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Nicoll, Don oral history interview

Andrea L'Hommedieu

Interview with Don Nicoll by Andrea L'Hommedieu

Summary Sheet and Transcript

Interviewee

Nicoll, Don

Interviewer

L'Hommedieu, Andrea

Date

September 24, 2008

Place

Portland, Maine

ID Number

MOH 449

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Biographical Note

Donald Eugene "Don" Nicoll was born in Boston, Massachusetts, on August 4, 1927, and grew up in the West Roxbury section of the city. He is the son of George and Mary Nicoll. He attended Robert Gould Shaw Junior High School and Boston English High School and graduated from Colby College in Waterville, Maine in 1949, majoring in History with a minor in Government. Don met his future wife, Hilda Farnum, also a Colby student, when they worked in the resort town of Ocean Park, Maine, in the summer of 1944. Nicoll began his graduate work at Pennsylvania State College in 1949, where he received a teaching fellowship in the Department of History. His graduate studies concentrated on American history, specifically the period from the Revolutionary War to the Civil War .. His M.A. (1952) thesis was on the Alien and Sedition Acts.

Starting in 1951, Nicoll and his family settled in Buckfield, Maine where he picked apples and taught part time at Stephen's High School, located in Rumford. Nicoll began working as an announcer for WLAM radio in Lewiston, Maine. He became a reporter and then news editor for WLAM and WLAM-TV. In June 1954, Nicoll left WLAM to become Executive Secretary of the Democratic State Committee at the request of Frank M. Coffin, who has just become chairman. Mr. Coffin was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives from Maine's Second Congressional

District in 1956 and Nicoll went to Washington, DC, as his administrative assistant, continuing in that post until December 1960, the end of Congressman Coffin's second term. Mr. Coffin ran for governor in 1960 and was defeated. After the election Senator Edmund S. Muskie asked Nicoll to join his staff as legislative assistant and news secretary. Nicoll served in that position until 1962, when he became administrative assistant. He continued in that post until 1971, when he became personal advisor to Senator Muskie. He left the senate office in mid-1972.

From 1972 until his retirement in 2005 Nicoll worked as a program and policy planner, first as a consultant (1972-73), then as chairman and chief executive officer of the New England Land Grant Universities Joint Operations Committee (1973-1975), then as coordinator of planning and vice president for planning and public affairs for the Maine Medical Center (1975-1986), then as a consultant (1986-2005). His clients were primarily in the non-profit sector and included, universities, libraries, education associations, health care organizations and social service agencies. He also worked as a volunteer, heading a variety of public policy projects, including the Maine Task Force on Government Reorganization, the Maine State Compensation Commission, the Maine (Mental Health) Systems Assessment Commission, the Maine Consortium for Health Professions Education, the Southern Maine Community Television Consortium, the Maine Special Commission on Government Reorganization (co-chair), the Board of Visitors of the University of Southern Maine's Edmund S. Muskie School of Public Service, the Maine-Aomori Sister-State Advisory Council and the Governor's Allagash Wilderness Waterway Working Group.

From 1998-2005, Don Nicoll was the Director of the Edmund S. Muskie Oral History Project at Bates College.

Scope and Content Note

Interview includes discussions of: 1971 foreign trips: Israel, West Germany, Soviet Union, Egypt and Nigeria; meetings with: Golda Meir, Menachem Begin, David Ben-Gurion, Anwar Sadat, Aleksey Kosygin, Andre Gromyko, Georgy Arbatov; Peter N. Kyros, Jr. surveillance story; 1972 presidential campaign; management of 1972 campaign; analysis of 1972 campaign; Roosevelt Campobello International Park Commission (RCIPC); Joint Operations Committee (JOC); Equal Access to Justice and Muskie Award program; Muskie Institute---early structure; Muskie and the art of persuasion; Charlie Lander's death; Dick Dubord's death; and Muskie's uses of temper.

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Transcript

Andrea L'Hommedieu: This is an interview for the Edmund S. Muskie Oral History Project. The date is September 24th, 2008, and today I'm interviewing Don Nicoll in Portland, Maine, and this is Andrea L'Hommedieu. Don, last time we talked we left off in 1970, and you'd just talked about negotiating debates between Ed Muskie and Cliff McIntire.

DL: Right, and as history shows, the senator went on and won that reelection contest handily, and went back to the Senate and continued on the effort to get the Democratic nomination for president in 1972. I should note that in 1970, I was moving gradually out of the Senate office and focusing on the '72 campaign, and much of the work that I'd supervised, directly related to legislation, started to migrate particularly to the staff of the subcommittees, notably Leon Billings in the Air and Water Pollution Subcommittee, and to [Edwin] Ike Webber in the Intergovernmental Relations Subcommittee. And there's a lot in that arena that Leon in particular can talk about, because there were the major air pollution acts and other negotiations with the Nixon administration.

