

Maureen and Mike

# Mansfield Library

UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA

## **Archives and Special Collections**

Mansfield Library, University of Montana

Missoula MT 59812-9936

Email: [library.archives@umontana.edu](mailto:library.archives@umontana.edu)

Telephone: (406) 243-2053

This transcript represents the nearly verbatim record of an unrehearsed interview. Please bear in mind that you are reading the spoken word rather than the written word.

**Oral History Number: 396-002**  
**Interviewee: John Delano**  
**Interviewer: Bob Brown**  
**Date of Interview: March 10, 2005**  
**Project: Bob Brown Oral History Collection**

Bob Brown: Well John, what was the Legislature like when you first experienced it?

John Delano: Well, I first started—I was working for Blue Shield Blue Cross. It was Montana Physician Service in Blue Shield, and this was in '59. And they had a bill out there that would affect the Blues. The guy that ran the Blues at that time was Samuel English and he didn't understand the political situation very well. And they said, why don't you go out and mosey around and that's how I got started in the lobbying business and that was '59, I guess...no, '49 I mean.

BB: Well '49.

JD: Yes, right after the war I first worked for them. I started with Montana Physician Service. And that was to organize the doctors.

BB: So Governor Bonner was governor.

JD: Yes!

BB: Holy smokes. Then you served later in the legislature.

JD: Yes, in the '60s.

BB: And then your experience goes from 1949 to the present.

JD: Right.

BB: You've got to have seen some incredible changes. Are there any that—I mean, if you were to describe the legislature and the legislative culture and that sort of thing in the '49, '50s period, how would you describe it?

JD: Well, first of all, it was more gentlemanly. I mean there was more camaraderie and I don't know whether that was because of the watering holes, or—everyone said those were terrible, but it was a chance to go after the session and visit with both sides of the aisle, you know, but they don't do that anymore.

BB: Well, you know I got here after the watering holes, so I never really experienced those, tell me about them. Tell me about the watering holes.

JD: Well, of course you had the Montana Power, and even the railroad that modified watering holes. Ty Robinson and his brother Cal—a lot of people thought it was the same guy, you know, and one legislator—maybe you don't want little stories like—

BB: I do, yes!

JD: Oh.

BB: Keep—

JD: The legislator said, "My God, that Ty Robinson, he works all day out here writing bills." That was before the legislative council; you had to get a lawyer, you'd need real skills to write a bill. In fact, when I was in the legislature, a fellow wanted a bill on something, I'd say, "Well, go get a lawyer and get the bill written up." Well anyhow, Ty would work all day out at the session, and then in the evening Cal, would tend bar at the railroad watering hole.

BB: Now Cal, of course, and Ty were brothers.

JD: Yes.

BB: Both lawyers.

JD: Yes.

BB: And I think Cal, my recollection was Cal represented the Pacific Power and Light Company?

JD: Could be, I—

BB: But he may have also represented what, the Northern Pacific Railroad?

JD: Well those, all the railroads.

BB: All the railroads and Ty, of course, was a railroad lobbyist.

JD: Oh yes, even for the Milwaukee.

BB: The Milwaukee, and so they had a watering hole, which was like a hospitality room, right?

JD: In the Placer Hotel. Most of them had their rooms in the Placer Hotel. In fact when I got elected somebody said, "I suppose you're going to live at the Placer."

And I said "Why?"

And they said, “Well they have those transoms where they throw the money at you...”

BB: [Laughs].

JD: [Laughs]. And I said all I got at the Placer was the flu.

BB: [Laughs].

JD: [Laughs]. I didn't get any—

BB: And the Robinson brothers were both smart attorneys, who also in addition to being lobbyists, helped legislators write bills.

JD: Yes, a lot of bills were written at the Placer and at the bar at the Montana Club.

BB: I see.

JD: There isn't the camaraderie anymore, and I think that's bad.

BB: Yes.

JD: Yes, well there's just something about communications that I think we're lacking here.

BB: Yes.

JD: Today—

BB: Just so, kind of give me a feel, an impression of a watering hole, you mentioned that the railroad, what was it the Milwaukee, or the—

JD: Oh no, all of them: Northern Pacific, the Great Northern, the—we had seven railroads when I joined the railroad association. Jim Haughey was representing the Northern Pacific, Newell Gough of the Great Northern, Ty Robinson of the Milwaukee, and from Butte—ah—Bob Corette, representative of the Union Pacific. They paid according to trackage, number of miles.

