Except for his birthday lunch and one brief call on him to report my elbow progress, I had not seen Mansfield since my return from Korea in December, and not at all to ask him questions. I was nearly complete with the Truman administration chapter and wanted to touch base with him. Also, I had the Kawaii material from Ohio State, which I wanted to give him for his edification.

He didn’t look particularly bad, but at the beginning took a while to adjust his hearing aid. Said he isn’t feeling that good etc. and losing memory—quite an admission from one whose memory has been phenomenal. I noticed a bit of struggling to get his breath from time to time.

He was in his shirtsleeves and wearing a tie with his Marine Corps tiepin. Some pictures on his desk of Maureen I had never seen before, including one he had obtained of her in high school before they met, a lovely young girl, and a good picture of them with Nakasone in the background that had been used by LA Times with Maureen’s obit. He had it taped to a piece of poster board with scotch tape.

Barbara Hickey rather than he offered the coffee and poured it for each of us from a thermos. He didn’t offer to help me off or on with my coat or raincoat (a rainy day), nor say, tap ‘er light, or anything but goodbye. Had the feeling that everything is a bit more of an effort for him these days. Most of what he told me, but not all, was a repeat of something said before.

Am just hoping I can finish quickly while he is still alive but left doubting that this could be the case.
The following is the recorded interview with Mike Mansfield

Mike Mansfield: Kazuo Kawai.

Don Oberdorfer: That’s right. He’s a Japanese American. I have a friend who is a professor at Ohio State. Kawai ended his career at Ohio State.

MM: That’s right.

DO: And he sent me the materials that they published when he died in 1963, but also his whole personnel file. It’s a file like that. I didn’t bring it over here, but I pulled out some things from it that I thought you would be interested in. I’m don’t know how much you actually knew about his life.

MM: No, I only tried to track him down after the war, found out he was an Ohio State. He was going to come to Washington but he died.

DO: Well, he was the son of a Christian minister.

MM: A Christian minister?

DO: Yes, a Japanese Christian minister. He spent his boyhood actually in California and attended UCLA and then Stanford. He got his M.A. from Stanford in 1928. Studied at Harvard. He got his Ph.D. from Stanford in 1938. Then, I’m trying to remember the year in which you took his courses, but it would have been in...let’s see.

MM: ’29 or ’30 or ’31.

DO: Yes, I’ve got it in the file. I just don’t remember. But anyway what happened to him was in 1941 he took his widowed mother back to Japan in order to visit her home place and the war broke out. He was a Japanese national because he had never become an American citizen. So they treated him like another Japanese even though he had been most of his life in the United States. He got a job reporting on the Nippon Times, which was a predecessor of the Japan Times, and he had that job during the war. He was in sympathy with the occupation, what the occupation was trying to do, democratizing Japan.

MM: Yes. He was a nice man.

DO: They made him then editor-in-chief of, in effect, of The Japan Times—the Nippon Times. Then in 1949 he resigned as editor-in-chief of the newspaper and came back and went to Stanford as a visiting lecturer and in 1951 was appointed to the faculty of the Ohio State University.
MM: Wait a while. Before that he was at UCLA.

DO: That’s right. Well he was at UCLA teaching when you saw him earlier, before ‘41—before Pearl Harbor.

MM: Yes. Oh yes.

DO: In that period.

MM: That’s right. I was mixed up here for a bit.

DO: Then in 1960, I guess, he published his major book, which is called *Japan’s American Interlude*. It was published by the University of Chicago Press. He has quite a few publications. He lectured at the National War College here, the Air War College at Maxwell Airport Base in Alabama. One of his letters—this is from his personnel file, this is 1953. He’s still somehow connected with the *Nippon Times* because he’s getting his mail there. He says, “We’re living in the rented upstairs room of a western house of a medical school professor in Tokyo within fifteen minutes drive of downtown Tokyo. We have our own little private veranda, which is a godsend in this stifling sultry weather”—this is August—“The vitality, ingenuity, progressiveness, and nervous activity of the people of Tokyo continues to amaze us. There is a carnival atmosphere of gaiety and prosperity”—this is ’53 now—“but underneath this apparent dynamism one gets to feel after a while that it’s all pretty unhealthy. Much of it is a pretentious front by the slick operators. More of it is an attempt at escapism by cynical and disillusioned people who are trying not to think either about the past or the future. They say they have to keep skating fast in order to avoid crashing through thin ice. But still compared to the days lethargy of the immediate post-surrender years this is an unbelievable change. Everybody talks about a new anti-American trend, but there is surprising little evidence of it. You have to go out of your way to find it and then it shows up only on a small group of comments.” I mean he has various observations about things, about Japan. There is some biographical material here about him. I had asked for some material on him some time ago and never found anybody who knew anything, but I went to a meeting up at Princeton, which happened also to be attended by a professor from Ohio State. He had never heard of the guy, but he just checked with the personnel office and they produced this big file of information on him. So I don’t know. I made copies of this for you if you’re interested. You can look at it sometime and learn something about your old prof.