But sometime in late '70, early '71 I moved, much of the time, down to an office on L Street where we set up the presidential exploration. And we got ready for projects, including the trip to Europe and the Soviet Union and the Middle East, burnishing Senator Muskie's international credentials. It reminds me of some of the debates and discussions this year in the Obama-McCain contest. And our effort downtown included beginning to build a base of supporters around the country and seeking financial support, without making it as formal as would have

required substantial reporting and attention to our work.

I think the most significant thing to report on, really, is the trip overseas in January of 1971, and that was designed to touch bases in the hot-button areas of the world. The original itinerary had us going to, flying to Vienna where we were to meet with the foreign minister of West Germany, thence to Israel where we would essentially tour the country and see government leaders. And from there to Egypt for meetings with government officials there, and from Egypt to the Soviet Union where we hoped to meet with senior officials, and then returning to the States by way of West Germany where we were scheduled to meet with Willy Brandt, the chancellor of West Germany.

The trip was fouled up a little bit by the weather, and we had to land in London because of fog in Europe, and had to stay overnight in London and cancel the stop in Vienna. We took in a theater, and as I recall just about everybody fell asleep during the course of the show, then were at the airport waiting for our flight and finally switched to a flight that went directly from London to Tel Aviv. In Israel, we saw just about every senior official in the Israeli government, including Prime Minister Golda Meir, Shimon Peres, oh, I forget the name of the minister of labor, I believe, but we visited with him at Ginnosar, which was his kibbutz at the southern end of Kinneret, or as we tend to call it, Lake Galilee. We also flew down to the Negev, to Sde Boker, which was David Ben-Gurion's kibbutz, and met with him in his home. And we flew by helicopter from there north, over the Dead Sea by the Masada, the old redoubt of the Israelis, and into an area just south of Kinneret, at an old crusaders castle site. And from there went to Ginnosar and went by bus up the Yarmuk River and on to the Golan Heights, which the Israelis had taken in the '67 war, and looked down on Kinneret and realized quite dramatically what a strategic point those plains are overlooking, or bluffs overlooking the, not only the lake but also well into Israel. And we went north up the west side of the lake to some ancient settlements around Capernaum, then back down and across through Nazareth to Haifa, and from there back to Tel Aviv.

And we had been in Jerusalem of course meeting with government officials, and we had gone to Yad Vashem and to the Dome of the Book [*sic* The Shrine of the Book] where we had an extensive tour and presentation by the director, whose name escapes me [Yigael Yadin], but who was a leading archaeologist and military figure. One of the incidental sessions while we were there was with Menachem Begin and his cohorts in Begin's apartment in Tel Aviv. We wanted to talk to the opposition as well as to the government.

Just a few things from the conversations with Prime Minister Meir. Much of the time was taken up with her discussion of the problem the Israelis had with a couple of flyers who had been captured by the Egyptians and were being held by them, and her request that Senator Muskie convey Israeli interest to the Egyptian government, in getting those flyers freed. And other than that, it was a pretty general discussion of Israel's position and difficulties in dealing with the Arab countries in general.

We had an encounter at the beginning of the stop that I think reveals the kind of problems

foreign visitors, particularly American politicians, faced in Israel then – I suspect sometimes they do today. We landed at the Tel Aviv airport and were taken to a room where there were press waiting, quite unplanned, not requested by us, and the senator decided he wasn't going to go there and headed straight for the hotel, because we were fatigued. And I was in the position of telling the reporters that they weren't going to interview Senator Muskie at that time, and got furious responses. "Well, this had been set up and we were told he would be here." And I had to say, "Well, we knew nothing about it." They were unforgiving and there was a lot of critical press. My suspicion is that that was set up by someone trying to undermine us, and it could have been either from within the Israeli government or the long arm of Richard Nixon and company.

AL: So you never did -?

DN: Never found out what the source was, and there were other things on our mind. The session with Begin was fascinating because it had been arranged by Ezer Weizman, who'd been the air force chief of staff during the '67 war and had, Weizman, who later became president of Israel, was related by marriage to Peter Rosenblatt who was working, supporting Senator Muskie, and Weizman had links to Begin and arranged the meeting. There were two or three of us with the senator, and we gathered in his relatively small apartment and I think there were three people in total, Mr. Begin and two of his colleagues. They were all alumni of the Irgun, the Israeli partisans – other people would call them terrorists today – in the pre-1948 period, and had participated in the bombing of the King David Hotel. And much of the evening we had to sit there and listen to them arguing about who did what during that period, and as a result the conversation about Israeli politics and foreign policy was fairly limited. We also met Mayor Teddy Kollek of Jerusalem and had a tour with him, and got a very different perspective on the potential for Israeli-Palestinian relations from him than from many of the other figures in Israel.

From there we were going to Cairo, and the big decision was do we land – we could not fly directly from Israel to Egypt at that time, you had to go to another state and then to Egypt – and should we go to Athens and thence to Cairo, or to Rome and thence to Cairo. Athens was much more convenient, a shorter trip, and the flights were convenient. But at the time Greece was under the control of the colonels, infamous period in Modern Greek history, and we decided for political reasons that we couldn't land in Greece and so we flew all the way to Rome and simply landed at the airport, changed planes, and flew on to Cairo.

