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Snow, Roger Vinton, Jr. oral history interview

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Interview with Roger Vinton Snow, Jr. by Don Nicoll and Mike Richard

Summary Sheet and Transcript

Interviewee

Snow, Roger Vinton, Jr.

Interviewer

Nicoll, Don
Richard, Mike

Date

June 23, 1999

Place

Falmouth Foreside, Maine

ID Number

MOH 111

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Biographical Note

Roger Vinton Snow, Jr. was born in Portland, Maine on June 10, 1918. His father was a corporate and probate lawyer and moderator of Falmouth town meetings. Alida, his mother, was chairman of the Republican town committee. Roger attended Waynflete until the 4th grade, and then Portland Country Day School, Lincoln Junior H. S., Deering H. S., and Deerfield Academy. At Williams College his major was French, with a minor in Spanish, graduating in the class of 1940. During World War II he worked for W. R. Grace in New York, a New England Shipbuilding Corporation. After the war, he worked for a bottle modification plant in Cheyenne, WY, Canal Bank, *Kennebec Journal* and then the *Portland Press Herald* for seven years. He organized KJ for American Newspaper Guild and was vice president of the union. He later became publisher of the *Westbrook American*. He changed his political party enrollment from Republican to Democrat the day Kennedy was assassinated. He ran for Maine Senate and won in 1964, where he was Chair of the Education Committee. He was also a member of the Committee on Welfare.

Scope and Content Note

Interview includes discussions of: the Office of Price Stabilization; the 1954 Maine gubernatorial

campaign (Snow moderated a TV interview/debate between Muskie and Cross); the 1964 Senate campaign; the 1969-1972 Presidential campaign; attending school with Ed Gignoux, Louis Porteous, Horace Thomas (son of Widgery Thomas, president of Canal Bank), and Arthur Bosworth; New England Shipbuilding; covering the 1948 Bar Harbor fires with Brooks Hamilton and meeting up with Stewart Symington and Margaret Chase Smith; Roger Snow, Sr., who wrote the official state of Maine song; the Teamsters endorsing Snow for Senate; Charlie Payson and his wife; Sinclair Act regarding town contributions to public education; Henry Benoit; Ralph Owen Brewster; Louis Jalbert ; Snow being the only Democrat elected to state office from Falmouth since 1914; sponsoring eradication of big box voting with Rodney Ross; and Parker Hoy.

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Transcript

Don Nicoll: June 23, 1999. We are at the home of Roger Snow in Falmouth Foreside, Maine interviewing him for the Muskie Oral History Project. Roger, could you start by giving us your full name and your date of birth, and your parents' names?

Roger Snow: I am Roger V. Snow, Jr. My father was Roger Vinton Snow. My mother was Alida Payson Snow. And I was born in Portland in what they used to call Adam Layton's Lying-In Hospital in June 10th, 1918. My dad was in the service and went overseas shortly thereafter.

DN: Where was the Layton Lying-In Hospital?

RS: I think it was on either Thomas Street or Emory Street. I mean, Don, you know I wouldn't know that.

DN: I thought maybe you, as a former reporter and amateur historian, would know the location. Not from the time of your birth.

RS: Well, I'm sorry, but all I know about it, Don, is this, and I'm sure you can censor the program if you need to. I had, had a birth injury and I've been lame all my life. And my mother claims it's because, claims that it was because Adam Layton and his nurse were having sex in a neighboring room. She said she could hear them. So anyway, it hasn't bothered me but obviously it was an inconvenience at the time. He was very well known. He was president of the Maine Medical Association, chairman of it; whatever they call it. His son Adam Layton was medical examiner for Cumberland County. I think he was a fairly prominent Republican too.

DN: Now where did you get your education?

RS: We lived across the street from Waynflete in Portland. And I went there through fourth grade. And I was one of four boys amongst fourteen girls; I didn't like it there. Then they formed a day school for boys on Ocean Avenue, Portland Country Day School. [Edward Thaxter] Ed Gignoux went there; I went there. I'm trying to think if anybody else you know went there; I'm not sure of that. Anyway, that folded in 19-, when I was in seventh grade. There were only like fourteen kids there. Louis Porteous who owned Porteous, Mitchell and Braun was one of the supporters. His two sons went there. Horace Thomas whose father was president of the Canal Bank went there. A fella named Arthur Bosworth, whose middle name was Sewall, was involved with the Bath Iron Works went there.

Well I went to Lincoln Junior for eighth grade and was paralyzed when I entered the place because there were forty in the class instead of six or seven. I think my biggest worry was finding the classroom I was supposed to be in. There were no academic problems there or at Deering, which I attended for two years until sophomore year. Then my father announced that they wanted to send me away to school, and this, I don't know about you, Mike, but in those days, Don may have been in the same situation, when your parents wanted to do something, well you did it. I mean, there wasn't much argument. And I said, "Why is that, Dad?" I said, "I'm getting all Es," they had Es for excellent, and if I stuck around here I could be salutatorian or valedictorian or something like that. He said, "Well, I just want you to get off your ass and work harder." I'd never heard him use that word before. I was amazed. But anyway, so I went to Deerfield Academy for two years and finished *kappa cum laude* and went on to Williams College and majored in French, minored in Spanish. You noticed how I pronounced Armand's name? Duquette? And your last name is?

Mike Richard: Richard (*French pronunciation= Ree-shaard*).

RS: Richard? But I'm afraid I was interested more in friends of mine at Smith College than I was in my studies, so I had to go back and take the comprehensive examination over again. But I'm still a member of the class of 1940, and I'm secretary at the time, at the moment. Because of my leg, which I mentioned, I was 4F; I was not in service. I went to work in a shipyard.

DN: Did you work at the Portland Shipyard?

RS: First I worked in New York for W. R. Grace and I was going to work in South America. But the war came along and all my friends were joining and I went to work in South Amer-, in

the New England Shipbuilding Corp. And that was my first introduction to politics, because I was quickly moved from the tin shop, which I liked, to head the priorities division which bought steel for the ships. And there were shipyards all over the country building ships, so the demand for steel was heavy and it was a difficult job to get all the steel you needed. And I used to have to go to Washington to talk to the War Production Board people. I kind of forget now, but I soon learned that that was a waste of time because you'd sit in somebody's office making a telephone call from Texas and a shipyard there or Oregon and a shipyard there. And so I stayed home after that and used the telephone. But Washington in wartime was kind of fun. After that I took some time off and spent a year skiing, stuff like that. And as a matter of fact, it's rather interesting because I was paid four thousand dollars a year, which was an enormous sum of money in 1943. I didn't know what to do with it all. Maybe you can tell me, Don- do have any guess as to how much four thousand would be today in terms of, I think it would be forty thousand?

DN: At least, yeah.

RS: Yeah, well anyway, I could afford to take a year off and ski. I also worked in a bottle modification plant in Cheyenne, and went to California, looked around; plenty of jobs. But I was drawn back to Maine. And I worked for the Canal Bank for a while and didn't like it and quit and told Widgery Thomas who was then the president, the son of W. W. Thomas who was. . . . Anyway, he said "You'll starve working for the newspaper business." I got a job with the KJ, which rejected me, but I wrote a note thanking them for the interview and they liked that so much they hired me; it was a weird thing. And Mr. Gannett knew that I flew a plane; I had a private pilot license. His aviation editor quit and he wanted to have me transferred. And I liked the KJ, *The Kennebec Journal*, and I didn't want to go. But a fellow named Fred Lord was then the president of the company. He said, "What Mr. Gannett wants he usually gets."

