through the early, mid- eighties?

JS: Let me see, let me see, when did this all end? Sixty-seven, gee, I lost track now. I should have looked that up in my account.

MR: So you left Labor it must have been, Curtis left in '75 was it?

JS: Yeah. And so I went on, yeah, I'd say early eighties; you're right. That brings it up; that's about right. After that I just went on my own and I did self-employment, and I kind of enjoyed that. It was a brokerage outfit for shipping, shipping brokerage, putting trucks and loads, shipping, together. People come in with a truckload of merchandise and have nothing to go back, so I'd get in between and book them with a load, loads to go back. I did that for a while and I kind of enjoyed that. That's about it, isn't it Betsy? I'm just trying to think.

MR: Okay. Well, I guess let's talk about your, you and your wife's involvement with the Muskie family, the Gray family, and how it all began.

Mrs. S: I don't dare go into that-, too many parties.

JS: No, it, the, no we don't mind going into that. You'd like to hear that?

MR: Yeah, anything that you're comfortable with sharing.

JS: Yeah, well that's good; let's be comfortable about it. But they were, they were fun people. And Ed was, Ed was always very, very, very as I say busy, focused and on-the-go all the time. And, you know, kind of exciting. And we went through all his campaigns and everything, and it

was exciting.

Mrs. S: And the four of us got together down at, where was that place when we had moose meat? And the place was full of servants, and the four of us went down for a weekend. And you and Ed fished, and Jane and I just slept and chatted, relaxed. And we had a good time.

JS: Yeah, they were fun people, really. It was a, it was kind of an honor thing to be with them. After all, with the jobs he was holding, and always climbing; always a new election coming up for something better.

Mrs. S: And I have pictures with him singing by the piano, because Jim's a piano player.

JS: Yeah, he did a lot of that.

Mrs S: And also, did you mention when we went down to, when Ed asked all of you people what he thought about you, or did you miss that?

JS: No, I've got to tell you this story.

Mrs. S: There were ten of us.

JS: I've got to tell you this story. Ed . . .

Mrs. S: He had a little temper, you know.

JS: Ed was short-fused.

MR: I was going to ask you about that.

JS: Oh yeah, Ed was short-fused. But again, he had the right to be short-fused. He was so, his mentality and what he was able to grasp and visualize, far greater than most people. And, I mean the guy got impatient, it's as simple as that.

Mrs. S: Well, get to the point on his temper.

JS: Well, he's going on, he's going to be involved nationally, from the Senate I think to the vice presidency bid. And before that happened, he gathered just a handful of his friends at a, a place that was given to him to be on, at Goose Rocks Beach in southern Maine, Kennebunk area, one of those, I'm not sure if it's Kennebunk or Wells; it's one of them. And he had a, it wasn't his place at the time. It was, someone let him use it. And so we were there. And . . .

Mrs. S: Well, we went to a place that he used to take a shower outdoors, you know . . .

JS: No, that was his own; that was his own. No, but back, I just want to tell you about this

Goose Rocks experience place, because that was, that was a funny scene. It just kind of . . .

Mrs. S: There were about eight of us I think.

JS: . . . captures Ed Muskie real well in his younger days in this, you know

Mrs. S: Jack and Doris were down there, too, his

JS: His brother-in-law. Anyway, we're down there, and jeez, we're having a great time, good food, good drinks, everything's fine, fine and everything. So Ed finally asked the question, and this was (*unintelligible phrase*) . . .

Mrs. S: That was his first mistake.

JS: . . . talking. He says well what do, what do you, let me just preface it, this, with one bit of knowledge here. That, for the first time, he had a, I, and I can't even remember who it was because he outfaced people like you can't believe who he ever ran against, but . . .

Mrs. S: Oh I think he, didn't he his secretary down there named Doris Jack, and you and I, and one other couple; I've forgotten.