The visit in Cairo was fascinating. It was part tour, we went to the museum and saw King Tut's mummy, and we went to the site of the pyramids and toured that area, but we also had an opportunity to meet with some senior officials in the Egyptian government. And on one evening we went to meet with President Sadat in the presidential palace on the barrages, these are dams, low dams on the lower Nile River, downstream from the center of Cairo. And Senator Muskie and Mrs. Muskie and I were taken to the presidential palace for an evening meeting, it was after dinner, and it was there that Senator Muskie made the pitch on behalf of Prime Minister Meir on the release of the airmen.

But I remember, we were seated in a rather large, quite formal living room, if you will, or a

reception room, with Senator Muskie and President Sadat in one corner talking, and Mrs. Sadat and Mrs. Muskie on a sofa along the wall near them, and I was in the other corner. Given the delicacy of the situation, I couldn't haul out a notebook and make notes, so I was focusing on trying to remember everything that was said by Senator Muskie and President Sadat. But my concentration was interrupted constantly as Mrs. Sadat and Mrs. Muskie were carrying on their conversation, in many ways on domestic matters such as recipes, etcetera, and customs, and every so often Mrs. Muskie would ask me a question about something in Maine, while I was trying to hear the two men. But it was a pleasant evening, and both Sadat and Mrs. Sadat were very impressive people.

The next morning we had an appointment with [Mohamed Hassanein] Heikal, who was the editor of *Al-Ahram*, the Egyptian newspaper that was essentially the mouthpiece of the administration there, the government. And we walked in, and Heikal launched into a critique of the things Senator Muskie had said to President Sadat the night before, and he did so in such detail that it was obvious that he had listened to a tape of the conversation. And it was not a problem for us, but a source of amusement. That visit was pleasant and I think productive in terms of the interactions.

AL: Before you go too much further ahead, do you feel that that sort of surveillance was also apparent when you were in Israel?

DN: Less apparent but obviously there. I'm not sure whether there was taping, but obviously people were taking notes and paying attention to what Senator Muskie was saying, and I'm sure it was shared around.

AL: Did they want to accompany you all wherever you went?

DN: Well, we were pretty much shepherded around by Israelis, and we had a couple of people who were assigned to us and took us around. In Egypt, I think we had, yes, we had a Foreign Service official, a rather senior person, civil servant, older, and I did not get the sense that we were being watched or kept from talking to people but we were never in situations where we likely had contact with people on the street. There was more opportunity for that in Israel, more relaxed on that front. The place in Israel that the security was very tight was on the trip down to the Negev and from the Negev up to the area, I think it was called Bel Air, the castle, by helicopter. We were told very clearly, 'no cameras', we weren't allowed to take our cameras out and take any photographs, and the Israelis were mostly concerned with military intelligence issues, but that was the only obvious surveillance.

Then we flew to Moscow at night, arriving in the morning from Cairo, in a Aeroflot Soviet airline plane, and it was their version of the Lockheed turbo-prop, four engine turbo-prop plane, not terribly comfortable. And got in, it was January, cold, and apparently is fairly consistent in Moscow, not a lot of snow, just a slow accumulation through the winter. And we were not sure who we were going to see while there. They kept us on tenterhooks as to whether we would have an opportunity for the senator to meet Brezhnev, and we never did, but he did have a very

good session with Kosygin, who was then the premier, and that was a very straightforward discussion with some debate on policy issues. But Kosygin was an impressive, I'd say highly competent and very, but for one of the Soviets, fairly straightforward and someone you, you had the feeling you could work with him.

Then we went to meet with Georgy Arbatov, who was the head of the Institute for U.S.A. Studies, who was very fluent in English and a very impressive guy who had had lots of interactions with Americans. And then in some respects, the highlight of the visit to Moscow was a late afternoon session with Andrei Gromyko, the foreign minister. That was put on at the last minute, just before we were supposed to be going to the Ballet Russe. And so the senator and I think two or three aides headed for the Foreign Ministry and went up to the office which was, I think, at the top of the building. But fairly low ceilings, no higher than the ceilings in this room, and very dark room, a conference room, small conference room with wood paneled walls, and a table that virtually filled the room. And we were ushered into that room through the double doors along one long wall, and as we came in, to the right on the opposite wall was another door, and at the end of the room to the left there was a third door.

We were there a couple of minutes and Mr. Gromyko came in, very dour, polite, correct, but not a hint of a smile or any lively interest. And he had just gone through his introductions, shaking hands with us, when the door to our left opened and Averell Harriman came through. Mr. Harriman was joining the senator partially to be there dealing with the Soviets, and partially to give visible evidence of his support for Senator Muskie. So when Harriman walked through the door, Gromyko turned and saw him, his face was transformed. A broad smile, energy, and he went over to greet his old friend, because Harriman of course had managed the Land Lease work with the Soviets during WWII for President Roosevelt, and was regarded in many ways as a great friend of the Soviet Union for having helped them at their time of need. And the conversation proceeded from there. I don't remember the details of the conversation, but it was businesslike but more friendly than it would have been otherwise.