I put him off for three months; I came down to Portland and went to work for the *Press Herald*. I'd been paid thirty dollars a week at *The Kennebec Journal* through general reporting, which was a little better than the twenty-eight dollars a week, which I'd earned at the Canal Bank. At *The Press Herald*, within a month or so I was making seventy-six dollars a week. And I remember taking my paycheck down to Widgery Thomas and saying, "Did you say I was going to starve Widgery?" So I was with *The Press Herald* for seven years. I organized the KJ for the American Newspaper Guild which didn't endear me to anybody. But it was obvious to me that the reason I was paid twenty-eight dollars a week there, or thirty dollars a week there and seventy-six at *The Press Herald* was the union. So, but Mr. Gannett and I did get along well despite that. And I can tell a political story if I'm permitted.

DN: Yes.

RS: I covered the Bar Harbor fires for him. It must have been '48, yes, and Brooks Hamilton, whom you probably know of, was, happened to be vacationing on the island. He worked for the KJ; he and I covered it together, four days. I borrowed ten dollars from Vic Slake and his raincoat. Vic Slake is 5'6" and I was 6'4" then. I'm not any more, but it made no sense. We had no sleep or anything. And finally after being up three straight nights, Brook and I found a place that would take us in, and it had one double bed and we just plunked down in our clothes. And I used to make Brooks furious by telling him I was the first man, that he was the first man I ever

slept with.

So, I got a call, (the phone lines were working), from Ernie Chard who was, I think he was assistant managing editor, or maybe he was city editor for *The Press Herald*. And he said “Roger, Mr. Gannett is coming up for you in the “Widget” which was a twin engine amphibian he owned; he owned five airplanes. And I said, “What?” He said, “Yeah, he’s bringing Margaret Chase Smith with him.” She was in the House at the time and she was thinking of running for the Senate. “Mr. Gannett wants you to sit beside her and fly around the island with her and quote her comments.” And then, then I remember replying, “Ernie, she doesn’t want to sit beside me, I haven’t had a bath or a shave for four days. But I know what she’s going to say without listening to her; leave it to me.” So that’s what happened. He said, Stewart Symington, who was secretary of the Air Force and a Democrat, was just coming back from something in Europe and he had Air Force, had borrowed Air Force One. “And Mr. Gannett wants you to persuade him,” (he knew I knew Symington, he was a friend of my mother’s), “to pose under the wing of Air Force One with Mrs. Smith, who will announce her candidacy for the U.S. Senate tomorrow,” the next day. Whenever it was. They were coming for me. So I said, I probably said, “Jesus.”

But anyway, it happened. And Symington emerged, first of all we went to the Pilot’s Grill, which you’re familiar with, for lunch. And Mrs. Smith ordered a meal but jumped up and acted like she was the head waitress; she greeted everybody who came in. We got word that Air Force One was coming in. We went over. And Dow Field was then an Air Force base so the Air Force was all agog with the secretary, they’d reserved a room for him, for me to interview him. He came off the plane immaculately dressed; looked like a suit ad for *Esquire*. And he was wearing some male perfume anyway. So he and I went off to this room which turned out to be overheated. And the minute I walked into the room I knew I had him because I kept walking closer and closer to him telling him what I wanted. He said “I’ll do anything you want to, Roger.” So we went out to the, you know they used speed graphics, slides. Are you familiar with those, Mike?

MR: Um, what’s that? The slides. . . .

RS: A camera. Well, you put a slide in; they do it differently now. Whoever their photographer was took the pictures, handed them to me, handed the slides to me. I say goodbye to Symington, and Gannett, who was rather a profane man, said, “There, god dammit, let’s get the hell out of here.” So we got in the plane, got home. And I was feeling profane. I walked in to the city editor’s desk, sat down and wrote the story very quickly, gave him the slides, and said, “Now, goddammit, I’m going home for three days.” And that was that. And Mrs. Smith did announce, and as you know she won.

DN: How had your mother known Stuart Symington?

RS: My uncle was Charles Shipman Payson who gave the wing on the museum. His wife was Joan Whitney Payson, and Symington was her first cousin. And parties, and they had daughters my age and so forth, one thing. You just got to know them, that’s all. I liked him; he was a nice man. I think, well that’s the story anyway.

DN: What was your father's occupation?

RS: Dad was a golfer by choice and a lawyer by some necessity. His father was also a lawyer. But he was never terribly involved in the law. He practiced corporate law and probate law, just enough to keep my mother happy. And as you can judge from the name, she was comfortably well off. But anyway she, he was club champion. And he was, he also by the way wrote the State of Maine Song, the official State of Maine Song, which brings me to an interesting legislative story. When I was in the Senate, somebody in the House didn't like the State of Maine Song and thought we should have a different State of Maine Song. So there was a bill introduced to do something about a new State of Maine Song. And Herbert Payson, Charles' brother, was in the House when I was in the senate. He was a Republican and I was Democrat. He said, "Did you see this bill, Roger?" I says, "No." And he says, "Well." I says, "I can't go; I've got, to the hearing. Would you go?" And he went and he got up and said, "Did you know that the father of the chairman of the Education Committee wrote this song?" And the sponsor dropped his bill. That was all that was necessary; an exercise of power. But, you, I think you wanted me to say how I got into politics, something like that.

DN: Well, you were reporting for the Gannett papers and at *The Press Herald*, and I take it you left there at some point?

RS: I was vice president of the union, yeah, I left. I was suburban editor, we had, I was vice, yeah, vice president of the union, the newspaper guild. We had the only strike in the company's history. Nick Slake was president. Mr. Gannett had gotten along with me when I organized the KJ; he probably realized they needed a pay increase. But this was too much for him. And he thought I was one of the leaders in the strike, which was not true because I was too busy arranging to buy the *Westbrook American*, a Westbrook weekly paper. I did obviously walk in the picket line, and I did work with a man named Keith Glaser who was state editor to try to persuade the paper's advertisers to slow down. That was a very unsuccessful effort on my part, despite the fact that Henry Benoit, who owned Benoit's, was my brother-in-law's father, and other connections that I had didn't work.

But he thought I was responsible for the strike, which I was not, and so he wanted to get rid of me. And it was kind of an interesting story, I've told it. They heard that I was going to buy the Westbrook paper and Bob Beaks who was the managing editor, called me in and said, "I hear you're buying the Westbrook paper." And I said, "Yes." And he said, "Well, we'll miss you because" I said, "Miss me?" There was something, a light bulb went on in my head, the way he said it. I said, "Wait a minute Bob, I didn't say I was leaving." He said, "Well, you have to. You're the union, you can't work for the competition." And I said "the *Westbrook American* is no more competition for *The Press Herald* than a rowboat for the Queen Mary. I'm sorry," I said, "if you want to get rid of me you'll have to fire me." And that was the end of that conversation.

About a week later he called me in. He said, "Roger, how much vacation time do you have?" I said, "I have two weeks, but I'm almost in my seventh year. I may have three weeks; I'm not sure." He said, "You have three weeks; forget it." So I had three weeks vacation. Then he said

“How much notice would you give us if you left?” I said, “Well I told you.” He says, “Well no, but if you did leave.” I said, I was really beginning to catch on to what was happening, I said, “Well I’d give you a month’s notice.” He said “We’ll give you a month’s severance pay; it’s no problem at all.” So a little later he called me in. I was in the midst of a story; I don’t remember what the hell it was now. He said, (and there was a severance pay clause in the contract), he said “We’ll give you full severance pay, which. . . . I said, “Bob, all this stuff adds up to four thousand dollars.” He said, “I’ll have the check for you in twenty minutes.” That was the end of my career with *The Press Herald*.

DN: Well did you, you purchased the *Westbrook American*. And did you also edit it?

RS: Yes, I was publisher. Ray sold the advertising and I handled the editorial end.

