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Whitcomb, Roy, Jr. oral history interview

Brian O'Doherty

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Interview with Roy Whitcomb, Jr. by Brian O'Doherty

Summary Sheet and Transcript

Interviewee

Whitcomb, Roy, Jr.

Interviewer

O'Doherty, Brian

Date

January 24, 2000

Place

Farmingdale, Maine

ID Number

MOH 166

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Biographical Note

Roy Whitcomb, Jr. was born on December 26, 1927 in Cleveland, Ohio. His parents met at Deering High School in Portland, Maine. His father, Roy Sr., served in World War I, and later worked for Goodyear Tire and Rubber in Akron, Ohio and Hally Brothers in Cleveland, Ohio. His mother, Mary Ashton (Rustemeyer) Whitcomb worked for General Electric in Schenectady, New York. Both returned to Maine during the Depression. Roy, Jr. earned his degree in Journalism from Boston University in 1950. He became a police reporter in Fredericksburg, Virginia, then was drafted for two years during the Korean War. He worked for Jim Oliver, and then helped Curtis run for the House in 1964. He was Deputy Secretary of State under Governor Curtis for one day. He served as director of the Democratic Party in New Hampshire in 1965. He was Executive Assistant and Press Secretary under Ken Curtis, during his second term as Governor. He served as the Director for Model Cities in Maine.

Scope and Content Note

Interview includes discussions of: Office of Price Stabilization (OPS); anecdote of car ride with Curtis, Muskie and Mitchell, 1966?; Dick McMahon; Ken Curtis; World War I: State Guard comparable to National Guard; Bill Dunfey; anecdote reflecting Humphrey's inability to remember faces and names; wrote Curtis' inaugural speech with George Mitchell; Maine Nudist

Camp, Gray, Maine; Model Cities; and the Boston Post Road.

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Transcript

Brian O'Doherty: We are here today on the 24th of January of 2000 with Mr. Roy Whitcomb at the Maine Retiree Association in Farmingdale. What we're here to do today, Mr. Whitcomb, is

really try to get an oral history of Maine as well as Mr. Edmund Muskie's career, beginning with the days in which you entered Maine history, or politics, and trying to end up with today. So, can you please start by naming and spelling your full name?

Roy Whitcomb: Okay, well my full name is Roy Harold Whitcomb (*segment unintelligible due to electronic drone - microphone error?*)

RW: . . . it was a positive one. I went to work in Biddeford, I stayed there about three years, then I came to Portland and worked at . . .

. . . I'd love to help you, what do you want me to do? "Well, nothing," he said, "I don't know yet, but maybe I'll give you a call." So he called me about a week later, come over to the house on a Sunday afternoon, about six or seven people there, and Curtis, and we talked about him running for congress . . .

. . . I've spoken to this group and I'm going to say this, and he would read the release to them so that everybody would have it, so, they would have the benefit of that. And then the newspapers sometimes would run it. And we were trying to get a dialogue going between he himself, and a man named Stan Tupper. Stan Tupper was a, the Republican congressman who covered the same district. And because he was a Republican and it was a year of Democrats, hopefully you're going to get elected everywhere, we felt we could knock him out. And . . .

. . . that was the same year that Lyndon Johnson got elected with a landslide, in Maine even, and almost everybody in Maine got elected in the legislature if he put a D after his name. And Curtis lost by a hundred and twenty, thirty votes, so we had a recount. And they counted the votes in every town and city in Maine, and we lost again, same amount practically, but it kept his name in the public eye. For weeks after that election nobody knew whether he had won or not.

And so when the legislature sat in January, remembering that almost the first time in I don't know how many years, they had a majority of Democrats. The Democrats have the right to name, or the majority party I should say, names the secretary of state, the state auditor, the, they name the members of the executive council, they name the state treasurer. Well, . . . so they told Curtis if he wanted a job they'd give it to him because he did so much, you know, to brighten the awareness of the Democrats. So he wanted to be secretary of state. Next day, as secretary, they named him to that job and he became, he became secretary of state on the inauguration day which is another month or so away.

During that interesting time, I'm a friend of Curtis', he knows he's going to be secretary of state, so he named me deputy secretary of state. No, wait a minute, he did that after he got in office, yeah, after he got in office. Well, the governor of the state is still running the executive council and he's a Republican. Some of the members of the executive council, they were all Democrats, didn't like Curtis, really because they'd ran against him and lost in the primaries. And they wouldn't give him his deputies, I mean, they would not fund my job. So I'm in one day and out the next, I was deputy secretary for a day. And never again.

Well, that interesting turn also put me in a bad light with the editor of the paper that I worked

for. They brought me into the office, they said, "Now, I've been reading about you in our paper and you can't have people in political life being, also being reporters, they'd be too biased. And even though you probably are not biased, it would look that way to the general public. You've got to make up your mind. Do you want to be a journalist, or do you want to be a politician?" I said, "Oh, I want to be a journalist, don't worry about that." Well, that saved my job for about three weeks, and then I had a chance to go to work in New Hampshire as the director of the Democratic Party.

See, the Democratic Party is just like the one in Maine, it has an office staff and a director. I got that job. And they hired me, they said, because I didn't know anybody in New Hampshire so I couldn't have any, I didn't have any one guy that I liked better than another or anything like that. And I kept that job for a year or two. Then Curtis got elected governor. Not with me, I wasn't working on his campaign. I came up here a couple of times, that's it, just chat with him. And I went through the campaign mistakes they were making trying to explain to them how they could do something differently. In a couple of cases they did.

And so when he got elected he called me up again, he said, "Now I've got a job for you. Why don't you quit that job down there and come right up here?" "Well," I said, "I don't know, it's a pretty good job I got down here." "What are you going to give me up there?" "Don't worry, it'll be a good job," you know. And he really didn't have any idea what I was going to be, he just, but he was helping me out of the, he figured I wasn't happy in New Hampshire. Even I don't know whether I was or not. But I said, "Okay, I'll come up and talk to you." So all the way up on the road I decided, yeah, I'll stay, I'll go back to Maine, I really don't know that many people in New Hampshire. But you have to remember, you keep winding up buying a house and moving out, and moving again, it's a pain in the ass. I had a family and they were all, they were not upset, you know, but they didn't like to move around either. But anyhow, I did move back. And I'm just telling you this about me, only because I think we're trying to get to Muskie somewhere, right?