And there were, Mrs. Muskie and her party visited some schools, but beyond that we didn't do much. We had one evening where we managed to see some ex-patriot Americans and others that was fairly interesting, but all the while we were in Moscow, we had our Intourist guides who were obviously agents of the KGB. And we had one marvelous encounter that involved Peter Kyros, Jr. Peter was one of our advance men on the trip and had gone to Moscow ahead of us and done some work there, and we were staying in the Rossiya, which is an enormous hotel on Red Square. And we were quite certain that our rooms were bugged, and Peter was having a terrible time with arrangements for our travel and seeing people and getting blocked by the Intourist guides, you can't do this, you can't do that, etcetera. And finally it reached a breaking point and Peter decided he would test the system. So he went to his room and, with someone else with him in the room, and in very loud tones said, "We are supposed to be guests of the Soviet Union, but we're being treated very badly," and went on in this, "and we will register a protest." Well, he came down to the lobby, and sure enough, within a few minutes the chief agent came up to him and said, "Come Peter, let us be friends. We can work this out."

A footnote on this, when we came back I told a friend of ours, Larry Speiser, who was the Washington director for the American Civil Liberties Union, about our encounters in Moscow, knowing he would be interested because he had been there during the dissidents' trial in Leningrad, ostensibly as a tourist but as really observing what was going on. And when I finished telling him and I identified the agent, he laughed and said, "You know, he's the one who told me that I had twenty-four hours to leave the Soviet Union, when I was there observing."

I should have mentioned that we had a good conversation with the U.S. ambassador in Moscow. I don't recall any encounter with an ambassador in Israel, but one of the senior people in the embassy spent some time with us and was very helpful. And in Egypt, where the U.S. did not at the time have official relations, there was a chargé d'affaires and an assistant, Donald Bergus, B-E-R-G-U-S was the chargé, and he was extremely helpful. In fact, we stayed at his home, Senator Muskie and Mrs. Muskie and Hilda and I stayed. And I should have said at the beginning, Hilda went as Mrs. Muskie's companion, and in Israel Mrs. Muskie came down with food poisoning of some sort and was laid low for a day or so, so wasn't able to make the trip to the Negev and up to the Galilee area, and Hilda had to stay behind on that trip. But she, Mrs. Muskie was staying in her bed, and Hilda was able to visit some friends of ours from Washington who lived on a kibbutz near Tel Aviv, and was with Mrs. Muskie on various trips and events in the other countries.

On the way back we flew from Moscow to Bonn. Well actually, to Frankfurt, no, Cologne, Cologne. No, the airport was Frankfurt, and we met with Willy Brandt and some of his aides, Walter Scheel, the foreign minister, met us there, Mr. Harriman was with us, and those discussions were pleasant, forthright, not earthshaking. And Mrs. Muskie and Hilda and the others went to the cathedral in Cologne for mass that day, it happened to be a Sunday, and we flew back from there.

Dropping back, the arrangements for the trip were made working with one of the senior people in the Soviet Embassy in Washington, and I remember one encounter that stemmed from a concern Governor Harriman had. The previous summer, I had been on the Allagash and as usual didn't shave while I was on the Allagash, and when I came out our daughters said I should keep my beard, which I did. That was the beginning of what I still wear. And Governor Harriman was concerned that Nicoll would present a kind of radical appearance in the Soviet Union and that would trouble them, and he sent word by Ben Reed, who was a former and later a State Department official, that my beard was a problem and I should shave it off. I didn't think that probably was the case, but the next time I met with the gentleman from the embassy I said some concern had been expressed as to whether the people in Moscow would find it offensive that I had a beard, and the response was the one we heard over and over again, "That is not a problem here." So I went with beard and had no problems.

When we got back, by the way, Senator Muskie offered to give Secretary Rogers a briefing and got no interest in response, none, none at all. But we did get a call from the FBI saying they wanted to debrief us, and we told them in effect to go fly a kite. We wouldn't be playing that game. But those were the only interactions with the Nixon administration.

AL: What about the press, how did they view the trip, did they pick up on it?

DN: We had several reporters with us, a reporter from the *Baltimore Sun*, Jules Whitcover from *The Los Angeles Times*, I think he was with the L.A. Times at the time, a reporter from *Newsweek*, and Don Larrabee, who represented the Maine papers, and one other reporter, I think AP. They did a very good job of covering the trip, and were very helpful. Oh, *Boston Globe*, later worked for us, I'm drawing a blank on his name – we can insert it in the text [Dick Stewart] was also with us on that trip. And general attention to the trip was muted, and my sense is that the Israelis were very suspicious of Senator Muskie, partially based on the fact that he was a Roman Catholic of Polish origins and the feeling that the Poles had behaved badly during WWII toward the Jews, and that he would not be sympathetic to Israel, in spite of the fact that he had some very prominent Jewish supporters. But that was a constant sort of background, it was partially the way Israel tends to play the game in American politics, and some of the most ardent supporters of Israel, I'd say the uncritical supporters of Israel behaved toward any politician who is not willing to make a hundred and twenty percent commitment to their policies, whatever they happen to be. But the trip was useful in terms of giving him some of that experience, and it was useful in terms of his own encounters and reinforcing his interest in foreign policy, which dated way back to his college days.

