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Stuart, Lawrence oral history interview

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Interview with Lawrence Stuart by Don Nicoll and Sarah Terwilliger

Summary Sheet and Transcript

Interviewee

Stuart, Lawrence

Interviewer

Nicoll, Don
Terwilliger, Sarah

Date

February 23, 1999

Place

Augusta, Maine

ID Number

MOH 068

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Biographical Note

Lawrence “Larry” Stuart was born in Hallowell in 1909. His father was principal of Cony High School and superintendent of schools in Augusta where they lived until 1923. He attended Melrose High School; Bowdoin College from 1928 to 1930; and Tufts College, graduating in 1932 with a Bachelor’s degree in science and education. He taught school in Plymouth, Maine, served as principal and teacher for three years at Pennell Institute in Gray, Maine, and as principal at Hallowell School, Southwest Harbor High School, Cape Elizabeth High School (1949-1951), Madison High School, and Rangeley High School (one year). He also served as a Department of Fish and Game Conservation educator and director of State Parks in Maine.

Scope and Content Note

Interview includes discussions of: Bates College (Barbara Stuart, sister, president of Women’s Association when Ed Muskie was president of Men’s Association); Bar Harbor and Southwest Harbor during World War II during which they were subject to black outs; Conservation Education Campus, Bryant Pond; Conservation Education dynamics of the University of Maine; Maine State Parks Department; Faust Couture; forest fire districts; cooperative efforts in conservation education; Civilian Conservation Corps or Bankhead Jones Farm Tenancy Act

(farmland, Camden Hills, St. George, Mt. Blue) during the Depression; and the trip to the Allagash.

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Transcript

Don Nicoll: It is Tuesday, the 23rd of February, 1999. Sarah Terwilliger and Don Nicoll are at 33 Linwood Avenue in Augusta, Larry and Gert Stuart's home, where we're interviewing Larry Stuart. Larry, I'd like to start the interview with your telling us when and where you were born, and the names of your parents.

Larry Stuart: Actually I was born in Hallowell in 1909. And my, at that time my father was principal of Cony High School, and he later became superintendent of schools in Augusta. In 1910 probably, we moved to Augusta, and we lived there until 1923. I attended Augusta grammar schools up through the seventh grade, when father was elected superintendent of schools in Melrose, Massachusetts. And we moved to Massachusetts then. That would be around '23, and he was superintendent of schools there. I went to high school in Melrose, Massachusetts and when I graduated from there I moved to Bowdoin College, in 1928, '29 and '30. That was the years of the Depression and I was earning my, trying to earn my way through Bowdoin but reached the point where I couldn't do it any more. So I moved to, back with my folks in Melrose, Massachusetts and attended my last two years of college life in Tufts College. And I graduated in 1932 with a bachelor's degree in science and education, and started right in teaching.

DN: Where did you teach?

LS: Well, the very first year I taught was at Plymouth, which was a little one-room school with one teacher, one janitor and one bus driver.

DN: This is Plymouth, Maine?

LS: Plymouth, Maine, which is just outside of Newport. And I got eight hundred dollars for teacher four freshman subjects and then four sophomore subjects ultimately, and drove the school bus and swept the building and got the grand sum of eight hundred dollars. Most of that eight hundred dollars was in produce and script in those years, and so I was there just one year, of course I was unmarried. And the next year I got promoted to the Pennell Institute down in Gray, where I was principal and teacher for three years. I married and, in the year after I got out of college, after I taught and . . .

DN: So you graduated in '32?

LS: I was the class of '32, and spent a year teaching at Plymouth and then started in the next year as principal of Pennell Institute, which was then a private institute, as most of those were. And I was there three years; principal and teacher and coach, taught music (*unintelligible word*). Just shows you all those things you did. And I got the grand salary of a thousand dollars for the first year I taught and I got boosted to twelve hundred for the third year. There I learned about an opening in Hallowell, which was a big step forward so. And since my father was principal at Hallowell High School when I was born, sort of a connection there. So I was principal at (*name*) Institute, (*name*) Institute for three years, then I moved down to Hallowell for two years, for a larger school and more responsibilities.

DN: You were principal there as well?

LS: Yes, principal, teacher. Principal everywhere I went except when I became superintendent. From Hallowell, I learned of a new school building and a new program down at Southwest Harbor called Pemetic High School, and I raised a family which was now a wife and daughter and son, and we moved to Southwest Harbor. And that was during the war when Bar Harbor and Southwest were all under blackouts, like in, you under, you know, not being allowed to use the car lights, and they used bicycles with muffled lights and so forth. And that was a very progressive unit. And we then looked for greener pastures and we heard of the opening at Cape Elizabeth High School, which I took over as principalship and, mostly principal's duties and guidance. I think I did teach some math, but it was principal, principally principalship. And if you know anything about Cape Elizabeth, which you should, you know, it was a darn progressive community. I think we had to send, eighty-eight percent of our graduates had to go into class A colleges, most of them, well many of them with entrance examinations. And we had a pretty high standard to maintain.

DN: What was the year you went to Cape Elizabeth?

LS: It might have to be about, probably '49, seems to me (*unintelligible phrase*) from '49 to '51 or something. Well, Laverdiere was chairman of the school board then, and you probably knew him as the treasurer of Hannaford Brothers. The other two members of the committee were Lester Brown's wife, who used to be the chief game warden for the state. The fourth one was Frank Dinsmore, who was one of the top insurance agencies there in Portland.