DN: This is Ray Durgin?

RS: Yeah, whom you mentioned. And I got married in ‘56 and I took a five-week honeymoon in Europe. Ray did all the work despite the fact that he, well I loaned him the money to buy his half of the paper. And he developed a serious drinking problem, in fact it almost killed him. But he paid me every cent he owed me, and he worked for me, did the whole business for five weeks while I was in Europe. So, those kinds of problems, he was a great guy.

While I was doing that, Don, this is how I got into politics. Do you remember Floyd Nute? He wrote a column for the paper and two things happened. A fellow named Hugh Saunders, who was at that time the president of Saunders Bros. in Westbrook, decided he wanted to run for the Senate. And he was a moderate Republican; hell of a bright guy, very personable. He, because he was moderate, found he got no, the conservatives in the party would not pay much attention to him. And he found that he wasn’t going to be able to go anywhere; they weren’t helping him. At that point in time I think the treasurer of Saunders Bros., who was his uncle, died, so Hugh quit. I think he would have won the primary and I think he might have been elected. But he was thoroughly fed up with the Republicans in the senate. And I was publishing Floyd Nute’s column all that time and Floyd was very disrespectful, in fact he was nastily disrespectful. And I had thought of giving him up because I wasn’t sure I liked the way he attacked some of the people in the Senate, in the legislature and the governor. And he picked the president of the Senate to attack who was in the dairy business I think; I can’t remember the guy’s name.

DN: Was this [Earl M.] Hillman?

RS: Probably. He called me up and I was- I was so innocent I didn’t even know who the president of the Senate was. But he was very nasty on the phone, really nastier than Floyd’s column called for him to be, under the consideration of the power, not the power, the freedom of the press. And it annoyed me and I told him to go to hell. And, this must have been 1963. And it was apparent, you would know this, Don, the Republicans were arrogant. There were only three Democrats, three, very few Democrats, three or four Democrats in the Senate, including Emile Jacques, Romeo Boisvert and Armand. No, they were the three in the (*unintelligible word*), there were quite, there were more than that. But anyway it was a hopeless cause for anybody who didn’t get along with the Republican majority, and it annoyed me.

And I decided, as a newspaper publisher you have influence on what people do, and I had been successful in getting the Westbrook city council to pay its councilors and successful through the newspaper in getting some other things done in Westbrook. And I thought it would be nice to have a direct influence on affairs. And also it annoyed me that no Democrat had run from Cumberland County for a hell of a long time. And I thought it would be kind of interesting, so I ran. And it happened to be the year of the Johnson landslide, Goldwater; you've read about it, you're majoring in history. So then I was in the Senate.

DN: Now, as a younger person you'd been a Republican.

RS: Yeah.

DN: When did you change your enrollment?

RS: I changed my enrollment the day Kennedy was assassinated. This was not connected. In fact I went in and changed it that morning. And I hadn't at that point decided to run for the Senate but I was thinking about it. And because of the nature of the Republican Party, the fact that I changed my registration was on the front page of *The Press Herald*. I don't, somebody thought I might be going to run for the Senate, so that was a story. And I must say that although Mr. Gannett, it had cost him four thousand dollars to get rid of me, they were very nice to me. When I announced, I was invited to speak to the Democratic committee in South Portland, and it was my first public speech and newspaper men are used to being very brief. If you couldn't do it in seven, say it in seven minutes it wasn't worth saying, or something like that. It was very difficult for me to write a ten-minute speech, but I did. And the *Evening Express* published it on the front page word for word, which flabbergasted me.

But the funny part of that is, preceding Dana Childs was running; he lived in South Portland. I guess it must have been more than just a South Portland caucus. He is- was a lot smaller than I am and the podium was down here, the public address system barely worked. And I had to hold this, I'd written it out because I was scared stiff of speaking without having every word down up in front of me. And despite that, I got a good, good bit of applause and as I say, the paper published it all, all of it on the front page. And later on they endorsed me in an editorial. Which, and I remember it was some union called me up, Teamsters, said they wanted to endorse me and would I be embarrassed if they did. And I said, "If you want to endorse me, you do it," and so they did.

MR: You said the reactions of your Republican colleagues to your party switch were pretty friendly or understanding at least, in general?

RS: My uncle called me a traitor to the family and to my traditions, this is Herbert Payson. Charlie Payson laughed and he may even have sent me fifty dollars. He and his wife, by the way, were the largest contributors to Eisenhower's campaign for president. Anyway, my dad had died. I don't know what he- no, my mother had died, yeah, that's right. So that was it. Herbert was the only one, and he got cancer during the, his term in office. He was an environmentalist; he was one of the first ones. And I took over his bills and we got them passed;

he forgave me.

DN: Speaking of your parents, had they been much interested in politics or at all active?

RS: Dad was moderator of the Falmouth town meetings, mother was chairman of the Republican town committee, and I used that in my campaign. I mean, Don, if you remember then, the registration then was heavily in favor of the Republicans. And I saw no reason not to use my Republican connections. The only thing adverse that happened, which really was kind of disgusting: I walked a picket line, this was years before, this was ten years before. And when I walked the picket line one night, this symphony or some concert was letting out at City Hall. And I knew a lot of the people who went to that. In fact I usually went myself; I reviewed them for the paper. When they saw me in the picket line, they crossed the street. And my mother went to a party. Oh, I wish I could think of the guy's name; he was an admiralty lawyer- Nate Thompson. And his wife came. And Mrs. Thompson said to my mother, "Alida, it's such a shame that your son has Communist leanings." And mother slapped her and left the party.

MR: Beyond your, beyond both of your alignments in the Republican Party, how would you compare your own political attitudes to those of your parents? Were they pretty similar as far as you could tell then?

RS: My Republican friends?

MR: Your Republican friends or your parents. Actually, I was interested in. . . .

RS: I don't think I was at all different from what my mother would have wanted. My father, I probably was more liberal, but largely because he believed in Republican control. I can cite one story when he was moderating the Falmouth town meeting. I was living at home. At supper he told us a bill was coming up to put town water on Ledgewood Drive, Ledgewood Road? Ledgewood Drive, and that there were only three families on it that were all very poor. And "It was ridiculous for the town to spend seventy-five thousand dollars just to put deep water to serve three families." And when the article came up my mother stood up and voted in favor of passage, and the bill passed. And dad was furious. I don't remember how I voted; I probably voted with her, I don't remember. Well maybe I didn't; I just don't know.

But, no, I think, I would think that most of them would have agreed with what I was trying to do. It was the old guard Republicans who didn't. And I guess I was fairly conservative fiscally, within reason. But I sponsored the, the major bill I sponsored was the one which was the Sinclair Act, you remember, remember that. It was a method of paying for public education, which depended, which each town contributed, and the wealthier towns contributed more. It was based on the property tax, and it still is to some extent. And I of course sponsored the State Museum. That was interesting, and that's because Jean Gannett asked me to. I didn't want to because I was busy.

DN: It was Jean Gannett who proposed the State Museum, or?

RS: Yeah, not my idea but it was a good one. The Sinclair Act wasn't my idea, but it was a

good idea and I sponsored it, and. . . .

DN: Tell us about the fight to get the State Museum approved.

RS: Oh, well we had, Rusty Edwards is the Democrat that I couldn't think of his name, when Dana Childs asked me, Jean asked him to ask me to do it, to make this correct. And I said I didn't want to because I had some forty other bills I was sponsoring. Because, it seemed I was having good luck and a lot of people had asked me to sponsor bills. And I was, if I liked the bill I did it. Anyway, Dick Berry was in the house and he was on it. And we had meetings at the old Pine Restaurant; well it doesn't matter, they all were there. And we invited a lot of people and stuff like that, and we finally got the bill together. And we had to combine, in order to get support, we had to combine the library and the archives into the State Museum bill, which we did. And I went all around talking about it.