So I got to tell you, my most intimate adventure with Muskie occurred just about the time I'm coming back to Maine. It's, Curtis is not governor but he's going to be inaugurated. Take a month or so, you know, for a lot of paper work to be done and speeches to write and finances to review and whatever. And we would meet at Maury Williams' place, Maury Williams lived up across from the Augusta Country Club. And we'd go there, then I'd have to go back to New Hampshire. I'd come up for a day or so, then I got to go back to New Hampshire because I haven't quit the job down there.

And so one day Curtis is floating around between Portland and Augusta. His car is in Portland, he's in Augusta, he's got to get back. So he said, "Give me a ride back." I said, "Oh sure." "Well," he said, "Muskie needs a ride back, too." So I said, "Okay." I don't care, I've got a sedan. Well, we'll meet him at the turnpike gate, the Augusta turnpike gate. So then Curtis has a way of delaying things, you know. I mean, like he's going to meet a guy at twelve, if that guy's smart he won't show up until one thirty, because that's when Curtis is going to be there. No, that's not always true, it was at that time. And anyhow, so we drove around, we finally get to the gate and there's Muskie standing there. And he's got George Mitchell with him by the way, who works for him at the time, and we're going to Portland and it's beginning to snow. It's

been snowing for twenty, half an hour, and these guys are not only a little upset because we're late, but they're a little covered with snow. And they get in the car and we drive down the road, and I'm driving and, I don't know. When you drive a car on fresh fallen snow, you're not really where it's going to stop when you hit the brakes. So I would come up to an intersection and I'd hit the brakes and the car would kind of slip forward, but I knew where it was going to stop. The guy in the back seat didn't know that, he was Ed Muskie and he was getting goddamned nervous about that. He finally said, "Roy, I've had my brakes on for twenty minutes now. When are you going to start doing that right?" I said, "Well, I keep trying to do it right but it's, but the road is terrible." "Well, just keep trying to do it right, will you?" I said, "Okay."

So I remember that because I remember somebody told me later, boy, he gets upset easy you know, and you really got him upset. But on the other hand, I'm driving and he's just riding in back there. And he, he never reminded me of that again. I just think about that once in a while because he kept saying, I've had my brakes on for twenty minutes, you haven't." And I was sliding. And what I'm really thinking is this: I don't know these guys too well. I know Curtis a little bit. But here I am, I'm in a car with the new governor of Maine, the senator from Maine, and his aide George Mitchell, and if we go off the road and get, all get killed, they won't even mention my name in the ob-, I won't even be mentioned in the accident. But anyhow, well, let's see, did you have some questions you'd like to (*unintelligible word*)?

BO: Actually, to go back, we're going to go through these things because this is some interesting information. Particularly, I'd like to go back, all the way back to your beginning in Maine and ask you a few questions about your parents, and your parents' names and why they chose to move to Maine as opposed to any other northeastern state.

RW: Well my father's name of course was Roy Whitcomb. My mother's name was Mary, Mary Ashton Rustemeyer. And she and my father met at Deering High School, when they were in high school. And when, this is right before WWI. Now, when WWI started, my father was in what they called the State Guard, which is comparable to I suppose now the National Guard. And it wasn't too long before he and his brother were called into active duty and shipped to France right out of Portland, in a troop ship that came in here. I can imagine what . . . Well anyhow, they did, they took all the kids in Portland off to France.

Well anyhow, when he got back he wanted to get married, and my mother said, "You don't even have a job." "Well," he said, "I, it's not easy to get a job in Maine." "Well," she said, "get a job somewhere else." So he heard from a couple of his buddies that they were hiring guys out in Akron, Ohio at the Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company. And he, so he, they, about five of them, they all went out to Akron and got jobs right away. My mother, by the way my mother's now out of high school and she's a, she says to him, "That's not much of a job," you know, "I'm not going to marry you, because you're just going to be making tires the rest of your life." "Well," he says, "I'll work on it."

So anyhow what happened is, a couple of friends of his at the tire factory knew of a store in Cleveland called Hally Brothers, which is like we'll call it Macy's would be or something. It was big in the middle west, particularly in Cleveland. They were hiring people. So he went up there and he got a job. Now he's in the, he had some background in carpentry and ruggery, but I

don't know why, but anyhow, he got into the division of rugs and carpets. Well, he got a better job, now he's paid based on sales and things like that and it's pretty good. So he calls my mother again and she allowed that it probably is a pretty good job and we'll get married. So she was living by then in Schenectady, New York, she had left Portland. And her mother had moved, and they moved back, she was originally from the western part of Massachusetts outside of Northampton. Northampton? Yeah, yeah. And they went to, she got a job in Schenectady working for General Electric, that's a big company out there I guess. And anyhow, from there she went to Cleveland. They got married. Now they lived there for seven or eight years before I was born, and then, now it's the late '20s, the late '20s I was born, in '27. The Depression hit about a year later and when it did, the business my father was in is not going to succeed. I mean, people aren't buying too many Oriental rugs and they're not buying too many of these other things, they're going to let it do until next year. And then, meanwhile the store's losing money so they decided they would put everybody on a commission basis, no salary, only commissions. Well, he couldn't make that. I mean, that did not work for him.

So his father said, you ought to come back to Maine, there's no Depression here to begin with, which is true at the time, only took him a few more weeks to get there, and I think I've got a good deal for you. Well anyhow, that's what they did. They came back to Portland and his father and he got together and they bought a coal company. You know, coal and oil, mostly coal, coal and wood I guess they sold. Well, it was an established business and they bought it. And they had a regular list of customers and everything else. But then, geez, when the Depression really hit, everybody's broke and they're out of work. And they need coal and wood in winter, I don't care whether you've got money or not, so they would have to trust them. Well a lot of people just went through bankruptcy, they left my father high and dry in the water. He really lost a lot of business, people who just left him. And he wound up, this is during the '30s, he's buying most of his coal from a larger wholesaler, then being the middle man and being stuck. He finally wound up, he had to sell the business, he had to sell it to the wholesaler to meet his debts (*unintelligible word*). But fortunately for him and millions of others, WWII started and a big shipyard showed up at Portland. He went to work in the shipyard and he managed to stay there about six years and got a good wage. And, you know, so I mean, he bridged that gap with that. And after that he got into the business of dry cleaning.

BO: This is your father?