Had a nice house right out there next to Fort Williams. Every time we fired the guns, why, they came in the next day and patched ceilings. After a year, after five years I developed ulcers and the doctor decided that I should take a year off, so I went up to Rangeley and that was another chapter entirely. We built a home there and developed and maintained a sporting camp for, until 1954 or '5, somewhere in there, when my wife's health failed. She had diabetes, and she started having a problem with diabetes, so as a family we couldn't maintain it, so we sold it. But I spent all those years outdoors, fishing; guiding was my principle income, and that's where we developed the, what was then the famous Mooselook Warbler for fishing, which we developed there at camp during the war because we couldn't get any of the abalone, which was the finishing coat on the warblers. Came from California. That was, so after a year, that went on at the same time I was principal at Madison High School.

DN: Oh, you went back to being principal after the year off.

LS: Yes, well, the year off at Rangeley I, it just so happened that they had a vacancy and so I taught there, two or three subjects and was principal at the Rangeley High School for one year. I kept up my continuity of service for retirement, and it allowed us to use all our time to build the house, which we did. A nice one. And we had a large clientele of fishermen, etc. The fifth year at Madison, the state Department of Education under Warren Hill and Roland Cobb and Austin Wilkins, those three who were heads of big departments felt that curricular was Come in Gert.

Gert Stuart: Excuse me, sorry to be late. How are you? Good to see you. Long time. How's Hilda?

DN: She's doing well, thank you.

GS: Oh, good. And her mother?

DN: Mother's so-so. She's ninety-eight and is not She's up and down, but she's still quite alert and staying in her own apartment, so that's good.

GS: Isn't that terrific.

(Introductions with Sarah, chatting.)

LS: My sister went to Bates College and graduated in class, it would be behind Ed Muskie.

DN: Thirty-seven?

LS: Yeah. See, I graduated in '32. It seems to me it would be '36, somewhere in there.

DN: Thirty-six was Ed's class.

LS: Well, then, she probably was, maybe in '35. Of course she's passed away, but, she

graduated from Bates with a master's degree in Education and English and became an instructor of English at a college in Boston. Gertrude, what school was it Barbara was head of the English department?

GS: Chamberlain [Joshua Chamberlain Smith Form College].

LS: And had what athlete?

GS: Dan Rather. He's not the athlete, journalist.

LS: Oh, must have been Dan Rather.

GS: Oh, yeah, she had Dan. Yeah, she used to speak about it frequently.

DN: Taught him all he knew.

GS: Well, knowing Barbara, she'd probably say he probably was well equipped when he came. Barb was a great teacher.

DN: You were saying . . .

LS: Oh, speaking of Barbara, she married . . .

GS: Whit Standish.

LS: Whitney Standish, who was a direct relative of Miles Standish, and they had their genealogy all carefully traced. They had no children. And she passed away two years ago. We get off these tracks; it's all fill-in.

DN: You were talking about Roland Cobb and Austin Wilkins and Warren Hill.

LS: That's yeah, they, when I was at Madison, the last year when I was at Madison, they called a state-wide gathering of all of the athletic directors or phys-ed people and so forth, to, and held a meeting in Augusta to try to, it was primarily geared at hunter safety and firewood safety and so forth. Do, are you looking at me?

GS: Well, I was just standing here listening to what you were saying.

LS: Yeah, and so after five years at Madison, and that would be what? Donny graduated in '54. We felt that it was a challenge which I needed to take because I'd been at Madison five years and I still had the sporting camps going. So I decided to join the Department of Fish and Game as Conservation Educator to develop a program in, for this, primarily for schools, to integrate conservation education as much as possible and where possible into the curriculum of different courses, because Fish and Game had more money then than the Department of Education. They, Carl Fenderson was then head of the educational services of Fish and Game.

They sent me to, I went as far west as Oregon and a lot of the, well four or five of the places that had conservation education programs in the curriculum in one form or another. Kansas City was one, Oregon another. And tried to get help in how to go about setting up programs for conservation education. So for a year and a half, I had the title of Conservation, Education and Wildlife in the Fish and Game Department, my desk was downstairs in the old museum (*unintelligible phrase*), and

DN: That was in the basement of the State House.

LS: Yessir, right down the stairs where the museum used to be, right at the exit door. And, it's the only desk I had, could have in those days. Then we moved over into the new building, so-called, now which is being torn down I guess, the state office building. In line with what I think might be help to you, the State Fish and Game Association, which has nothing to do with government, it's a fish and game club they called it. And they met once a year and a philanthropist lady whose name was Lillian Waterhouse had property on Christopher Lake, and she didn't know what to do with it. She was very sick; we all thought she was on dope or some such. She really had a brain tumor, and so she offered to give her property to this Fish and Game Association. Charlie Pierce was a motivating factor in it. He still is out pulling; you know Charlie. And so he and I and Carl Fenderson and so forth (*unintelligible phrase*).

GS: Excuse me, would you people like a cup of coffee?

ST: I'm fine; thank you.

LS: I offered it to them.

GS: Don, you aren't interested?

LS: No, I offered it to them.

GS: Oh, you did, okay. Well, I think I'll run over and see Donny for a few minutes. I'll see you people when I come back.