When it came time to put the bond issue, which was five million, I think it's five, five and half million dollars, up for vote, (as you know a legislature has to approve all bond issues), I, Rusty and Dick came to me, and said, "How are you going to? We got- they got it through the house, how are you going to get it through the senate?" And I said, "I'll be damned if I know." Bud Reed, who was a good friend and whom I'd done a lot of favors for, and I'll tell you some of them later, was against it. Floyd Harding, the majority leader, was against it. A senator from Rumford who worked in a paper mill there didn't know the difference between archives and anchovies. And he made a speech about archives were salad dressing or something like that. I can't think of his name.

DN: Is that Norm Ferguson?

RS: No, that was not Norm Ferguson. Norm was a Republican; this guy was a Democrat. And there were two of them from that county; I can find out his name. But he had seven kids; I'll go back to that. You may not want to know his name if I tell you a story on it, but he. . . . Anyway, I said, "I don't know, I'm going to call a caucus and I'll talk to them and that's all I can think of." So I did, and I called the caucus. And Al Smith who sat beside me on my left, I had a lot of books and I said, "These are not to talk about. These are here in case you need answers that I don't know offhand." He got up and he had never forgiven; he thought I was not a good Democrat because I was a Republican. He had no use for Republicans; they were slime. And I was still slime, and he called me all kinds of names. Basically I came from a wealthy family, he brought that up, he brought up some other stuff. It was kind of disgusting.

But the minute he started doing this, Don, I said "I've got this," because I knew what the reaction would be. And then Armand Duquette, who was chairman of the Appropriations Committee got up and def-, said, (*spoken with French accent*) "Roger is a good man; he's a good bill." And Elmer Violette whose French accent wasn't quite so pronounced got up, as chairman of the judiciary Committee. Violette and Reed spoke against it but they lost. And there were only two votes against me, and they were the only two. And it passed the Senate. Obviously the Republicans were of no consequence; thank God there were only three or four of them. I can't remember who they were. I think, well, I can't remember who they were. I have the book. So that's how that got through.

DN: You were saying that you did some favors for Bud Reed?

RS: Yes, I sponsored the Sinclair Act Bill, which was a school subsidy program for him. And the other one I did was the University of Maine bond issue, which was fourteen million dollars. He handed it to me one day and said, "Roger, we've got to act on this tomorrow, but we don't know what the hell to do." I said, "It's your bill and I think we'll do whatever you tell us to." And I was going home that night; I called up my wife and told her about this. I said, "Gee, somebody should have been paying me twenty-five thousand dollars a year for the last two years so I know what the hell I'm doing with it." But I looked at the bill and it was giving all the money, practically all the money to Orono. And it was obvious to me and particularly to my brother-in-law (Arthur Benoit, who was on the board of trustees), that Portland was developing. And, I'll come to this later; Portland was developing and needed more money to develop. And so I switched seven, I think seven million dollars I took away from Orono and put in Portland. I called most of the trustees; none of them would talk about it. I called Lloyd Elliott who was the president and he wouldn't discuss it. None of them would say a thing. I said, "Well, I'm going to do what I think is best now," I did and it passed.

Later I did sponsor on my own the bill, which unified the state colleges into the university system, or brought them into the university system, and merged the two in Portland. Actually I sponsored a study act and I, we passed it. And I persuaded Frank, Gov. Reed, who was a very good person to work with despite anything people may say; he was wonderful to work with. He did everything I asked him to, he was a very good listener. I, we lost a couple of things that we both wanted, but I've forgotten what they were now. He signed it, he appointed the people I asked on the study committee, and that was that. And there was something else he did which I sponsored. We joined the, what's now the New England Higher Education Association, which wanted Maine to join, a compact for education. I talked the governor into it. . . .

DN: New England Board of Higher Education?

RS: Yeah, he called a meeting and it got passed. But those things were not favors for Bud; they were my ideas.

End of Side A, Tape One

Side B, Tape One

DN: This is the second side of the first tape, the interview with Roger Snow on Wednesday, the 23rd of June 1999. Roger, you were talking about legislative service and in the course of it you mentioned your brother-in-law, Arthur Benoit, who at the time was a member of the board of trustees of the University of Maine. And also you have talked about your immediate family. Tell us something about the Benois, Arthur who married your sister, and particularly his father Henry.

RS: Oh, they were a family I got to know very well. Arthur really was my cam-, well he was my campaign manager when I ran for the Senate the first time. My mother-in-law was my campaign treasurer. Arthur was the guy who got me thinking about the University of Maine. I

forgot to tell you that I also sponsored an increase in their operating budget. And he introduced me to people, and you know how important this is, who gave me the facts. And I said “The facts have got to be incontrovertible, absolutely,” and they were. There was a nice lady who has since died, Edith somebody, who was secretary to the board of trustees. And everything she gave me about underfund-, “Well, how did the University of Maine compare with other state universities as to how it was funded?” She funneled this through Arthur and Arthur would suggest things for me to emphasize.

He was very active locally, and his brother Louis Benoit, his brother Louis Benoit who you probably heard of who just died, was also very active. And Henry Benoit himself sponsored the milk bottle, the milk bottle poll. There was talk about a civic center; this, God knows when this was. Henry thought we should expand the expo. And we had a milk b-, he persuaded the dairy people who then delivered milk – (are you old enough to remember that, Don? Okay, see, he’s older than he looks) - to do that. And I’ve forgotten, obviously we got the civic center eventually. But he was a very highly respected person and he was a civic leader. He headed the United Way, or what was then called, what did we call the United Way? Community Chest, during the war; WWII. He himself I think served in WWII, as did my dad. He, both his sons, Louis and Arthur were very, very active, and (*aside - I’ll close that window in a minute - referring to very loud motor noises*), had three daughters. All of them, I think I dated them; all good kids. He was one of the first people whom I knew to have symptoms of Alzheimer’s, and he stayed on with the store much longer than he should have. Arthur did, too. Arthur had a heart condition and worked longer than he should have, and Louis had stomach cancer.

Well, they were a very well respected family. They grew up on West Street in one of those row houses, which were owned by the J. B. Barnham estate at the time, and then moved to the Cape when business prospered. Benoit’s was started by Henry’s father and, who was Arthur Henry Benoit, and Henry Arthur Benoit, and my brother-in-law was Arthur Henry Benoit, and he named his son Henry Arthur Benoit, who would not name his son that way. In fact he became a Democrat, became, you know, they were, I’ll tell you a story about them; you asked me this. My sister was, my family are Episcopalians; the Benois are all Catholics. And they were married in 1944 in a chapel at Fort Williams. The priest who married them did not approve of a Catholic marrying out of the faith, and my father didn’t approve of it either. But anyway they got married, and he read the dispensation as part of the wedding ceremony, which was infuriat-, infuriated my mother particularly and upset both Henry and his wife Kitty. And the reception was held at my grandmother’s house in Falmouth, which is in (*unintelligible word*). The priest showed up at the reception and my mother turned to Mr. Benoit and said, “Henry, throw that man out.” And Henry not only asked him to leave, but had him transferred to the South Pacific, because his wife’s uncle was Bishop Walsh who was a member of the Catholic, Archbishop to the Catholic Church. Are you a Catholic?

MR: Yes.

RS: I don’t want to offend you, Michael.

MR: Oh no, that’s fine.

RS: I don't think you are; I don't know why.

DN: No. The- Henry was an active Democrat.

RS: Yes.

DN: And a man of strong opinions as I recall.