RW: My father, yeah. Meanwhile I'm just a kid going through all this. We, but I mean you think about it now, we, sometimes you think you had a tough life, we really didn't have a tough life. We lived in a nice single home up in the Deering area, we had a summer place on Peak's Island. Everybody in the family had it, I mean, it belonged to my grandfather, but you know, one family another week, another week and all that stuff. But anyhow, after the war he got into that other business.

Then I got through college. I went to Boston University after going to Portland Junior College for a while. Then I got out of BU and I went into journalism and I really wanted to do that, I wanted to. I remember somebody at the college saying, we'll make you another Ernie Pyle. Well everybody was saying that, you know, that was the big thing. A lot of national, there were well known figures who had been national writers, and I thought I could do that. But I began

reading more and more and more and going to classes and their point was this: you want to get big, you got to start small. Go to work for a small daily paper, or weekly, learn the ropes and work your way up. I didn't, I should not have listened to them but I did, and so I went to Fredericksburg, Virginia when I got out of college. My God, a small town, you would never believe it.

Well the worst thing about Fredericksburg to me, it was segregated. You know, I never lived in any circumstance like that. You get into town and that's the colored end, and this is the white end. Even the railroad stations, they'd have a sign that said colored this way and that way.

And there I went to work as a reporter on the local paper. And one of the things you had to learn was every time you wrote a man's name down, or a woman's name, you had to say John Smith, comma, colored, comma, or not. If it's not there, he's white. But if he was colored you had to say it because down in Fredericksburg and all through the South, when the slaves were released they had to take names, they took the names of the families that they worked for, or had owned them. And so because of that, that's the only name they had. Like you could be a guy like George Smith, okay, but you're a laborer, a farm hand. Now all of a sudden you're free, you've got to have your own name. Well, try George Smith. So they did. So now the newspaper would have said, it's George Smith, comma, colored, comma. Many times because they were always getting arrested, you know, and I (*unintelligible phrase*) like maybe, that may not be fair. I was a police reporter. Well, I'd be covering people who got arrested anyhow, you know. But I remember that, and going on with that about a year or so, I worked in that paper.

And all of a sudden it's the Korean War. And I got drafted right out of there and wound up in, well wound up in California for a year, and another year in Korea, and then I was out. That was a two year enlistment. Not enlistment, they drafted you for two years, that was it. Under some law that allowed, while I was in the service they changed the law so they could draft a guy for three years, but they couldn't draft me for that because I was already in under the two year law. And I'm glad of that because many, several times they offered me better jobs in the Army, and better ranks and all that stuff. I don't want that, just get me out of here, I'll do the two years, period. So I did.

And then I got back to the, back to Maine and I went to work for the *Biddeford Journal*, no, no, I went to work in Biddeford where the *Biddeford Journal* was, but the *Portland Press Herald* ran an office there. And I went to work in the *Portland Press Herald*, and covered the news. But you see, the *Journal* is an evening newspaper and the *Press Herald* is a morning newspaper, so a lot of the news that I wrote ap-, you know, happened at some time after twelve noon, during the afternoon or evening. It was fresh news in the morning paper. And the *Journal*, *Biddeford Journal* had to bring it up, you know, it looked like they would take all the news out of the *Press Herald*. So there was always some sort of a bad feeling about me being there with those guys because I was scooping them daily, daily.

I had one, I had, one of the best ways to be a reporter, you got to make a lot of contacts. One of them you have to contact is the police news, is the police desk where the, when you call in and report a crime the first guy you talk to is at the desk there, he assigns a, he assigns anybody who has to go out to it. But he's there all day and he's like a filter, in the operating desk, operations

center. And those guys, you make them, become friendly because if they get a, they know that you're interested in bad accidents, fires, shootings, stuff like that, they'll call you, you know. As soon as they get the call, as soon as they get the policemen on the job they give you a call. But you've got to be friendly with them. You got to, you know, send them some liquor for lunch and things like that at Christmas time, and things like that.

I remember doing that and, ha, there was a guy working on the *Biddeford Journal* who'd been around for a hundred years. He was always, he was a man, Sam Leblinsky, and he had worked for the Boston papers; he wound up settled in Old Orchard Beach. And he was the *Biddeford Journal* police reporter and he always showed up anywhere I did, at a fire or accident or something. He said to me one day, he said, "You know, (*unintelligible phrase*), you've always got to have a pint of whiskey in the car because it's a cold night, those guys are unhappy, they want to talk. Get them in the car and give them a drink, they will tell you everything." So that's what we, I used to do that, there was a pint of whiskey in the car. Then comes Christmas time, you've got to give them all a pint of whiskey for a Christmas present.

And I remember the first year I did that, I sent my editor a bill, you know. I said, I mean, I'm only making fifty dollars a week and a bottle of whiskey's three or four bucks. I bought about four or five of them. And the editor said, "We never do that, we're not going to bribe our policemen. Are you crazy? No we can't, we're not paying for that." "You're not paying?" "No, sir, we, and don't you ever do that again." And I said, "Well fuck this," pardon me, but I went out of course and bought the liquor. And then I sent him a bill for, oh, I don't know, a new hat or some other darn thing that you had to have in your work. Because you had to have a little oil to grease the wheels to get the story, and to get them to call you. That's the thing, they got to be on your side.

And my biggest problem down there, when I think about it now, is that I cannot speak French, and down there that's all they speak. They are all bilingual. And, you know, if they don't want you to know something they just rattle on in French and you're out of it. And I complained to a guy a couple of times about that and he said, "We'll never do that again." Well he never did, he really was nice about it. But I never really believed, because they could still, you know, how would I know.

But, I mean you're dealing with some terrible situations, that's what it is when you're a reporter, you go to the worst in the world. I remember one day going up the river from Biddeford in the winter, and there's an ice pond out in the front of somebody's home and it's a backwash of the river itself, the Saco River. And some kids are out there playing, that ice breaks, they go down, and they drowned. They're dead, two of them. Well, the family gets them out somehow or other. But I hear about it and I'm up in Portland and I have to go down and I drive down and get to the house and, I mean it's over, the kids are already gone, you know, to the morgue. And I asked the mother, I asked somebody to come out from the house, knocked on the door, told them I was a reporter and that I heard about this terrible thing, could you tell me about it and so forth. And I said to one guy, "Do you have a picture of these kids?" And he grabbed me and he's going to pound me right there, you know. He really was mad as hell that I would have the nerve to show up at a time of crisis in a family's life like this. And I said, "Wait, don't do it, it's my job, I mean, I'm only doing a job. I don't mean to hurt your feelings." You know, I had to really

finesse it quite a bit.