BB: Yes.

JD: That's the way I got paid.

BB: I see, and you, you represented the umbrella group, the association group.

JD: That was, yes, that was after.

BB: So the association was the sponsor of the watering hole.

JD: Yes.

BB: And so the watering hole would be just a, like a suite of rooms at the Placer?

JD: No, one big room.

BB: Just one big room.

JD: Well, they had a bedroom to one side there, where like whoever was running the watering hole that night could go to bed.

BB: And the watering hole would be a place where you could get a cocktail, you could have a what, a cold cut, like a—

JD: A sandwich.

BB: A sandwich of some kind or another.

JD: Yes.

BB: And just sit down in a soft chair and visit.

JD: Yes. The Butte guys were in there every night.

BB: [Laughs].

JD: And then they would vote against the Anaconda Company or the railroads the next day. You know, I mean they didn't have any of the influence on their voting.

BB: Why do you suppose these watering holes were sort of a part of Montana tradition, why do you suppose they got started and why did they continue?

JD: Well they got started to, so that you could get to know everybody.

BB: How did that serve the interests of the railroads in the Montana Power Company, or Anaconda Company?

JD: Oh, the ability to communicate to the legislators.

BB: I see.

JD: When I took that railroad job they told me to be on the road half the time, fooling around towns and visiting. And of course in those days if you were elected senator from whatever county, you were there years.

BB: Sure, before term limitations.

JD: Yes.

BB: Did lobbying take place in the watering holes?

JD: Well, ah, yes, I mean it was an informational thing because like the Butte guys, they would just vote no on the bills anyhow.

BB: [Laughs]. But you might discuss anything, I mean

JD: Yes.

BB: You might discuss legislation, you might discuss baseball.

JD: Well yes, but as I recall we discussed the legislation, mostly.

BB: Yes. John, when you think back over your long history of involvement in Montana state politics is there a particular lobbyist or maybe a couple of lobbyists that kind of stand out in your mind?

JD: Well, of course, when I was in the legislature, I thought Ty Robinson was probably the—I mean he knew everybody and if I voted and say I needed a bill on such and such, and he'd say well let's draft it, you knew, he'd help you out drafting a bill. I "phonied" up a lot of bills that I never put in, you know, not a lot—several [laughs].

BB: What do you mean "phonied up?"

JD: Well, like the truckers were giving the railroads hell one session, so I phonied up a bill that said that the semis and the big trucks couldn't run on weekends or holidays, and ah, oh the guy who lobbied for the truckers, he 'bout had a heart failure. And of course I never meant to do it, but I got it circulated around, you know.

BB: Just for psychological reasons.

JD: Yes.

Both: [Laugh].

BB: I see. Who was he?

JD: Eckels was his name.

BB: Oh...Leonard Eckels.

JD: Leonard.

BB: Leonard Eckels, I've heard him spoken of. He preceded me also, but I have heard him spoken of. In fact, I think he was friend of Tim Babcock's.

JD: Oh, yes.

BB: Because Tim...

JD: Well, they were both truckers.

BB: Both were truckers. Yes, sure. What was there about Ty, Ty Robinson, that made him memorable? Was it great confidence, in his—

JD: Yes.

BB: He was very effective obviously.

JD: Oh yes. And he went out of his way to help you.

BB: Yes.

JD: Haughey was a good lobbyist.

BB: Now Haughey was a lobbyist before he became a legislator?

JD: No, I think he was in the legislature first.

BB: I see, yes.

JD: He was a senator.

BB: Yes, from Billings, right.

JD: Yes. Oh yes, the Crowley firm. I went to him on that Towe bill to house those Fords, you know. [The Towe family owed a collection of antique Ford cars housed in Deer Lodge in a museum.]

BB: Yes.

JD: And of course I wanted to vote no on it, I didn't think—

BB: This is when you were a legislator?

JD: Yes, I didn't think we should house those, and carry insurance, and carry a maintenance man, and everything, and Towe—the old man was pretty loose in saying the state would eventually own those Fords. Well, Haughey says, "Put that in writing," to Towe.

BB: Now this was Edward Towe.

JD: Yes, yes.

BB: The banker, the father of Tom Towe, who is the legislator.

JD: Yes, yes. Well of course he wouldn't put it in writing, the way it happened was just the way Haughey said it would be like.

