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Shapiro, Sam oral history interview

Andrea L'Hommedieu

Interview with Sam Shapiro by Andrea L'Hommedieu

Summary Sheet and Transcript

Interviewee
Shapiro, Sam

Interviewer
L'Hommedieu, Andrea

Date
April 24, 2000

Place
Waterville, Maine

ID Number
MOH 183

Biographical Note

Sam Shapiro was born in Brownsville, Pennsylvania on August 26, 1927. His parents were Maurice and Anna (Silver) Shapiro. His father was born in the Ukraine and his mother in Lithuania. He joined the Navy for two years in 1945, then went to the University of Pittsburg on the G.I. Bill, graduating in 1952. He married and moved to Waterville in 1953 and served as treasurer for Maine Democratic Party for 13 years. He also ran several furniture stores with his father-in-law. He served as state treasurer for 16 years 1980-1997, during the Brennan, McKernan and King administrations. He was temporary chairman of the state democratic convention from the 1970s-2000.

Scope and Content Note

Interview includes discussions of: 1954 Maine gubernatorial campaign; 1958 U.S. Senate campaign; political parties in Maine; Democratic National Committee; story about Muskie's near campaign for President in 1976; 1958 Maine gubernatorial campaign primary: Clauson vs. Dolloff; fundraising; anecdote about Clinton campaigning in Maine in 1992; and stories about Brownsville, Pennsylvania during the Depression.

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Transcript

Andrea L'Hommedieu: This is an interview with Sam Shapiro at his home at 4 Pray Avenue in Waterville, Maine on April 24th, the year 2000. Mr. Shapiro, if you could start by stating

your name and spelling it?

Samuel Shapiro: Yes, I'm Samuel Shapiro, S-A-M-U-E-L, last name S-H-A-P-I-R-O.

AL: And where and when were you born?

SS: I was born in Brownsville, Pennsylvania, August 26th, 1927.

AL: And did you grew up there until what year?

SS: I grew up in Brownsville, Pennsylvania until I left for the service. I joined the Navy in 1945 and spent two years in the Navy in China and Japan right after WWII, and then I came back, went to the University of Pittsburgh, went to college from 1947 to '52.

AL: And when you were growing up through school, were there any teachers or people in your community that had an impact on you?

SS: Well, I was mostly interested in athletics in those days. I played basketball and baseball in high school. And probably my basketball coach was the one who, as I look back and remember, had the greatest influence on my life at that time.

AL: And your parents, could you give me their names?

SS: Sure, my father was Maurice Shapiro, he was born in the Ukraine, and my mother was Anna Silver Shapiro, she was born in Lithuania. And both of them came over in the early nineteen hundreds.

AL: And what were their occupations?

SS: Well, my mother did not work. My father, although he spoke six languages and was very learned, was a peddler. He had a truck and drove around to the small coal mining towns and sold clothing and notions to the families there.

AL: Did you have brothers and sisters?

SS: Had one sister, one sister, who was sixteen months younger than myself. She was a secretary and remains living in Pennsylvania.

AL: If you could go through sort of the chronology of when you became interested in politics, and sort of follow that with your career?

SS: Well, you know, I guess the best way I could explain maybe my high school years is that at my twentieth high school reunion Shirley Crowe, who was a classmate of mine at that time, came up to me- this was probably in the late 1960s- and asked me if when she was traveling through New England, that she had seen where a Sam Shapiro was selected outstanding young man in Maine. I think it was the year 1960. And I said, "Yes, it was me," you know. And she

said, “God,” she said, “There’s hope for my kids now,” she said. “You were the biggest zero we had in high school.” I think she meant it as a compliment obviously. So, I think that best describes, you know, my high school years, although I was involved in athletics, came from a very orthodox Jewish home, and actually my mother and father, I think my mother came to see me play ball once and my father once in all the years that I played because they thought only bums played ball. And they were more interested in things more academic and for whatever reason, you know, my interests ran toward the athletics.

But then I joined the Navy right after high school. I joined I think in August of 1945 right before the war ended, and it ended right after, I guess, when they heard I was coming, things ended and, plus I guess the atom bomb as well. And I spent two years in the Navy aboard ship in China and Japan, and came back and went to college on a G.I. Bill of Rights. Originally I signed up for a business course because, quite frankly, I didn’t have any idea whatsoever what I wanted to do, and I guess all Jewish boys took business at the University of Pittsburg. But I went to a basketball practice of the high school team and worked out with them, and the basketball coach at that time said to me, “Gee Sam,” he said, “you know, why don’t you go into education and be a phys-ed teacher because you’re a good athletic, and there’s a shortage of phys-ed teachers, and you’d be sure to get a job.” And so using what I guess eventually turned out to be an ability to convince people, I went on the very last day before school started and talked them into allowing me to change from educa--, I mean business courses to education. And then I spent four years at the University of Pittsburgh and graduated with a bachelor of science in education and taught school phys-ed at, first at a high school and then an elementary school.

But let me go back, that’s where I first became involved in politics. The fraternities, and I was a fraternity member, sort of dominated college politics in the sense that they elected their fraternity slate to nearly all the offices that there were elections for within the college, you know, the student council and the other governing bodies of the university. And I remember that I ran on a anti-fraternity slate even though I was a fraternity member. I sort of was maybe independent thinking as such, and I was elected. I was on the student council for two years. At one time in my senior year I was elected to be the student member on the university’s athletic council, which was made up of, you know, alumni, distinguished businessmen, and what have you, and I served on that. While at the university, that began to cut my teeth on running for elective office and being part of the governing establishment. I played baseball at the university, won four letters in baseball, and received the Charles Hartwig Memorial Award for the, which was the highest athletic award at that time at the university. And in fact I was back there a couple years ago and they have a stone engraved with the names of every, of the winners of the two awards every year. And I noticed that mine was the first year that the award was given and it’s sort of worn away the names because it’s right at the bottom of the step where you step down, so we’re trying to get that rebuilt before I die. You know, I showed my sons that in the early eighties, and they weren’t that impressed because they knew their father they thought, until they walked. I told them look down the walk and see who else won that award, and later on Tony Dorsett and Mike Ditka won the same award, so they were a tiny bit impressed at that time.

But then, when I graduated, I was in, well after I graduated from college I took a year of courses for my master’s degree in education because I graduated in February, because I had started in February in mid-term. And the baseball coach at Peabody High School, one of the largest high

schools in Pittsburgh, the baseball coach became ill and couldn't carry on. So they came to the university and asked if there was anybody there that they would recommend to coach the baseball team, and I was recommended and left the graduate work and became a phys-ed teacher and baseball coach at Peabody High School.

But Pittsburgh had an unusual system of- that nobody went directly from college to the high schools. Everybody had to work their way up through the elementary system to become a high school teacher, and so, which is different now, I would think. You're either trained to teach elementary or high school, in those days you had to start in the elementary schools and work your way through. So I had to back to an elementary school and I had, I was a Phys Ed teacher at a small elementary school on the north side of Pittsburgh called East Park Elementary, and unfortunately ran into a women principal who, she and I did not seem to see things the same way. And so, having been an athletic counselor, an athletic director at a boy's camp in Maine for the four previous summers, and having met my, who is now my present wife of forty-six years there in the summer, we just got married and decided to leave teaching and go, went into the furniture business with her father. And came to Maine in 1953, and, to Waterville, and went to work for State Furniture Company at that time.