About that time the mother comes out on the deck and she's quite understanding. It was her brother was giving me a hard time. She was quite upset but I told her how upset I was and all. That I, I was only trying to, you know, help these people by putting something in the newspaper that was accurate. And that's what they really wanted, see. They gave me a couple of pictures and all and knew what I wanted and I left. And I thought, you know, that's really a tough thing to do, I don't like, I don't want to do that every day. But you got to do it every day if you're, you would if you were in the city of Boston or something like that, not quite here. But anyhow, I digress, what else do you want, we're way off the track.

BO: Just to go back again, I wanted to know your birth date and birth place.

RW: Okay, my birth date is December 26, 1927, a day that would live in infamy. And I was born in Cleveland, Ohio, St. John's Hospital as I recall. I don't remem-, yeah, it was St. John's Hospital.

BO: And your high school years, where did you -?

RW: I was at Deering High School, graduated in 1946. And I went to Boston University and graduated in 1950.

BO: And the year you moved back to Maine.

RW: The year we moved back to Maine? Must have been 1934. I was quite young, you know. Yeah, 1934.

BO: And then the year you moved to Virginia?

RW: Well, I moved to Virginia after graduating from college in 1950, and I moved there June of 1950. And that's the same month that North Korea invaded South Korea, June 25th of 1950. And I thought, well that's apropos of something, and it was, I mean, before the year was out they're hauling my poor fanny across. But the only thing that . . . I don't know about the service, I kept, I'd seen too many movies, you know, it's just, I can't believe I'm in this movie. And we wound up in, I come to Portland, I had to be sworn in out to Fort Williams with a bunch of guys that I, some of them I had gone to school with.

And we got on a rickety old Army bus and right down to Fort Devons which is outside of Boston, it's on that interstate 495, which wasn't there at the time, by the way, the 495 wasn't there. But anyhow we got there. And, oh God, it was a rainy, it was December 5th, 6th, and it was raining like a sonofabitch and it was a miserable day. First thing they do, you know, in the Army, they take you to a huge warehouse like a big airplane hangar, and they give you some Army clothes like a poncho, underwear, everything. And all your clothes, they give you bag to send it home in, or you can keep it, but I mean, you can do whatever you want but it's all gone, it's useless to you. And I, then we're freezing to death and wet as hell and all that jazz, they bring you up and start giving you your shots. Shots were very important and they got to be done

right away. Well one of them is a killer, I forget what it is but I think it's tetanus, but I mean this pain goes right through you. Well, well anyhow, then they feed you and they fed me something that to this very day I will never eat again, and that's called liver and onions. I hate liver and onions. Christ, I was at a restaurant today, they were featuring it. But I mean, honest to God, it was just terrible. That piece of liver was like a leather shoe sole, you know. Oh, it was, well anyhow. But anyhow I started the Army that way.

But within a week we were on a train, wound up in California. My God, the difference is unbelievable. Remember, it's December, we went across country it seemed for days, a long trip, Jesus. We got to Chicago, we had to be stuck there for eighteen hours because they needed clearance, these are special trains, you know, and all that stuff. Meanwhile, they're Pullman cars, you can't get out of them, they're sealed cars, you cannot leave them. And, did you ever see that movie, "Some Like It Hot" with Marilyn Monroe and Jack Lemmon? Well, there's a lot of scenes in a Pullman car. But anyhow the Pullman cars are just, pull the windows out and you've got double bunks, you know, with curtains on them.

Well anyhow, when we finally get to a place in the west I believe called the Donner Pass, where in the history of America it's famous, or infamous is a better word, for the place where a party of explorers heading west got to the Donner Pass, got stuck, and wound up cannibalizing each other. They wound up eating each other. Terrible.

So anyhow, the train went right through by the way, but then it went down hill and by God we wound up in Sacramento and it was a beautiful afternoon. The sun is out, guys are walking around in short sleeves, you know, it was a beautiful day. Just from the mountains down to that was what. And then we went down to Camp Cook, Camp Cook is down near Santa Barbara and that's another hundred and fifty miles from where we were, Sacramento. But we stayed right there. Now Camp Cook is Van Den Berg Air Force Base, all those big missiles are launched from there. But anyhow, that's another story. We wound up there, and about a year later I'm transferred overseas.

By that time I thought I'd never go overseas, you know, but then they ran through a list and they said, "We're sending everybody overseas who's never been there, I don't care what he does." So I'm an enlisted man, I'm a, oh, what is the word, I'm some kind of a writer anyhow, you know, as a writer. And I have a secondary speciality as a rifleman, but I figured they'd never ask me to do that. But that's what they put me down for, rifleman, Korea. And next thing I know, thirty day pass and then show up at the boat. I had to show up at the boat up in San Francisco, and I did, and the boat didn't leave for three weeks. And then we finally got overseas, we got to Japan, we wound up in Yokohama Bay, and that was another rainy day I remember. They run you up the road, up a train run for quite a ways, what they call a port of embarkation or something where they reshuffled you into a different place, and then the next day they tell you where you're going.

So the next day they told me I'm going to Korea and be here, you know, like at five o'clock tomorrow afternoon. So at five o'clock tomorrow afternoon we march back up these trains, down to the port, onto these troop ships, off we go. Christ, we went through the worst storm I've ever seen. You know in the movies where you see these huge ships flying? Well, we're in a

ship as big as that and it's just bumping off the goddamned, right off the top of the ocean. It was scary. I really was thinking that I may never get out of here, you know, so I'm writing a letter to my parents. Oh, it was scary. But when we got to Korea, interestingly enough, Korea had already been sort of taken over by the Americans and we landed in a place where it's safe to land.

But there were, Korea is like Maine as far as it's relationship to their globe. It has very high tides, eighteen, twenty foot tides. It also has no drop off like this, it's just a long . . . They had to anchor these ships five, six miles out to sea, and then send you down on a flat platform and onto a landing craft. Then the landing craft can go in, and it does, you know, and it drops the front down and, boom, you're there. I couldn't believe this was happening to me, you know. Fortunately, (*unintelligible phrase*) the war is another two hundred and fifty miles up there somewhere, but God that was scary because it was so, I was not used to it and I didn't know what to expect. But everything turned out all right of course, and I didn't get shot. I came close to being shot, but I didn't get shot, and had a very interesting month or two, well, six months I guess. But anyhow, that's what, well, doesn't seem to be anything to do with Ed Muskie.