LS: So, the first year that the Fish and Game boys owned that building by gift, now they took a lot out of it and put nothing into it, and just used it as a, I won't say a place to do a little drinking, but it was a rowdy place. It wasn't maintained at all. And Charlie Pierce and Dr. Garcelon were members of the state Fish and Game Association. And as such they thought, "Well why not see if we can't get . . . We needed a place to set up a conservation education program, so this would seem to be ideal if we could get title to it." Well, Charlie Pierce donated his services, and I think he's still active to a degree in it, but he got title to it. And so that year, which would be probably '57, by working with the University of Maine, because of my background in education, Perry Shibles and several of the people that ran the college hierarchy felt that something should be done for education.

DN: Perry was then the dean of the School of Education, College of Education?

LS: At University of Maine. And first thing we did was we worked with the nature clubs of Maine. Most of those people are dead now, but there are some still living. And they, we founded a committee on conservation education, which was not a state, it was made up of state people, but it was not affiliated in any way with government except that we needed money. So Al Nutting, who was Commissioner of Forestry, and Austin Wilkins, and Roland Cobb, Commissioner of Fish and Game, Doc Garcelon who is a well known dentist in Augusta, and he also at one time was the chairman of the National Wildlife Federation, wasn't he? And we formed an informal group and we got together and let it be known that we wanted to have a course for teachers, to run it one summer at this property over at Bryant Pond; it's now called the Conservation Education Campus. Lillian Waterhouse was the donor, we had clean title to that. And Al Nutting and Roland were able to get, squeeze out some money out of their appropriations. I think it was five thousand dollars, each of those two, oh, and Education, and they maintained it for a number of years.

We went to the nature clubs in Augusta; we got several people who are now on TV that trained over there. And so that first summer we had twelve students, they called them. And we had built a dormitory for twelve people, and we hired a cook someplace, and we drew on the departments of Fish and Game, and Forestry, and Sea and Shore Fisheries, Soil Conservation districts and so forth. They all participated in that first year and gave money or services so that we were able to put on a six-week course, I think that was. In order to get to, supply the carrot for it, we got the University of Maine, through Perry Shibles, to agree that if the course maintained certain standards, that it would count towards a one degree, one, rather, credit or whatever; it may have been two. Buy anyway, whoever took the course and passed it, did get two credits towards their degree credit, even up as high as the master's degree. In order to do that we had to have approved instructors. So we went to the Farmington Teachers' College and got Mudge, John Mudge, who's still living and active in the Christian Civic League in Maine.

DN: Now, is he related to Ray Mudge?

LS: No. Ray Mudge was the state treasurer; that the one you mean?

DN: Yup.

LS: And Ray Mudge is how I got to be Director of State Parks, because, well, that's another story. But I had, see, when I was in Cape Elizabeth, I had his children in school, and he was quite impressed with what we did there, so anyway. No, Ray Mudge was, helped set up the reorganization of the State Park Department later on, and that's another story.

John Mudge is up at Farmington and he's quite active in the Christian Civic League. And from the University of Maine we got a full-time instructor from up there by the name of Davis, George Davis. And for the third member we got from Gorham, he still is active there in the field of geology and science and so forth, and I, his name will come to me, I think. This is what happens when you're retired.

Anyway, we got three approved instructors and the trustees of the University of Maine said,

“Okay, we’ll pass supervision,” and so forth. “With that faculty and with so many hours of study and so many hours of field work, why, they will get credit.” So that was the, how we got our foot in the door and kept it in the door, and kept the campus going because we were able to offer credit. Now, when, the first summer we took only the teachers. In the fall of the year we took organized groups of children from a few selected schools to try out the student part of the program, because we still had very limited dormitories but we had, we housed everybody there and fed ‘em. And the, that’s how that program started.

Now, the Commissioner of Education, Warren Hill, was very much in favor of it, but Education just couldn’t find any money. But we did say, set up in its constitution, that it should be supervised and maintained and approved by the State Department of Education. Now, Roland Cobb took more money out of Fish and Game funds; they were really flush then, and supplied the plane service for our use. We had a lot of the fishery; we had a lot on salmon, Fish and Wildlife Department that came up and put on a whole week’s course in fish management, and took the students out into the lake with these fish nets and showed the different things that they could. . . . It was an actual learning experience. The Wildlife well one of them, Miller was the, George Miller, was the one down at Gorham. Still is. Head of the Department of Geology and so forth, and they went up into Bethel, up to West Paris, up there on that mountain where all the gem is buried, spent two or three days cracking rocks and, it was full of practical experience. And the kids who went there still talk about it.

DN: By the way, you mentioned that some folks on television went there. Do you remember some of the names of the television folks who were at the conservation camp?

LS: No, They’d be; they were the. . . . We had some ads, some publicity through the news, but most of it came from the public information offices of Fish and Game, of which Ken Gray was, that was his department. And each of the departments supplied their PR people.

DN: Okay, I misunderstood you earlier. I thought you meant that there were some television people who were students there, but you were talking about publicity.

LS: Did what?

DN: You were talking about publicity from the program earlier.

LS: Well, we had news stories in the, from special news writers at, I don’t, I can’t remember any particular ones. But the newspapers, as fast as we could get a program together, would send somebody up to take pictures of the biologists out on the lake and the students and so forth. And the nature clubs did a lot of recruiting within their own groups. A girl from South Portland by the name of Rowe was very active in the garden clubs. I think she may have passed away recently, but she was very active in soliciting money from clubs.

DN: Now when did you go to the Parks and Recreation Department?