JS: Yeah, but Betsy, what I'm trying to say is that he, for the first time he had an honest, honest run against him for the Senate. Now he had to maintain that Senate seat above all. I mean, you know, you maintain that seat. So he had to win his Senate seat, and at the same time go on to the vice presidency bid thing with it. So he asked how we felt about it. And at the time, as I say, he had some, he had a candidate on the other side who was, who was doing well. And I've forgotten who it was; he ran against so many people. But it, the picture looked as if he'd have a race on his hands for the first time in his life. All right. So keeping that in mind, he asked us the question, (I'm still laughing about it), he asked us the question, "What do you think I should do?"

Mrs. S: And you opened your big mouth.

JS: Yeah. I told him, I told him, I said, "Look Ed, my opinion, very simply, take care of all the people in Maine first. I mean you're, you got to get elected first. The other thing will, let that take care of itself. Priorities here." Why he, he blew his stack. He blew his stack, he, you know, he . . .

Mrs. S: Was he mad at all of us?

JS: Oh sure, oh sure, because everyone kind of felt the same way, that that was of utmost importance. The other thing, fine, but don't risk losing your seat in the Senate. And he didn't like that.

Mrs. S: He said, "I thought you people would support me."

JS: "Support me." And oh yeah, he just, he just went off, . . .

Mrs. S: He was wild.

JS: . . . he was wild. But he calmed down. But that was typical of him, you know.

Mrs. S: He calmed down, but we all went to bed early.

JS: I know, I know, but he was such a great guy. I remember, remember when our family was very young, he was in Washington in the Senate and we had little kids . . .

Mrs. S: We took the three girls down.

JS: Yeah, we took the three girls down and, God, that was a memorable experience for him. He took us, we stayed at his place in Washington. He took us around the next day and we met then Everett Dirksen, who was king of the Senate for the Republicans, Mike Mansfield . . .

Mrs. S: He took all of us for lunch in the Senate room there, which is priority to the senators.

JS: Yeah, but anyway, he was a great host, and he always was, and always a good time. And he had a place . . .

Mrs. S: Yeah, we had great times together.

JS: . . . he had a place in China Lake a long time ago, and we'd go there, and it was always fun. He had, he'd always send out for food, Chinese food I remember he used to do that. And it was a fun thing. He was a real nice guy to be with.

Mrs. S: We spent a lot of time with them.

JS: Enjoyed him a lot. And Jane, his wife, was very . . .

Mrs. S: Did you tell Mike, too, that your mother introduced Jane and Ed?

JS: I told him; I told him, yeah.

MR: Oh yeah, actually I don't know if we got that on tape or not, though. Could we go over the, your original meeting with him and Jane?

JS: Sure, sure, well yeah. As I recall I wasn't here then, I must have been at St. John's at the time or something.

Mrs. S: Yeah.

JS: Yeah, was not in town. But anyway, my mother and aunt used to tell the story all the time. Jane Gray, her name, maiden name was, worked in the store, my mother and aunt's store. And they knew there was a new young lawyer in town that was very nice and looked nice. And, you know, and so they, somehow they got around to meeting him and, you know, talking with him and so forth. And they, they're the ones who put them together, put . . .

Mrs. S: Well, they found out what restaurant Ed ate at. He ate at the, what's the name of the restaurant down there on; I've forgotten the name of it. But anyway, they found out where he ate, so they started taking Jane in there.

JS: Yeah, and so it finally resulted, and there they got together and got married. So, so we always, we remember that. And of course they liked him very much; both my mother and aunt thought he was great.

MR: And that was your first meeting with Ed, through your connection with Jane Gray.

JS: Yes, yes, yes.

Mrs. S: Yeah, although Ed was your lawyer (*unintelligible word*); he did your income tax thing from you. Don't you remember he broke his back and you had to take your paperwork down to him and . . .

JS: Yeah, right, at his camp yeah, very early.

Mrs. S: No, no, he broke his back over on . . .

JS: He was on Silvermount.

Mrs. S: . . . on Silvermount. And he was doing something, painting or something, and he fell down. So you had to take all the paperwork from Alvina and Delia's over there to . . .

