Mike Mansfield: I didn’t check on it the last year. I just assumed that we were going there and we’d be taken care of. It wasn’t much anyway.

Don Oberdorfer: Well, we will see. The other thing is that none of the—on your trips to China in 1972, 1974 and so on—none of the memoranda of conversations were in there and I don’t know why. I am sure someone made them. You were probably accompanied by somebody from the State Department or somebody from the senate staff.

MM: You might talk to Frank Valeo.

DO: Yes, I’ll ask Frank if he knows what happened to them.

MM: He’s the only one (?) all my trips there.

DO: Another sort of gap, which we’ll get to in a minute, is there is very little here on Maureen, on her family. I wasn’t able to figure—when I went to Butte I couldn’t find any surviving members of her family. I know that her father ran for mayor in 1923 and so forth. There are no papers that really deal with her life much. Now, do you know, are there such papers? Or do you know if she has some family around that would have them?

MM: No. She didn’t carry on much correspondence. She wrote me several letters from time to time, but they wouldn’t be made available because of their nature. She left her job in Butte to come to Missoula to get married. ’32 I think. She did social work in western Montana. She earned her master’s at Montana. She was the one who sort of pushed me—to put it mildly—into politics. Well, she made me what I am, whatever that is. She is the cause of it because she is the one who kept pushing and pressuring and urging and done everything else to get me involved. She was more involved in the politics than I was, probably due to her father and probably due to Butte, which was always politics year round.

DO: I was going to ask you about this in a minute but while we are on this, I may as well ask you now. I took a little tour around Butte in a car, looked around and so forth. I saw where I believe what their house was—a brick house, nice house. I looked around the mine areas, where a lot of these scaffolds still are remaining. It’s amazing to me that here’s this woman who already has an A.B. degree from the female side of Notre Dame. She is a schoolteacher, high school schoolteacher and she meets this miner, a guy who is living in a boarding house in the mines. How did you two meet and how did you get together?
MM: Well, in 1927 I enrolled in the School of Mines as a special student. I hadn’t finished the 8th grade, ran away, served in the Navy, Army, Marines. Came to Butte. Didn’t finish the 8th grade, but the President, George Craven, I believe was his name, agreed that I could enroll as a special student, but before there was any possibly of a degree I would have to make up my missing high school credits: 15. I went with—that was the first year that they allowed women to enter the School of Mines. Just a coincidence, but they came mostly from Butte, Anaconda and Butte Central High Schools. I met Maureen’s younger sister, Anne, went with her a little while.

DO: She was a co-ed or something at the school?

MM: No, she was, I think, going to Mount St. Joseph in Dubuque, Iowa—later called Clarke College, C-L-A-R-K-E, you can check with them. And through her, I met her sister, and we started going with each other.

DO: How did you meet Anne? Just somewhere on the campus, you were walking down the street and meeting her or what?

MM: I really don’t recall. I just met her.

DO: You went out a couple times?

MM: Oh, went out a couple times and a couple of items developed into more times. Finally, marriage.

DO: But you met Anne and then she says, I’d like you to meet my sister, or you were at their house or something?

MM: Something like that. They lived at a place called 517 North Alabama, a wooden house, right below the shaft of the Anselmo Mine. Butte was a shaft mine town then. She urged me to keep on going to school. She kept on teaching. We got to be closer and eventually she was the one who was laying down the schedule for me to follow.

DO: When you first met her did the two of you hit it off right away or was it a gradual process? The old famous line is “love at first sight.” Was it that sort of thing or not?

MM: Well, sort of. Hard to say. I just don’t recall.

DO: What did her dad think about her going with this miner? Her father, did he ever—

MM: Oh, no. None of her family ever said a thing. They were difficult years. Gas had come in and replaced coal, so that sort of forced her father out of business. He used to be a coal and ice man. I think it was on her salaries in large part that kept the house going.
DO: As a schoolteacher. The salary of a teacher. She had two brothers I believe?

MM: Yes, T.B. who died about 30 years ago, and his wife, five or six years before him. Both in Nebraska. Both went to the college there. It was a (?) college, I can’t recall its name. And Fairclough, who was sort of a fun (?). He joined the Navy in the Second World War, got T.B. I believe. I’m not certain. Any way, he spent much of the rest of his life in veterans’ hospitals; I think died in the VA hospital at Walla Walla, Washington, I’m not sure.