Our next foreign trip came in March of that year when he was invited to attend a conference of African leaders in Lagos, Nigeria. It was a program sponsored by the Ford Foundation and brought together leaders from virtually every independent African community, and led by, at that time, the king of Botswana, who was a revered democratic leader in his country. That was a very useful session for the senator. He and Charlie Lander and I went on that trip, and we flew to London, then south to Lagos, and were there for three or four days, met Bill Cotter who later became president of Colby, who was the Ford Foundation staff person for that program, and met Jesse Jackson who was there with his wife. And I remember having breakfast with Jackson one morning, and -

AL: What was that like?

DN: Well, it was pleasant, but he was edgy, edgy. And I'm not surprised, here was this white guy from Maine and what were his commitments in terms of civil rights, etcetera, but it was... And the conversation as I recall was unexceptional, although we did talk a bit about civil rights and the African problems. And that was the, that conference was the one at the end of which Whitney Young, the Urban League director, drowned. At the end of the conference they went to the beach – well I'm not sure whether he drowned or had a heart attack, but he died in the water at the end of the conference when they went to the beach for a recreational day. We had left by then and were on our way back to the States and heard about it when we landed in London. And, but that was a very helpful conference.

Oh, the other person who was with us in Nigeria, I should have mentioned, and had been on parts of the trip to the Soviet Union and the Middle East and Europe was Tony Lake. And Tony Lake was very helpful in terms of some contacts with press people in Nigeria, and that is, not for

publicity but for information about what was going on in Nigeria. And we did have a short meeting with the then president of Nigeria, who was a military officer who, he was not the one who staged the coup originally but he succeeded that leader and later was ousted himself, and as far as I know is still living in London somewhere. But that was interesting because of the security around the president, and nervousness. I had a camera with me, and they were very nervous about that until the president indicated he would like to have some pictures taken, which we did.

That was the end of the foreign trips.

AL: I'm going to stop right there and flip it, this is a good place to -

End of Side A
Side B

AL: We are now on Side B. So that was the end of the foreign trips.

DN: Yes, and by then we were really beginning to build the organization. And although I was devoting virtually all of my time to the campaign, I had some reservations about it. Not in terms of the senator running, but in terms of how much energy I had, because I'd been at this then for over fifteen years, and I'm beginning to appreciate now the intensity of the work we were doing from 1962 on up through '68, on legislation. I think I've remarked before, I look back on the multitude of legislative initiatives that we were immersed in at one time, and found, and wonder how in the world we managed it. And by then I was running out of steam. I had deliberately not been involved directly in the management of the 1970 reelection campaign, because I felt that I was, well I had reached the point where I could do, I could manage a campaign with one hand tied behind my back, but when you reach that stage, you better get out because you're not going to bring to it the kind of energy and fresh view that you should have. And I fault myself now, looking back on the '72 campaign, that I didn't simply say, "Senator, I better stick with the Hill and let's bring in some other people."

We did make an effort at one point to bring in a person to manage the operation, not the overall campaign, but interestingly enough, this was a fellow named Paul Firstenberg, who had married Arnold Picker's niece and was involved in business in New York, later headed up the not-for-profit corporation that produced Sesame Street. And Paul had volunteered to help in the campaign and I thought he would be a good candidate to manage the operation – not the politics, but the operation – and it was vetoed by Berl Bernhard. And I look back often and wonder about that decision and how wise it was.

We also suffered a blow when Dick Dubord died suddenly. And I forget the exact date of that but I had been concerned about the senator who was being torn by his commitments in the Senate and his real sense of obligation to carry forward the environmental legislation and other legislation he was working on in Intergovernmental Relations and the federal system, and the demands of a campaign. And it was a campaign that demanded attention not only nationwide

because of the competition with George McGovern and others, but also because the fights of 1968 were still stressing the Democratic Party. And you had the conflicts over appropriate attention to and support for African Americans in the party, to a lesser degree women, that wasn't as sharp an issue as it is today but it was still there, and the war was still a very hot issue in the party, and Muskie was viewed as someone who wasn't sufficiently against the war.

And then there was the so-called reform of the party in the McGovern Commission, and I knew that with all of that kind of conflict and with his sense of obligation to his constituents and to the Senate, he was not going to be as enthusiastically committed to the campaign for president as others might be. He never had what Vice President Mondale referred to as 'fire in the belly', sufficient (*unintelligible*) to carry him forward and brush everything else aside. And I had looked to Dick Dubord, who was a wonderful companion, very bright, very able, and just a perfect light touch as well as wise counselor to travel with him and keep things going on the road. And also watch out for his interests in terms of his health and pacing himself. And Dick's death just left an enormous hole that we never filled.

And we soon got into a period – I left the Senate in August of '81, effectively.

AL: Seventy-one.