And quite frankly, my father-in-law was the first person to introduce me to Ed Muskie. I was obviously very interested in who was who in town, being very new. And one day we were walking back to the store from lunch, and, you know, any time I would see someone, I'd say, "Well, who's that and who's that," you know. And there were three men walking up the street, and I remember I said, "Who are those three men?" And he said, "Well, the tall guy on the left is Arthur Eaton, who I think was a lawyer in town, and the one in the center there is Ed Muskie, who's a lawyer in town who can't make a living." That was early in Senator Muskie's career, and my father-in-law was wrong as he was often in his life. But in any case, that was the first time I think I saw Ed Muskie, walking up a main street right in front of Stearn's Department Store and having my father-in-law point him out to me.

Now, when I came to Waterville, I still had, you know, politics in my blood, but, you know, when you come to a new city, it's not that easy. And I lived in ward two at that time; we lived on Roosevelt Avenue, when I decided that I wanted to get involved. And I remember the first, my first political office, so to speak, was assistant ward chairman, vice chairman of the ward for the Democratic Party, and I think the reason I got it is nobody else wanted it. I don't think that anyone ever ran against me for it. And then I became ward chairman. I ran for the city council in Waterville from ward two for my first two-year term, and I won that. And then I ran a second, for a second two-year term, and I was elected president of the common council. In those days Waterville had a bicameral type of city government. They had the common council, and they had the board of aldermen, and I was the president of the common council and served under Mayor Bernier.

And I was, I think I was sort of instrumental, you know, there was a order to build a new high school, our present high school that we have on Brooklyn Avenue, and there was a lot of opposition to building a new high school based on, you know, conservative feelings and keeping taxes down. And there was always, in fact it continues to this day, the battle, you know, between those who want to spend money on education and those who care more about what the tax base

is.

But in any case, I recall that I had gone over to visit my parents in Pennsylvania and came back for an emergency meeting, where there was a vote taken on whether to appropriate monies for the high school or not, or to float a bond a issue, actually, to build a high school. And as president of the council, they say I did this, and you know my memory's a little dim on it, but that I asked the, all those, when I called the question rather than asking all those four to say, "aye," and all those opposed to say, "nay," which is the normal thing, that I asked all those opposed to please stand. Well, they were sort of caught by surprise, and nobody sort of stood up, and then I said all those in favor say, "Aye." And so everybody, you know, it was aye, and it was passed, and eventually that high school is built today and as, I guess where I was one of the members of the building committee as, well there is a plaque in the lobby with the members of the, you know, the building committee.

But that was sort of how I cut my teeth in politics. I really didn't have that much to do with Senator Muskie at that time. I think when I first got there in '54- he was elected governor of Maine unexpectedly within that period of time I think, well it had to be in '56 because he was governor '56 to '58 and '58 to '60. In those days I think the term of the governor was two years, but that's not clear. I'm not clear.

AL: Fifty-four to fifty-eight.

SS: Is when he was -?

AL: Yeah, he was elected governor the first time in '54. Were you aware of that campaign at all? Were there people you had connected with at that time?

SS: No, at that time, remember I didn't come to Maine until November of '53 and, when I got married in November of '53. And, you know, when he ran in '54, although I was a Democrat and voted for him. And nobody expected him to win, by the way, as I remember, but I supported, voted for him. I wasn't involved in politics, I was too new to the area. But in '54 and in '56 I, you know, I still was not that active. I was elected I think to the common council in '60. But what happened in '58 when he ran for senate, did he run for senate in '58?

AL: Yeah, or '59, in that area.

SS: I thought it was in -

AL: Let me pause for a minute. (*Pause*) Go ahead.

SS: Well during, when he ran for the senate in '58, he was governor from '54 to '58, I was not that involved in politics to any great degree. I ran for the common council in '58 myself. That is the Waterville common council. And at that time there were, during his senate campaign there was obviously a campaign to elect a new governor. And the Maine, there was a primary contest in the Maine Democratic party. Senator Muskie and all the influential top Democrats were supporting Maynard Dolloff, who was the executive director of the Maine Grange, a very

powerful organization in those days, it's since has lost a lot of its influence. And Clinton Clauson who was the executive director of the revenue, the internal revenue service for the state of Maine and a Waterville resident and a former mayor of Waterville ran against him.

And Clinton Clauson was a big underdog. I mean, it was conceded that it would be, Maynard Dolloff would be the candidate of the party. And I remember Dick Dubord, who was National Committee man, and then Governor Muskie and all the influential Democratic leaders of the state were supporting Dolloff. So that left room on the Clauson campaign to have, anybody who wanted to be a supporter of Clinton Clauson at that time immediately was one of his ten closest supporters. And I don't think he had very many close supporters outside of Waterville. Paul Julian, Paul Dundas, Johnny Jabar, Sam Shapiro, and maybe one or two others in Waterville were supporting him openly and financially to some degree in the best, and gave him all the help they could with scattered friends he had throughout the thing.

Well, Dolloff was upset. Clauson won the primary, and at that time the party leaders realized they wanted to sort of bring all the people who had supported Clauson into the ranks of the Democratic hierarchy rather than having a split within the Democratic Party, so we became very important immediately. And then Clinton Clauson went on to win the election and become governor. Unfortunately he died about a year into his term. And I recall, in fact there was an article in *Look* magazine in 1958, in November of 1958, where I'm pictured with Senator Muskie and Dick Dubord and Jim Harvey and some others at a coffee klatch as they called it that time at the Blaine House where there were, where Governor Muskie at the time invited everybody who had been involved in the Clauson campaign to the Blaine House to sort of bring in the ranks of the party around him, which we did. I mean, it was an easy thing to do.

Obviously Clauson became governor, Muskie went on to the senate, and I ran for the common council at that time, in 1960, and was elected to two two-year terms at the common council. I moved, during that time I moved to another ward, ward four, and ran for the board of aldermen from that ward. And ward four was a very heavy Republican ward; it hadn't had any Democrats elected there in God knows how many years. And I lost that election and no longer was involved in city government at that time.

And then at that time, after having been on the council, I ran for the, for the state committee, and I remember Senator George Mitchell was the chairman of the party in my first two years on the state committee. And after being on the state committee two years I was elected treasurer of the Maine Democratic Party and served as treasurer of the Maine Democratic Party for thirteen years. I was on the state committee for all those years as well and was involved in the party structure, fundraising, election, all the election campaigns, was elected a delegate to six National Democratic Conventions. And during those period of years, you know, in the seventies, was very active within the party.

I can remember days where, I remember, I was then the manager of our Augusta, Maine, store in the seventies, and I can remember waking up in the morning sleeping on the floors out at the Democratic headquarters in Augusta, hanging signs over the streets, the street signs, climbing up on the building hanging signs, coming down, going to a fundraiser at night. I did everything there was to do really within the party. I spent a lot of time at Democratic headquarters, which

was at that time up on State Street. We bought a building up there, and living in, you know, working in Augusta all day long with the headquarters, you know, two minutes away. I spent much too much time at Democratic headquarters having, helping them, you know, run the party and licking stamps and licking envelopes and doing everything there was to be done. And did that for at least, you know, fifteen to twenty years of doing everything there had to be done within the party structure.