LS: While I was in the, while I was working for the Fish and Game Department as Conservation Educator, the opening occurred in the Director of State Parks; that was the title. And at that time

the State Parks Department was run and, is set up by statute by a State Parks Commission, which was made up Commissioner of Forestry, Commissioner of Fish and Game, and ex-officio. And then there were three citizen members appointed by a governor council.

First important one I remember was Bill Ray from Boothbay Harbor, who reorganized defunct, or, the big companies that were going bankrupt. The first one he did was Birdseye; I remember that. He also reorganized Oxford Paper Company and put it back on its feet. He was one member, and he was a very, had a lot of background. Lives at Boothbay Harbor and had nice boats. Second member was Faust Couture, who owned and operated all the radio stations in Maine that were run by [Gay] Gannett; WFAU, F is for Faust, WCOU is, the C-O-U is for Couture, and he owned Presque Isle, and so forth and so on. French background; very strong minded and capable PR man. That was his business. He lived in Lewiston.

DN: He also owned a newspaper over there, the Messagier.

LS: Probably. He had, he was a, had, did you say French, he had a very strong French background. The third, there were three members. The third member was appointed by the Governor. Well they all, the ex-officios were two and then there were the three, and they were appointed by the governor council. All three of those now passed away. The last one that passed away was Cliff O'Rourke¹ over in Camden, who was, became a judge. And recently I learned (*name*) had passed away, so those are all gone.

But, I'll say right now that the Department, the conservation, the State Parks Department under the rule and statutory powers that ran the State Parks, what, three or four we had in those days, I have great praise for and still think that there's a great merit in a citizen advisory committee set up as the Park Department was set up. The director, I was responsible directly to all those people. And when you've got Nutting and Cobb, and Austin Wilkins and Roland Cobb, and Rodney [Ronnie] Green was not a member but he was an active participant because of Sea and Shore Fisheries.

Now, the Commissioner of Educa-, Commissioner of Agriculture at the time was Nuttick [Albert K. Gardner]. And he saw that the Soil Conservation Service, I don't know how much control he had over it, but they went out in the fields and dug farm ponds. If you go over to the campus now you'll find farm ponds over there. And the farm ponds were dug and maintained by the Soil Conservation Service, and the children went out there and learned a great deal about aquaculture and things that were in the farm. Austin Wilkins, still living thank God, was very active in the forest fire protection program. So they, his, the Maine Forest Service then was independent of the State Forestry Department. Forest fire districts I think they were called. So they were very interested in teaching children how to keep from building forest fires, and they built all of the fireplaces and stuff. An awful lot of state agencies (*unintelligible phrase*) so when we had a meeting, we often had them over there at the campus. It was a pretty wonderful group to work with.

DN: So what you're telling us indicates that back in the forties and fifties at least, there was a

¹ Hon. Clifford R. O'Rourke, Maine District Court, 205 Newbury St. P.O. Box 66 Portland, ME 04112-066

lot of cooperative effort among the state department heads.

LS: Particularly in the field of education. It was all geared towards forest, towards conservation education and getting it integrated into the subjects that were already there. After I left, I don't know what happened, but I know that when I was there we, the history teachers would come as a group and. . . . A little bit more difficult perhaps to integrate natural resources into history, but it was done through approved methods. And no question about it, we copied a lot of material from other states.

DN: And did you continue with the program after you became the head of the Parks Department?

LS: I didn't, but the program is still going on. It's very active. I could, should have a, you can get a folder. And so they now have a year-round director, they have year-round programs with children up there, or adults for sporting clubs and so forth studying and learning, I don't know, perhaps ice fishing or something like that. It goes on and more and more. Let's see, the first program was only for perhaps a total of two months. That's all the money we had, all the company utensils we had; we had to use what we could scrounge. We got an awful lot from surplus property, and, yeah, I lived there. I lived on the campus down in that, there's a log cabin down in back, in '57 and '58. And in '58 Mrs. Stuart, whose name was Gertrude, was taken with the last throes of diabetes and died in Portland hospital.

DN: That was 1958?

LS: She died in 1957 actually, in October. And at that time, that's when we as a family gave up the sporting camp at Rangeley, which we developed into a. If you go up, right now it's gone, but before we had left it and sold it we had thirteen housekeeping camps, a hotel and served meals and . . .

DN: And you built the buildings?

LS: No, the main lodge is one of the old Hiram Ricker log cabins; it's on that shore. There's four or five of them that were, when Poland Spring gave up its catering to people from New York who came in and drunk and stayed all summer, which is entirely different clientele than what we had. See, my whole background was from the J. H. Stuart, who is the author of the Maine Atlas² and, I've got copies downstairs, printed in 1887. And he and [George N.] Colby conspired and put out another atlas. Grandfather, I call him J.H., laid out all the public lots in Maine and did, was the official whatever it was for the state.

DN: Was he a surveyor for the state?

LS: Yessir, surveyor, and prior to that he was a, came over from the old country and had to earn his living trapping, a bounty hunter, and . . .

² Stuart's Atlas of the State of Maine

DN: Did you know your grandfather?

LS: Oh, sure. Picture of him, where is it? It's right here or it's over on that (*unintelligible word*), and, oh sure. In fact, grandfath-, he was alive when I was in Bowdoin. We used to argue over mathematics. (*LS has wandered away from recorder.*)

DN: (*Whispers to ST*) Poke in with questions.

ST: Okay.

DN: (*Still whispering*) This is going to be at least two sessions. Might as well stop the . . .