JS: Yeah, but I remember he, it, he was out in China Lake when we went, did the tax out there, too.

Mrs. S: Yeah, I know; we did it both places.

JS: In the store, and he was our lawyer, you know, so to speak. He was just starting out. But ninety-nine percent of his time was spent in politics. That's what, that was, yeah, he was so focused on that.

Mrs. S: Didn't he lose the race for mayor?

JS: Yes, yes, that's on, you've got that from somebody else, I'm sure. But he really, I mean he, I don't care where he went. He would al-, he'd further his cause with anybody as far as politics were concerned. I mean, he'd meet people, and he was likeable, he was charismatic. And he, that was key to him; that was priority. You know, he just, he'd get a vote, I don't care where he was, just by being himself and talking with people, and very, very, very sharp guy. Now what else could we tell you what we've, oh yeah, we, we . . .

Mrs. S: Oh, leave out some of the party things.

JS: We'd go, we went to the, we'd go to the Blaine House when he was governor. And he had some nice parties there; we had a lot of fun then. And he'd get the State Police chauffeur sometimes to bring him here. We'd, you know, we'd go back and forth. But we had some awfully good times, very, very congenial.

Mrs. S: Well I think that he, he usually had, I don't know, it was my favorite state cop that used to bring him up.

JS: Yeah.

Mrs. S: Don't you remember (*unintelligible word*), and party here with us too, so.

JS: And, oh I'll tell you one little story too that was kind of fun.

Mrs. S: Which one's that?

JS: When he brought, I think the guy was named, he was a journalist from Washington that covered Maine; I think it was Larrabee, Don Larrabee. And he knew Ed very well and liked him. And he, Larrabee and his wife came here one night, and we had a party right here, and they liked to sing. I play the piano, just you know, accompaniment and stuff. And they had a very, very good time, those Larrabees did. And, but Ed would be there, just that way and he'd go sing by the piano. And, he loved life, he, you know, he, despite . . .

Mrs. S: He only had a few very close friends that he felt comfortable with, partying with, you know, because, you know that's . . .

JS: Back then. Yeah, I know, kind of private stuff. But the point is, the guy was always very, very, very honorable, ethical. Everything he did was right there. And that's why I guess he was liked; his charisma was super.

MR: And did you have an opportunity to work with him professionally, or was your relationship more of a strictly personal . . .?

JS: Strictly personal, strictly personal.

MR: You never worked on any campaigns with him or anything like that?

JS: No, no, but you know, interestingly enough, he was such a loyal guy that whenever there was any campaign or election night, that's, we always were invited and had a very good time, you know, listening to the returns. And we did that for years and years, all, every one of them, every one of them. And, so we followed it that way, but we didn't work on campaigns or anything of that sort. Just friends.

MR: And you remained close to him and saw him often up until he passed away?

JS: Well, not the last few years, not the last few years.

Mrs. S: Too far away.

JS: Yeah, you sort of, it sort of got away from it, because he had a completely different life, you know, than he did. After all, he was in a national there for quite a while and, yeah, lived in Washington. We didn't see him for the last quite a few years. I have an interesting note to tell you about it, because everything isn't all the roses, so I'll tell you one that, that sort of bothered me a little bit. But knowing him, he knew what he, he was strong in his feelings; there's no question about it. We were at a friend's house, and he came to visit because he was, had a, his old secretary had, was, Arnolds, Joan Arnold and Bill Arnold, he was staying there one night. And I don't know what he was in town for. But, this is in the latter years, not, that's why I'm mentioning it.

Mrs. S: Was he a speaker?

JS: He was speaking somewhere; I don't know what it was, but any-, I've lost track. But anyway, so the Arnolds invited us over, and it was just us, right, for supper, and with Ed. And so we got talking and so forth. And, and you know how, he was, he'd argue, you know, he was really, really a debater; I mean real sharp. Anyway, one of the things that, that I got in an argument with him about, and I held my own and he, on it, and he didn't really, he didn't see my point of view at all. And I think it should be said. I, you know, he was talking about, he was talking about an issue, and I'm trying to grasp it now, exactly how it developed, how it got in there. Well, I've lost how we entered it. But anyway I mentioned the fact that, I mentioned the fact that people like Ralph Nader don't get the recognition they should.