DN: Seventy-one, excuse me, August of '71, and John McEvoy came in as administrative assistant and proceeded pretty much to clean house. So it was a very different staff and a very different pattern of operation during that period, and I was focused on the campaign. And we brought on to the campaign a lot of very talented people, and there was inevitable tension between the campaign and the Senate office because the Senate office had both Senator Muskie's pressure to focus on Senate business, and the ambitions of the young people who came in with John McEvoy to prove themselves, and the demands of the campaign at the other end.

And because of Senator Muskie's attitude, we were building up staff on research, both volunteer and some paid, for the campaign, and we had some very good people, including Tony Lake and some others who came on in the research area. And then we had some political operatives, Bob Squier and his wife, who were media specialists, very gifted, and people like Bob Shrum, a speech writer, and others who were political operatives. Mark Shields was one, was a field worker, Jack English from, who had been county executive in Nassau County, New York on Long Island. And there was an attitude among many of them that – we jokingly referred to measuring the drapes at the Blaine House, a mistake that the wife of a candidate, who thought her husband was going to be elected governor (*unintelligible*), and the word got out that she was measuring the drapes at the Blaine House – well, it did her husband in – and you had people in this campaign who were measuring the drapes in the White House, and an awful lot of infighting built up.

And I was not managing that and finally the senator decided to have Berl Bernhard become the manager, and George Mitchell was his deputy for the campaign, and I focused on, for the remainder of the campaign I focused on issues and speech development, etcetera. And as far as

my perspective on what happened in that campaign, I think that it probably was a campaign impossible to win, given the divisions in the country and the legacy of the war, and the turmoil of the social changes that had been taking place since the sixties, and the Nixon operatives were exploiting that very effectively. I think that the dirty tricks contributed to it, but weren't the cause of the loss. And I think Senator Muskie, one, didn't have the fire in his belly and the focus, and we didn't make decisions early enough on how to organize the campaign so as to meet his twin needs of paying attention to business in the Senate and dealing with the campaign demands.

And many of the decisions that were made about scheduling, sort of trying to do all, the whole country, were not sensible under the circumstances, and I think the campaign paid a price, and I have to say that from my perspective the people who took over management of the campaign had no real grasp of grass roots politicking. This included Berl Bernhard and George Mitchell, neither one of them had had any experience with that. And we saw it particularly in New Hampshire, where I recommended early on that we organize groups from Maine to go in as volunteers in the campaign, particularly in the cities of Manchester and Nashua, using volunteers from the Franco-American community in Maine who could counter the influence of the *Manchester Union Leader*. But that sort of thing was never organized.

It's interesting to look at what Senator Obama and his people have done this year, with organizing volunteers at the grass root. And that's essentially what one needs to do, if you're going to run a nationwide campaign. And I know that Mark Shields has noted the problems he and his colleagues had, just having basic equipment like a copying machine so that they could get out press releases, and requesting that kind of equipment over and over again and getting no response. So I think there were some difficulties in the campaign, and I think that they're worth looking at in some detail but in the end I don't think, taking them by themselves, they caused the defeat.

By April of 1972, I had concluded that there wasn't much I could do to help with the campaign, and I thought that there would have to be some changes if the campaign was to be rescued at all and wrote a letter to the senator telling him that I planned to resign effective, I said, July 15th, because I did not want to resign at that point. If I had left at that point and word of it got out, it would have been very bad for the campaign; it would have been taken as evidence of a disintegrating campaign. So I stayed on, continued to work through July, and then left in the middle of the month.

The last encounter I had with the campaign, which was, yeah, it would have been after my resignation took effect, was the primary in Florida, and it was then that the senator effectively pulled out. And they had a gathering of the campaign workers and I got a call from George Mitchell asking me to fly down to participate in this. And I said, "No George, as long as the campaign is being run as it is and the same people I'm highly critical of are going to be there, I don't want any part of it, and I can't see the point of making the trip for that purpose." And that was the end of my involvement.

I left the Senate office and started work as a consultant, worked for the German Marshall Fund of the United States on a project, worked for the Ford Foundation's Energy Policy Project as an analyst, worked for Robert Nathan Associates on an environmental assessment project for the Corps of Engineers, and worked for the New England Land Grant University presidents on a project concerning joint planning by the six Land Grant institutions. And also continued to work on the Roosevelt Campobello International Park Commission [RCIPC], where I was an informal secretary to the Commission, as a volunteer essentially.

AL: Did that put you in contact with Senator Muskie?