BB: Yes [laughs].

JD: Ah, just one example.

BB: Do you remember Al Dougherty?

JD: Oh sure. He must have represented 15 outfits. He had a sauna at his house, he would take them out there, wine and dine them, dunk them in the pool, and—

BB: [Laughs].

JD: Yes, he was very effective.

BB: I first met him when I was a young freshmen legislator, and he came to Kalispell, and I got a telephone call, I believe from Con Lundgren, who was also, as you know, a legislator from there. Real nice guy, and he said, "Bob, there is a fellow that has invited us to dinner, the delegation here locally. And so if you'd like to, why don't you meet us this evening at the Outlaw Inn." Well, before it was the Outlaw Inn, it was called Hennessy's at the time. So I arrived there and there was Matt Himsl, and I believe Jim Murphy, and Con Lundgren, and maybe somebody else, I don't remember for sure, and...



JD: [Fred] Broeder?

BB: Probably Broeder. And I arrived there and this fellow who I had never met before Al Dougherty stood up, and he extended his hand to me, and he said “Bob, Al Dougherty, beer, milk, cable TV, and chiropractors.”

JD: Yes.

BB: And that didn’t mean anything to me. I thought, gosh I can’t imagine that’s what were having for dinner you know, I didn’t know what he meant.

JD: Yes.

BB: And so I kind of shook hands with him and sat down, and then it developed that he was a lobbyist for those groups, and as a young legislator for some reason or another I was—I didn’t even hardly understand what he meant when he introduced himself to me.

JD: One of his—

BB: But he struck me as a sort of a colorful high profile character.

JD: Yes, like an old railroad lobbyist.

BB: [Laughs].

JD: They said the old railroad lobbyists only had to know the three Bs: Booze, Broads, and Bribes.

Both: [Laugh].

JD: But Al Dougherty’s fame was—and they don’t give her credit, but his wife—

BB: Really!

JD: She wrote those articles, you know and sent them out to the legislature.

BB: What did he do, did he, did Dougherty and his wife circulate a newsletter among legislators?

JD: No, well yes, the chiropractors—

BB: Oh...

JD: They would put out a newsletter like we were in the middle of a session and there was a crisis. He wanted to keep his clients on their toes.

BB: [Laughs]. So who got the newsletter?

JD: Oh, the legislators and of course his clients.

BB: Was it a general newsletter on the legislative session, I mean it wasn't just specific to chiropractors.

JD: Well it was during the legislature, I mean in the interim, he'd get out a letter that sounded like there was a crisis coming up.

BB: I see [laughs].

JD: She was very talented.

BB: When you think back, was there a particular legislator or two in your experience that especially stand out in your mind?

JD: I always thought the world of Lucas.

BB: Jim Lucas, the speaker of the house from Miles City.

JD: Yes. We called him the silver-tongued Greek. He really was good on his feet. He was smart, he was an attorney. I don't mean you have to be an attorney to be smart. Yes, I thought he was very good.

BB: Why?

JD: Well he would do a lot of studying, and he knew about the bills and their content, and when he got up to speak, people listened, and that was what I always looked for, were they listening, both sides of the aisle. And my recollection is that they always listened to Lucas, both sides.

BB: Yes, anybody else?

JD: Of course, there's others.

BB: Yes, any Democrat pops into your mind that's especially memorable?

JD: There were some good Democrats when I served, and as I say, I got together with a Democrat and wrote that Fish and Game Sportsmen bill, you know—

BB: Now what was that, I guess I don't know about that?

JD: Well it was put in years ago where you buy—as a sportsman they only put out 500 licenses, and mine is number three. Dunkle was in charge of Fish and Game then—

BB: Frank Dunkle?

JD: Yes.

BB: Who was later a state senator, and who was later—

JD: Well he ran for governor—

BB: Ran for governor, and then had some high level federal appointment, I think.

JD: Yes, he did. I was there when they offered it to him at a meeting in Denver. Yes, but um—

BB: What was the bill?

JD: Well you buy a sportsman license and that entitles you to hunt anything, or it's a special license and there's a pad in there for extra money for the Fish and Game to develop fishing sites and—

BB: I see.

JD: Stuff like that. It never got much publicity. It was quite expensive for one thing, you know most guys they buy fishing licenses when they're going fishing and if they want to shoot an antelope, they just buy an antelope tag, you know. But this license, you could even get a bear on this license.