And I was elected temporary chairman when we had the convention in Waterville, the state convention in Waterville in, I think, the seventies, and I was elected as temporary chairman of the convention and every convention until this year, 2000. I ran last year, two years ago, said it would be the last time that I would run for that office. It's time to pass it on to someone else. So I was temporary chairman all those years, and, I guess, at one convention I wore a white suit, and this sort of became something that had to happen at every state convention. So when I opened up a convention as temporary chairman on the Friday nights, I always wore a white suit. And I still have that white suit. It barely fits now, but I did wear it at the state convention two years ago.

And, you know, working for the party as I did over those years, I met a lot of people, made a lot of friends, raised a lot of money for the Democratic candidates and continued running the furniture business. I did that when my father-in-law passed away in the early seventies, and I ran it, three stores. We had one in Skowhegan, one in Waterville and one in Augusta, and I wasn't paying as much attention I think to the business as I should have, I was more interested in politics. But slowly but surely we closed each of those stores. First in Skowhegan and Waterville, then Augusta and we closed the Augusta store in 1980.

And in 1980 I ran for state treasurer of the state of Maine, and in Maine all our constitutional officers are elected by the legislature. We're actually the only state who elects our attorney general by the legislature. Four states elect their treasurers by legislative action, Maine, New Hampshire, Maryland and Tennessee. And in 1980 I ran for state treasurer of Maine in the Democratic caucus. I had no opposition, in fact I've never had, I never had any opposition in all, in the sixteen years that I was state treasurer. I sort of am a little amused at the fact that when I ran, I didn't realize it at the time, but after I had won I had a number of people come up to me after and say, that is number of legislators, who voted, said that, you know, they were called by other people interested in running. And there's a lot of them their best friends, their former seat mates at the legislature, and a congressional candidate who had lost, a girlfriend of the speaker of the house, you know, some people with some credentials who were interested in running because at that time people began to see constitutional officers as a stepping stone to higher office. And they were all told the same thing by all the legislators; they ought to be ashamed to think of even running against me, that I'd worked for twenty years for the party, never asked for anything, only gave, and now I'm finally asking for something, and they're going to vote for me, and they ought to be ashamed to even think about running against me. And obviously nobody got enough support so nobody did run against me.

I was elected state treasurer eight times, served for sixteen years and one month, and during those eight terms, eight elections, nobody ever ran against me within my party, and I'm thankful for that because it's kind of tough to lose if nobody runs against you. And then as term limits

were passed and I could not run again in 1996, so I served from December of 1980 to January of 1997 and could not run for state treasurer again. During my time as a state treasurer my involvement in politics obviously continued. I was a fundraiser for each Democratic legislative campaign, contributed, raised quite a bit of money in a time whenever you could raise money in Wall Street, that now has changed, and made sure that we continue with a Democratic majority. And we had that Democratic majority for all those sixteen years, and in the last two elections after I no longer could run. So we've had a long reign at the State House as such.

While I was state treasurer I helped form the Democratic National Treasurer's Association at which I was its president until I left office. And made it a more prominent factor within the Democratic party so that the chair per-, the chairman and the vice chairman, president and vice president of the Democratic National State Treasurer's Association became members of the Democratic National Committee and which made him, gave him direct membership on the, to the Democratic National Convention, which allowed, you know, another person from Maine to go along with all the others, who were elected and prorated by the rules of the party. And once, you know, once being a delegate to the national conventions and president of the Democratic National Treasurer's Association sort of gave me some prominence and ability to get involved, you know, at the national level.

And I remember when President Carter was running for his second term at the national convention in New York, there was a sort of boomlet for Senator Muskie. There were a lot of people who felt that Carter could not win his reelection. It had a lot to do with what happened in Iraq, the failed, the failed attempt to rescue the captives in Iran. And so one morning at the Maine delegation meeting, each state's delegation met every morning, and President Carter's people had somebody sort of sitting in on every state's meeting. As well as this little boomlet as we called it for Senator Muskie for president, we, Senator Kennedy had thoughts of running, but by rules of the party it was a closed convention; the only way the convention could be, that Kennedy could run would be if the convention would open it up by a vote of the delegates. And I mentioned at the morning meeting, at the time Governor Brennan was the chairman of our delegation, that he ought to go to Kennedy and try to form some sort of alliance where we would get Alabama to pass to Maine, and Maine would move for an open convention for Muskie and, but we needed the support of Kennedy and asked Brennan to go to Kennedy to see if they would be part of this.

And for whatever reason it never happened that way, but the conversation obviously got back to the Carter people, and I remember when I came to the convention hall that night, they came to me and asked me if I would go to the Carter- they had a sort of a trailer underneath Madison Square Garden- if I'd come there, they wanted to talk to me. And I was there with, Severin Beliveau was there, and I said, "Severin, come with me. I don't want to go alone." So Severin came with me, and we got there, and after a few pleasantries they wanted to, I said, "Why are we here?" And they said, well, Jordan was there and all the biggies in the Carter campaign, Hamilton Jordan and the other gentleman. And they said well they're here because they've heard that we were trying to start something for Senator Muskie for president and that they wanted us to know that Senator Muskie did not want to be president and wanted me to go back and tell my delegation that. I said, well, I couldn't do that. They said why. I said, well they want to hear it from Senator Muskie. They said, "Well, we're trying to reach him. He's up in

Maine at his home in Kennebunkport, and we can't reach him by phone." And I said, "Well, I said I just couldn't do it then." And they said, "Well, will you do it if President Carter tells you himself?" And I said, "With all due respect to President Carter," I said, "no, they want to hear it from Muskie." And of course Severin was there bantering as he did with all of them.

And then finally somebody came and said, "We have Senator Muskie on the phone," and they said, "Will you talk to him?" I said, "Sure." So I got on the phone, I said, "Hi Ed, how are you?" And Ed said, "Fine Sam, what's going on?" I says, "Well, I'm here, and the Carter people are telling me that you don't want to be president and want me to go back to tell the delegation that." And I'll always remember his exact words; his exact words were, "Who in the hell doesn't want to be president?" I says, "You want me to go back and tell them that?" He said, "No, no," he said, "you know, circumstances as they are, let it go." And, but it wasn't that definitive. I says, "Well, look, let me get Severin," because I figured Severin, so I said, "Here Severin," you know, "talk to Ed." I, you know, I, "You handle it." And so he, I went back into the other room of the trailer, and Severin comes back a couple of minutes later. And you know Severin, he was a character, and he said to them, "You know, it's not the way you say it is." One guy dropped his drink, another guy choked on his drink. "You know, they got a little excited there, but then he laughed and said, "No, no," he said, "you know," it's, Ed, it's all over, Ed's not running for president."