Mrs. S: Oh yeah, that's right.

JS: And he didn't like that. And I said, "Well you know, here's a guy who has spent his life in behalf of, I, what I call the general good, for the consumer, for the average person. And he spent his entire life and guess what? He's poor, he's still poor, and he's had all kinds of opportunity to make a lot of money, and he never has." In fact up until, oh, quite a few years ago now he was living on a, just a small amount of money. And that was his lifestyle. And yet, he persisted in fighting these big companies for safety, started you know with the General Motors thing. And,

you know, I really respect that guy and so forth. For some reason that didn't, he didn't like that.

Mrs. S: Didn't set too well.

JS: No, didn't set well with him at all. I guess we were talking about environmental protection, that's what it was, and he had just gotten some award for all the work that he did on it. And so I just thought I'd throw Ralph Nader's name into it too, I says "Well, here's a guy that, I says you've done very well. Ralph Nader's been exceptionally strong in that field and he's still very poor." He didn't like that. And that's the only bad words that I had with him, you know, kind of argument that I had with him. And I'm sure he had his reasons for the position that he took.

I elaborated a little bit in what, how I felt. I said, for instance, I fail to see that we should be funding our education of our kids on a property tax. And I think every single non-profit corporation should be made profit as far as property tax payment is concerned. I don't mean income; that's something else. I mean property tax. Bates, Bowdoin, Colby; hospitals; Thomas [College], you name it, they should be paying their taxes to the municipality that they're in. Reason why?

Oh, religion, that's what got him, I recall now. I said every church should be paying their taxes because otherwise you're forcing, where's the freedom of religion? You're forcing someone of another belief to support you, a religion, if you give them a non-profit status. And I felt strongly about it. He didn't see that at all. He thought that that was a horrible thought. And I still to this day believe that, I still believe that every entity should be paying property taxes to their local municipalities, because that is what supports our public education today. And I, you know, I don't care. If you're going to give non-profit status, make it. Don't take it from a property tax, take it from a general tax of some sort, not a limited focus population.

And, no, he didn't like that at all. He still, to this day I guess he didn't believe in that at all. And I just, I took issue with that; I just didn't, and I still believe it. I think we ought to all pay our taxes to the local, or else don't fund education from it. And whatever you do, make it fair. There should be no freeloaders. I call that freeloading. Pay your taxes first. That supports all the services, education, running of the, running your public services, police, yeah. And I hope some day that'll come out, because too many non-profits that get away with that. And he, let's look at the colleges itself. Are you interested in this, or should I not talk about it?

MR: Oh, you can continue.

JS: Okay, look at the colleges, what they're doing. They don't answer to, they answer to a private board of trustees of some sort. Yet, they're able to not pay taxes by virtue of the fact that a non-profit can receive all kinds of payments or donations in lieu of taxes, right? They'd got to be paying the taxes to the, the general (*unintelligible word*). That is teetotally wrong. They should pay their share of taxes first, and there should be no such a thing as non-profits getting away with that. And even our hospitals. I'll, I'll give you an example of why I feel that way. Take a town this size, or any town; I'm taking this one because I live here. You have a hospital

here that serves the greater area, I mean a large area. They do not pay taxes to the city of Waterville. That's wrong, teetotally wrong. Why should one city have to pay, or one municipality have to pay for services for another. That is totally wrong, yet that persists.

And to try to get that out of there, you get all kinds of flak from these people who have been getting away with it. I don't like the idea of some benefactor, some altruist somewhere, giving a huge amount of money to a college, and having that money overseen by a board rather than having it responsible to the general public. And that's what, exactly what's happened. Colby's a good example here, they, jeez, they pay hardly anything to this town. And they use the excuse, "Well we give them a lot of business and we provide," -true, but so does everybody, every other business has to pay taxes plus provide jobs and so forth. So that, Ed didn't see that.