BB: [Laughs]. Sounds great; you bag a grizzly.

JD: And I have three, I have number three.

BB: Dunkle got number one?

JD: No, he got number two. And the governor got number one.

BB: And the governor at the time was—

JD: I think it was—

BB: Babcock?

JD: Judge.

BB: Oh, Judge, okay. Do you remember who the Democrat was you teamed with on that?

JD: Yes. He was from Glasgow.

BB: Bob Cotton?

JD: No. Nice guy. Real nice guy. God, I can't—

BB: Well I'm thinking, Jerry Feda, Lou Perry, they're from up, from that country, but they're Republicans.

JD: Yes.

BB: Yes.

JD: Well, I'm sorry.

BB: When you think, you know you mentioned Jim Lucas, and of course I know him too. And he is a wonderfully bright and charming, and capable person. And he remains very active in his community, and the practice of law and that sort of thing. As you think back though there must be another legislator or two that kind of cross your mind as particularly memorable. And I don't necessarily mean because they were comparable to Jim Lucas, maybe you remember legislators for another reason.

JD: Well, I'm sorry, I should get my old notes out. If you want me to, I will think about that and look at my notes and let you know.

BB: Sure, I could just give you a couple of examples.

JD: Okay.

BB: Um, what do you remember about Fred Broeder?

JD: Well of course I thought the world of him. He was very solid, very—he didn't get up on a whole lot of bills—

BB: Fred Broeder was a representative and senator from Flathead County.

JD: If he said something about the timber industry that's the way it was.

BB: He owned a saw mill in the Flathead Valley.

JD: I had great respect for him, and then after he retired he went down to South America, and helped people set up saw mills down there.

BB: Tom Towe. We talked about him.

JD: Well he's smarter than hell, but I—he puts in too many bills. He's too liberal. You know, like this year, over 2,000 requests, well, our state isn't in that kind of shape where we need 2,000 bills.

BB: [Laughs]. That's for sure. John, the 1972 constitution brought some major changes. When you served in the legislature was under the 1889 constitution. Then of course you have been a lobbyist, both under the 1889 constitution and the 1972 constitutions. Any thoughts or observations on the change the new constitution has brought?

JD: Well, of course there was a lot of complaining about it, and it was kind of funny. I approached the lady from Glendive who was in the Constitutional Convention. I was talking to her about railroad matters and somebody walked by and said, "Well, John, how's the railroad going?" or something. She said, "Are you a lobbyist?" And I said yes. She said, "Oh, I can't talk to you then."

BB: So you also lobbied the Constitutional Convention, the 1972 constitution, for the railroads, and in the process of lobbying this particular convention delegate you were just having a conversation with her—

JD: Well, she just ended it.

BB: When she just learned you were a lobbyist, she just ended it. Which means she had—she heard, she had been given an impression on lobbyists in advance.

JD: Well it's kind of like our present governor. If you're a lobbyist you're nothing.

BB: Yes. What do you think about that, I mean—

JD: Well, I think it's crazy.

BB: Yes, because lobbyists, well, explain. Why do you think that's wrong?

JD: John Kennedy himself, when he was president, said the best way to know about a bill is to get the lobbyists from both sides and visit with them. He says they have a lot of knowledge.

BB: Sure.

JD: And if you can't trust them, well don't talk to them, it's your fault. You know, I could tell you a little—they went around the room in school when my daughter was not very old, and they ask each student, "What does your dad do?" And [laughs], she didn't want to tell them that I was a lobbyist. So she said, "He works for the railroads."

And the teacher said "Oh. How does he work for the railroads?" And finally she says, "Well, he's a lobbyist."

Both: [Laughs].

JD: So even my daughter I had to convince.

BB: And this was clear back in the '60s, probably.

JD: Yes.

BB: The 1889 constitution allowed the executive sessions of legislative committees to be closed.

JD: Yes.

BB: So when a committee, after it had heard the testimony on the bill, and, say, several bills had to turn testimony on and was ready to take action on the bills. If the committee chairman wanted to, he could excuse everyone from the session, he could allow people to remain there as he chose before he took action on the bill. The 1972 constitution says that any time an action can be taken on legislation, the meetings got to be open. Do you have any thoughts on that?