And other than that, other than that, I'm just trying to, other than that. Well, I guess the only other thing is that it sort of brought, being president of the National Democratic Treasurer's Association brought me in contact, and I remember, and being state treasurer of Maine always, at the same time when President Clinton first ran, he came to Portland, Maine for a meeting, an early meeting in February of '92. And that was probably a week or two after the Flowers accusations of harass-, sexual harassment. And he called me, and, I mean, he was probably calling all the people in Maine, asking for my support. And I asked him a few questions, the things I thought were important, he said, "Yes." And I said, "Yeah, you have my support," and, never thinking that he would get the nomination because I thought it would be similar to four years before whenever. You know, I supported eight different presidential candidates before finally Dukakis was the last one I supported as they fell by the wayside. And I honestly didn't think Clinton would be a candidate for president for very much longer based on the Flowers problem. He thanked me for the support and said, "Are you coming to Portland?" and I said, "No, I'm over an hour away and you're going to be starting soon. I won't make it in time," and he thanked me for my support.

Well, I hung up the phone, laid back down on the couch, and something said, "Get up and go." So I popped into the car and broke the speed limit and got there in time, and when he saw me, he said, "You know, I'm never going to forget this, and, that you came down here and that you're supporting me." Actually, as it turned out I was the only elected Democratic official in the state of Maine who was supporting him at that time because they were all afraid of his candidacy would be a failure based on all the problems he was having. But I, you know, I gave him my support, and he hung in there.

And the truth of the matter is that he never has. I think I've been at the White House maybe six times, and each time he is, the first comment he made to me was that, "I haven't forgotten. You

were the first," you know, "to support me in Maine. I haven't forgotten it." And, you know, it's sort of nice to hear it. He's a great communicator, and he knows how to talk to people. And then once term limits removed me from the political scene I, having worked for state government for a long time, you know, and not having any personal wealth prior to that, you don't accumulate any wealth, so I went to work for Mitchell Hutchins, which is an asset manager, a fully owned subsidiary of Paine Webber. And here I am in April of 2000 still working for Paine Webber.

AL: I'd like to talk a little bit about some of the people that you knew and worked with and had political get-togethers with from the Waterville area. Did you sort of develop a close circle of political friends over the years? I'm thinking of Dick Dubord -

SS: Oh, I've made a lot, yes, I had a lot of friends going way back to the very beginning. There was Dick Dubord, John Jabar, Paul Dundas. . . . These were all people who were very active Democrats in the city of Waterville. I'm just trying to think of Ed's campaign manager, he was a big factor in . . . .

AL: Dick McMahon?

SS: Dick McMahon was an awfully good close friend of mine, Don Nicoll who worked for Senator Muskie as well. Dick McMahon, who was Muskie's chairman in his first campaign to run for the governorship as well as the senate campaign, sort of gave me some advice. I ran for county commissioner and lost, and he told me, "Sam," he said, "you're a hard worker, you know, people like you," he said, "but you're never going to get elected to anything," he said, "because," he said, "this is Maine and this isn't going to work." He said, "You got to be the power behind the throne," he said, "you got to work in the background and get your kicks that way and get your politics that's in your system there."

And I listened to him for many, many years, and it was good advice obviously because when I finally did run for state treasurer and win, it was because of that advice of having worked all those years in the background and making friends and earning a reputation as being, you know, a loyal Democrat. But getting back to the people, Richard McCleigh, who was a very active council member who I fought with on a regular basis, because our philosophies were terribly different, but who I respected. I think he respected me, and we still to this day are friends. Paul Mitchell, who is, ran for the board of aldermen at that time.

AL: George Mitchell's brother?

SS: Yes, Paul Mitchell is George Mitchell's brother. And then later on Senator Mitchell, I remember Senator Mitchell and I were roommates at a Democratic national convention in New York early in, it had to be in the seventies, right after he, when he was chairman of the party.

AL: What were your impressions of him?

SS: I always liked him. He's always, you know, they called him the professor when he first went to the senate. He was a very bright person, very articulate and very caring. He was a

product of a home where I'm sure they were all very close. I know to this day the brothers and sisters are so close, they were a close family. And they, they were raised by loving, hard working parents, and they're good people. All the Mitchells are good people. Senator Mitchell, you know, received the highest because he was extremely bright and hard working and ambitious, and was weaned. I think his secret was when he was in Washington working for Senator Mitchell, that's where he was weaned to politics as such. He, very seldom do people give up federal judgeships to become a United States senator, and he did, he knew what he was doing. And he did a great job for the state of Maine. I wish he would still be there, but he has his own life to live.

AL: You mentioned Paul Dundas?

SS: Yes.

AL: I've heard the name but I don't really have an impression of who he is. Could you talk a little bit about him, what did he do, and what was his role?

SS: Yeah, Paul Dundas was sort of the elder statesman. He was the president of what is now the Kennebec Federal Savings Bank. Well respected, soft-spoken. And you have to remember that those people, Paul Dundas, Paul Julian, and later some of us who joined them were Democrats in a land of Republicans, you know, and they never gave up their battle for the, what the Democratic party stood for. We always felt that the Democratic party was a party of the less influential, the less wealthy, you know, that we were the party who cared about the base needs of people to make sure that everybody had food, shelter and clothing. And there were people who did not have that.

I can remember during the early Depression years living in Brownsville, Pennsylvania, living in a, you know, a three room apartment over a garage, it was heated by one coal stove, and never having enough, never having food. I can remember supper at times being a cup of half coffee and half milk, and bread and butter. You know, that was supper. Not every night obviously, but a good many nights, you know, that was supper. And I think because of the, that upbringing and living, you know, that life and feeling those things that it made me care, you know, more about the little people. I was one of them. It's not that usual I think in this country that someone who's Jewish comes from poverty, but I did, and because of that, I think I feel a little bit more for those who don't have enough.

You know, I can remember once, I had to be twelve years old probably, my mother said to me- and without any disrespect, the Jewish people, if they were talking about somebody who was Jewish, they called him by his name. If they were talking about somebody who was a Gentile, with no disrespect meant they didn't call him by his name, I don't know why, but they would call him by some title, like "the old Gentile who lives on the second floor across the street," or "the old Gentile who lives in the grey house next to the house on the corner," you know, or "the Gentile butcher" or "the Gentile grocer" or what have you.

And I remember one morning my mother said to me, "Take this pot of oatmeal to the old Gentile who lives in the blue house next to the house on the corner." We lived on Bershire Street. And I

said, "What are you doing, Ma? We don't have enough food ourselves. What are you giving away food?" She said, "Well, he's old, and he's dying, and he has no family, and he has no food. Take this to him." So every morning, you know, for, God, weeks, I took a pot of oatmeal down to that man every morning until he died. And when you're brought up like that, it makes you a Democrat, not a Republican. So, that's probably why I was a Democrat. My father was a Democrat. Most of the Jewish people were Democrats. They were Roosevelt Democrats, and, because he was, Roosevelt was trying to do something for those who didn't have a lot. And that's probably why I became a Democrat.

And then once you run as a Democrat, and you are a Democrat, very few people change, you know. Now that, I joke now that I'm making more money than I ever did before and paying more taxes than I used to make, you know, total salary, that, gee, I'm beginning to think maybe it isn't so bad, some of the Republican ideas, but I soon squelch that. No, I was born a Democrat and I'll die a Democrat.