DO: By the time you met Maureen her mother was already gone, right?

MM: I never met her mother. She died the year before.

DO: Was she the oldest of the family? Kids?

MM: Yes, she was the first of four.

DO: So she must have had some responsibility.

MM: Oh, too much. I think that’s what made it difficult for Maureen because she was given so much in the way of responsibility; I suppose to replace her mother, who was ailing more all the time. She took it seriously and she took her responsibility seriously all her life. But, evidently it had reached a point where her father and mother had to decide to send her someplace else to break this responsibility that she was achieving at too rapid a pace for her family. And so they sent her to Mount St. Joseph’s for her high school and three years of her college.

DO: Now, was the Maureen or Anne who went there?

MM: That’s Maureen, the eldest. Given too much responsibility so they tried to shift it away from her by sending her off.

DO: I thought that she finished her A.B. degree at the women’s side of Notre Dame, whatever that is called.

MM: That’s right. St. Mary’s.

DO: That was just her final year?

MM: That was just her final year. I think in the meantime she had gone to UCLA and maybe Berkley, but she came back and enrolled in St. Mary’s and finished in 1926, I think.

DO: What was her father like? Did he talk politics to you and that sort of thing?
MM: No. (?) He talked politics once in the while, but I wasn’t interested. He always had some kind of a proposal or a scheme in mind. Never got very far with them.

DO: Do you know had he inherited his coal business or did he build it up himself?

MM: As far as I know he built it up himself and he also had an ice barn up at Elk Place, about 7 miles outside of Butte. To sell ice and coal. That is my understanding. But, when the gas came in, knocked it out.

DO: Did you ever feel there was a big social gap or something between Maureen, college graduate and daughter of a businessman, and you as a person working in the mines, living in a boarding house?

MM: Yup. I did. Didn’t like it. That’s why I went to the School of Mines. It’s what kept me going. I took correspondence courses, earned two college credits and the high school credits. In 1933, in my last quarter in my senior year, I delivered my 15th high school credit and became a regular student.

DO: Right. March 1933 admitted as a senior. No longer special student.

MM: Graduated as a senior regular student.

DO: In June. That’s right. Three months before because I have your transcript here. Three months before they gave your status as a special student and three months later you graduated.

MM: Yes, because I made up the missing 15 units.

DO: Right, exactly. Did they ever give you, did you ever get something like a high school certificate or diploma or anything like that?

MM: No.

DO: Didn’t need it I suppose. Where you thrilled to meet this young woman who you hit it off so well with or was it just kind of a slow accumulation of closeness between the two of you?

MM: It was sort of a simultaneous thing. We both seemed to hit it off at about the same time and it kept getting even more serious.

DO: She came down to Missoula to get married. The two of you in October.

MM: Father O’Brien.
DO: September 13, 1932. You had gone to Missoula a little earlier in January of that year to work full time as a student. Was this a difficult decision to get married at that point?

MM: Oh no. Oh no, not at all. She had cashed her insurance. She had got a job as a social worker, covered a good deal of western Montana.

DO: She was working for the state or city or some agency?

MM: Federal Government. That was during the New Deal. I had gotten my veteran’s bonus from World War II—or World War I. And so, we were riding very well at the end, but then when I finished and tried to get a job teaching I couldn’t get any. Came back to my school adviser, Professor Phillips in the History Department. He said he couldn’t be of much help, but if I wanted to, I could become a student graduate instructor and work on my master’s degree at $25 a month.

DO: That’s what you’ve said, but actually you’re wrong.

MM: Oh.

DO: It was $22.50 a month.

MM: Well.

DO: Maybe they raised you to $25 after a while.

MM: No, I thought it was $25. $22.50.

DO: It’s in the records.

MM: Yeah. I’ll take that. Then when we both got our master’s that year, ’34. Maureen was in social work and I was given several large freshman classes to teach. It wasn’t too much trouble.

DO: They also gave you a job as an assistant to the Registrar for a $100 a month.

MM: I think that was after I got the master’s degree.

DO: I think you are right.

MM: That was a half-time job.

DO: June of ’34.

MM: The other half-time was teaching.
DO: Right. Exactly. I am a little confused about when Maureen cashed in her life insurance.

MM: Her what?

DO: I am a little confused about at what point Maureen cashed in her life insurance, whether this was after you couldn’t get the teaching job or whether it was much earlier when you were just going through undergraduate school.