JD: Well, I think it's crazy. It's just like the people that want the Supreme Court open on all meetings that they—you know I used to quiz [Chief Justice Jean] Turnage on that and he said, "Well there's some things, you know some of the people play for the press." I mean if they start inviting TV people, radio people, the media, why you're going to get a different twist on a lot of things. And I just think there has to be—I mean you can overdo this privacy thing. Like our newspapers suing that they want the file opened on so and so. Well, the judge put that information aside for a purpose, and I think it's wrong.

BB: So you feel that the—the closed—were the closed committing hearings—I don't mean it to say the hearings, but I mean the closed executive sessions in the committee, were they, how would you describe them, were they better than the system since then, or just no harm done, or how would you describe them?

JD: Well—

BB: You were a legislator, what, in the '67 to the '69 sessions?

JD: I was elected to '69, but I took a job over at the University to run the Alumni Office in '69.

BB: I see, I see.

JD: So I was, '67, and '65.

BB: You served in the House of Representatives in '65 and '67.

JD: Yes.

BB: Yes, okay.

JD: Well I just have a different thought on the secrecy thing—

BB: You don't see that any harm was done that you can recall when the executive sessions were closed.

JD: No, when you have the press there it's a different hearing.

BB: Yes.

JD: And, well, I don't know, I just—I think there's places and times for not letting everybody in and then getting a biased story in the newspaper the next day.

BB: Sure. Tell me now too, because you mentioned that early on that there was more camaraderie and more friendship and so on in the legislature. Do you think term limitations have affected that?

JD: Oh, very much. You got a whole new bunch out there. They don't want to hear what went on 10 years ago, or 15, or 20. They're not bothered by prior experiences.

BB: And how do you think that affects the relationships between legislators, how do you think term limitations affects it?

JD: Well, there's some bills put in that if the legislator has any background at all he wouldn't have put the bill in. I mean there's a lot of those.

BB: Do you think it affects, do you think that perhaps they knew each other better before term limitation?

JD: Yes, I used to go across the aisle and visit all the time.

BB: When we think of the old-time legislature, I got in right on the tail end of the mock sessions, but you probably remember those. Tell me about those.

JD: Well, I can't remember that much about them.

BB: Lobbyists played the parts of legislators in kind of a funny mock session that was just sort of a lighthearted evening.

JD: Well, to tell you the truth I never participated in any of those.

BB: [Laughs].

JD: I'd always be there for business. It used to irritate me when a little group would come over from Ekalaka or somewhere, and we would close the session down to listen to them for 40 minutes.

BB: [Laughs].

JD: I just wanted to have business.

BB: John, there's a legislator or either a lobbyist that I met, actually he was a legislator at one time too, years ago, who was a fascinating, interesting character, I just wanted to know if you remember him, I don't remember how prominently involved he was, I think he was though in the '50s and '60s; a fellow by the name of Boo McGillivray.

JD: Oh sure. Boo. Yes he's the one that worked on me on the Towe Ford collections.

BB: Okay, now he lobbied for Montana Power Company didn't he?

JD: Yes. Boo was quite a guy. I was going to vote no on those cars, and Boo worked me over, and then he worked one of my board members over, Newell Gough, and convinced him that I should vote for the bill.

BB: Did he ever tell you the baking powder, biscuit story?

JD: I don't remember that.

BB: That was kind of a trademark story of his.

JD: Oh, I kind of remember that.

BB: It was a funny story too, I remember. Did you ever know Governor Aronson?



JD: Oh, very well, he appointed me to the Girls' School board of directors when they were out here in the valley. He called me one day and I was state president of the Jaycees, or had been, and he said, "Johnny," he says, "the Jaycees in Canada want me to come up to Calgary to give a talk," but he says, "but I'm afraid to leave the state." You know Cannon was—

BB: Paul Cannon, was the lieutenant governor.

JD: Yes, and he figured that Paul would make a lot of appointments while he was up there at that Jaycee meeting.

Both: [Laughs].

JD: So he said, "Will you go up and talk to them instead of me?" So I did.

BB: Oh, great.

JD: They gave me some spurs [laughs].

BB: Oh really? So you knew him personally?

JD: Yes.

BB: How would you describe him?

JD: Well, as the kind of guy I like, you know. I mean, I had him speak at Kiwanis one time and somebody said, "How many people work for state government?"

He said, "About half of them."

Both: [Laughs].

BB: So he was, would you describe him as common, genuine, down to earth?

JD: Oh yes, not dishonest in any way. I thought the world of him.