AL: I'm going to stop right here and turn the tape over.

SS: Okay.

End of Side A
Side B

AL: We are now on side B of the interview with Mr. Sam Shapiro on April 24th, the year 2000.

SS: You know, over the years I tended to see Senator Muskie, you know, on obviously numerous occasions. I was one of the people instrumental in having an annual lobster bake, which we called the Muskie Lobster Bake, when I was on the state committee. And my wife and the senator's wife, Jane Muskie, both used to sneak cigarettes. You know, they'd go off and smoke together. And I know Carol, who never cared much about politics as a general rule, liked Jane Muskie very much. They didn't see each other that often, but when they did see each other, there was a warm relationship based around their interest in their children and being, you know, wives of politicians. Although Carol, sometimes I'd ask, let's go to the, we're invited to the Blaine House, she always wondered, "Do I have to go?" You know what I mean? Usually probably because I brought her through the back door, you know, and then we used to always have to wash dishes after the political events at the Blaine House because at the time, when the Governor Brennan and Governor Curtis were there and when we were active, you know, at politic events at the Blaine House, we'd have to wash the dishes after because they didn't use the staff members for political events.

During those years, too, prior to becoming state treasurer when Governor Curtis was elected treasurer, I was very active in his campaign. I was his military aide. Maine has a structure of military aides where up until Governor Curtis, prior to that, at least in my memory, basically military aides showed up at the inaugural ball, and they were sort of in charge of, you know, seating and so forth at the inaugural ball, and then after that they sort of disappeared. Governor Curtis had me come to the Blaine House for all the social events and act as a military aide like

military aides do, you know, in Washington. Be there at the door, greet people, make everybody feel at home, help them with their coats, take the reporters into the kitchen where I was known to sneak them beers and drinks and such at parties whenever only wine was served, or punch as such. And so that sort of got me involved in some of the Blaine House activities, and that carried on even after Governor Brennan was elected governor and I was a military aide to Governor Brennan as well.

And, I'm, Senator Muskie, you know, I ran into him at times. I used to, they used to, I used to kid him once that the senator had a reputation of being fairly thrifty. And they used to joke about the fact, you know, that when he bought a new pair of pants or a new suit, he'd have fish hooks sewn into the pocket so that even if he ever lost his mind for a second and decided to reach in to try to pick up a tab or pay a bill, that he couldn't get his hand out with the money because of the fish hooks that were there. I told him that once, and I don't think that he thought it was that funny at the time. I remember we were at a summer resort for some conference or something.

But Senator Muskie, you know, truly would have made a magnificent president of the United States. You know, it's funny about circumstances and what have you. I don't know whether he cried or whether it was snowflakes on his face. I'm guessing knowing the kind of person he was and being an emotional person that he might have cried when he felt his wife's image was being tarnished. But I don't see that as a strength of- sign of weakness; I see that as a sign of strength. I know a lot of men who cry, you know. I think that the few times in my life when I had an emotional problem and physical violence had to be, come right after it, you know, I was pretty tough when I was crying, I'll tell you. I never lost a fight that I had a tear in my eye because I was up for it.

But it's a shame that it did happen, and, you know, there are a lot of people who at the time felt he should have gone on because it in itself was not enough to derail it. But I, the feeling that a lot of people had, I don't know how accurate it was, that there was a lot of money involved in running for president, and it meant going into debt, and I think it was something that Senator Muskie was not going to do. I think that his, he came from a fairly poor upbringing, his father and mother were not wealthy to say the least. They were certainly middle class in Rumford, Maine. My father-in-law knew the family because my father-in-law worked in Rumford. My wife was born in Rumford, and he just wasn't going to go into debt if it meant going into debt. I think when things happen, money sort of begins to dry up a little bit whenever you hit a roadblock like what happened in Manchester, New Hampshire, and he just was not going to allow himself to go into debt on his own and decided to pull out of the race. It's a shame because he might have won.

And then of course when he ran as vice president on the Humphrey campaign, I was very active in that campaign, spent a lot of time with him, got to know him. I remember we had a big party at the Holiday Inn and Howard Johnson's up here prior to the election. Well, everybody came from all over the country to be here. Waterville was the center of it, along with obviously where Senator Humphrey was. And I remember at that time Harold Alfond, who was quite a Maine philanthropist, called me up and said, "Sam," he said, "when these people come up here, I want to make sure that they get the right impression of Waterville." And he gave me a large sum of

money to go out and buy all kinds of refreshments for the Holiday Inn where the headquarters was and also for Howard Johnson's across the street to make sure that anybody who was there had the proper refreshments. We had closets full of refreshments. And, you know, the senator is someone who probably, along with Margaret Chase Smith and eventually maybe Senator Mitchell will go down in history as Maine's outstanding national figures.

AL: When you, you were state treasurer during Curtis and Brennan?

SS: No, I was state treasurer during Brennan's administration. Actually Brennan, McKernan, and--, just Brennan and McKernan, and King, Governor King, yeah.

AL: A little bit of King. What was it like? Did you see differences in how they ran the government?

SS: No, they all treated me, I think, very similarly. I made up my mind when I was first elected treasurer that I wanted to be treasurer for life. It wasn't going to be a steppingstone for me to run for congress or for governor or what have you. It was a good job, I enjoyed it very much, and I had no interest in that, maybe because I was in my fifties when I was elected. I was fifty-three when I was elected, and, you know, it's kind of tough to decide you want to run for congress when you're sixty, in your sixties, although I guess there are some who have, or for governor. I saw how hard it was to be a governor, and I'll tell you, it's no cup of tea, it's a hard job. You got to get up at seven in the morning and work until ten at night, and it's seven days a week, and you're constantly under the eye of the media, and you're constantly being pressed and oppressed, quite frankly, in my book.

You know, one good example is, there's Governor Brennan. He was governor for eight years; I think he played golf once a year. He loved to play golf but he'd play once or twice a year at the very most. And I think in his last year there was a group of us that he would play with, that he, he never wanted to play with the big shots that were the presidents of banks or the presidents of big corporations. He had about five or six people that he played with, Dave Bustin who had been in his administration, and Ed Gall and myself and Allen Tim, and, the pro there, and that's all the people he would play with. And what he would do in his last year, after getting up at seven in the morning, he'd, at three or three thirty in the afternoon would sneak off and play golf. And there'd always be some wise jerks, "Ah-hah, taking off again governor?" You know? And I used to always tell them off, and such. And so it's no cup of tea to be governor, and it's a tough life. I was happy to be treasurer.

But to answer your question, the fact that I only got involved in things that effected the treasury, except in one case, that I didn't try to govern. And I got to the point, I think, where all three governors, an independent, a Republican and a Democrat all respected the job that I did, the work that I did, because I made up my mind that I, that the state's interest could best be served by getting a higher credit rating so that our cost of money would be less, which I did; that I worked on getting an abandoned property program involved where we found people who had lost their assets through record keeping or through lost bank accounts, to get their money back to them, and just advise the legislature on matters that effected the credit rating or affected the treasury. I didn't get involved in the budget. You know, the constitution of the state of Maine

doesn't say that the treasurer shall administer the budget; that's a legislative and gubernatorial prerogative. And I let them do it, and I never spoke about it, and I never talked to the press about it. And I never tried to gain any personal attention about things other than what affected the treasury. So then I had a good relationship with the executive branch because they saw that I let them do their job, and they let me do my job.