MM: I always liked him. I like him very much.

DO: Do you think he had any particular influence on your interest in Asia? Of course you had been already to—1922—to China and you’d been to the Philippines.

MM: He was teaching East Asian studies.
DO: Right.

MM: He had an interest and I had an interest. Got along very well. I’m sorry I missed him. Tried to trace him down in Japan when I went out there—his family—but never could.

DO: I think reading this it doesn’t seem to me he had much of a family. His first wife committed suicide. Why I don’t know. His father was a minister. When he took his widowed mother back—well, his father was obviously dead by then, in 1941—she wanted to go back to the place of her ancestry, as Japanese will do sometimes.

MM: A lot of them wanted to.

DO: So, anyway I was interested to get all this stuff and even though maybe it will be a paragraph. When the guy sent me all the material I said, well, I’ve got to give this to Mansfield. You’ll notice in here he keeps writing to a Dr. Mansfield. The guy at Ohio State who was head of the Asian Studies Department was named Harvey Mansfield.

MM: Harvey Mansfield. There’s one in the CIA, isn’t there?

DO: Is there? I don’t know. Maybe.

MM: Or on the Harvard faculty.

DO: Could be. Well maybe it’s a relative of this man. It’s obviously not the same guy.

MM: Mansfield is a common name.

DO: Yes, right.

MM: I think the Harvey Mansfield though is at Harvard. I forget the name of the Mansfield who has been in the CIA for years. He was a P.R. man.

DO: Oh. Mark Mansfield.

MM: That’s correct.

DO: I know Mark.

MM: And Harvey Mansfield is some sort of a professor from Harvard. I was reading about (?) not in line with the ordinary run of professors. I forget what it is. Just a recent one.
DO: Well Mark is a very nice young man. He’s quite young. He’s been out there as an assistant—public relations or public information guy—and I’ve dealt with him on a number of occasions.

MM: Been there a long time.

DO: Yes, he’s been there quite a while. Nice guy. Very nice guy. So, anyway, how are you getting along?

MM: Okay. A little more tired. I’m with Maureen most of the time. Miss her terribly.

DO: What is your daily regimen? Do you get up pretty early still?

MM: Sleep intermitently. Get up early. Until about three weeks ago I hardly made any movements physically. In the past two-three weeks I have been walking a little bit more, maybe around a mile, sometimes a mile and a half a day, but off and on.

DO: Around the apartment?

MM: Sometimes outside but there are other dogs in that apartment so you have to be lucky in that building. Mentally, I think, slipping a little bit. Finding it harder to recall names, especially.

DO: I do too.

MM: But on the whole, pretty lucky.

DO: I’m terrible on names, but you were always good and I was always bad. I love this story which the guy who was your assistant out in Tokyo here to see you—this shows you about my names, I can’t remember the guy’s name—with a Russian name who was there for a long time, still writes you letters from time to time. He was the chief of the translation section, who went to Tokyo Embassy. Anyway, he tells me this story. You were there as Ambassador and there was this visiting group from Montana—maybe 10 or 20 people—and they all came and you said to everyone, hello Susan, how’s Joe or how’s this one of that one. And when they were gone he said to you, how in the world did you remember all those people’s names? And you said to him, well, if you’re in politics you remember people’s names.

MM: Yes, especially if they’re from Montana.