MM: Can’t tell you when, but it was much earlier, while I was an undergraduate.

DO: Do you remember how much money it was?

MM: No, I remember how much money my bonus was—about $750 I think, which was an awful lot of money in those days. That was just something unexpected, came along and helped tremendously.

DO: You seem to have taken to teaching very well. I mean, I’ve talked to some of your former students who say you were a terrific teacher.

MM: No. I wasn’t too good a teacher, but good enough to hold down the jobs which they offered me. The only jobs available.

DO: To go from Butte and the hill, richest hill on earth, but full of mines and everything, to the campus of the University of Montana in Missoula, this beautiful, quiet, green, tree-lined campus. It must have been quite a thing for you to do.

MM: Well, it was Maureen who made it possible. It wasn’t much in the way of volunteering on my part. It was pressuring on hers.

DO: I want to go back one step, because talking to John Mansfield and his daughter, Sheila, and her husband Bill. By the way, Bill is the nephew of Peggy DeMichele, your former assistant.

MM: I knew there was some relationship. Yeah.

DO: But they didn’t meet through you. It just happened. They met and got married and it wasn’t because Peggy was working for you, it just was for other reasons.

MM: Oh, no.

DO: Whatever they were. At any rate, they don’t know really why, although they lived with him for a number of years, why your father left Ireland. Do you know? Did you ever talk about it to him?
MM: No, I visited Ballykeel, where he came from.

DO: When was that? When you were in the Senate?

MM: Yeah, on some sort of a trip. John Pastore was with me. I told the group I’d like to come here often and visit my father’s hometown. Did. Remember meeting one of my father’s brothers and he took quite a shine towards Pastore. Pretty soon they were engaged in conversation like they were old buddies and I was in a corner by myself. Pastore enjoyed himself. I just wanted to see the place. I didn’t ask anything about my family’s history. Never been interested really in genealogy. I don’t know what I look like to my uncles. I could be my uncle Gil (?). But at least we stopped there, just for a very short visit. It may be hours.

DO: They showed Sheila, John’s daughter, the initials of your father carved in a bridge.

MM: That’s what they told me. I didn’t go down to see it. They said that when he left he had signed his initials or name on the bridge. I urged him several times to go back, but he would never go back.

DO: He didn’t want to.

MM: No.

DO: The story they had was that—of course there were hard times in Ireland at that time—but he was the oldest son, the oldest person, oldest child, would have inherited the family lands and so forth, but his mother, according to family lore, anyway, gave him money to go buy bread. He went and took the money and went on a cattle boat and came to the United States, went to Ellis Island.

MM: Could be.


MM: No, there is no knowledge of it.

DO: At some point, when he was living in New York still, he fell from a construction site, 35 feet, and hurt himself very badly, was put in a Catholic hospital for maybe two years, a long period of time. Do you know whether that was before you left for Montana, or afterwards?

MM: I really can’t say because I don’t remember. But, I do remember generally that he fell off a roof or something and broke his leg and of course he had a limp for the rest of his life, but I never inquired into further details.
DO: What was your impression of Great Falls? Do you remember much about it when you were a kid?

MM: Well, it was a well-laid-out city, probably the biggest in Montana at that time. I don’t know.

DO: Butte was probably, but—

MM: Wooden sidewalks, cottonwood trees. Population, I thought, about 30,000, but I read somewhere recently where it was only about 15 or 20,000 at the time. Went to public and parochial schools. Didn’t get along—no, got along okay with my father’s uncle. He died. I used to help drive the grocery wagon.

DO: He died just two years after you arrived in Great Falls.

MM: Yeah.

DO: Richard, right?

MM: Yeah. I remember his wife, my aunt—I think she was from Kentucky, I’m not certain—taking over and . . .

DO: He had a brother there as well.

MM: No.

DO: He had. Richard had a brother, right?

MM: Not in Montana.

DO: I thought he was in Great Falls.

MM: No, not that I know of. There was a brother who came down once—I think he was a brother—and he had been prospecting in Alaska. He gave my two sisters and me 50-cent pieces, which was a lot. He didn’t stay long.

DO: So Margaret took over the responsibility, after her husband died, for the stores.