Except for one instance when McKernan was running against Brennan, when Brennan decided to come back after having been in the congress for four years, to run against McKernan in his second term. McKernan had a campaign meeting, he stopped in Augusta where he basically was arguing that (*unintelligible word*) the finances of the state of Maine were tremendous, and he had done a great job financially and what have you. And we had just gone on to computers, and up until then it was very difficult to tell what the cash position of the state was because we were writing checks, and they were floating around and not being cashed and so that we didn't, we wrote checks when, without an accurate knowledge of what the exact checking account was at that time, until we suddenly had computers come in and for the first time we saw, and I think for the first time ever that it maybe even had happened, that there was a negative balance in the checkbook.

And so when I told the Democratic leaders in the house and senate and Brennan's people about it, they wanted me to issue a press conference and, which I did, you know, pointing out that for the first time, well, that the checkbook of the state of Maine was negative and that we were using monies from our cash flow which belonged to the university and to the pension fund, because their monies were being invested through a treasurer's cash flow which I administered. And all it did was cause a big political (*unintelligible word*) where you try to say yes, during Brennan's previous administration there was a negative cash position, which it wasn't. There was never a period of time when it ended up in a negative cash position except at that time. And we probably wouldn't have found out. Actually I got the information from one of his administrators, I mean, who ran a computer.

But outside of that, I got along with all three of them equally as well, and I think they were all satisfied with their relationship with me. And I always had a good relationship with the legislature. There's nothing that I ever asked the legislature for that I didn't get. Maybe I was smart enough to know what I could or couldn't get, but I, but they realized that I had no political ambitions, and I think that's very important. I think that when you get a treasurer who goes in there and has political ambitions, there are a lot of things that he or she does that makes them get involved. I know the present treasurer, a very bright person, you know, at times she gets involved in what, you could almost argue that it's legislative prerogative. She has a right to her opinion, and she has a right to give advice based on what she thinks is best for the state of Maine based on her own knowledge, but it's taken very, it's not taken well by the legislature themselves, and you can get into problems that way.

AL: Did you spend any time in the Dubord home and sort of know the family? Did you ever know F. Harold Dubord?

SS: I did not know Harold very well. I saw him at times, and then when he died, I did not know Harold that well, no, no. I knew Dick very well.

AL: What was Dick like?

SS: Well he, you know, it was just sad, his untimely death at a very young age. He was bright, he was aggressive, he was intelligent, he was political, he knew how to handle himself. And he would have had great potential, he might have been governor someday himself, you know, if he hadn't died. I liked him, everybody liked Dick Dubord.

AL: Did he have a good sense of humor?

SS: I don't, I'm not that sure that I could give an honest opinion on it. I think that what little I remember, he was smiling. He smiled a lot. I think he did, yes. I'd have to say yes, definitely.

AL: You mentioned that your wife and your fath- that your wife grew up in Rumford?

SS: Yeah, my wife was born in Rumford.

AL: What was her maiden name?

SS: Her name, she was Carol Plavin, P-L-A-V-I-N, yeah. And then moved to Lewiston when she was a young child, and then moved to Waterville when she was about probably fifteen or sixteen.

AL: And so her father, your father-in-law, did some business in the Rumford area?

SS: Yeah, he had a store in Rumford, a furniture store in Rumford, or he worked for his brother, who had a furniture store in Rumford. And then I think he opened up his own furniture store in Rumford and then he came to Waterville.

AL: Did he ever know Muskie's parents?

SS: I'm sure he did, yes.

AL: Being that Muskie's father was a tailor, a business man, a tailor (*unintelligible phrase*).

SS: Yeah, he did know them, yes.

AL: Did he ever give you any impressions?

SS: No, no, he didn't, no.

AL: You spoke about John Jabar?

SS: Yes.

AL: Who is he?

SS: Oh, John Jabar was a lawyer in Waterville, and he was involved with Paul Julien and Paul Dundas in the Clauson campaign. He was one of the top people in the Clauson campaign, and I knew him because he was, we played basketball together. He was, you know, he was one of the famous Jabars who played basketball for Waterville High School. And he was a very bright- I was surprised that he never went on to get involved in politics. His brother Joe Jabar is now a representative in the Maine State House of Representatives and former county attorney, but John never ran for political office.

AL: Now, Don Nicoll said you would have stories about people such as George Mitchell and Ken Curtis.

SS: Can't tell all of them.

AL: No? Can you tell some?

SS: Well, yeah. Let me think now. Ken Curtis, you know, in my younger days I used to drive a pickup truck when I had the furniture store. I drove from Waterville every day, to the Augusta store, and I drove in a pickup truck. And I played softball. Ken Curtis started a thing called the Curtis All Stars, and it was partly because he was sort of a frustrated athlete, you know. And we had a great team; we traveled all over the state. And Ken Curtis, whenever we played near the Augusta area, like in Gardiner or Hallowell or somewhere, you know, near Augusta where I drove up in my pickup truck, he'd always want to drive my pickup truck back to the Blaine House. You know, he wouldn't come back with the trooper in his, in the car, he'd say, "Can I drive your pickup truck, Sam?" So he'd drive back to the Blaine House in a pickup truck; he got a big kick out of driving a pickup truck. And he was a competitive softball player, and we enjoyed that a lot. And I traveled with him at different times because I was his military aide, especially in a sad time of Ken Curtis' life. As you know, he had two daughters who had multiple sclerosis.

AL: Or cystic fibrosis?

SS: Cystic fibrosis, I'm sorry, yeah, had cystic fibrosis. And we used to go skiing in the winter time to Saddleback up in Rangeley with my kids and his kids, and I remember they used to carry the portable tents with them up there, and I used to try to be helpful with that, and we went up with him every time. Bob Dunfey, who was an active Democrat, had a place up there, and we all went there and skied. Ken was a marvelous man. He, you know, it could have been him that had the career that Senator Mitchell had because when Ed Muskie left the senate to become secretary of state, the appointment to the, temporary appointment to the senate was done by the governor, Governor Brennan. And the logical choice in a lot of people's minds was Ken Curtis because he had been governor before and was well liked and obviously a very capable person.