BO: Going back still to your childhood and maybe your teenage years, I'm curious to know when you decided that you'd become a Democrat, and when you started becoming politically involved and why?

RW: Okay, well that's a good question, that's fair. I decided to become Democrat because . . . My parents, remember, they are Republicans, oh yes. My father hated Roosevelt, and we used to blame all my father's problems on the Roosevelt administration. And the bankruptcy laws had been eased, and the WPA is giving away money, and all this other stuff, none of which my father ever took advantage of. It was quite upsetting. So I was too, naturally, growing up as a child.

But after I got into college, and I became very dissatisfied with people like Thomas E. Dewey who was a Republican running for, against Harry Truman. And Harry Truman ran for reelection the same month that I became twenty-one, only I became twenty-one in December. He got elected in November, so I couldn't vote for him. But anyhow, I admired Truman and I admired his pluck, you know, he was quite a plucky guy. And we went to, I went through that process in my mind quite often after that. Not just jumping into politics as a whole but I wound up, I wound up as a reporter. And I'm in Biddeford covering all those political events, trying to be very neutral, really, you got to be neutral, and it was before I got involved with Curtis. Then I wound up moving to Portland. And I wound up living next door to a guy named Milton Wheeler.

Milton Wheeler, I told your boss about him, he's still alive, he lives down in Pembroke Pines, Florida. Well Milton Wheeler says to me one day, "What do you think of Ed Muskie?" And I says, "Well, never thought too much about him." Well, he started to tell me about it. Well Wheeler is one of Muskie's closest friends. If it wasn't for Wheeler, Muskie would never have been really, a lot of times, where he was. But that's a long, but that's another story. But anyhow, I got interested in politics more and more and more dealing with, or living next door to Wheeler. But by that time I was already working for Curtis, you know, and I'm on the governor's staff. And I just drive to work every day from Portland to Augusta, and I used to

bring him with me because he had a job up there, too.

End of Side A

Side B

BO: This is side B of Roy Whitcomb's interview on January 24th, 19- excuse me, 2000. You were telling us about your political alignment and how it came about. Please continue.

RW: Oh well, I really, I, no, it started really back in the days of working in Biddeford, Maine. But there it was just my interest in politics as a way of life for people, I mean, I'm an observer. Writers have to take all sides and bring them to, to sort them all. I didn't become interested in Democratic politics particularly until I got to know Ken Curtis better and then realized, and then began to realize that if you wanted to find out what the difference between a Republican and Democratic and so forth, I mean, there are many ways to do it. But one of them is to realize that Republicans really are interested in maintaining the status quo, and also making sure that the institutions that we have are not destroyed, are not broken down.

Whereas Democrats realize the problem with this country is that these institutions don't work, they've got to be fine-tuned, and they have to be fine-tuned on a regular basis. And unless they are, you have this, the, you have things set in I guess you'd say, that becomes sort of a bad way, a bad influence. Now, I'm not trying to, I don't want to say rot, but they do, really do rot. And I think Democrats never are satisfied with that circumstance. So some of them are more active than others. Some are more competent than others and therefore can get things done, where others can only complain about it. I think that's quite good.

I must say also, I used to run into Republicans in different places that to me were really lightweights, you know, and yet they had these unusually powerful jobs. One of the people that comes to mind is a guy named Eddie Bernstein in Portland. Edward Bernstein became the postmaster of the city of Portland. He was active in the Republican Party, Margaret Chase Smith was senator, and he wanted that job and it was available, and he bugged her and she gave it to him, I mean she approved it. I have never seen a more incompetent person. His claim, his claim to ownership of that job was that when he was in the Army he was a mail clerk. Well, a mail clerk in the Army is a guy who opens up a bag of mail every day and reads off your name and hands it out; that's the best he could do. Oh, he was just incompetent. And a man who never knew that he was incompetent, you know, that's the worst part. When somebody, I remembered that phrase years ago, but, if a man knows not and knows not that he knows not, he's in trouble, you know, (*unintelligible phrase*). But anyhow, the reason about, that's one of the reasons I became very pro-Democrat. I think, I'll tell you honestly, there were times when I'd cry for the Republican Party because they're so incompetent, they manage to screw up things so bad. They're ruining government as I know it in this country, or in this city and this state. There are things that could be done right if the right people were there, and they're not there. And therefore, you know, they're allowing these things to happen.

I remember this so well, I used to live in a neighborhood in Standish not too many years ago. Nothing but Republicans, they were young people who were Republican, unbelievable that that's true, but it is. And so this fellow that I knew particularly well, he was always telling me . . . in

fact they liked to rag me, they thought I was like the “token” Democrat. But there was a story in the paper one day and it was this, the Cumberland County Republican Committee is having a meeting.

And I don’t know if you know all these players, but the guy who was chairman was a very outspoken supporter of the right wing extremists of that party. And he wanted to have some guy who was a moderate thrown out as chairman because he was a moderate. And, we’re not going into a lot of names. They got so mad, that the guy who was the chairman called the police and they came over and they hauled those guys right out of there, they hauled, the police hauled the complainers right out of there. And there was a police note of course. And I called this guy up the next day. I said, “You know the Republican Party reminds me of those Polish weddings where the last person to leave at a Polish wedding is the riot police, the riot squad.” But that’s what they had there, the riot squad. They were just pathetic. That guy’s still around too.

BO: Who is it?

RW: Oh, who is it, what is the name, this guy is over at the right wing Christian coalition all the time now, and I saw his picture in the paper just a week or two ago after some stupid event. You see, they’re still out there, they still have clout, they have the majority in the United States Congress. People like Orrin Hatch, absolute scare mongers. Orrin Hatch, when he’s not doing anything else, I read in the paper the other day, he writes lyrics for country western songs. Did you know that? Oh yes, he does. And a couple of well known singers have recorded them. But, hmm, those people are scary.

But anyhow, when I get all my, you know, thoughts processed about Democrats versus Republicans, there’s always some example. I think, well they do some dumb things, I’m, I don’t like to just make a generality about it, but why, what was it that came up the other day. I don’t know, they’re going to have an election in another six months, wow, what other choices does the country have, they got Al Gore, and I can’t think of his name, what’s the guy’s, basketball player?

BO: [Bill] Bradley.