MM: Yes, and we didn’t get along well. I ran away once and got caught about 15 miles away in a place called Ulm—U-L-M. Brought back to Great Falls. I think I spent the night in jail. Well-taken care of. Sent home the next day and ran away again—1917. This time made it all the way. Spent most of my time in Washington state and worked in the logging camps. I really forgot, can’t remember the kind of work I did, but it was a job in which a whistle was used to signify
something of the business of the day. They had some of the Oregon National Guard up in
Washington state and I was sort of a mascot to this squad or so, which was around
Leavenworth Washington, which is close to Wenatchee. Then they were called back along with
other units of the Oregon National Guard to a place called Clackamas—C-L-A-C-K-A-M-A-S—
which I understand was the training ground for the National Guard. So they assembled the
whole regiment—Oregon National Guard regiment—and I snuck in with them and was on the
train all the way to New York. They were relocated at the place called Yaphank, Long Island,
where they formed, as I recall, the brigade or division with the California National Guard, the
Alabama National Guard. That’s all I can recall. There were others of course. I think it became
the 42nd division. I went to see my father. Now he had a new wife and three children.

DO: Was he still working for the hotel, or was he doing something?

MM: He was working at the Van Rensselaer Hotel, I think, on 11th street, as a porter. It was
while he was there that our mother died. I never knew her. I understand he wrote to his uncle,
Richard, in Great Falls, and the Mansfields there—they had their grocery store on the corner—
[and they] agreed to take us. I think she came back and took the three of us to Great Falls.
That’s how we got to Montana.

DO: But then when you went to see your father later, in 1917 you wanted him to—

MM: 1918.

DO: Or 1918. You wanted him to false—or give you an age so you could get into the Navy. And
as I understand it, he wouldn’t do it.

MM: That’s right, and frankly I don’t recall how I did it. But it was done some way and they took
me somehow and they sent me to Newport, Rhode Island, for a boot camp.

DO: I’ve seen a picture. Sheila and Bill have a picture of you in the Navy. I tell you, you look like
a little kid. I can’t imagine any recruiting officer believing that you were 18 years old. They
probably just wanted a warm body to fill a uniform.

MM: It just happened. Got away with it.

DO: In the papers in Montana I came across something that I didn’t know about—it bears on
your drive to succeed as a member of Congress—and that is some letters from you and from
Jim Roe and from Tommy Corcoran. In 1948 you had been in Congress since 1942 and Truman
had just won the election of 1948, surprisingly against Tom Dewey. The letters are to John
McCormick and Sam Rayburn saying that you would like to be, if an opening occurred, a
Majority Whip, because there weren’t very many people from the west of the Mississippi who
had any particular position in the House of Representative. Most of them were either from the
East or southerners, one or the other. Their letter said well, we’ll consider this, we’ll think about it and so forth.

MM: Something like that.

DO: Yes. Come back to you. This shows to me that just six years after you’d been in Congress you were already trying to make your way up the Congressional ladder with the help of Jim Roe and his law partner, who was Tommy the Cork.

MM: That’s true.

DO: Was it your idea, do you think, or their idea, or some of both?

MM: I would say, basically it was all Maureen’s idea and others (?).

DO: She must have had a pretty intimate connection with politics to think about something like that.

MM: Well, she was interested. She was persistent. She was brilliant and very political-minded.

DO: Yeah. Valeo, in his book—I don’t know if you’ve seen his book, it’s a nice looking book—

MM: I’ve seen it, but I haven’t read except for parts. Heard of it.

DO: He kind of suggests that you were really at heart more interested in doing some of these things like becoming a vice presidential candidate and so forth and pushing yourself to be majority leader than you appeared. That you had this posture of not wanting to push ahead, but actually really at heart, wanted to be asked, and you were kind of playing it in a cagey way.

MM: No. Nope, I didn’t want to be Whip; I didn’t want to be Majority Leader. I was very satisfied being a senator from Montana.

DO: But you did want to be a House Whip?

MM: I did, but . . .

DO: That didn’t develop anyway.

MM: Didn’t develop. But I had no desire in the Senate to be anything but Senator.

DO: Also in these papers there’s Jim Roe in 1942 was helping to raise money for you to run for Congress the first time. He was back in Washington. He’s from Butte, of course. Sending you some money and getting in touch with the congressional campaign committees to try to get
some money and so forth and so on. Then, in 1970—your last race—there is a memo in there because some guy who was associated with Charlie Engelhard sent in some money and Roe says, “I think this is okay. It doesn’t go against your orders that you not take any money from Charlie Engelhard” for the campaign. Why did you not to take money from Engelhard? Because you had a too close relationship?