End of Side One
Side Two

LS: Are you writing a book on Muskie?

DN: I'm thinking about it, Larry. We're on the second side of the first tape in interviewing Larry Stuart, the 23rd of February. Larry, before we broke for a few minutes, you were talking about your grandfather, J. H. Stuart, and you said that you and he used to argue when you were at Bowdoin?

LS: Oh yeah, over, questions involving mathematics as they pertained to surveying. And, I come back from, of course I had my math, my major in math was, my major at Bowdoin was math. And we had these conundrums, you know, a lot of them, figuring out the square root of something that's not four foot, that the Bowdoin professors would need to have expert advice on. And Grandpa, Grandfather was the authority. And so I can remember I'd come; of course I can't remember what they were, but they'd be problems that, "Given three sides and this and an angle and so forth, how do you get from here to there?" And Grandfather used to have to testify in court a lot on controversial things.

DN: On surveying lands and . . .

LS: I quite often would go to see him, from Bowdoin, by trolley car. Of course I didn't have any car in those days. I'd go up to South Paris and spend the night, and go. But I have one of his atlases; sometime you'd like to see it, and you'd be surprised what it shows about the Allagash country. The old Indian trails and . . .

DN: Now, you mentioned going by trolley from Brunswick to . . .

LS: Augusta.

DC: Oh, from Augusta . . .

LS: (*Unintelligible word*) Brunswick in those days. Oh, but we had a camp on Norway Lake and we used to go from, for our summer vacation, the family would leave Augusta, which was

State Street. The house right opposite the courthouse on State Street, which was torn down, that was our home. And mother and I would get on the street car out front and go by way of Mechanic, by Winthrop, Mechanic Falls, and all the way up to Norway Lake, and then get in a steamer boat and go up the lake to a camp that father and his brother built, to spend the summer, and live off the land. I saw somebody the other day chopping the heads off chickens which reminded me of how we got our meat during the summer.

DN: You kept chickens for the summer?

LS: Oh yeah, yeah. You wouldn't remember it, an old fiddler by the name of Mellie Dunham?³

DN: No.

LS: Well, he goes way, way back to the state championship fiddling contest, and he had a farm over on the other side of Norway Lake, or Penneseewassee. That's what they call it, and where father always used to get a dozen chickens in the spring. And we'd take them across to the camp, fence them in, try to keep them away from the foxes, and kill one a, one every Sunday for dinner or so.

DN: Now, did you also have a garden?

LS: Not over there. Yeah, we had a garden for small stuff, but no, we had a, in those days the, Frost Corner, which is down at the corner of Norway Lake, had a store. And the man used to come around to all the camps on a schedule and we'd buy all our produce that way. We didn't have a car the whole summer.

DN: Now, did you take the steamer when you went to Frost Corner, or did you have a canoe?

LS: He came to, no, he came to the cott-. . .

DN: He came to the cottage.

LS: He had a regular route right up the west shore and up to Recreation Point, or Pine Point, something like that, turned around and come back down the other shore.

DN: Quite a different life in those days.

LS: When I think of it, you know it's a funny thing. When I can't sleep at night, I wake up and I can put together all of these things with names and titles. I get up in the morning, I can't. I wanted to talk some today, well, I'm probably taking medication that does it, but anyway. But that is a funny thing.

DN: Maybe you need to keep a little recorder by the bed and then when you wake up and you

³ Alanson Melon Mellie Dunham. Norway, ME, fiddler, friend of Jack London, snowshoe maker. Made shoes for Adm. Robert E. Peary's 1909 North Pole expedition. Friend of Henry Ford, fiddled for him.

think of that then . . .

LS: Well, yeah, if it was worth keeping. But, you see, I didn't know Muskie as the politician. The first time I got to know the word was from my sister in Bates College, when she was president of the Women's Association and Ed was president of the Men's Association. And once in a while the two had things they did cooperatively, or they may have had exchanges on things. But I don't, see, I can't, I'd have to get out some dates and so forth. But I was a, I got my appointment of course as Director of State Parks from the Commission, remember, that I told you about. And I was elected by them and there was no politics in it all. Ray Mudge was the, who was then, what, State Controller or State Treasurer

DN: Was he Commissioner of Finance then?

LS: Yes, Commissioner of Finance, and he used to drive Warren Hill crazy, because Ray had a desk that was just as clean and bare as that table was before we put the pictures on it. And it drove Warren Hill crazy to go up there and talk with him, you know, because that's the way Ray was. See, Ray lived there in Cottage Farms, and I had his children in school. And he and Walter Wittier⁴ of Hannaford Brothers thought that I did a good job and kept me on.

DN: Now, was Ray on the Parks Commission?

LS: No. The first year I took over as parks director, the parks weren't open except on an open and shut basis depending pretty much upon how much money they took in the preceding year. Sebago Lake, I can remember very vividly of being called down there because the campers were complaining about the toilets. The toilets were plugged; they were over-running. The superintendent who, I don't remember now, I think it was Eddy Beech, closed them because there wasn't anything he could do. We didn't have any money to open them up. So all the campers . . .

DN: There were no state appropriations?

LS: Huh?

DN: There were no state appropriations?

LS: No. See, we were on dedicated revenue. We had to live off what we could collect at the gate. So I can remember going to Ray Mudge and saying, "This is a hell of a way to run a shop, right?" And he said, "I agree with you." So he says, "Why don't you put a bill in the legislature." And he says, "I'll support it for you." And from that day on we got an appropriation for the maintenance and operation. Another thing that climaxed it was that lifeguards could only be hired as we could collect from all the campers.