RW: Bradley, yeah. And Republicans have got George [W.] Bush, Jr. and [John] McCain. McCain would probably be a good president, you know, if I, if he would just pay attention and not try to be a Republican. But they wouldn’t let him do that. But anyway, because I think Republicans are crazy. They, you know, they really, their real goal in life is to destroy government as we know it, because it’s gone too far and it would be better to start all over again. Adam and Eve, an apple, a snake, you know, things like that. But that will never happen so, I don’t know, I, let’s ask some more questions, get more specific, I’m just drifting around.

BO: You were talking about Milton Wheeler earlier.

RW: Who?

BO: Milton Wheeler?

RW: Yes, right.

BO: And I was curious if you had any more anecdotes or any more stories about him?

RW: Milton Wheeler, I know the stor-, Milton Wheeler, I told this to somebody on the phone the other day. Milton Wheeler was active in politics in the Democratic Party back from the '30s. He came from the Lewiston area and he was a lawyer. His father owned a chain of clothing stores back before the war. And anyhow he, so he went to Harvard, he went to Dartmouth College, graduated Dartmouth, went to Harvard Law School, got a Harvard law, got all, the best of both worlds. Now he's practicing law in Portland, he has a, he gets involved in Democratic politics nationally and, even as a young man.

Now it comes to pass that Harry Truman gets elected president and we've got, you know, a big political organization in the country but nothing really going on in Maine. There are too many Republicans up here and they won't, you know, the Democrats can't survive. So to get them going, people like Wheeler meet with people like the national committee of the Democratic Party and they go to national conventions. Well, we went to a national convention. We went with a guy named Mike [V.] DiSalle, and Mike DiSalle is from Ohio and he became the national chairman of the Democratic Party.

He becomes friendly with DiSalle, and DiSalle, after Truman's elected, calls up Milton Wheeler and says, "Milton, we got a good opportunity for you. The president is establishing the Office of Price Administration [*sic*] [stabilization], you know, we've got to do something in this country to level off the inflation and all that sort of stuff, and the president wants you to have that job." Milton says, "I don't want that job, it's too much work. What I'd like to do is give you the name of a good Democrat to become their director. And I'll be his, I'll be his legal counsel, you don't have to do that much work." And, well, they said, "What are you talking about?" He said, "Well, a guy named Ed Muskie is quite popular in Maine. And he's been the state chairman and he's a lawyer, he lives up in Waterville, a lot of the Democrats up there, blah-blah-blah, I think he'd be, I think he'd work out fine." So they look up Muskie and they say, "Good choice." So Muskie, but Wheeler says, you have to remember that Wheeler told me this story, Wheeler says, "I want him to have this job, but I don't want to move to Waterville. Tell him to get him the job he's got to move to Portland, Maine." So that's what they do, see. So now Wheeler, so now Muskie moves to Portland and he gets the job, Wheeler gets the job of legal counsel, and Muskie moves into Wheeler's house. I mean, you know, during the week, they stay there. And they got him this job and they got him started and (*unintelligible phrase*).

A job like that gets you involved in national politics a lot more than he had been, I mean that Muskie had been. So Muskie now becomes the darling of the Democrats of the nation, you know, the guys who are the wheelers and dealers, the back door types, and they find Ed Muskie's their man, he's the guy that they liked. And so they push him and he runs for office and he gets elected. Now, he goes on, you know, and becomes very famous, Ed Muskie.

Milton Wheeler is not forgotten by Ed Muskie. Milton Wheeler gets a nice federal job when Muskie gets to be governor, and then he gets another nice federal job when he becomes a

senator. And, yeah, the only thing is he has to work in New York City. He's the head of the, oh, I forgot the name of it but it's a health, Health and Housing, no, Housing Finance Administration, HFA, not FHA but HFA. And the offices are in downtown New York, and so that's where he's got to work. Well, he doesn't care for that too much and finally a job shows up in Maine as the head of the Small Business Administration. And he calls up his wife, who is more friendly with Muskie than he is, and tells her, "Hey that's a good job, you know, why don't you see what . . . He says, "I don't want to go begging for these jobs but I would like to have it if it came up my way." Well it did and he went to work and she did that.

But you know, see, Milton doesn't, I mean, I don't think even today he would tell you a lot of that stuff because he and I traveled up and down the highway from Portland to Augusta for several years, just to kind of, you know, get little tidbits of things done. And I mean I could write, if I wrote a book about Milt Wheeler it would be very short because he didn't tell me that much about himself. But he's an interesting chap and he does know Ed Muskie, of course he's dead now, knew him very well and had a lot to do with Ed Muskie's starting the career that he finished with. And I don't think that the, I don't know that Muskie would have ended where he did without people like Milt Wheeler.

Another guy is Dick McMahon. Dick McMahon who I'm sure, they tell me he's died, but he was a close friend of Muskie's and he [Muskie] got him a job as head of the FHA, Federal Housing Authority. You know, that's another thing, yeah, I went into politics, one of the things I had in the back of my mind was oh, you get to know the right people, you can get any kind of a job, you know, you just have to be there, show up. Well, it's not really quite true, you have to have a little bit of smarts, you have to have a little bit of qualification for the job. Except for the job of postmaster of Portland, Maine, you don't have to have any goddamn brains for that job. But anyhow, what else should we talk about.

BO: All right. Like, how did Milton Wheeler ever actually end up meeting Ed Muskie?

RW: How did he wind up meeting him?

BO: Yeah, I mean how did he know to reference him to the job of price stabilization?

RW: Well, I suppose Muskie got involved in some state Democratic politics affairs, because they're not from the same town or anything. Milton is from a) Lewiston, and then b) he moved to Portland. Muskie's from Rumford and then moved to Waterville. And during that, some period in his life, they might have both got to know each other through working to get some Democrat elected, like Jim Oliver trying to get elected governor.

Jim Oliver was another story altogether, but that's, Jim Oliver was a Republican for years. He was elected three times as a Republican congressman back before WWII. But he became an isolationist, see, and he followed the old Townsend plan which is another story, or whatever, and wound up on the wrong end of the stick when the war started of course. So he, but that's Jim Oliver. So Jim Oliver still wants to be a congressman, they said, well you'll never, Republicans will never back you again, you know, you've had it. "Ah, the hell with that, I'll become a Democrat." So he did, and he got elected. He didn't get elected the first time but he did the

second time. And that allowed him to serve five terms in the congress, which gave him a certain pension level that was quite good, you know. And he was a pretty smart guy, but also everybody thought him a wheeler and a dealer type of guy. Well he was, but you've got to be in this world, you know, so. He, but anyhow how'd I get to, well, because he ran for governor I suppose. He told me one time that Muskie was one of the guys that talked to him to get him to run for governor. And he said they didn't have any money, had to run with no money, but he said, "If you'll get me a car and buy the gasoline, I'll go all over the state and I'll run for governor." It's what he did, but it's not enough, you've got to do more than that. And he didn't, he wasn't able to win the election. But he did, he was able to probably get guys like Wheeler and Muskie together because of the interest in Democrats.