DO: Well, yes. Right. I want to ask you about two or three things I was writing about in recent days, see if you have any other thoughts about them. In 1946 you joined a group from the Naval Affairs Committee and took a tour of the Far East—they went through the Trust Territory, Trust Alums (?) and into China and Japan—and in Japan you had lunch with General MacArthur
in the residence which you later occupied. You wrote you were impressed—he had his own silver service with his initials stamped on it.

MM: I don’t know about that one.

DO: But anyway, it was in your diary, and I think at that point you were pretty impressed with MacArthur and the job he was doing—this is in the early occupation, of course, of Japan.

MM: Yes, I was. I was on the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House, and we were invited to lunch by MacArthur. [Actually he was traveling with Naval Affairs Committee.] ** We were there on time. Seated at the table. Mrs. MacArthur came to the door and announced, the General has arrived. He came in, shook hands all the way around. Sat at the head of the table. There for 3 ½ to 4 hours. Except for about 15 or 20 minutes at the most, he did all the talking. He had a good job. He was doing a good job. We appreciated the visit, but I tried to ask one question but didn’t get very far with it. I forget what the question was. But, anyway he dominated the conversation.

DO: Right. When you became ambassador and you were living in that house, did you ever think back on the meeting with McArthur in the same place?

MM: Yes. It was the only time I met McArthur. I was interested in the place on the first floor where he had his picture taken with the Emperor.

DO: Right, the famous picture.

MM: The Presidents. I followed McArthur’s career.

DO: He was a big figure.

MM: He was a big figure. Had to go to Korea. Had to take the occupation army with him. Out of it came the creation of a 75,000-man police reserve force and out of that came the self-defense force. He was able to turn the war around. It had reached pretty far into South Vietnam. He brought about a landing at Inchon, and from then on the war began to change. He pushed too far, up to the Yalu, wanted to go into China. Thought he was superior to Truman. Truman did the right thing in taking his epaulets away and his responsibilities. But in many respects he was good for the democratization of Japan. Made farming more accessible to the little guy. Gave women a greater degree of freedom. Clamped down on the communists when they were getting to be a force in policy (?). Has a good reputation still in Japan.

DO: Yes, absolutely. I think so.

MM: He helped to bring Japan into the modern world in a certain sense. The constitution, which he ordered a certain Col.—Kobb, Kates, something K—to draw up a new constitution,
was in confluence with some Japanese who had some say, but it was primarily a made-in-
America constitution and then he was responsible for that Article 9. Kades—K-a-d-e-s was the
one he delegated the authority to. [Correct, Col. Charles Kades; with a little effort, comes up
with Kades’ name. D.O.]

DO: Do you have any feeling about now [Prime Minister Junichiro] Koizumi is talking about
changing Article 9. [Discussion of changing constitution regarding having a military force.]

MM: Well, if Japan is a sovereign nation and it is. If it is not a satellite of ours, and it shouldn’t
be. Japan is a sovereign power. It has the right, I would assume, perhaps there’s a time
limitation involved—a year’s notice or something like that—to bring about necessary changes. I
don’t know what the rules and regulations are. But if we wanted to change our constitution, we
could. If Japan wanted to, it could. The big drawback in it is not so much the social reforms, but
Article 9, which the Japanese have tried to get around in various ways, or have, to help us and
the U.N. Two billion dollars—million dollars—spent in Cambodia. Japan self-defense forces
were sent down there. They’ve got them, I think still, on the Golan Heights. Some little
elements in Africa.

DO: There are some people who fear that this will lead to some remilitarization of Japan if they
abolish Article 9 or change it or whatever. Do you think that’s the case?

MM: No. I think that despite its past history that the Japanese people are a pacific people. The
one thing they don’t want is war. The one thing they realize is the old days are gone forever.
And that in any conflict the mainland would [not?] be susceptible but the archipelago is.
They’ve more than made up for their criticisms of Article 9, by outsiders, especially by us who
drew up the constitution, has been more than compensated through the contributions made by
Japan—about 13.6 million dollar during the Gulf War, which is about 22 percent of the total
cost—I don’t think it cost us anything, maybe we came out ahead. There was a squabble with
them at that time—when they were making these contributions—about the value of the yen.

DO: Yes, right.