MM: I don’t recall that. But if I did it, I did it because of the possible close relationship.

DO: Yeah.

MM: I didn’t want to perhaps appear begging at his table.

DO: I want to ask you one thing about the LBJ, the famous LBJ conversation, which I got a tape of some of it, but, unfortunately not the end of it, because the tape ran out before the end of the meeting. There are 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7—7 different quotes from you about what he said at the end of the meeting when he gets ready to go back into the Oval Office. They were all slightly different. Let me just read them to you. One of them is from an interview with Paul Healy, 1974—remember Paul used to work for the New York News and was a writer for the Saturday Evening Post and stuff—“Mike, I wish my leader would support me,” and then in parentheses, “I was not his leader.’ But, he added, “I want you to know, how I appreciate your honesty in telling me how you feel about things.”

Here is one from the Baltimore Sun, 1976: “Mike, I’m sorry we can’t agree on more things, but I want you to know, I appreciate your honesty and your candor. You’ve been frank with me all along.”

Here is one from a letter to Jim Ludwig in ’88: “Thanks for coming down, we have disagreed on some aspects of this issue, but I want you to know I appreciate your candor.”

And here is from a Ludwig interview: “Mike, I appreciate your honesty at all times. I’m sorry we couldn’t get together more.” Mansfield says, “Thank you, Mr. President.”

And, with an interview with me in February: “I wish we had a Majority Leader who supported me,” said Johnson. Mansfield said nothing.

Here is another interview with me in June: “I appreciate your honesty, but I only wish I had a majority leader who was more supportive.”

Finally, from Frank Valeo’s book: “I would appreciate some support from my Majority Leader.” Mansfield says, “Mr. President, I’m not your Majority Leader. I’m the Senate’s Majority Leader.”

MM: What does Mr. Healy say it?
DO: Healy says, “Mike, I wish my leader would support me.” And then it says, in parentheses—you didn’t say this, but you were perhaps thinking it—“I was not his leader.” “But, he added—Johnson—I want you to know I appreciate your honesty in telling me how you feel about it.”

MM: That’s about as close.

DO: Yes. It’s the first one, the first interview, so maybe it’s the closest to the actual time. As I understand it from you, you didn’t really say anything, you just—(pause in tape). Now in Frank’s book he also says, you were discharged from the army when the army learned that you were under age, but that is the first time I have ever heard that.

MM: No. No, I was—

DO: You served your army term of one year, right?

MM: Yeah. November the 10th or 11th, 1919, was when I enlisted after—

DO: Getting out of the Navy.

MM: After 19 months in the Navy. They had one-year enlistments at the time. When my year was up I went across the street, so to speak, to join the Marines.

DO: But there was nothing about your age that came up?

MM: And as far as the Navy is concerned, it was the Navy I served in during the war. I served for the duration of the war. I was not discharged until about August 19, 1919. 1919?

DO: Yes.

MM: He also says that in 1963—the famous occasion where you were preparing to make a speech defending your majority leadership and Kennedy was killed so you didn’t make the speech until recently when you went to the Senate and made the speech—Frank says you seriously considered resigning the leadership in ’63, saying, “This is shortening my life. If the Senate doesn’t like it they can take it back. I don’t need this job.”

MM: Could be true. I don’t recall it. Could be true.

DO: Yes. Do you remember what his role was in the speech that you made when President Kennedy died? You know, “They took the ring from the finger…”

MM: Yeah. We got to talking about it and the newspapers of the day were more or less quoting the ring on her finger and we decided that perhaps we could draw up a eulogy or statement of some sort, which would express our feelings. So Frank went to work, came back with it, showed
it to me, made some corrections, called in John Pastore and [?] very dignified and he said I put in a last sentence, something like under God we will, and that sort. So that was open.

DO: That was it. He also says that when you made your statement on gun control, before 1968—after that Marine was killed, after Robert Kennedy was killed—that you received death threats and when you went back to Montana the sheriffs and other people in Montana put body guards on you to make sure that nobody was going to attack you. Is that true?

MM: No death threats that I’m aware of, but in one, possibly two counties, they did put security people around me, but not much. Nothing to worry about.