DN: That was, he asked me to continue to do that. And from then on, I'll just simply say that – I made a decision, by the way, when I left the Senate and the campaign that I would not become a lobbyist, and I would not be involved in consulting work that was directly related to pushing legislation, particular legislation. And I didn't have a career plan in mind, but there were enough jobs to sustain us. And the job with the New England Land Grants, it was amusing in a way. I was approached by Bob Wood, who was then president of the University of Massachusetts, and Win Libby who was president of the University of Maine, Orono, the Land Grant Institution of Maine, with whom, both of whom were colleagues from earlier times. I had done a lot of work with President Libby in the Senate office as we tried to assist the university on a number of fronts, and we also turned to the university and faculty members for advice and assistance on legislative matters. And Bob had been undersecretary and then secretary of Housing and Urban Development and had been the key figure in the Model Cities legislation so I'd worked him on that, plus other housing and urban planning programs over the years. They came to me because the Land Grant presidents had for years met as the Yankee Conference, which was essentially the athletics program, and each time they met they would talk about their problems, funding shortages, etcetera, etcetera. And since the funding problems were getting worse, said, each time they met, we really should be cooperating and doing some joint planning efforts and saving money through collaborative activities. And then they would go back to their campuses and that conversation would, it would go on the shelf, they'd come back to the next meeting and have exactly the same conversation.

So Bob and Win said to their colleagues at a meeting, well we know a guy in Washington who could do something for us in this area, and came to me and asked me if I'd go to work for the Land Grants. And I queried them on what it is they wanted to do and how they wanted to do it, and they weren't sure at all. I said well, if you don't know what you want to do, I don't want to work for you. But if you'd like a quick-and-dirty planning effort, just to see what might make sense, I'll be glad to do that. So they hired me as a planning consultant, and I toured the campuses, talked with people and developed the proposal that they create a committee called the Joint Operations Committee. Well they were the ones who came up with the title – a committee made up the academic vice presidents plus an outside person who would be hired to serve both as chair of the committee and as the operating officer for a joint planning, academic planning program for the six. And [I] submitted the report, and they said, "Fine. Would you go to work for us?" So I became the chair of what they called the Joint Operations Committee, and they chose that title – it was the president, then president of the University of Rhode Island who came

up with the title, because it was related to the athletic program and the acronyms when sounded out was JOC, so it became known as JOC. And that program continued from 1973, it was about August of 1973, until last year.

AL: Oh, until last year.

DN: Yeah, and my assistant, Joe Cusker, took over when I left to come to the Maine Medical Center. And one of my six bosses was Dr. Edward Andrews, who was president of the University of Vermont and a pathologist by training, and he came to the Maine Medical Center as the first president, full time president in a new corporate structure, and asked me to come and head up planning at the Medical Center. And my then assistant succeeded me and continued on, and then the presidents decided that this was something they didn't want to leave to the academic vice presidents and took it over and it lasted, well 1973, it lasted about thirty-five years, and produced some good cooperative planning efforts and joint programming.

But, by the way, I told them that I had noted that presidents had very short attention spans, and therefore I thought the academic vice presidents were the ones who should be making the decisions in the planning committee. And I think that made sense then, and it would have made sense when they made the switch.

But Senator Muskie asked me to continue on with the Campobello work, which I did until I was at the Medical Center and it was increasingly difficult for me to carve out the time. And Karl Braithwaite, on the Air and Water Pollution staff, did some work for him on the Pittston oil terminal proposal, and Don Larrabee, when he retired from the newspapers, took over that informal secretary's role until he finally retired.

AL: And so what was the length of your connection with the Roosevelt Campobello [International Park Commission]?

DN: I forget the exact time, but it would have run, it ran from 196-, roughly '64, to probably 1984 or '86, it was about twenty years plus.

AL: And what sorts of things did you do in terms of that?

DN: Oh, I would help – the arrangement on the commission, it has three members from Canada, three members from the United States, appointed by the prime minister and by the president, and three alternates on either side, and the chair of the commission alternates year to year between Canadian and American. And Senator Muskie was the regular U.S. chair, and whether he was chair or the Canadian was chair, I tended to prepare the agendas and then do notes and then do follow up on a number of things, usually in concert with the superintendent of the park. Part of this was dictated by the fact that the first superintendent was a fellow named Alex MacNichol from Eastport who had married Genevieve Roach [MacNichol], and Gen had been secretary to Dexter Cooper, the originator of the Passamaquoddy Tidal Power Project idea. And she came from Portland, but had moved to Eastport where Alex grew up, to work for

Cooper, and they met, fell in love, married.

Well Alex was, he was in his sixties, I think, and retired when he became superintendent, and Alex had many good qualities but taking care of a governing board was not one of them. So it developed that essentially the Muskie staff staffed the commission on the substantive issues, and I did that essentially over the years. And the next superintendent, Winslow Newman, was a fellow with, who was local, from Campobello, and had no, I don't think he had any college training so was not used to any of the business of working with a governing board on the business of the board. He managed the park very well.

And then Henry, he was succeeded by – another name I'm missing. By the way, I remember the name of that other reporter, it was Dick Stewart, and I may come up with Henry's full name later.

But I continued with Campobello and then no direct work for the senator from roughly the mid-eighties on, but we kept in touch, just the usual holiday greetings, and from time to time I would get a call from him for assistance on family matters. One of his daughters, Martha, had serious health problems and for a while she was misdiagnosed – she had lupus – she was misdiagnosed and was under psychiatric care and, under psychiatric care at the Maine Medical Center while I was there, so from time to time I'd get calls asking for assistance. And continued pretty much that way, and we really started working together more when the Muskie Institute was formed.