God, there are a lot of Democrats in Lewiston who are, you know, figure in all this scenario too, I suppose. Whether it's good, bad or indifferent, that guy, Louis Brann who was a Democratic governor of Maine back in '35, '36, around there, had a lot to do with that. He was a lot to do with the rebirth of the Democratic Party, but it didn't carry, you know, it didn't last. Louis Jalbert's down there, everybody knows about Louis Jalbert. Whether it's good, bad or indifferent, they know about Louis. But there are a lot of other guys around there in the woodwork, if they're still alive, I don't know. What else are you interested in, where are we?

BO: Right, I actually want to move on to your directorship in New Hampshire and just probe in that area a little bit because that's very interesting.

RW: Well, the reason I had that job is because a guy named Bob Dunfey is a friend of Ken Curtis' and I'm a friend of Ken Curtis', in this instance, I mentioned to you about the secretary of state's job falls. Meanwhile, Bob Dunfey's brother Bill in New Hampshire has become the chairman of the Democratic State Committee down there, and they're all active Democrats down there. And they're really close to the Kennedys. And Bob, Bill was just about to be named to the White House staff when Kennedy was shot.

But anyhow, Bill, I mean Bob got me the job by going down to see Bill. And I just met him and drove around New Hampshire for a day, went up to Ports-, I mean went up to, I went to Portsmouth and I drove up to Manchester. And I'm a little overwhelmed by all this because I, next thing I know I'm having my supper with Gov. [John W.] King, the governor of the state and a couple of other people, and the senator, a guy named [Thomas J.] McIntyre. And they don't have a whole list of people they're going to interview for this job. They're just going to hire me if they like me, you know. So they told me that, and what would I do, and so forth and so on. And they wanted me to, they wanted to be sure of one thing, I didn't have any friends in the New Hampshire Democratic Party. That once I got the job I would, you know, isolate myself from them. You got to be as neutral as possible, and I said, I am, I don't know anybody in New Hampshire, I really don't. You know, I didn't.

And what was happening was, the party had been broken up in little factions because people who had tried to protect their friends, you know, did it at the expense of the party as a whole. So that's when they were trying to bring the party back together. And so I said, "Oh, that's no problem." So then I have to use my organizational skills. Well, the fact is, I don't really have any, but you had to develop them in your mind, you know, as you go along and, you know, get

meetings together, get people, get issues solved. And, Bill Dunfey was a wonderful mentor. I mean, he kept me, you know, up to speed on everything that had to be done anyhow.

And the, oh, we had two or three, when Lyndon Johnson was president he came to visit New Hampshire while I was there, and we had to go through an awful lot of crap, you know. When the president decides to visit someplace, weeks ahead of time they show up with what they call advance men and people from the Signal Corps, and the Secret Service, and the political arm of the party and all, of the, you know, White House. And they do, they run through all the different things they could do and then just select what he can do, and all that stuff. And I'm supposed to bring them to everything, you know, and try and sell them on this idea. And you do that for a while then you realize, you know, they're going to have something set in their mind anyhow, which they did because they really wanted it to be a platform for a particular speech he was going to give, and it has to do with the Navy. Well, there's the Portsmouth Naval Yard there, whatever. But anyhow, I did learn a lot about how to deal with presidents.

But Lyndon Johnson, about three or four times I bumped into him in North Korea, he was quite an interesting guy. And the, I saw more of him than I did any . . . I was thinking one time, in my life the first time I ever saw a real president, a live body, it was Harry Truman. I'm in Boston and I'm in the (*unintelligible phrase*) Square or something, ten thousand people, and he drives through in a car and waves and you could see him, that was it. Never saw him again. You realize that all your life you hear about the president this, that and the other and blah-blah-blah. You have an intimacy about him but you don't, because you, all you do is see him from afar. So when it came to Kennedy, I saw him two or three times but just for four minutes, five minutes at airports and down at Boothbay Harbor. He came to Portland, he came to Maine one time and went to Boothbay Harbor, so we had to cover all that pretty good. Then Hubert Humphrey, Hubert Humphrey, I saw him a dozen times because he was constantly, he would show up in Maine, and Humphrey was a really, a quite, he'd get right out in the crowd and work the crowd. But -

BO: Any particular anecdotes about Hubert Humphrey or Kennedy?

RW: Any, yeah, well, well I was just thinking about Humphrey. Humphrey was one of these guys that was, I think he tells the story on himself about being at a group meeting, I mean a crowd you know. And he could remember everybody there because he was there a year ago. And as people came through, he prides himself, he can remember their names. Well he can't. There's a little guy in back of him who's done some research and can tell him, you know. But then everybody has the feeling that he never forgets a face. And so, and what his story is, that he did this when some guy came by in this group as they're walking through. And you've got to imagine a crowded room and people coming through one after another to shake his hand. And he's always got something to say to them like, "How are you Charlie? How's Phil?" And then you get another guy, he'll say, "Well Bob, how's your wife Mary?" Things like that. People love that stuff. So he'd come along and he'd say, and this one person came up and, well, then he said, "Well Phil, how are you and how's your wife Phyllis?" "Well," he said, "she died." "Oh, that's too bad, well, sorry to hear that." He goes away. Well meanwhile the guy goes around and circles around and comes through the line again. And he's coming through the line and he's met the second time, and Humphrey looks right at him, he says, "Well, Phil, how are you?" He says,

“Fine.” He said, “And how is your wife Phyllis?” “Well,” he said, “she’s still dead.” That was one of Humphrey’s favorite jokes at the time. But anyhow, he was quite a star for that, mixing in with the people, he was very good. And he told everybody in the room, he said, “I want to shake everybody’s hand because I’m here to get money from you. You got to give me money so I can get elected. Now,” he said, “just come on right up here and give me that dollar bill” and I’ll shake your hand. And they would do it, you know, crowds of people. And that guy didn’t know any, he didn’t want you to leave the money in a bucket out back to be picked up by somebody else. He was quite a hands-on type of guy, very good.