Mrs. S: Well, a lot of the money that Colby gets away from comes from the Alfond. Explain that because that...

JS: Alright, so here's a little example...

Mrs. S: So they, they say, "Well okay you get the hockey rink for nothing." That's because Harold Alfond and Bibi said "You've got to give it for nothing, because we've already given you a couple of million."

JS: Yeah, well, you're saying partiality, favoritism. Well, I go further than that. I say that a person like, let's say a Harold Alfond, but anyone like him, who's looked at as a real benefactor to our area, and he is; there's no doubt about it. First of all, examine what the story is. He has made his money employing slave labor in shoe shops. And I can show you that every day: piece work that's horrible conditions, and so forth. He takes that money. Instead of the profits being taxed income tax-wise to go to coffers that would benefit everyone, he in turn gives the money to Colby or to wherever he wants to give it, and so forth. That to me should not be allowed. If he wants to give it, give it to them after taxes, after taxes. Because what you have now is you have this huge mishmash that's creating a lot of inequities all over the place. And that's happening; it's happened.

Mrs. S: He gave some to Colby.

JS: Oh, I know, it's not, I don't criticize the man for giving some. A lot of people with that kind, with those resources wouldn't. He has, so he should be recognized for that. I criticize the system, that money should not be going tax-free to any special, those are special interests. Any way that you want to view it, a college is a special interest. Thomas College, Colby College, Bates College where you are; all of those, I'd like, they should pay their taxes to the municipality first, and the income tax thing should be reviewed so that people, when they give something, give it after taxes. That'll be, that'll be real altruism, right?

MR: Okay. Well what would you say, I guess just a broad general question, what would you say Muskie's effects or legacy for Maine or politics has been?

JS: Muskie equalized the balance of power by actually taking a non-existent party as far as, for all practical purposes, and made it strong so that you had, he brought about that balance. Without him, that would not have happened that I could ever foresee. It took that sort of brilliant, strongly focused man to do that. And I think that that's his big contribution. True, he's made nationally some, some big inroads in environmental protection, but he isn't the only one. I prefer Ralph Nader's, to tell you the truth. Ralph Nader became, is still poor, still a poor man. Ed Muskie didn't die a poor man. So I think, I think he was a, I think he was just extra bright, extra driven, extra focused and did a lot of good, no question about it. The big thing is to bring about that balance, without that balance we'd still have the right wingers running everything, and there'd be nothing else; it would be all companies.

But you know, look through it. As I said earlier, look through it. Despite efforts from a sincere man like Ed Muskie, still hasn't done any good, has it? The paper companies are still polluting everything we have. Everyone looks the other way. There's a case going on right here, where in one small area there have been, oh, an inordinate amount of cancer . . .

Mrs. S: I think there are eleven in this small area.

JS: . . . cases in a small area, and all pret- . . .

Mrs. S: . . . within two miles of each other.

JS: All pretty much traceable to the paper companies' dumpings of toxic stuff. And yet, they're still pretty well protected, because they hired a contractor to do it, an independent contractor to do, to run the dump so to speak. And so they sort of cleared themselves from that. So, you know, I don't think we've made any inroads, despite efforts of great guys like Ed. We're still in, I don't, we're in worse trouble than we ever were. And it's showing up every day. Nobody cares now. In fact there's such, politics are looked at from a completely different eye today than Ed's time in politics. There was some sort of dignity or honor in, to be a politician. Now, people don't respect politicians. Really, they don't, because it's degenerated down to special interest running everything. And so, you ask me what it is. Despite what he did, it still hasn't done a hell of a lot of good.

MR: And, is there anything that we haven't covered that you'd like to go over? Any stories or topics or anything at all?

Mrs. S: No, but we've got, all the stories.

MR: Well, we don't want to go too far into those stories.

Mrs. S: Those are classified.

JS: Yeah. I'm just, I'm just looking and, no, I guess that pretty much covers it. I just . . .

Mrs. S: Parties are private.