Dick Barringer, who was the director of the institute, I forget the name of it at the time but it was a combination of the old Human Services Development Institute and the Public Policy and Management Program at U.S.M. I guess that's what the title was, Public Policy and Management and HSDI. And Dick got the idea that there should be an institute with a name that would attract attention and money, and he thought Senator Muskie's name on the institute would be a great gain, and he called me to see if I could influence the senator to say yes. So I suggested that he write to the senator and I would call him, which I did. And he gave his usual answer, "If it'll do you any good, okay, I'm not looking for anything to be named after me but if it'll help, fine." And at that point a board of visitors was established, and the senator and I and several others were appointed to serve on it, and we worked together there until his death.

And then I was asked to assist on a follow-on committee to his work on Equal Access to Justice. It was a committee that included Judge Coffin and Buzz Fitzgerald, Duane Fitzgerald, who was Gayle (Fitzgerald) Cory's brother and president of Bath Iron Works, and Elizabeth Noyes was on that committee, and the Chief Justice [Daniel] Wathen chaired it. And Senator Muskie was not on the committee, but it was his influence, and I'm not sure, either he or Judge Coffin suggested that I serve on it. And we kept in touch with each other on that and the related Pine Tree Legal assistance program -

AL: The Legal Needs Commission, specifically?

DN: No, that, I didn't have anything to do with that. I came on later in really the support

phase as a volunteer, and assisting with promoting the Muskie Awards program. And it was, well we had a fairly intense time with the Muskie Institute, because of policy differences with Dick Barringer. And Dick got crosswise with the Board of Visitors on some policies, and from my point of view was treating the board as something that would do what he wanted to do but would not be advisory. And I remember, well one thing he did was to tell Bob Wood, who wrote him a long letter one day criticizing some decisions he'd made, that Bob, if Bob didn't like it, he could get off the board. And this was a letter written to a man who had been Dick's advisor on his Ph.D. program at M.I.T., number one, and number two, you don't say to someone on a board, "If you don't like it get off." You listen to what they have to say.

And all of this bubbled up, and I remember the session with the senator there, where we were discussing whether we should move for a change in the structure of the board and its role. And he was very, he was his usual self, challenging us, forcing us to examine our arguments and our assumptions, and at one point saying, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." And we went on to demonstrate to his satisfaction that it was broke. And he pitched in and moved ultimately with the formation of the school, rather than the institute, and was very actively interested in the programs of the school.

And it was at the board meetings; I remember most vividly, his comments about the importance of persuasion, over and over again as he bemoaned the low state of civil discourse in the United States. He would return again and again to the importance of civil discourse and persuasion, and that's what tied back to the Ruth Rowe Wilson comment about what they were taught by Brooks Quimby.

And my final conversation with the senator was the day before his surgery that led to his death. Charlie Lander, his dear friend of many years and a wonderful, selfless aide, had cardiac problems and sort of brushed them aside and didn't talk about them. He and his wife went off with his daughter and son-in-law I think to a Caribbean island for a vacation, and while there he had a heart attack and died – he was not where he could get immediate medical aid – and the funeral was scheduled for a day or two after the senator's surgery. He wasn't going to be able to come to Charlie's funeral, but Steve [Muskie], his son, and Steve's wife were going to come. And the senator called me to ask me if I would look out for Steve, and this was, Steve by then is

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AL: A grown man.

DN: In his mid-twenties at least, oh, more than that, in his thirties. But Ed wanted to make sure that things were taken care of and we talked about that, and talked a little bit about his surgery on his leg/vein problem and then said goodbye, and that was the last time I talked to him.

AL: Did his demeanor change as he got older?

DN: Oh, he was -

AL: When he was, you know, retired and didn't have all those pressures, did it change how he'd interact?

DN: He was much, much more relaxed in many ways than he had been, and more, yes, I think that's the best way to phrase it, he was relaxed, and he didn't flare up the way he could at times and he took things in stride. He was remarkable in terms of his willingness to devote time and energy, when he wasn't feeling that well, particularly to the Equal Access to Justice Program. He was interested in the work in China and in Russia for the law firm, but there wasn't much else about the law firm that interested him, I think. Oh, and he took on the Nestlé project [NIFAC], which again was an example of his ability to be thoroughly independent and turn what was a risky endeavor into a very useful contribution.

Now, the subject of his temper and his demeanor is something that fascinates people. I always felt that for the most part there were two ways in which Ed Muskie's temper came into play. One was when he deliberately used it for the appearance of loss of temper as a tool of intimidation, and he did that from time to time in committees when he was dealing with a particularly recalcitrant colleague, and occasionally when he was dealing with somebody in the administration who was being particularly difficult. The other place that it came into play was when he was frustrated by something and just needed to explode, and he very seldom did that in public. The people who caught the brunt of it were his family and his staff, particularly the people closest to him. And as a consequence, sometimes his very strong and assertive argumentative style was taken as temper, which it wasn't.

I remember – and Leon's talked about -

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