BB: Did you know Governor Nutter?

JD: Oh, very well. Went hunting with him. In fact—

BB: How did you become acquainted with him?

JD: Well in the legislature, and he became a member of our hunting group.

BB: Oh, that's your SASH group? And what does SASH stand for?

JD: Society of American Statesmen and Huntsmen.

BB: And so that was a group of legislators or former legislators that got together at the hunting cabin of Don Valiton.

JD: And Everett Shuey

BB: And Everett Shuey, and that was over in the Ovanda area.

JD: And we met for 43 years. I think it was 43.

BB: And that group included Don Nutter, and Jean Turnage, Jim Haughey.

JD: Well, if you want to wait a minute I'll go upstairs and get you a roster.

BB: I'd be interested to see that, but let's not do it now, but I would be interested to see that. But for the most part, these fellows met for a long weekend, and they did some hunting and just had a good social time together.

JD: Yes.

BB: And Nutter was a part of that group.

JD: Yes, well he didn't, just for—you know his term didn't last that long.

BB: Yes, he was only governor for about a year, I think.

JD: The night he died I was at a Jaycee meeting, and I was sitting next to General Mitchell.

BB: Who is General Mitchell?

JD: He was—

BB: Commandant of the Montana National Guard.

JD: Yes, what Prendergast was [the same job]—

BB: Yes, okay.

JD: This fellow came in and whispered in his ear. He whispered in mine and said, "Governor Nutter's crashed and died." So he left right away. So I knew it.

BB: Oh, so you were one of the first people to know about it. How would you describe Nutter personally?

JD: Well, I liked the way he legislated, he was all business.

BB: He was a state senator from Sidney, prior to being elected governor.

JD: He was smart, but you know—I suppose things went on, I was probably pretty naive. But it seems to me there's more stuff goes on now—

BB: [Laughs].

JD: —than when I started.

BB: If I asked you, like in a sentence or two to describe Governor Aronson, how would you describe him?

JD: Well, I remember his stories. Came out on a train, got off the train, and he did manual labor jobs, in the oil fields. There's a good story about him, he was with a crew that was carrying planks to a project. Have you heard this one?

BB: Go ahead, tell me.

JD: And most of the guys were carrying just one plank, Aronson carried two, and he had two on his shoulder and the supervisor said "Hey, Aronson, take five." And he said, "My God, he says, I can hardly lift two."

Both: [Laughs].

BB: And the guy realized he was carrying two and working hard, and he said take a break, take five, take five minutes off. So he was a big strong man, and that was a story he liked to tell.

JD: Yes!

BB: Tell me now if you could just describe briefly Governor Nutter.

JD: Well, I just thought he was a smart, no-nonsense legislator, and I thought he would go far in the political field, I mean probably to the Potomac, you know, as a senator or—

BB: How about Governor Babcock?

JD: Course he took over when—Tim's been a good hand. Of course he'd been a lobbyist, you know?

BB: Sure.

JD: That's bad, bad order.

BB: [Laughs].

JD: Well, I think he's done a good job, certainly between the two of them they've done a lot for the state in various fundraising.

BB: Have you had any personal experiences with Governor Babcock that would help—

JD: Not very much.

BB: Don't really know him intimately, but, of course, you've known him casually.

JD: Oh yes, for years.

BB: For many, many years.

JD: I first met him in the Jaycees; he was from Miles City.

BB: He was a young legislator from Miles City, then he was also a legislator from Billings before he was elected lieutenant governor.

JD: I kind of forget the time in there, but he was a good legislator.

BB: How do you suppose he and Nutter got teamed up to run for governor and lieutenant governor?

JD: I often wondered about it.

BB: Why is that?

Both: [Laughs].

BB: Did it seem like an unusual combination?

JD: Yes. Kind of like the one we got now.

BB: Why did it seem unusual?

JD: Well, I don't know. I expected Nutter to select to run with him—I think Babcock's name recognition was good. Well, I really don't know. I never got into that heavy—

BB: [Laughs]. Did they have contrasting personalities?

JD: No. I don't know how—

BB: Because they ran as a team. Even though they constitutionally didn't have to, I know that they ran as a team, both in the primary and the general election.

JD: Yes.

BB: Then Governor Babcock was replaced by Governor Anderson. If I asked you to describe him—

JD: Forrest?

BB: Yes.

JD: He was a fraternity brother.