RS: Yes, and he was on Louis Brann's staff and I think Arthur was on, well I know he was on Muskie's staff. I really can't, well, Arthur was very much a husband of the period; he could cook. I encouraged my sister who became a Democrat, in fact everybody in my family (except my brother who's a Republican, and I've urged him not to change because it's nice to have one Republican in the family), ran for the school board and ran for the town council, and was chairman of both. Arthur would get very upset if she didn't cook his dinner before she went to the council meeting. And in fact one day, one day when she had their only car, he walked to the town hall to upbraid her because she hadn't done something. He became a bit eccentric after his heart trouble got to him. And he and I built a sailfish. Are you familiar, any of you sailors?

MR: I'm not.

DN: I know what a sailfish is. . . .

RS: Well, a sailfish is a fourteen-foot sailboat. And we drank so much beer while we were building it that we got one of the ribs in backwards and we had to take the whole, the damn thing apart and put it back together again. Oh well.

DN: I'd like to take you back, Roger, to the 1950s when you were publisher of the *Westbrook American* and the Democrats were just getting under way with rebuilding the party, and ask you for your recollections of Frank Coffin and Ed Muskie during that period.

RS: I didn't know Frank very well; I got to know him better as time went on. He, I first knew Muskie. I think he was involved with the federal government before he became governor; OPS or something.

DN: Office of Price Stabilization.

RS: Yes, and I first got to know him when he was in that office, because one of Mr. Gannett's first efforts to get rid of me involved encouraging Ed Muskie to offer me a job in the OPS at some time. I was not terribly interested in this, but I did talk to Ed. And I remember that he would say "Yes," he would do something, and then I wouldn't hear from him for ages and I'd have to call him up and remind him. And as I look back on it, I think they probably did not want to find me a job at OPS and I was not particularly interested in a job in OPS. But that's when I first met him. And I took (*taping paused - very noisy engine outside*). Then I think earlier, I don't know if we were recording, I told you about interviewing him for Orrey's (?) station?

DN: No, we weren't recording then, so let's talk about that.

RS: I was asked to help interview him and Burt Cross, Burton Cross, who died recently, for the, I think we had a very short range TV and I don't think very many people watched it. But both Muskie and Cross accepted the invitation. And it was a walk-away for Muskie. Cross, I think, didn't think he had to do much homework for it. He expressed his opinions without documenting them. Muskie would express an opinion and document it. And I came home and told my Republican family that Muskie had it, really had it. I think I had the Westbrook paper then; I was not working at *The Press Herald*. But one story you might like to know about politics in that era concerns Fred Payne who, oh heavens, he was governor in the '40s. I think he followed Sumner Sewall.

DN: Uh-huh, he was governor from 1948 to '52.

RS: Yeah, yeah. I covered both Owen Brewster, Ralph Owen Brewster, but he dropped the Ralph because his initials became ROB and a lot of people didn't like him. And so he thought it would be better to be called Owen Brewster. He, a couple of stories of politics in those days if you want them: Brewster got in trouble because of his support of Pan American Airlines. And [Howard] Hughes, who owned TWA, I can't think of his name, anyway, caught on to the fact that Pan Am was doing all kinds of favors and giving Brewster free flights and his family and all that kind of thing. And he, the Senate had hearings, I think. Anyway, one night Brewster was headed back from Washington when Hughes made some rather strong charges against him, and I was told to go down and get Owen Brewster's comments on this. And I knew he was taking a night train in New York. So I got him out of his, I knocked on his compartment door, told him what was happening, he quickly threw on a coat and rushed out to a phone booth; they didn't have cell phones of course. And I very adroitly had stood behind the phone booth so I could hear what he was saying, and did so.

And I have a story saying he's of course denying it, but when we covered Brewster, he had once sued Mr. Gannett and collected I think it was forty thousand dollars. So Mr. Gannett didn't trust him. So when he talked, usually he was double-teamed. And I was part of that once. He spoke at a grange hall off Forest Avenue, and Bill Langzettel, whom you may know of, was then the working for the AP. And he didn't know Brewster, but Brewster knew me. I sat in the front row and made certain that Brewster said what was in front of him, then I left. And Langzettel was there to make sure what he said then. Fortunately he stuck to the, but we double-teamed him every time, somebody whom he didn't know would sit in the back row. They didn't have tape recorders.

But getting back to Payne, Payne was involved in a liquor scandal. He, his bag man was supposedly a guy named [Edward D.] Rabbit Talberth, who was Mr. Gannett's political reporter who kept Mr. Gannett entertained with political tidbits the way the FBI director, Hoover, was supposed to have entertained Mr. Johnson with tidbits on various politicians. He was apparently Payne's bagman. And a fellow named [Herman] Sahagian who owned wineries and liquor distilleries in the Lewiston-Auburn area, near Bates College I'm sure, was the guy who put the cash in the bags. And Gannett had his editorial staff run some absolutely outrageous cartoons about Brewster sitting up, well Payne was running against Brewster for the, you know, Senate, sitting up on a throne and Payne kneeling in front of him asking forgiveness for something. I

don't know, it was ridiculous.

I was invited to cover Payne, I was told to cover Payne's major- a major campaign speech at the Old Falmouth Hotel, which had a huge ballroom which is no longer up. It was on Middle Street. So I went, and Payne knew me. Anyway, I sat there. I had a copy of his speech and followed it to make sure he said what he was going to say, and he did. When the formal part of his speech was over, I got up to leave. And I was sitting, Payne had not seen me but I was sitting fairly close to the front to make sure you hear; reporters do that. I stood up, he saw me, he pointed his finger at me, he said, "There is Mr. Gannett's stooge. Whatever you read in the paper tomorrow is going to be totally wrong. It won't be what I said, it will be something else." Of course usually reporters are quite meek. Well I got quite annoyed and I turned around and said, "Governor, you've got to read every goddamn word in the paper." Went back and said, "We're publishing this word for word. If you don't, I quit." And that was that; we did. But, Paine got elected as you know, and, for governor who succeeded, Mrs. Smith succeeded him. Oh, no. . . .

DN: It was, Burt Cross was elected. This is the '52 election.

RS: I'm talking about the, yeah, Mrs. Smith was elected in '48, Payne beat Brewster, yes. . . .

DN: In '52. And Burt Cross was elected that year. So you were, you worked at the paper until '5-. . . .?

RS: Fifty-three.

DN: Fifty-three.

RS: November. I left a month after the strike.

DN: Now, Ed Schlick was the president of the union when you left the paper.

RS: I'm not sure. He was very active in the union. It may have been Wally Prey, I don't know if you knew him or not. I remember when we had the strike vote, the only thing I had to do with the, as vice president was fill in when the pr-. . . . Well, Wally fainted while we were taking the strike vote, so I had to stand up and run the meeting. And I was not happy, because I hadn't learned to conduct meetings at that point in time. I think you probably know of the Muskie anecdote in Don Hansen's book, which concerned me. It's. . . .

DN: Refresh our memory on that.

RS: Well, sure. We gave a big party for Muskie. We invited a hundred and twenty people. We lived in a much larger house at White's Landing there. And there was the most, well we hired a bartender and a caterer and stuff like that. And we invited only Republicans because all my neighbors were Republicans, and ninety of them came. Muskie was late, which didn't surprise me. And it was raining; it was an awful day. We had the bar on the porch but people, screened-in porch, people still go out there to buy their drinks. My eighty, well she wasn't eighty then, my aunt came; she was a Republican. And she said, "I have to go home; my husband is furious

with me for coming and I want to see your senator. Where is he? And I was running for the station and I said, "I looked all over; I couldn't find him." I looked all over the house. Finally I went upstairs; it was a big house, eight bedrooms. I finally found him in my son Burt's room reading to my children. And he said, "I'm sorry Roger, I miss this. Excuse me." I said, "Well that's okay but my aunt is going to kill me if you don't come down and meet her," so he did.