And we had no continuity of service in lifeguards, because of course they were kids going to college and so forth, and it was a terrible way to treat public safety. Well, it happened, we had a,

⁴ Walter F. Whittier, Cape Elizabeth School Committee, early 1950s

I think it was a girl drowned because there were no lifeguards. That made a good talking point and I'm sure there were other politicians at that time. And if Ed was in the governor then, why I don't, I never got up to that level.

DN: Now, you had no encounters with him, for example, in connection with the conservation education program?

LS: No. No, we didn't, I don't know who was governor then, but we didn't go that high. We didn't get any money for that program except, as Roland Cobbs told it, from Fish and Game licenses under the guise of safety education. And Al Nutting got it for the forest fire protection landowners fund, and the first one that actually put it into his appropriation and named it as such, I, it may have been Warren Hill in Education, but I quicker think it was Roland Cobb, because his budget was quite ample, compared to everybody else's.

DN: Now, during the time that you were in Maine after you graduated from college through, let's say up to 1960, did you while you were teaching and working as principal have any kind of interest in or involvement in politics?

LS: Don, I have stayed right away from politics. I mean, I'll tell you an extreme this week, last week. Mike Heath, my grandson, who's head of the Christian Civic League and controversial All you got to do is read the paper today and, well, they're going to fight this abortion thing. Back about two weeks ago, I made the remark about, I didn't, I've wondered how the State House looked now that they chopped it all to pieces and so forth. And he says, "Well why don't we set aside some day and go over." So I said, "Sure, I'd like to see it sometime." Well, he sent me a booklet here the other day and, a schedule, and it said, "I'll meet you on the 18th." When was that, yesterday? The day before? "And take you, I've made arrangements for you to see the governor and then we're going down," he called it "into the well of the legislature and introduce you." Well that, I stayed awake a few nights (*unintelligible phrase*), but I called him over and I said, "Absolutely not."

All the time that I was in state work, I was always brought up by, and Ken Curtis probably more than anybody else, told all his department heads, "You stay out of the legislative branch." So the only time that I, I never went over there and went into that chamber. John Martin can tell you that. I would appear at hearings, but, because the governor council was in operation at the time, you see, I was allowed to go to the council chamber to meet with the council every two weeks, because of council orders. You see, everything in the old part statute said, "With the consent of the council." You could spit, you could do this, but I had more council orders than anybody. And I did get to know Tarpi Shulten (*sounds like*), a few of the old timers in the council of eleven. I don't remember going to the governor's office except to the assistant. He's still around; what's his name? Used to be . . .

DN: Oh, Allen Pease?

LS: Allen Pease, and he would make arrangements for us to dedicate, we'll say, Rangeley State Park. And the Governor would of course be there, and we had many dedications with Ken Curtis and with Governor Reed. And that took me up to, let's see when Curtis got through, it took me

into the threat of having a, serving a term under

DN: Governor Longley.

LS: Longley. That was a turning point. I was always glad to (*unintelligible phrase*).

DN: Now, you retired at that point?

LS: Yup. But that wasn't the reason. I'd already set my retirement because Gert and I wanted to, let's see, I remarried in '58, 59, and we agreed that because of the various honoraries and otherwise positions I held, and all of the national organizations at one time or other I was president, at one time I was president to them, but was very active in that, in, that's another story. But you get into those positions by your tenure, how long you've been in the State Park group. Because of the way the Maine statute was set up, I was under tenure, you see. Most all park directors, including the one in Massachusetts; I've forgotten his name I used to chum around with him a lot, they were not under tenure. Hal Dyer⁵ I followed; he'd been there, he was a ranger at Baxter, and, from the time that that was set up, and then when the State Park Department was established, he was the first director. And he served as director for six years. And then he was picked up by the New York Through-, not throughway, but Parkway, and became director of, another title, but Director of State Parks and Parkways, which were under the Park Department. And he served out his term there.

DN: By my calculation, the Park Department was established in '52? You were appointed in '58?

LS: Yeah, I think it, the history of that's is in, easily established. Prior to Hal Dyer being selected as Director of State Parks, Charlie Bradford. . . . There's a very interesting article about Charlie, who died some time ago, with the Nature Conservan-, Nature, Natural Resource dedicated something to him and gave an interesting story. But Charlie Bradford started the Maine State Park program, was elect-, appointed director back in a certain year.

They had one park, one employee, one something else, and one thousand dollars, or something like that. And the only part that was established was, most parks were all established by the CCC's or the Bankhead Jones Farm Tenancy Act, which bought up a lot of land during the Depression, farmland particularly, and land on the coast such as Camden. And the federal government held it for recreational purposes or anything else. And then about the time that I came in, they turned it back to the states, if they would use it for public recreation. So that is how, Camden Hills was a CCC project, and that was continual. But like St. George, Mt. Blue, I could name a lot of them, but all became a state property by gift. And at that same time, Percival Baxter gave to the state the, all the, the forts, the historic sites. And there's a whole book of that that's

DN: So you were Director of Parks during a period of great expansion in the number of parks.

⁵ Harold J. Dyer, Baxter State Park Employee, 1940. Park supervisor, May 1941. Swerved in WWII 1942-46. Supervisor until August 19, 1950.