And, but unfortunately after he left the governorship, he became the envoy to Canada, ambassador to Canada, and Governor Brennan did not reappoint, did not reappoint a judge pilot in Bangor. And Ken Curtis for some reason openly criticized him for that. And obviously something that I wished he hadn't done. It's something that normally is not expected of ex-

governors, against his own party on an issue like that, but he did. And then there was a primary that Phil Merrill ran against Governor Brennan in Governor Brennan's second term. And the day, the night before the election, Ken Curtis appeared at a Phil Merrill fundraiser, and the front page pictures on a lot of papers showed him and Phil Merrill on Election Day, on the newspaper of Election Day. Brennan won, but it left a very bad taste in Governor Brennan's mind, I think, about Ken Curtis. And I remember there was a delegation, I did not attend, but there was a delegation who went to Governor Brennan, it was on a weekend morning at the Blaine House, to try to convince him to appoint Ken Curtis, and I don't think anything would have got him to do that. I think he just felt ambushed and betrayed by Ken, and so he- I think that Senator Muskie, the word is that Senator Muskie called him, recommended Senator Mitchell, and asked him to appoint, came to the Blaine House, told him that he'd like him to do that. And, you know, at that time I think that what Senator Muskie wanted carried a lot of weight, and obviously Governor Brennan appointed Senator Muskie [*sic*] [Mitchell] who went on to win elections after that on his own and become majority leader of the senate and obviously a very powerful senator.

I think Maine lost a lot. There were a lot of things happening and coming into Maine. I know that my influence dwindled when he didn't run again because at the time, you got to remember that if you're the treasurer of the state of Maine and the majority leader of the senate is a senator from the state of Maine, it suddenly gives you a certain amount of importance, you know, within the organization, the treasurer's organization, National Association of State Treasurers and what have you. Luckily I'd been around long enough that I didn't lose very much, but Maine lost a lot because there were a lot of things that he did that helped Maine, and Maine had a greater influence obviously in the senate and, and in Washington, than we have now.

As far as, you know, Senator Mitchell obvi- he was terrific in that anytime I came to Washington with my fellow Democratic and Republican treasurers, he always would meet with us, give up some time. I remember one time, we had set a meeting to have lunch with him, I had about four or five fellow treasurers and a couple other people to meet with him for lunch. And it was at the time that the vote was being taken for the Clean Air Bill, which was, you know, one of Muskie's early projects and it was very important to Senator Mitchell, it was a big thing, I mean it was one of the biggest things I think in his legislative life at the time. And that vote was being taken the very day that we had the luncheon meeting. And I called, and they said, "Well, gee, you know, we don't know whether he's going to be available at all, and he feels bad about it," you know, because he always felt very warmly toward me. And I said, "Well, sure, whatever it has to be has to be." Finally we came up there, and what he did, rather than very easily canceling the meeting, which he should have probably, he said, he brought sandwiches in, food into his office, in his private room there, and we all sat around the table, and he gave us almost an hour and a half of his time, sitting, chatting, talking to everybody there, everybody was very impressed by him. But it shows the kind of person that he was, I mean, that he wasn't going to, he wasn't going to, he wanted, he did it for me. I mean, he didn't do it for himself, it was no advantage to him at this very crucial time. There was a break obviously so he didn't have to be on the floor, but I'm sure he could have used that time, you know, much more to his advantage than it was used to meet with, you know, half a dozen state treasurers.

We always hoped that he would be a presidential candidate, we, I still think that he would be a marvelous presidential candidate. It's just something that, you know, you have to have the fire

in your belly and once he gave up his senate seat, you know, he went on to other things. I know now he actually is a consultant for my firm, Mitchell, Hutchins. He's a consultant for us, and you know, he's out there making some money for a change. Real money.

AL: I have a question about the Maine state Democratic Party. And so you were involved in say the late fifties or early sixties?

SS: No, I was involved with the Maine Democratic party from, really heavily from nineteen, say, sixty-six to nineteen eighty when I was treasurer of the party. And before that probably, I think I ran for the state committee in 1962 and was very active with the party all that time. I took a, that was my, outside of playing softball in Waterville where I played baseball and softball all the years that I was here, that was my other avocation, the Democratic Party.

AL: How have you seen it changed over the years? I've heard about shifting of how effective it is, and what role it plays. Have you, do you feel there are clear changes that have taken place in the party structure in the state and its role?

SS: I think that, you know, the state committee is made up of individuals. At one time it was only thirty odd people; it's much larger now. And there was always that feeling, you know, within the politicians, and that's what you are if you run for the state committee, that they weren't getting their proper access, proper patronage, proper everything. And whenever the, early in the years of our party before, you know, while we had Muskie and Clauson, once Clauson died the president of the senate became the governor, and he was a Republican obviously, and he was there for seven years. And we just had Democratic rule in the State House, and there was always that feeling of, you know, who is running things, you know, the legislature liked to think they were, the governor was there wanting everybody to be happy with him.

And I don't think anything really has changed. I think at one time there was a greater party structure, you know, of the Democrats who were part of the party. And now I think there's more an independent feeling, and there's more independence in both parties for that matter, both the Democratic Party and the Republican Party, and they feel less controlled by what the state committee says or what the platform is, you know what I mean? Or what the legislature, legislative program is. And I think there's less of that now because at one time I think the Democratic Party's platform was the, you know, the constitution of the party and nearly everybody either accepted it or ignored it, but nobody opposed it. Today, I think, it's different, where everybody says, "Hey, it really doesn't matter what the platform of the party says; here's how I feel," you know?

And I think that's permeated its way into the legislative process. I think when John Martin was there, you know, he tried to make the legislature a more all powerful organization that was the party and that the state committee had minimal relevancy into what the party did because, you know, what can the party do? The party doesn't legislate, the state committee doesn't legislate, all they do is run the state convention, you know, and elect delegates to the national convention. The legislature is the one who on a day-to-day basis when they're in session who decides what happens, you know, to the laws of Maine and to the people of Maine.

And if you stop to think it through, that's true. I mean, what can the state committee do- what can the state party do, to change anybody's life? Or change any law to benefit or to hurt any individual or any group or what have you? Not a, a, zero. And so what has happened is that the state party no longer can, does enough to decide who is elected, so they'll be beholden to the state party because they need their financial support or their election effort support to elect them. They're independent now of that. They raise their own money; the state committee doesn't give them that much money that it makes a difference as to where their allegiance is. So I think when the legislature acts or when the party caucuses, what the platform says or what the chairman of the party says has very little effect on their bottom line decision. You want to click that?

AL: Could you tell me a little bit about Dick McMahon?

SS: Yeah, Dick McMahon, you know, he was sort of a rotund, cigar in his mouth always, old-fashioned politician. Not a Maine old-fashioned politician, but a politician like you'd see it in the movies. Always had an opinion about something, was very, had aloud voice and understood obviously the pulse of the people, you know, in the fifties, in a Republican state, and what was necessary to win an election. And I think what he did do was, I think the thing that Muskie did when he got elected governor for the first time was that he traveled the state.

There are stories about the fact that, you know, he met an eighty-one year old man up in Franklin County, and the guy said, the gentleman told him that's the first time he ever shook hands with a Democrat candidate. And I think that's what won the election for Muskie is the fact that he traveled the state and shook hundreds of thousands of hands. And McMahon, Dick McMahon was the architect of that strategy, and he drove with him, as I remember, he was his driver. I mean, you didn't have paid staff in those days. I mean, Dick McMahon drove him around and helped him get elected and was happy to be what he was. You know, he didn't have political ambitions of his own. Dick McMahon had no, you know, he got a job in government after that, but he did it for the pure feeling of the competitiveness of being a politician and trying to win an election. Just like athletes try to win ball games, professional politicians they get their kicks out of winning elections, you know, and I think that was Dick McMahon.