He came to Maine one time and we were down to Boothbay Harbor. And we’re down to a place where, Jesus, it’s a beautiful spot and it’s the foggiest day in the world, you know, you could not see from here to that wall. And he’s, and when a vice president travels they bring along a lot of extra people to kind of make it a nice entourage, you know. And I don’t remember but I think he had Jimmy Rogers with him, remember Jimmy Rogers? Well he’s a singer, and a country western singer, and he had a couple other people like that. But they all came along and they were going to go down to the end of the point there, that place called, you know, oh, and they were going to have a cookout, a lobster bake eventually. And everybody’s going to be there, and then they’re going out on this great boat to an island where the lobster bake is going to be held. Well, we get there, they can’t take that boat out, can’t do anything, so they just do it right there on the lawn. But you couldn’t see, you could not see Humphrey from across the fireplace, it was amazing, amazing. He was quite impressed with the fact that it was a terrible time, how do you people stand it, you know? But anyhow, he was quite a personable chap. So was Lyndon Johnson, but I didn’t get to know him very well, I mean I wouldn’t ever feel closely, never spent any time where I felt that I was even, in a conversation with him I got along. But at, what else is on that thing?

BO: Oh, I was wondering if you had any other, any stories about Mitchell?

RW: George Mitchell? George Mitchell and I, well, we go back a ways to when Curtis was running for governor. When Curtis was running for Congress, we went down to Washington to meet Muskie and George. George was going to take us over to the Democratic Campaign Committee offices where they’re going to give us some money to run a campaign. But you got to go down there and ask for it. Well, we go down there, we ask for it, and we didn’t get anything. Mainly because he’s running against a popular guy like Stan Tupper. And the people in Washington figure he’s going to get reelected and why spend any money on a guy named Ken Curtis. But anyhow, I did meet Mitchell down there that time, and I don’t remember much about it, except that.

But then, after we got elected governor, Mitchell is going to write Kenneth’s, I’m going to write Curtis’ inaugural address and so is Mitchell, the two of us, only we’re going to do it separately like in different parts of the state. And we did. And I met him down at, in Brunswick at the Howard Johnson’s down there, I remember that place, and we sat down and went over our notes (*unintelligible phrase*). And he has a phrase in there that I never heard before, and it has to do with pickerels and payrolls, you know, and the decision has to be made, blah-blah-blah whether it’s going to be pickerels or payrolls. I had never heard the expression and (*technical disruption starts again*)

... about that for a while, and we did kind of theme his speech around that idea, that it's really a question of the environment versus the economy, are you going to be ... get jobs, is it going to ruin the environment, so ...

... because he has done some amazing things, you know, with his career, with his life, and ...

... he quit it as soon as he could to become a senator, when Brennan appointed him to the senate. Then he stayed in that job until he was the best senator in Washington, chairman of the . . .

... was in line for things like Supreme Court judge or, well, we don't know those things, you know, they're just reports. But he got out of that altogether. . . .

... but that's what people write, you know, they don't really know any more than you and I do. But he's got an interesting life ...

... I wish I were that smart sometimes. But anyhow, I think he's making money now, too, which I've got, you know, I don't know what it is but he seems like he's involved in a lot of corporations and things. Because those people just buy you off, if they call me up tomorrow and ask me to go to a board meeting of RCA and they wanted to pay me ten thousand bucks to do it, I'd probably go. I'd refuse them when it was five thousand. Did you get that?

Well Curtis, I notice, is on some of these boards. And one of them that he's on is a mistake, the Maine Education Services thing. I think that's a mistake for him to be involved in that company. But that's another, there's another story. None of my business. That's what happens when you get older, get more calls to be on things. If you're a former governor, it's good to see your name on a list of officers and board directors and things like that.

BO: Do you have any, we traveled from the 1950s to the 1970s pretty quickly regarding your dealings with newspaper reporting and with politics as well as Maine's political arena. I was wondering if we could perhaps go back, slow down a little bit and travel the decades and maybe recollect any stories that you have regarding Maine history in general.

RW: Maine history, well, let's see, I did some things that I felt were of historic nature. One day I discovered that Maine had a nudist camp and went and found it, it was in Gray, Maine. And I went there and I did a couple of stories about it. And I must say that I was always, people bugged me forever afterwards about that. Well, they would say, "Did you do that story?" I said, "Yes." And they'd say, "Were they really naked?" I said, "Yes, really naked." Well, then, they'd be kind of shocked. I said, "Well, that's the way people are," you know? But I mean, historic proportion. I did a story I think was interesting. The distance from Boston to Maine and beyond the Maine border is marked off on ...

... and a hundred and fifty years ago or whenever, they used to have what they called the Post Road, and that was where you ...

. . . and that's how you found your way back and forth. Those posts exist today but they're lost, people don't know where the hell they are. And I helped a guy find about three of them, one of them in his front yard up in Cumberland on, you know, are you familiar with Cumberland, Maine? Well there's a road called Second Street, it parallels the turnpike and the interstate, . . . and it's the Boston Post Road. And I went up and we dug out under a guy's lilac bush and there was a post there. And we were down to another mile, found another one. And if you kept going, you go right down Ocean Avenue and go right through Portland, that's the route of the Boston Post Road. And I guess I did it through, then I found a book some guy had written about the whole thing, but he had missed some of them. He said, you just can't, people just don't think about it. Or sometimes people tear them up because they're in the way of project or something, you know, in that case. As a reporter, I don't know, I used to do a lot of things. I've got some clippings of things that I did, you know, that I thought were interesting, but I don't know what I did with them. I guess if I thought we were going through this I would have brought them along. Oh, I know what I can do just in a, I do know. Maybe we should take a break. I mean, I don't mind doing this, it's already quarter past three.

BO: Would you care to take a break and perhaps -

RW: And do it again another day?

BO: If we need to, that's just fine.

RW: Sure, that's okay.

BO: All right.

RW: I mean, I don't want to take a break and then continue here.

BO: Right, oh no, right, correct, on another day perhaps. All right, well this concludes the interview -

RW: I could do this, too, I could do it earlier in the day if it's all right with you.

BO: Okay, this concludes the Roy Whitcomb interview on January 24th, 2000 and, at the Maine Retirees Association.

RW: I've got to tell you something, we really are the Maine Association of Retirees.

BO: Maine Association of Retirees.

RW: As opposed to, have you turned that off?

BO: Yeah, sure.

End of Interview