LS: Wonderful. Very fortunate. For one thing, the federal government started the finan- well, no And what's his name, the lawyer that wrote that book over there, picture book, turn that, called me up, and I felt terrible that I couldn't return the information. Just underneath that (*indicating location of book*).

DN: Now there's The Allagash [Allagash: Maine's Wild and Scenic River], that the one?

LS: Yup, yup.

DN: Dean Bennett.

LS: Yeah. Now he's on your committee, or was on the committee. Have you seen the book?

DN: Yes, I've seen that; yeah.

LS: Because I was going to say, you can borrow it. He called me up; he wrote me a letter right in the midst of the Christmas card season and wanted to know He refers to a long conversation which I had with him and a lot of that information he apparently used. But he said his particular interest now was to establish all the information he could about Chamberlain Farm. And did I know, I think his letter's right around, it's in there somewhere, but did I know anything that would be helpful in tracing back the history of Chamberlain Farm?

Well at that time, I was laid up, Donny was laid up and time just went by, and the only information that I could get him would have been to gone to the State Library or State Dept. of Parks and Recreation to see if there was anything there. But I just didn't have, I didn't do it. And believe it or not, just the other day I threw this letter away because I knew I wasn't going to answer it. But I, it said in it, "If you have any information, would you please get in touch with me." And he gave me a stamped envelope. If I ever meet him, I'm going to apologize to him. I don't know, but I do know that I would have to go get it from research.

But there's some, as you know, there's some awfully interesting stories about the early days of the Allagash and logging and so forth in that publication of The Great Northern that I had access to through John Mains. That's something like The North, The Northern Off- or something, but it was a magazine and tremendously interesting stories. One of the most interesting ones that I recall was how they got the cable up through the wilderness to the cable, you know the . . .

DN: The tramway, yeah.

LS: And a lot of things like that. And they let me borrow that material when I was, and it was so interesting.

DN: Do you know whether those publications have been deposited at the University, or?

LS: I know they must be somewhere. Is John Sinclair still living?

DN: Yes, yeah.

LS: John ought to know. Because John put in track of a lot of good leads, and John is one of the people who. . . . Because his association with Irving and out-of-state ownership, we had quite a time getting title at the appraised price. Incidentally, the Allagash appraiser died this last week, Wesley Taylor. I saw him about three days ago down at the grocery store. He was the one that we hired to start out as soon as we had the money, and we started having appraisals done. And he was head of a, there were two of them, Wes Taylor and somebody else, red-headed boy. The red-headed boy had just got started on doing the appraisals and he had a heart attack. And so Wes Taylor was the one who (*unintelligible phrase*) final appraisals. He lives right here in Augusta. But, you know, that, I thought that could trace it. They're all in the library and I used to, like on the canal. It seems to me it's called The Canals of Maine, and tells all about the Songo.

DN: Is that the Joel Eastman⁶ book?

LS: I don't know. I took it out, read it at the time and studied it and put it back, because I was really interested in all those things. And, see, my first trip into the Allagash was with Bill Briggie,⁷ and he was from the National Park Service. And he had been commissioned to come to Maine and take a quick trip down through the Allagash so that National Park Service would know what they were talking about or something. So, and I only had, we were active in the, promoting the Allagash at the time, so, I only had two or three days. And I called up, what's his name over in Auburn, but he couldn't take us. Dooley.

DN: Oh, Zig Dooley.

LS: I got Sam Jalbert, the old man and his son, not Willard but the other one, who were under indictment then for wildlife. And what more, we had a, I'll tell you, we had an education that nobody else will get on that trip.

DN: When was that?

LS: I'd have to look it up, but it would be, I'd have to look it up; I don't know how I'd look it up. But it was in the month of September and we had, we were flown from Augusta to Greenville by George Slater. George Slater made arrangements for us to meet Sam Jalbert and his son at Churchill Dam, where there were then a number of camps, private camps, and there was a forestry camp there. And so he made arrangements to meet us there and start our trip, and we'd stay overnight there. Next morning, we had books from Gwen Ladlock? who did the early archeological surveys that's referred to in your book there. And he told us, at that time he was on my Historic Sites Committee, so at that time he told us, told me where to go, what to look for and so forth. And because the dam had gone out, see, we had that big area to the left of, if you stand on the shore and look back where you come from there'd be all that cove, that inlet. We found all kinds of Indian things. We left them except for the two or three we took for

⁶ Joel Eastman. Professor of American and Maine History, USM

⁷ Bill Briggie, former superintendent of Mt. Rainier and former Deputy Director of the National Park Service

identification and gave to Farnsworth Museum in Rockland. It was under, yup.

DN: What sorts of artifacts did you find?

LS: Well, to me there were signs of arrowheads, which are common, but also other, I remember one was a scraper, to scrape flesh off from deer, or meat or whatever it was, you know. And we only had a very short time at it. We took some pictures, and I've got a film but I got no camera, I had a movie camera and I took it, but I haven't got a projector. But I've got somewhere a roll of Allagash film.

DN: That is valuable.

LS: Yup.

DN: Now this, did George fly you from Greenville up to Churchill, or . . . ?

LS: Yup, at the expense of the Fish and Game Department.

DN: And Sam and his son met you there?