MM: They paid 2 billion dollars in Cambodia. When I left, about 71 percent of the total cost of
maintaining U.S. military personnel and civilians attached to the War Department serving there.
No country has even come close to making such a contribution. No one seems to have
recognized the fact that what they couldn’t do militarily they tried to do financially. But their
contributions were never truly acknowledged. It’s a sovereign nation. If it wants to bring about
a change in its constitution, it’s its business, not ours.

DO: In 1947 you made a speech on China before a group called the Academy of Political Science
in New York. In preparation of making this speech you wrote a letter to General Marshall,
Secretary of State at the time—Secretary of State George Marshall.
MM: I wrote him?

DO: You wrote him, saying, I don’t know what our China policy is and I’d really like to have a meeting with you. At least tell me what it is because I’m going to make a speech on the subject—I’ve committed myself to making a speech on the subject of the Chinese policy of the United States. The State Department files show that they were preparing for this meeting with Marshall—the aides sent him a memorandum saying Mansfield is very interested in Asia, he was out there as Marine, he is generally supportive of the State Department and so forth and so on. I don’t find actually anything about the meeting, but I think the meeting must have taken place, because here’s the speech and you’re saying what the policies are. So you’ve got it someplace.

MM: Yes, but my mind’s a blank about that. I don’t ever remember meeting Marshall at State Department. I only met him several times.

DO: Well you were in Bogotá with him in that period.

MM: Yes and so was Harriman when he was asked to be the head of the big European relief program. [later, the Marshall plan]. He’d come. Marshall would be there 10 o’clock, and about 11:30 the rest of the Latin Americans and others would start coming.

DO: I was interested, you wrote a diary, which I have a copy of—from Bogotá. Donald Jackson, who was this conservative Republican, was there with you and he gave you a .32 gun. He had a .45 and gave you a .32 pistol with 50 rounds of ammunition, and you wrote that you thought he was exaggerating the danger by quite a bit.

MM: No. He was a former Marine, a gung-ho fellow, Republican and nice guy, had a way with the ladies. Didn’t serve too long, left the Congress voluntarily, was good company. But I don’t recall him giving me anything in the way of firearms.

DO: Well apparently he did. He was worried about it. The interesting thing is the guy who was killed—which precipitated all these riots down there in Bogotá when you were there—that started ten years of violence in Columbia and is referred to as the “Violencia”—I can’t pronounce in Spanish—was sort of the trigger for the guerrilla war that still exists today—the killing of this individual who was a liberal party leader. And I don’t think it has ever been authoritatively proved who killed him.

MM: I knew there was a lot of unrest there and we were pretty well safeguarded. Oh, incidentally it was the Marshall Plan that I think that Harriman (?). He left us, but details I don’t know, except that there was a lot of trouble. Meetings were always late. Nothing much was accomplished. I didn’t get to know Marshall well. As a member of the delegation. Marshall was a sort of taciturn fellow. I remember seeing him in the outside room of the Senate, on the way to Johnson’s or the Vice President’s office, on one occasion, and he mentioned the fact that

Mike Mansfield Interview, OH 391-021, Archives and Special Collections, Mansfield Library, University of Montana-Missoula.
Custer’s last battle was approaching a 100th anniversary. Was it 100th? Yes, 1873 or something like that. But he never said much. Good man. Good secretary of State. Wasted a year in China, trying to bring the parties together. A better ambassador—I use the word ambassador advisedly—couldn’t have been sent. If there was any chance of bringing the Communists and nationalists together, he was the guy who could do it. But one year to go.

DO: You were giving speeches, making statements, traveling. You had various views on what had happened in China in the late 1940s. China became increasingly a hot topic in American politics, particularly after the fall of China to the Communists in ’49, and even before that. The right wing of the Republicans party had sort of taken up China as their cause. “Who Lost China,” a famous refrain. And of course then in 1952 was that Senate campaign where Joe McCarthy and his henchman...

MM: [Harvey] Matusow.

DO: Matusow.

MM: Matusow got into high schools and everything, the American Legion. The toughest campaign I ever went through. When Maureen and I came from Missoula to Butte I had to get off the road several times, I was so tired. I told her, if we ever had a campaign like this again, I wouldn’t run. Matusow came to see me several months later. I wouldn’t see him. I still felt the effects of the campaign. Evidently he had written a book, which I still haven’t read, in which he, in effect, apologized for what he did in Montana.