DO: He said that shortly after the inauguration of Richard Nixon—when you were meeting with Nixon—he complained to Mansfield that “Lyndon Johnson had three years to come to grips with the Vietnam problem, while he had a margin of only a few months to deal with the Vietnam problem.” Does that strike any bell with it?

MM: Don’t recall it.

DO: And he also talks about trying to get the policy committee to make some kind of a statement or draw up some kind of statement, which in effect, would say to Nixon if you get out of the war, we are not going to hold you to blame for whatever consequences might be.

MM: Don’t recall it.

DO: Also, did you have any misgivings about his stability as a person? Richard Nixon’s stability?

MM: No.

DO: Did you have any concerns about that?

MM: You mean mental?

DO: Yes, or flying off the handle or something like that.

MM: No.

DO: I talked to a state senator now, Dorothy Eck.

MM: Oh yeah.

DO: In the early 1970s she was the chair of the League of Women Voters in Montana and she came here visiting in 1970 and her recollection was that around the time—that is around the time of the big protests in Vietnam, Kent State, invasion of Cambodia, all of that going on—that
at some times you were sleeping in your office. It was kind of besieged by all this protesting Vietnam activity and so forth. Does that ring any bell with you?

MM: Oh, I wasn’t besieged, maybe if you use the word lightly. The women’s groups came to see me. I did have a personal meeting with Jeannette Rankin.

DO: Yes, she has a thank-you note in your file, thanking you for meeting—the day I think the bombing ended or something like that.

MM: Jeannette and I were in complete agreement. I wouldn’t know how to answer.

DO: Do you remember having to stay in your office overnight?

MM: Oh no, not that, but stayed in the office later. Not over night. With groups; I couldn’t meet with all of them. I met with some of them, like Jeannette Rankin with one or two. Just had a nice chat. Cup of coffee. Nothing to worry about. We were on the same side. Jeannette Rankin is one of the persons I have really truly admired, not that I agreed with her on the two wars, but because she really did use her conscience, really did prove what she stood for. I’m delighted that she and Charlie Russell have their statues in Statuary Hall.

DO: I have to tell you that when I was in Butte, I went to some little shop to have a—I don’t know how you say it—pasty? pāsty?


DO: Cornish, I guess it is, if it matters. Anyway, there are a few places that still make those things in Butte, including this little shop and they had a thing on the counter—make contributions to Mansfield statue in the capital and they are collecting.

MM: I’m sorry.

DO: From the public, basically. And I don’t know how the campaign is going exactly, but I’m sure it’s going very well.

MM: Oh. They shouldn’t have done it. If it was with Maureen, fine, but otherwise, no. But, pasties are pretty good. I hope you ate one.

DO: Oh, certainly did. I couldn’t turn that down.

MM: They are pretty filling.

DO: Yes, absolutely. I ate most of one, let me put it that way. I couldn’t quite finish it.
MM: It’s a Cornish dish.

DO: Yeah. Did you ever take those down into the mines with you?

MM: Oh yes. They were my main source of sustenance.

DO: According to something you wrote that I came across, at one stage in one mine you were fired from a mine for doing something. I don’t know what.

MM: I forget what it was, but it was at the Belmont, on the east side. And I was fired, but I still don’t know the reason or the reasons why I was fired.

DO: But that didn’t stop you from working in the mines anyway, right?

MM: No, oh no. When jobs are plentiful you can go from mine to mine and pay wasn’t much, $4.25 a day, in good times $4.75 a day. But it was how I lived.

DO: Yes. Well, it was more than most industrial workers made in those days. And of course, it was a dangerous job.

MM: Yeah and you could do contract work, which meant that if you produced above a certain amount of rock ore you would get paid extra money. And most miners didn’t do it, but the Finns did it an awful lot. Had a big Finnish colony that lived there. The camp’s hardest workers.

DO: Did you do this contract work?

MM: No. They did more contract work. They were the toughest fighters. They lived the shortest lives.

DO: You had a friend whose name was Gus Erickson. Who died out of silicosis?

MM: Yup.

DO: I wondered if that was a factor in having you feel that maybe you better get out of the mines and do something else.

MM: One of the factors. Gus and I lived in a place in South Montana Street. We didn’t work the same mines, but were friends. He was a Swede. He always referred to Seattle as Seattaly. It reminds me of a Texan signed up to teach at the University. He said, how was I supposed to know that Spokäne was Spokäne?