JS: The guy was outstanding; there's no question about it. He's, I think he's the outstanding guy that's ever come out of the state of Maine; there's no doubt in my mind of that. Despite the fact that we, it's, hasn't done any good, it hasn't done any good nationally, he really gave it a shot, a good one. And he was an absolute brain as far as I'm concerned. I've never seen a guy that sharp. I've seen him talk a few places, and, impromptu, he's just, he was just great. You don't see that much. You see Clinton now doing the same thing, but he doesn't have his ethics, let me tell you. Well, I think that's about it. I don't have anything else to say. Betsy, do you want to . . .

Mrs. S: No, whatever I've got to say, that's classified.

JS: Yeah, well I know, I know, I know. No, I, I guess that, Mike, that about does it. I have nothing but respect for the guy. He was, he was a Superman; there's no question about it.

MR: And, actually, is there anyone else around in the area that you can think of that we might want to interview for the project?

Mrs. S: No, I think you're going to be interviewing Len Saulter, aren't you, this afternoon?

MR: Sometime soon, yeah. I think next week.

JS: Next week.

Mrs. S: Oh next week, yeah.

JS: I don't know, you know, thinking of, most guys have passed away.

Mrs. S: (*Unintelligible phrase - both speaking at once*) . . . you know, I mentioned that to Jim the other day and we talked about Dick McMahan and a few other people. And all these people are dead and gone.

JS: Yeah, and, another one was Gene Letourneau that he used to like to go fishing and hunting with; he's gone.

Mrs. S: Yeah, and Jack Gray, his brother-in-law is gone.

JS: His brother-in-law, yeah, he could tell a lot of stories, Jack can. Jeez, you know ...

Mrs. S: We mentioned four or five others, but they're all gone.

JS: Yeah, they have, you know. After all, we're getting there. I'm seventy-two.

Mrs. S: Seventy-three.

JS: There you are so, Ed was quite a bit older, too, Ed would . . .

Mrs. S: He was ten years older, he was thirteen years older than Jane, and Jane is our age. So seventy-two, eighty-two, eighty-three, eighty-four, eighty-five, he'd be eighty-five today.

JS: Yeah, I'm just trying to think, we did, when we got the letter we were trying to think, "Now who?" And we said "Jeez, those people aren't here any more; they can't talk."

Mrs. S: And your mother and aunts are all gone; they knew him well, and you know . . .

JS: Yeah, they could have told . . .

Mrs. S: And, you know, Mattie and Howard Gray are gone.

JS: Right.

Mrs. S: Which was Jane's brother.

JS: Yeah.

Mrs. S: And Jack's gone, and, they've all gone.

JS: Did you talk, not around here, but his, his sister-in-law, Doris, Doris Gray?

MR: Doris, -I don't think they've actually gotten any of the family members yet, or they haven't.

JS: Oh, they haven't got them yet.

MR: They got a couple of his sons, or his son Stephen, I believe.

JS: Stephen and Ed [*sic* Ned], yeah.

Mrs. S: Yup. And Doris is in Florida, so I don't know if she's coming up this summer.

JS: But she'd be a good one. Make sure you talk to Doris because she has,

Mrs. S: Oh yeah, she's great.

JS: She's, I think she went to everything that, you know, that he was involved in back then, as a relative by marriage, you know. There's nobody else, I can't think of anything.

Mrs. S: They've all gone.

MR: Okay.

Mrs. S: Good thing you called us today.

JS: Yeah, we might be dead tomorrow.

MR: Well I hope not; that hearse was coming here for you.

JS: Yeah, I know, I know that's . . .

MR: Who knows where...

JS: I hope that that bodes well.

Mrs. S: What, what did you say?

JS: The hearse was out here in front; I gave him directions.

Mrs. S: Oh my God, yes. Put that on your tape there. I drove in, and the hearse was there to get directions. Fortunately, it wasn't them.

MR: Thank you both very much for your time.

Mrs. S: You're quite welcome.

JS: Well you're welcome, you're welcome.

End of Interview