And, the only other insight I have on, there's about two more if you'll bear with me, you asked me about the Benois; if I could go back to that a minute. They were planning to have Ed and Jane for dinner. Jane was a good friend of my sister's because they each had children who were, I told you, manic-depressive or something like that. They have a daughter. . . .

DN: Martha, who. . . .

RS: Yeah, and Judy had a son the same age. They were going to entertain him. And my sister had a woman named Frances Matthews who helped her iron and so forth in the house; came in occasionally. And they were getting ready for the Muskie's for dinner. And they were both small, my sister and Mrs. Matthews were small. And Mrs. Matthews started to get up to the top shelf to get down the best china. And Judy said, "Oh, I'm not using that, Frances." And Mrs. Matthews said, "Who are you waiting for, the Pope?" So that was one sideline.

Another sideline on Muskie, I generally refuse to go to these hundred dollar a plate, fifty dollar a plate parties, but there was one in Lewiston that I wanted to go to for some reason; fifty bucks. Usually I'd get in, when I was in the newspaper business, without paying. But I went to this one in Lewiston. And Muskie, I was chatting with him and he said, "I hate these things, Roger, they're so boring. And I don't like raising money." So that was another insight on him. I'll go back and give you one other political story. I'm running out of them. But do you remember Everett Dirksen?

DN: Yes.

RS: He came to Maine to give a speech during the presidential campaign; I don't remember what year it was. But by that time TV was much more customary, much wider spread. And he was giving a press conference or a conference at the Eastland Hotel. And I was a Democrat at that point and I was in the state senate. I went for the *Westbrook American*, and the only seat in the room was beside Dirksen and it was in front of the TV camera. And I sat down in it, and somebody introduced me to him. The look I got from him, you wouldn't believe. And he was apparently a pretty heavy drinker. Somebody had brought him a, some timid elderly lady asked him what he liked to drink and he said bourbon and water, and she brought him one and it was pale like this: "Go back, put in three times as much." She scurried away and did that. And I sat beside him all the time he was interviewing. I was on the camera. I thought it was funny; they didn't.

DN: What, you were a reporter and then a publisher and editor during the period of the '40s and '50s. And what was the press corps like in those days?

RS: It was a friendly bunch. At least there were fourteen reporters for the *Press Herald*, a

larger staff I think then, oh I don't know about now. We were all most of us friendly. But some of the reporters were rather private about their beats, and that was usually I thought an indication of a lack of self-confidence. There was a very noticeable rivalry between, particularly the bank owner who was in the Gannett papers. We tried to scoop them; they tried to scoop us. I was covering a story in Ellsworth for, about Garry Davis who was announcing he was a citizen of the world. And he was renouncing his American citizenship on the steps of the Ellsworth city hall. I went up, listened to him, went back to- I think it was called the Excelsior Hotel in Bangor, and wrote the story, took it down to Western Union, packed up my typewriter, put it in the car, packed my suitcase, mostly packed it, went to bed.

And about six in the morning I hear the fire engines outside, or fire sirens. Or, I thought "this is one I don't have to go to." But about two minutes later somebody banged on the door, "Get out, get out! The hotel's on fire!" So I looked out the window; I was on the second floor but it was only about thirteen feet to the ground and I figured I could tie the blankets together and get out, so I took my time so I went and put on my coat and pulled pants on over my pajamas, closed my suitcase, and I was prepared to toss it out the window. And I heard a woman crying out for help outside the door, and my aunt had taught me always to know the exits when you're in a hotel, so I knew where the exit was. So I opened the door; it was smoky, couldn't see anything, went. I heard her, said "Speak Again; I, oh, I know where the exit is." Took her hand, she had a daughter, led them out the front stairs which was fine, and immediately called the *Press Herald*, the *Evening Express*, and, which, and also WGAN at that time which put it on the air.

The hotel clerks didn't know who the hell I was so they answered every question I asked them about who was in the hotel, how many were there, all this. And I called up the paper and gave them this information. And then the head photographer for the *Bangor News*, whom I knew, showed up, saw me standing there dressed in, apparently fully dressed, and said "What the hell are you doing here, Snow? How did you know about this?" I said, "Well, we know what goes on everywhere, John." So it was really funny. And of course it was the lead story in the *Express* with my byline. And then I went back to the, I went to Orono, the university where I had a friend and walked into his room, and said "Can I get dressed in your room?" and turned on a radio and listened to the radio reports of the fire and phone them in to the paper, so that was one thing.

Oh, you asked me about the press corps. They were fun. They, I don't know if they were as well paid relatively speaking as they are now. When I left the paper in 1953, the strike gained us four bucks. It wasn't really over money, it was over other issues. But, so I was making a hundred bucks a week. And I think now the top scale reporters probably make forty thousand, thirty-five to forty-three or something like that. And I don't think they hire people now who don't have college degrees; they did then. They tried for college degrees but didn't always get them. It was, it was fun. I loved the business, and I refer to myself now, (I think you know that I went to work for the university shortly after I got out of the legislature), but I refer to myself as a retired reporter or as newspaperman. Frank, one thing interesting: Frank Coffin; I really didn't know Frank very well. I used to run into him and we were reasonably friendly. He is highly intellectual as we know, and I always felt a little overawed by him. I don't know how you felt but that's the way I felt.

One of the fun things that happened to me as a newspaper person, you I know were with the Maine Medical Center as planning director. I don't know how much you know of their history. But when Blue Cross Blue Shield wanted to involve itself with the osteopathic profession as well as the medical profession, it was a controversy. And many, many medical doctors didn't care for the idea. And I was, in addition to the aviation editor, I was sort of the medical writer for the papers, so I covered all of that. And I personally thought the osteopaths had a case, but you weren't supposed to show your opinions. But the facts occasionally spoke for themselves. And I think the MDs were annoyed that they were getting so much coverage.

And I was writing the story, so I went to the annual meeting of the Maine Medical Association held down at Great Lakes, some old resort hotel. And I got dirty looks from some of the doctors. And the head of the Medical Association, or one of the doctors who was a very prominent Portland doctor, asked the president of the association to have me leave their formal meeting. And he told me that, and I said "I'll leave if you put it to a vote, but you know I'm going to find out what happens." And he put it to a vote. I won by one vote, and I sat at the same table as the guy who tried to have me thrown out. He kept giving me dirty looks all through the meeting; he was furious. So, you can see, feelings, I don't know now how much that happens. I know you get occasions when you don't want the press there, but this was quite open.

DN: Was your- I guess relative by marriage Dan Hanley involved at that point?

RS: No, But Dan and I were buddies in the legislature when I was in the senate. Louis Jalbert, who probably would rise from the grave to be interviewed if you asked him, wanted a medical school in Maine. And I thought it was a silly idea, or ridiculous idea, and it turned out so did Dan Hanley. In my view, the expense of the medical school would have taken support from the university system, and so I was opposed. And Louis was very upset. But Dan Hanley was with me all the way. I had another incident that involved the chiropractors. They wanted the law to change so they could practice, so they could get workers' compensation payments. And John Gibbons, who married Dan Hanley's sister-in-law, Kathy Benoit, was very much opposed to this and so was Dan. And they convinced me to oppose this, which I did successfully my first term in the senate. My second term in the senate I said, "I will oppose it but one of you has got to come and testify. I won't be a front for the medical profession." So I got John to come. He was very reluctant to come, bring x-rays of people who had been injured by chiropractic treatments and so forth. I hope your folks aren't chiropractors.

MR: Oh, don't worry about it.