LS: Met us there. The first night, and that's where we spent the first night. After supper, I walked up back and there was a nice new camp up there that belonged, I think the was Durst, D-U-R-S-T. And who should I run into but a man whose name I now forget. But he was head of the, one of the big insurance firms in Portland, and knew me and I knew him through the Parent Teacher Associations, and we had quite a chat. And he was up there, he said, rewriting the insurance policy, fire insurance policy, or disaster, whatever they call it, for this Durst family; I think it's D-U-R-S-T. Within a period of time, maybe two or three weeks or months, the whole thing burned flat.

DN: Was he a Payson, a Noyes, a Bauker?

LS: Yeah.

DN: A Bauker?

LS: A what? A broker.

DN: He was a broker but was his name Payson, or was it Noyes, or was it. . . . Dana Bauker was a real estate, was a insurance agent.

LS: I don't think I, those names, it might have been a Payson or something like that. But anyway, you know, one of those things that lightning struck, in the middle of the day and the sun was shining; burned flat, as did other properties. But you see, they could see the Allagash coming and it was pretty well-known that we would only pay appraised price, or (*unintelligible word*) eminent domain. And that was a very convenient fire, as were there were a lot of those.

DN: Now, you stayed overnight at the Fish and Game . . .

LS: We stayed overnight in the Forest-, I think it was the Forestry camp; just a rangers' camp right on the shore of the lake. And . . .

DN: Was this on the shore of Churchill?

LS: On the shore of Churchill; yup, the upper part. We could look from the camp site right straight up the lake to where we'd come, where the plane had brought us. George left us at the dam and the Jalberts met us there, and they had all the food and all the equipment and took care of us. And that started a most interesting trip. The next morning, because I do some fishing, he took me across the head wall at . . . There was a body of water, you know, that's between Churchill and the dam, where the planes could land and did land and so forth. There's a brook that goes out of there, and I saw it on the map. He took me up in there and we caught the most beautiful mess of trout you've ever seen; had them for dinner that day. We started going down Chase Rapids that morning after breakfast, and ended up at the campground at the foot of Chase Rapids, on the right hand side, one that's very commonly used. It has a name; I think you've got it on the map. But that's where we stayed the, no, that's where we had our supper. Then we paddled down the shore to Jalbert's camp, which was of course operating in those days. Sam Jalbert's, not the one we, not . . .

DN: This is the Sam Jalbert camp down on the thoroughfare between Umsaskis and Long Lake?

LS: Yeah, this was Sam Jalbert's sporting camp which was on the left-hand side. The thoroughfare road goes across, and just below there on the left-hand side is where Sam Jalbert's camp was.

DN: Just below the John Page⁸ camp, but on the other side of the river.

LS: John Page, (*unintelligible phrase*) interesting story. John Page was an acquaintance we made in the Allagash who befriended us and when he found out that we were going to go to Florida, he said, "I'm going to meet you and entertain you at the Everglades." Right?

GS: Yup.

LS: And he did.

GS: He was very nice.

LS: Awful nice.

GS: And very helpful.

⁸ John Page, Inland Fisheries and Game Advisory Council, 1950s.

DN: Well, . . .

GS: Your girl is gone?

DN: Yeah, she had to get back to class.

LS: I'm just rambling now.

DN: No, well . . . (*brief break in taping*).

LS: . . . Which is downstream, where Jalbert had a camp; the other Jalbert, from Fort Kent.

DN: Willard, yeah.

LS: Yup, and we didn't, we stayed in the Forestry camp which was right on the shore, right in back of that. And then the next day, because we wanted a better view of things, we climbed the mountain in back of that. So it would be, whatever that mountain's name for and, where the Forestry tower was. And the next day we went downstream and took out at, someplace, some brook down there.

DN: You took out at a brook below Round Pond? On the third day?

LS: No, we went down through the falls.

DN: Oh, you went down to the falls and then down . . .

LS: No, we didn't. I don't think we did, . . .

DN: Did you go to Michaud Farm?

LS: We went to, oh, Michaud Farm, yes. And, was it, boy with the name of Taylor; does that make any sense?

DN: Well, Taylor had a cabin on the lower part of the river, well below the falls, down below Twin Brook Rapids, pretty near the end of the river.

LS: Well, down there somewhere, we took out because the road came right to the . . .

DN: Well, the road comes to the river at Michaud, and then down, I think it's below Twin Brook Rapids is another point.

LS: Anyway, we took out there and that would have been the same day that we, after we stayed overnight at Round Pond, then this toward the end of the trip. And we went down to Sam's house and paid the bill.

DN: And this must have been '61, '62, somewhere in there?

LS: I can't place it in that light. I have to, I don't, I didn't keep a diary or anything in those days. But it's all, if I only had access to the files at the Parks Department.

DN: But the Parks Department. would have that information?

LS: Yeah. But see, they've practically destroyed everything by putting it on microfilm or something and sticking it in the vaults up there at Amherst. I don't know, maybe they've got something on that, they, but my film they don't have, because I took . . .

DN: Well, when we come back, we see you again, perhaps we can take a look, take that film and we can get a . . .

LS: I want to see it myself.

DN: And the easiest thing would be to get copies made on videotape, as well as to see about having it preserved. There's a group in, I guess they're located in Bucksport now; Northeast Film, a not-for-profit group. And you might want to think about them having the film and really taking care of it, and have a copy for your, copies for your family on tape.

LS: Yeah. I think the grandchildren, Mike, is, is interested in the genealogy of the family and is the only logical receptor of our estate, I suppose, when we get through.

DN: Well I'm going to suggest that we . . .

End of Interview