DO: That’s right. Even before 1952, some of your opponents were trying to dig up things out of your China report to attack you as being some leftist or something like that.

MM: Well, as I said in the report, there was a lack of partnership between the Kuomintang and the Communists. I saw Chang So-lin [1922 warlord] [corrects self] Chiang Kai-shek three times, suggested they work together for the common good. He raised objections for his part. But one of the odd things of that time was that Moscow had never realized Mao Tse-tung and his communists but did realize Chiang Kai-shek and the Kuomintang. So there was no Moscow-(?) tie-up. There was some difficulty with the Russians at that time over Xinjiang in the far northwest.

DO: Did you feel that you were—during the ’40s and ’50s and even later—that you were under attack as being a possible Communist? This rightist China lobby-type of attack?

MM: Didn’t feel it much because while I advocated a hope and I talked to General Merrill. Remember General Merrill—

DO: Merrill’s Marauders.
MM: —and some of the other military people and they convinced me that the Communists were agrarian reformers, aiming more on the peasantry, whereas the Russians and their revolutions aimed more at the cities. I think I said in my report that the nationalists and Communists were spending more time fighting each other than combining their forces against the common foe, Japan at that time, which was running pretty high, wide and free in eastern and central China. But, nothing startling in the report. I said we had no choice but to support Chiang Kai-shek. But they made something out of it.

DO: Did you have any inkling before the 1952 campaign it was going to be that kind of a smear-type campaign? Were you surprised by it?

MM: I was surprised at the amount of support he’d gotten. People crossing the streets when Maureen and I were coming along. Never happened to us before, and never happened since. On occasions I sort of felt like an outcast. We did. McCarthy had a tremendous influence, and Matusow was being well received.

DO: Do you think it was—looking back—was this some kind of hysteria that was going on in the country?

MM: Something of that sort. McCarthy came out and campaigned too. I saw him after I was elected. We both got on the underground trolley. He said, how are things going in Montana, Mike? I said, since you left, very well.

DO: President Truman, it seems to me, gave you a very good assist by letting you go to Paris to debate Vishinsky and these other Russians guys at the U.N. assembly in Paris the year before, 1951. What could be better than having battled the chief Communists in a highly public way?

MM: Oh yes. The chairman of the U.S. delegation was a senator.

DO: I’ll have to look up and see [Warren Austin].

MM: He retired, I think. And then he died. And Mrs. Roosevelt took over. It was during the course of that thing. We didn’t have a debate really. Arguments back and forth. Some American fliers had been downed in Hungary. I went to a restaurant once with Mrs. Roosevelt and others. Mrs. Roosevelt came in and everybody stood up and cheered.

DO: This was in Paris, or in the States?


DO: In 1947 you had written a letter to President Truman asking to be named as a member of the U.N. delegation, but it didn’t happen then. I think it didn’t happen until 1951.
MM: Did I?

DO: Yes, you did. Saying you were interested in foreign affairs, I’m on the Foreign Affairs Committee, and I’d really like to be one of the congressional representatives.

MM: I’d forgotten that.

DO: But, for whatever reason they didn’t have a vacancy. I don’t know why.

MM: Well they used to have two from the House or two from the Senate. Maybe they still have, I don’t know.

DO: I think they do have, actually.

MM: So I didn’t go until ’51?

DO: That’s right. As far as I can tell.

MM: Still in the House.

DO: Still in the House, right.

MM: Forgot that.

DO: And I don’t know exactly how it came about in ’51, except maybe they figured well this is your turn or something like that.

MM: All I remember was, it was a pretty boring session. I was with a Republican congressman from Ohio, I forget his name.

DO: It got to be close to Christmas time. You stayed on in Paris because they needed somebody to argue with the Russians.

MM: Wait a while, 1951 was in New York.

DO: No. Well, I don’t think so. Part of ’51 was definitely in Paris, because that is when you had the debate. [Don Oberdorfer shows clipping of debate etc.]

MM: Darn. Guess you’re right.

DO: In fact, here.