RS: And we succeeded and it was interesting. After I left the senate Dick Berry took up the cudgel and opposed the chiropractors by reading from my testimony, which annoyed me. Eventually they got their wishes. In fact they threatened me, and I think they were ready to bribe me. I had two of them visit me at the *American*. And I just had the feeling, Don, that if I said, "You guys never advertise in newspapers do you?" that they would have taken that and I would have been deluged with advertising. You know Bud Reed, I presume.

DN: Yes, I know Bud.

RS: It leads me to another story; I may be getting away from it. Bud, Dana Childs and I were invited to a meeting at Orono. I was still, I was chairman of the Education Committee, I was still chairman. And I guess the university was trying to thank us for the support we were giving them or something; I don't remember the details. But John Reed was governor and he was there, too. He and I needed to go to the bathroom at the same time, so I went down, and he came down. I was standing there and he was standing there. Somebody walked into the room, some other person in need walked into the room and said, "Oh governor, I've been dying to meet you." And I thought, "Oh Jesus." The governor very quickly switched hands, stuck out his right hand, shook hands with whoever it is. At that point in time both Reed and Dana were thinking of running for governor. So in the car going back I told them the story, "You guys have got to learn to pee with your left hand." I love that story.

DN: During your- You've told us about running for the Senate in '64 and Ed Muskie campaigning for you. Did you have many dealings with him and his office while you were in the Senate and he was in the U.S. Senate?

RS: The only dealing I had with him in his office was when I (*aside, addressing dog, Sadie, lie down - if you want your feet washed, take off your shoes, she'll do it*). Do you remember the case of the Prestile Stream? We lowered the classifications. One vote I regret. But he and John Reed both of them were supporters of that legislature, and my view was they know a lot more about it than I do and so I'll vote for it. And I did, and the only two people who voted against it were Bud Reed and a senator from, whose name I forget, from Androscoggin County who's died since, who was a Republican but always voted with the Democrats, I think. That's the only dealing I remember having with him or his office.

I think it was through Arthur, who was in, Arthur Benoit who was in much closer touch with him than me, I, knew his views on various things better. While he was in the Senate, Bob Shepherd of course, that was a friend of mine then, knew what was going on there. Five o'clock (*referring to electronic beep*). So I knew about some of Ed's problems through Bob. And I think at one point in time he was drinking a little too much. And he pulled himself together, got over that, and after that was when he ran for President, which we were all very enthusiastic about of course. I heard some story about him at some meeting but I can't remember it very well, where he said the wrong thing, had had too much wine or something of that sort. But he said he was bored with the Senate at that point, so I understood from Shepherd, who was his press secretary. Bob, by the way, just lost a house he owned in Brunswick.

DN: Yes.

RS: I haven't seen much of him since. I saw quite a bit of Jane because she would be at my sister's from time to time. And she and I got to know each other rather well. I liked her. Oh, I had another experience that I, with you sitting here- I, when I was at the university as public information, USM, one night I got a call that Muskie's daughter who went to USM, I don't remember which one it was now, had been attacked by, or threatened with rape by two USM students. And so this was at midnight; I got a call from somebody or other. And I got dressed and went out to the Gorham, where she was a student. And the captain, the chief of the Maine State Police got there in nothing flat. And I was there and the president of the university was

there and the vice president was there.

And Jane had come, no, not Jane, the daughter had come back. And my investigation had shown that she had been in this pizza joint and then had a few too many beers and she asked these, had too much beer. She asked these, some guys at the next table for a r-, where they were going and would they give her a ride back. And I think one of them knew who she was and thought it would be, this is surmise on my part, but anyway he made a pass at her and she screamed rape. And they were in front of the dormitory, and of course that caused a big ruckus. And that's when I was called. And about, and I was, my view as to how, of course they were all asking me how should the university handle it. And I don't know why it was up to me; the police were there. But anyway, my view was that there's nothing wrong with some student. . . .

End of Side B, Tape One
Side A, Tape Two

RS: Is it going?

DN: This is the Roger Snow interview, tape two, side one. Go ahead, Roger.

RS: Her brother arrived, the daughter's brother, and I'm not sure but another sister. And they were with her and she was hysterical. Ed called up and wanted to talk to me. This was about four in the morning at that time. And he wanted to know what had happened and I told him what I thought had happened. And I was quite clear that I, that's what had happened. And he was then running for President, and he said, "Do you realize Roger what would happen if this story- if the facts appear as you relate them?" And then he found some others, and we talked for forty-five minutes. And he, at four o'clock in the morning, finally convinced me. And I've forgotten what I told the press. Of course we were getting calls from all over the country, and even outside the country, and I just dropped the beer part out. But I don't know now; it was my opinion, but I wasn't there to see it, so the hell with it. I went home at six in the morning and turned it over to the State Police guy who was a friend of mine, their public information guy, (he seems to have left, I don't remember his name), and went home to bed.

DN: And in the conversation with Senator Muskie, how, how did he deal with you and with the situation?

RS: He was very calm. He wasn't, he, in fact he wasn't upset with me; he didn't get mad at me (and I know he's supposed to have had a temper, I never saw it), for telling him what I thought, and what I thought I should do. He was very relaxed and obviously in forty minutes or whatever the time frame was, we talked about many things, including the, a tendency of college students to at some point during their career have too much to drink, and the fact that I had had that happen, he had had it happen. But at this time in his life and his daughter's life, it was going to be a dreadful thing, and I think I did a favor. And of course the justification for me was that I didn't know this was what happened, but it was the logical sequence of events. I don't know, maybe she didn't have too much to drink, maybe the guy made a pass at her. But she was drinking beer, and he was drinking beer, and that's what they said, the kids said. So, I guess I obviously saw him after that, but we never referred to the incident again.

DN: Mike, did you have any questions?

MR: A couple, actually. A while ago you mentioned Louis Jalbert. How would you, how do you assess his influence in the legislature, especially during the time you were in the senate?

RS: He wasn't, my time in the Senate? Well, he- I didn't particularly care for him. I'll preface this story by recounting my first meeting with him. I, Arthur, when I was running for the senate, Arthur wanted me to go to some meeting- Arthur Benoit wanted me to go to some meeting in Lewiston, or Auburn with him. And I had never met Jalbert; I didn't know, I knew he was in the House and so forth and so on. And Dana Childs was moderating the program. We were sitting there and somebody else was talking. And then this man walked in that was, had too much to drink and got up and blathered on and on. I didn't know who it was; I didn't hear his name when he was introduced, or if I heard his name I didn't know anything about it. And I said, Arthur, (*unintelligible word*) I want to speak to Dan and see if he can shut that drunk up. And it was Louis Jalbert; that was my first, I didn't meet him then.

But I had another run-in with Louis in the senate. I had no problems with him excepting, I mentioned the medical school. And he was- I don't think I ever had to be very public and discuss this with him; I don't remember, I think. But one bill I did have to discuss with him. Somebody had sponsored a bill to allow the Sunday sale of beer in convenience stores. This was, oh 1965 or '6, something like that. And the only convenience store operator I knew was here in Falmouth, and he was very much opposed. So I decided to oppose the sale of beer in convenience stores on Sunday. And there was a legislative dance the night before, and I'd invited Hugh Saunders and his wife to the party. They came. And during the dance people kept coming up to me and saying, "Can I speak to you?" They were saying, "Don't introduce your amendment," which would have killed the Sunday sale. It would have permitted the Sunday sale of drink with meals in restaurants, but it would not have permitted the Sunday sale of beer in convenience stores or anywhere.