DO: But Gus got sick while you were rooming with him?

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Mike Mansfield Interview, OH 391-008, Archives and Special Collections, Mansfield Library, University of Montana-Missoula.
MM: Wasting away. Getting thinner [?]

DO: Did they know what silicosis was in those days? Did they?

MM: No, they called it “miner’s con.” They got it either from the dust or the water or both.

DO: Must have been rather horrible seeing a person that you know—

MM: You take your chances. In those days you didn’t have these hard hats, for example. You didn’t have these lights that you had to have.

DO: You must have had some kind of light, though, didn’t you?

MM: Yeah, but it was something which we carried and I forget what the basic element in it was.

DO: But it wasn’t on your hat, you just carried it in your hand?

MM: Yup and you had just caps in those days. Now you have these construction hats or whatever you call them. It was life.

DO: It must have been kind of scary, half a mile down into the earth, dark, hot.

MM: You just get used to it.

DO: Yes. One of the people I would like to talk to is your former assistant Peggy DeMichele, who I gather—from her nephew, Bill—is fine. She’s in okay health, he says. Would it be okay with you if I contacted her and just asked her for her views?

MM: Absolutely. You can contact whomever you want. She’s incapacitated a little. I think she had a stroke and doesn’t get out much, but I’m sure she’ll be glad to see you. You’ll probably have to go to her place.

DO: Oh, I’m sure. Sure. Well, I’m happy to tell you that after all this research and talking to people I can begin to see how this book is going to work. I’ve sort of got an outline of it and I’m hoping—don’t hold me to this—but if I can get some interviewing done in Washington and around this fall—I’m not going to teach in the spring. I’m teaching in the fall—I hope I can start writing after the first of the year and perhaps finish this thing by the end of next year. I don’t do these things like that. I want to be sure when I write it that it is as accurate and fair and everything as you can make it. Obviously there always are some little inaccuracies that are going to creep in. Other people will have other thoughts, but I’ve always wanted to do everything I can to make sure that whatever I write is truthful and accurate as I can make it, given the circumstances. I think it’s a great story, what you did, not only in the Senate and in
Japan, but your life. I mean, it may not seem to you, but you and Maureen, in a way, are a great love story.

MM: Well Maureen gets the credit.

DO: Well she’ll get plenty of credit.

MM: I get credit. But she’s the one and it isn’t fair.

DO: How is she doing?

MM: Still has loss of memory. So we have her in the California home on Upton Street.

DO: Did she move now from where she was before?

MM: No, she needs round the clock.

DO: But I mean after she left Walter Reed (Hospital) and so forth is this where she went, to Upton Street?

MM: Oh yes.

DO: The same place.

MM: Office to office constantly. (Inaudible.) Just so glad that we can take care of her. Too much.

DO: And how are you doing? Are you still doing your walking?

MM: A little difficult walking. I’m not as stable as I should be, but I’m getting used to it.

DO: Are you still doing your walking in the morning?

MM: No. Not all. I’ve cut it down a lot.

DO: But you’re still keeping up with the news and all that sort of thing.

Mansfield: Trying to, yeah. But, it’s worthwhile just to keep abreast of things. I don’t look at T.V. much, I’d rather go on the press because it isn’t a sound byte, it’s a sound story, article, whatever you want to call it. It’s much easier.

DO: Well, you didn’t have a T.V. because of Maureen, right? Originally?
MM: That’s right.

DO: Because she couldn’t hear it.

MM: Couldn’t hear and eyesight was failing a little. You got some of these things for her, but didn’t work. We were never very much interested in TV anyway.

DO: Yes. It’s hard to remember actually, I think, reading and I find myself making notes is much better for memory than—you watch something on TV and two minutes later you can’t remember what they said. I mean, it just sort of passes through your mind.

MM: And you get too many different opinions and too much discontinuity. Not enough substance. I suppose when they put on a documentary it’s different, but it ain’t worth the trouble.

DO: How many newspapers do you read now?

MM: Well, I think I read weekly—the Post, the two Times, Washington and New York, the Wall Street Journal and the Financial Times.

DO: That’s quite a bit. That’s quite a bit.

MM: Have a cookie. Want some more coffee? We’ve got it here.

DO: Well maybe I will have a cup. A little bit.

[End of Interview]

* Question mark in parentheses reflects inaudible section of dialogue.