MM: Lots of things you forgot.
DO: Of course. Well how could you remember all these things? I mean you have an amazing memory. To remember any of it. But, you, in your speeches and stuff, were [initially] very critical of the Chinese communists as everybody was—Mao and his takeover and what he had done and so forth. And then, gradually over the years—it seems to me—your perspective changed from the Communist aspect of it more to the China aspect of it when you were encouraging President Nixon to go, when you were trying to go yourself and then when you finally did go in 1972.

MM: I tried to walk a fine line while in the House between the Communists and Kuomintang. But, what was the last part of your first question?

DO: Later, the criticism of the Chinese communists, which you had expressed, seems to me to had become more muted and your interest in the China aspect of it—the big country here that we have no relationship with, we have no connection with—became more important. And the fact that these people were doing things that none of us approved of, became somewhat less important.

MM: Yes. I thought we ought to develop some kind of understanding. I made a speech at the University of Montana, the first in the Mansfield lecture series.

DO: Right. ’68.

MM: Which you’ve probably seen.

DO: Yes, 1968.

MM: But as I told you earlier, I found out that a year before Nixon had made a speech along the same lines. I wasn’t the originator. Nixon was. And then he tried to put into operation the elements of that speech when he became President.

DO: It was an article in Foreign Affairs magazine by Nixon. That’s what it was.

MM: About that time?

DO: About Asia, in which you spoke of needing to get in contact with China. By the way, Johnson had these tape mechanisms put in the cabinet room, in his office and all this stuff, to tape people without their knowledge, and you and I listened to a little piece of the Johnson tape from ’68. When Nixon came in he had all of that stuff removed. Took it all out. But then, in February of 1971 he had it put back, and the National Archives has just started declassifying and releasing the tapes from Nixon that don’t have anything to do with Watergate. They did the Watergate ones a long time ago because of the Congressional inquiry and the courts and all this stuff. So I went out a month or so ago and I listened to a tape of you and Nixon and Kissinger...
when you were sending a letter to Chou En-Lai suggesting a visit to China—this is in 1971, sometime in the spring or summer, I forget the date—but they were encouraging you to do this, to get in touch with the Chinese and see if possibly you could make this connection. The odd thing is, within a very few days they had then received word from the Chinese that Chou En-Lai was ready to receive an American emissary, meaning it was Henry Kissinger who finally went some weeks later. So then, instead of encouraging you—they didn’t tell you this—but they sent word through the Romanians to discourage the Chinese from having any prominent American figure come before the emissary and before President Nixon could come. But the tape of you and Nixon and Kissinger—they were very interested in having you go there. And as far as I can tell, you kept them meticulously informed of all your interactions with these possibilities of going to China.

MM: As far as I can recall, although some of this is news to me, the breakfasts were just between Nixon and me, and on only one occasion did Kissinger come in for about five minutes to discuss something with Nixon and left. Nixon told me that I should be the first one to go to China. I said no, you should. The President of the United States should be the first one. I did get a letter off—I don’t know just when—to Chou En-Lai. I don’t know whether we’ve got a copy of it even.

DO: I’m not sure if you have a copy, but I do know—

MM: I must have had a copy.

DO: Yes. I mean, I don’t know if there’s a copy easily available. But, I’ve seen one.

MM: It got as far as Honolulu and then was returned.

DO: Returned by the Post Office. You couldn’t deliver a letter to China, they said. Well, I thought I would ask you these few things. I’m making progress. I’m moving along. My arm is better; I’m able to type now. [discussing Don’s health]

MM: Well, that’s good.

DO: I had this voice thing where I dictated into this little microphone, but that is a little more cumbersome.

MM: Yes, you were telling me about that when I saw you again.

DO: Now I can go back to my normal typing, stuff like that.

Mike Mansfield Interview, OH 391-021, Archives and Special Collections, Mansfield Library, University of Montana-Missoula.
MM: Takes time. I fell and dislocated these two fingers, two years ago this coming October the 17th. Still isn’t fully cured, but of course age, I think, has something to do with it too. At least the finger are straightened out, but the strength isn’t there that used to be. It takes time.

DO: It does. This finger I broke and it’s like that. As you see it’s not straight as it should be, but it’s going to take a while to get straightened out. The grip. You said to me—when I asked you how you were—you said a lot of it you were with Maureen. What do you mean by that?