And I finally changed my mind, that I would probably not introduce the amendment. And I went to the legislative documents office and said I was going to withdraw my amendment, and went back to the senate. And I was called out of the senate by Louis Jalbert, who invited me into the president's office. Bud Reed wasn't there; we were just the two of us. And he said, "If you," he said, "you know, if you sponsor that amendment it's going to pass." And I said, "Well, I don't know Louis. Most of the stuff I sponsor passed but perhaps this won't." He says "Well, if you do so, I'm going to kill your goddamn crash program which gave the University of Maine a million dollars more than it asked for, and I'm going to kill this, this, this and this." He was very nasty, and it infuriated me. Made me so mad that I didn't tell him I'd withdrawn the amendment. So I just went back, it came up, and said I withdraw the amendment. And that was that. But of course he thought he'd done it. And that was one experience.

And then of course I served in the House in the mid-'70s too. I asked Louis to lunch one day. He'd been having these programs of sickness and I'd kind of gotten so I kind of liked him, so I invited him to lunch. We went to someplace in Augusta for lunch and we had a nice lunch and a chat. And I asked for the check, and he says "You're not paying for this." He pulled out a

hundred dollar bill, which practically nobody carried around in those days. And I think he was just showing off; that was my view of it. He and I got along very well at the end. But that's, does that answer your question?

MR: Yeah. One other thing I'm curious about connected with that: did you ever hear him use the word "click," or "clique" connected to any groups of maybe Democrats or other legislators?

RS: Did I ever hear Louis use that word? No.

MR: The other thing, it's kind of a different topic. But I was wondering about, you've lived in the Portland area for many years, most of your life. So how would [you] say that it's changed, maybe politically, economically, socially over the years?

RS: Well, of course, it's changed to the extent that Portland is not run by a small power group, mostly Republicans. I think the elections are quite open now. It was a larger city when I lived, we moved to Falmouth in 1931 and I think it had eighty thousand or something like that in the 1920 census. I won't swear to it; you'd have to check it out. It's now sixty-four. Every time I drive in there, Mike, I wonder what my parents would think if they could come back. The time and temperature building and the building next to it were the only buildings over nine stories, over eight stories, at that time. It's not politically as controlled by a small group as it was. And Falmouth, I should tell you that I'm the only Democrat the town has elected to state office since 1914. So it's funny. They vote socially, we voted for, I'm sure we'll going to support the Gay Rights Amendment. We voted for it in a state measure, but they vote Republican in state elections. They voted for Muskie, they voted for, I don't think they voted for Dukakis, but they vote, I think they might, it goes Democrat, then national elections, no. And a lot of the state, in my view, is somewhat like that. You will find small towns, it's very seldom that they will elect a Democrat even. Although the Democrats now, and in Falmouth the registration is about one-third Republican, one third Democrat, one third Independent. And statewide, you know the statistics. I think the Democrats just slightly exceed the Republicans. And the Green Party's coming along.

I, I can tell you about one other measure I sponsored, or sort of sponsored, which shows perhaps how things are changing. When I was in the Senate in my first term, Dana had bro-, Dana Childs who was speaker of the House, had broken his leg skiing. He called me up and asked me if I'd find somebody to sponsor a straight income tax. I believed in that; I'd talked about it. In fact I talked about it at one meeting of the League of Women Voters, which had filled the Eastland Ballroom. And Dana and someone else came up and they said, "You just committed political suicide, Roger." Well I won the election. So I found Davis Grant to sponsor it. Davis was a representative from Freeport. Very liberal, a writer. Hell of a nice guy, who was opposed to the Vietnam War. He was famous for that. He agreed to sponsor it. I got three votes for it in the Senate, including mine, and I was reelected to the senate by four votes instead of four thousand votes. Davis lost the election, Davis Grant; that was the big tool. He laughed about it. I sponsored it again; I got somebody else to sponsor it, or else somebody sponsored it, (I don't remember whether I got them to or not). I got seven votes in the Senate, and about six or seven years later or whatever it was, it passed.

And the same is true with the big box, which Don will remember but you don't remember. Rodney Ross, who was a Republican, was in the House at the time I was in the Senate. We cosponsored it; it lost. Maybe five or six years after I quit the senate, it passed. The big box was at the top of the ballot, and you could vote the straight Republican or Democratic ticket very easily just by making a check mark, and I didn't think that was right. The big box was, was there when I was elected. And for a Republican to vote for me, it was easier to look down, check, well they can just check off the box.

MR: One other thing I was wondering about- you talked quite a bit about your experiences on the Committee of Education when you were in the Senate. And you were also in the Committee on Welfare; is that right?

RS: Yes. Have you looked me up?

MR: Oh yeah, doing a little bit of research.

RS: Good for you.

MR: But, what were some of the issues you dealt with there? Were there any major things that you remember from that work?

RS: Yes, the major one I remember, but the Welfare Committee, I should explain to you that Parker Hoy's son was in the House as a Democrat. I think it was his son, yes.

DN: Frank's son, whose name was Parker.

RS: Yes, and he was supposed to be House chairman of the Education Committee and I was supposed to be Senate chairman. In those days, the Senate chair predominated more than the House chair, which is not true today; they're more equals. But he was House chair and he had a nervous breakdown after the first meeting of the committee. So I was left without a House chair and one was never appointed. So I was awfully busy with the Education Committee, and which was my principal interest. And the Welfare Committee, I was on it because we all had to be on two committees.

But the principal bill I, the principal legislation I remember concerned welfare recipients in towns. Now, it was a long time ago; thirty years. In those days, if somebody from Skowhegan came to Portland and needed public assistance, Portland billed Skowhegan, okay? And that has changed so that the state, I don't remember the degree, but there were state reimburs-, supposedly state reimbursement, so that Portland would be reimbursed for a welfare recipient no matter what town they came from; the town would not be billed. That's frankly the only thing I remember from my service on that committee.

MR: And who did you work with on that committee? Do you remember anybody?

RS: Oh, God, if you've looked it up, you know who I worked with on the committee. I don't remember.

MR: But no one that exerted a significant influence on you, that you had really any dealings with outside the Senate? No one that sticks out?

RS: Well I, I hope I listened to my fellow legislators on the committee. I don't think I, I know when the 102nd was over, somebody composed a song that said, "Did you have your snow job?" which was referring to me, because I was quite lucky in getting a lot of stuff passed. But I think I listened. I don't feel I, just like I would listen to you and Don, or you would listen to me. You've been listening to me for quite a while now.

MR: Well, I think that's all of my questions.

DN: Roger is, you were really both as a reporter, then as a legislator, and then working for the university, very active during a period of great political and economic and social change in Maine. As you look back at that period from just post-WWII through the 1970s, how much influence do you think Ed Muskie was on those changes, and how much of it was a part of the society itself changing for other reasons?

RS: I think again that a great deal of influence, by him talking about the things in which he believed. But, I have seen many of my Republican friends move away from what I consider to be rather Neanderthal ideas to viewpoints which are, well let me put it this way, moderate Republicans and moderate Democrats I feel have a great deal in common. The conservative element of the Republican Party, which is now influencing a lot of what happens, is a more recent phenomenon. You think back at the Kennedy years and Johnson years, look what happened to Goldwater, and I think about what the Maine legislature has done regardless of party, I feel that we're in many ways a more Democratic society than we were when I first was involved in the '40s. I think just back to my story about Gannett and Fred Payne and Gannett and Mrs. Smith, publishers don't do those things. I mean, maybe your friend in Manchester does, or did. But, have I answered your question?

DN: Yes, yup, thank you very much.

MR: Thank you very much.

RS: Well this has been a pleasure. I probably, I'll leave this up to my wife because she wants me to do something like what you guys have just gotten me to do for our four kids, two sons and two daughters.

DN: You really should. Your. . . .

End of Interview