And he was entirely different than Muskie obviously, whereas Don Nicoll was a lot like Muskie in a sense. They were both very intelligent; Don Nicoll had a deep intellect and had a personality and demeanor that was quieter and softer than Dick McMahon's, which was louder and what have you. But they both reached the same bottom line achievement, you know. I think that although McMahon was very effective in Muskie's earlier campaigns for governor and also for his first senate campaign, Don Nicoll was very effective in strategy and organization of Senator Muskie's campaigns after that.

AL: Did you ever meet Frank Coffin or (*unintelligible phrase*)?

SS: Oh yes, Frank Coffin, I remember Frank. Well, in fact I just saw him at Judge Brody's funeral. Frank was one of the speakers as I was in talking about Judge Brody, who was a close friend of mine. I have to laugh about Frank. I remember I was running for county commissioner, he was running for governor against John Reed. And we were at the Bates Mill

in Waterville, I'm sorry, in Augusta, Bates Mill in Augusta at the gate waiting for the shifts to leave and come in at three o'clock, where there's, you know, hundreds if not a thousand people coming in and out at the same time, it was in the heyday of that mill. And I, having been the manager of our furniture store in Augusta for many years and played ball in Augusta, I played softball in Augusta, I practically knew half the people coming in and out, you know, by their first names and what have you. So as they were coming in, and there was myself, Frank Coffin, several other candidates who I can't remember. There was always a group of us at these mill gates, you know, either candidates or city chairmen or something like that. You know, I'd greet everybody and shake their hand, say, "Hi." Frank finally tapped me on the shoulder and said, "Sam, will you stand behind me, please," he says, "I'm running for governor," he says, "You're only running for county commissioner." So I reminded him of that.

You know, Frank Coffin is brilliant, I mean truly, truly a brilliant man. And actually he looks the same today, well I shouldn't say, he almost looks the same today, you know, in 19- in 2000, as he did back in the seventies. But Frank Coffin would have made a marvelous, bright governor, but, you know, the people somehow go for charisma and show. Frank was not a charismatic person, you know, he was a very quiet, serious, brilliant person. And, you know, maybe it turned out for the best. He went on to be a judge and become a federal judge, a circuit judge, and maybe that's where he's best suited for. You can't be a judge and governor both at the same time, and sometimes it's hard to be a judge after you've been governor. Governors, once you become governor you got to be careful what you do later on in life. I mean, there are certain things you can't do. You can either become a corporate president or a college president or, you know, it's very difficult at times to do what you want to do.

AL: I guess the final question today would be to ask you if there's something very important, some aspect that I haven't asked you about yet? Or any stories or recollections you have that would add to this history?

SS: Well, I came to Maine in 1953, which was the advent of the revival of the Democratic Party in Maine. So in essence I don't know, you know, I didn't live the Republican Party's control of Maine. Once I got here, you know, we've had more Democratic governors and more Democratic controlled legislatures than we've had Republican governors and Republican controlled legislators, legislatures. We've had Democrats in congress more so than ever before. So, you know, to make a comparison is sort of difficult for me because I didn't see the other side.

I can just say that I think the people of Maine have benefited most, I think, by a Democratic legislature and a Democratic controlled government just by the very essence of who controls the Democratic Party and who controls the Republican Party. You know, I don't think there's any argument that big business and big corporate interests are all Republicans. And if you have Republicans in control, their attitudes and their influences and what best serves their personal needs and interests will come first, before those of the people. And the people, is who control the Democratic Party. There is some change now that in some of the corporations, you know, there is a Democratic influence. But over the years, you know, it's very, very seldom that you ran into anybody who was the president of a large corporation, the president of a large bank, who was a Democrat. You know, it was hard to find somebody who would be on a committee for the

Democratic candidate for governor or senate or congress. They were all Republicans who were the big so-called names, or the big money people. And so therefore, since there are more people who are on the lower end of the income scale in Maine than there are on the upper income scale in Maine, so you have to logically assume that the people are better off with a Democratic philosophy and control, and making the laws.

I think you're finding that now in this year's legislature where the Democratic Party is trying hard to get money for education, for health issues, for elderly and what have you. Whereas the Republican Party is saying no to some of those things and wanting that money to go into a trust fund or to reduce the debt, so therefore not helping the majority of the people who live in the state at this time. And I think that, you know, the people who pay the debt, who pay the taxes, should be the ones who get the benefits of that money. And I think that's the whole idea on bond issues that, rather than go out and take a hundred million and build, you know, ten schools and have the people today who are paying taxes this year pay for those ten schools, the idea is to bond it over twenty years and let the people who are using those facilities over that period of years pay for it on an annual basis, you know. And that's the Democratic philosophy, different than the Republican philosophy.

The, you know, some of the things that maybe that we should talk about are some of the influences that some people have that we haven't talked about, somebody like John Martin, speaker of the house for twenty years, who really believed in the philosophy of the Democratic party and exposed that, espoused that philosophy into legislation and in caring, you know, for the people of Maine. We've, John Donovan, you know, is someone that we haven't talked about who was involved in Muskie's first senate campaign very heavily, a very bright Bates College professor and a good friend of mine, somebody who I worked with.

I think this, speaking, you know, in terms of myself, it, you know, sort of, there was a radio program in the thirties and forties called "Just Plain Bill." It was a radio program, in essence, that always started out, "Will this boy, grown up in this small coal mining town," you know, "of Pennsylvania, make it in the big city," you know what I mean? And I think this, that the Democratic Party in Maine allowed this small," you know, "this boy from the coal mines of Pennsylvania to reach whatever level he has, treasurer of the state of Maine, because of the philosophy of the party. The party didn't care where I came from. The party didn't care where I go to synagogue. The party only cared who I was, what I was, and how hard I would work and rewarded me, in a sense, for that work. And that's how the Democratic Party works, I think.

I think that the Republican Party, the people in the Republican party are as good as, they're good people, you know, they're good to their children, and they're good to their neighbors, and they're good to their family, and they give to charity the same as Democrats do. But I think it would have been harder for me to have achieved whatever I have achieved in the Democratic Party within the Republican Party. The roadblocks would have been higher. To say that it could never happen might be unfair, but I honestly believe that it would not have happened had I not been, worked within the Democratic Party. And, you know, and also to say that, you know, when I said that I wanted to be treasurer for life, well, term limits got me. I think, frankly, term limits are an abomination. You know, I actually missed being treasurer for about a year and a half until I got my first bonus check, and now I haven't cared at all about it since.

But the one thing that I think. . . . [*?*] that if a fire ever started to burn in my belly again, is the fact that the elderly and the veterans are not getting their fair shake out of life, that we have to care more about our elderly. And it's hard for someone to care as much as one can care, to the ultimate maximum, if they haven't lived it, you know. You have to be seventy-three like I am to realize what older people feel and care about and need. And you know, there's always a thought in my mind if there's ever the opportunity to maybe someday that I would run trying to carry and bear the, you know, the cross of the grey-headed people, you know, because they need it. And maybe I could do it, you know, maybe I could do it. My wife is here for lunch.

AL: Well, we will say goodbye for today, and thank you very much.

End of Interview