MM: She’s in my mind all the time.

DO: I think you have some new pictures of her up there that I didn’t notice before.

MM: When I think of the things I should have done for her and didn’t, and the things she did for me, and did. A terrible loss.

[Discusses new pictures]

DO: I don’t remember that girlhood picture that you have there.

MM: Which one?

DO: The one of her as a young woman with that bouquet or something.

MM: The girl. That was when she was in high school. Clarke College, I think Mt St. Josephs then in Iowa. She had a picture. I still have it at home. It was a very small picture. She’s in the middle and there are two big girls up here with hats on and I got that very small picture enlarged to that.

DO: Oh, I see.

MM: I didn’t know her then. I guess she was about 14, in high school. It’s my favorite picture.

DO: I don’t remember the picture of you and she there with your hand coming out. I can’t tell. Is that Nakasone? Or who is that?

MM: That’s Nakasone, but I never knew what happened. It appeared with Nakasone absent in the obituary in Los Angles Times.

DO: Oh, they did that wonderful obituary then.

MM: That’s when I called up and asked for the picture. I don’t remember the event, but it’s a beautiful picture of Maureen.
DO: Yes, it’s good of you both.

MM: I still like the girl I didn’t get to know until much later [referring to HS picture] after this picture was taken. Can’t get her out of my mind. I miss her so much. If it wasn’t for her, I don’t know. At the turn of last century—about 1900—the average age—I may have told you this before—was 47 years for men and women in this country, around the year 1900. In the mines, copper water, copper dust, falling rock, it was less. But she pulled me out of the mines, forced me to get an education. She doubled my lifespan, at least. Made me go to school. Corrected papers in correspondence courses. Cashed her insurance. Brought what little savings she had down to Missoula. Encouraged me all the time to keep going. Got to be a social worker. I remember on one occasion I bought three pounds of hamburger for 25 cents. I thought I’d made a big deal. I brought it home and she started crying. We had no icebox, no refrigerator in those days. So she gave most of the hamburger to the neighbors. It wouldn’t keep. Doing her social work she took risks with various kinds of people. Got me interested in politics—I wasn’t interested, but she and her family were. Urged me to go on and on. Defeated the first time around. Next day she had me on the trail again. She went out too. Every summer almost, in the House, she would drive 3,000 miles with Anne to get to Missoula in Montana. It’s hard to believe or appreciate what she did NOW ***. I didn’t at the time. It’s still hard to appreciate. When I got some kind of a fever—went to Haiti. I drank nothing but beer. I got some kind of amoebic dysentery I think and went to the Naval Hospital. Not in very good shape. She came out too and pulled me through. She urged me to run for the Senate. Jim Rowe wanted me to run six years before, but I didn’t. Paid a heavy price for that win in 1952. She pulled me out of that amoebic dysentery and I think saved my life that time too.

DO: Were you in Senate by then? When you went to Haiti?

MM: I think I was in the Senate. I’m not sure. Senate or late House. She kept on pushing me gently, but steadily. She was worried about me in Japan. I had been down to Yokosuka Naval Hospital several times. Nothing wrong. She thought there was something wrong. She almost literally forced me to go down again. This time she came along. After a day or so they sent me—she came along—to the Army Hospital in Honolulu, next day sent me and her in the CINCPAC’s admiral’s plane to Walter Reed. Couple days later it was a triple bypass and something down here [pointing at groin]. Saved my life again. Came back in two or three months. Too soon. Should have stayed away and taken it easy. (?) at her suggestion. Thought it was, as they say in Butte, deep enough, in the mines. Came home. I knew I had done the wrong thing because when we came home I started walking, found out I was tripping a lot. Not lifting my feet up enough. I faced the fact of coming back to work too soon, staying too long. She was my life. She saved it.

DO: You made it very clear at her service.
MM: Very few like her. Gave so much, received very little in return. Should be her who gets the credit. But we live in a world that is only gradually beginning to give woman in general the recognition they totally deserve, down through the centuries.

DO: I agree.

[End of Interview]

* Question mark in parentheses reflects inaudible section of dialogue.
** Information in brackets is the observations and/or comments of Oberdorfer.
*** Don Oberdorfer’s emphasis