BB: He was a fraternity brother at the University of Montana?

JD: Yes.

BB: At the same time?

JD: Oh, no.

BB: He's older?

JD: When he went to school.

BB: Yes, he's older than you?

JD: Yes.

BB: So you didn't know him in college?

JD: No, I did not. He was different—

BB: Which fraternity house by the way?

JD: Phi Delt.

BB: Phi Delta Theta?

JD: Yes.

BB: At the University of Montana?

JD: They have since folded up.

BB: Uh, oh. And what were you going to tell me about him?

JD: Well he was different to deal with, I wouldn't want to tell you all the stories I know.

BB: [Laughs].

JD: We made some deals when I worked with the railroad.

BB: When you were a lobbyist for the railroads you had some dealings with Governor Aronson—or Governor Anderson.

JD: Well I didn't, but some of the higher ups in the railroad did.

BB: I see.

JD: To get easements to build a railroad for example down at Colstrip and things like that.

BB: And so he was, that was in his capacity as a member of the State Land Board, perhaps?

JD: Oh no, he knew who to contact.

BB: Like for private landowners, in order to get easements across ranch property, and that sort of thing? I see. Okay [laughs], I see. So there's some question in your mind maybe about his personal honesty?

JD: Well, yes, but you knew how he stood. I mean he made it real plain.

BB: [Laughs].

JD: I...When I worked for the University I—well here's a guy that was a legislator, a Supreme Court, and a governor, and I thought he was—he should be recognized. I put him in for some awards at the University and none of them went through. Well the, what do they call it—

committee. Anyhow they wouldn't agree with me. Because I think when a guy gets to be governor he's due some respect.

BB: Well sure.

JD: I don't care what he name was.

BB: So you proposed Governor Anderson for an honor at the University of Montana, but the committee, or whomever chose, decided not to give it to him?

JD: Yes, yes.

BB: Was this after he had been governor?

JD: Yes.

BB: Why do you suppose they made that decision?

JD: Well, there were a lot of stories that were circulating. I would rather not—

BB: Okay. What are your impressions of, what do you remember about—I think you served in the Legislature from Lewis and Clark County at the same time as Governor Judge?

JD: Yes.

BB: So you probably knew him pretty well?

JD: Yes.

BB: Well tell me about him.

Both: [Laugh].

JD: Well, I—see, we ran county wide then it wasn't—so I'd go to those dinners up at the church and things like that. Judge's mother campaigned I think harder than Tommy did.

BB: Blanche Judge.

JD: She'd get up at the church meeting, "I'll help on the dishes tonight." You know wash dishes, and somebody next to me would say, "Are you going to help on the dishes?" I'd say, "No, I didn't come up here to wash dishes." They were hard to beat, but I did get more votes one time than Judge.

BB: He was very young, wasn't he?

JD: Oh yes, and in fact he had not been a resident of Montana long enough really. I remember some of the old hands, they'd say "Ah, let the kid run; we know we can overlook a few months."

BB: So he lived out of state?

JD: Well he'd been to school.

BB: He'd been at college out of state.

JD: Notre Dame.

BB: Notre Dame, but he returned to Montana—

JD: To run.

BB: He wanted to run for the legislature and there was some question about whether he quite met the residency requirement.

JD: Yes.

BB: But it turned out that he did run, and he was elected.

JD: Yes.

BB: How would you describe him, I mean if you—what kind of guy was he—I'm sure he was personable?

JD: Oh yes, well of course, I am not a way-out liberal, as you probably have figured out.

BB: [Laughs].

JD: And one time he put a bill in that every cat should have a house.

BB: Every cat.

JD: Yes, kitten, cat. So John Pierce from Billings—

BB: Representative John Pierce, Republican from Billings.

JD: Yes, he'd been there forever. So they called him Cat House Judge, or something.



BB: [Laughs]. And he was concerned about stray cats.

JD: Yes.

BB: Can you think of any other bill or bills that he was associated with?

JD: Oh, he had a lot of bills. In fact the food stamps, he was always trying to get more people eligible for food stamps, and I thought we should be trying to get people off food stamps. That's just one, two different ways of thinking.

BB: How do you remember him as governor?

JD: Well, he wasn't outstanding. He did too many things that were too liberal for me.

BB: He didn't make a strong impression, is that what you're saying, he didn't really make a strong impression one way or another?

JD: Kind of like Bonner.

BB: How would you describe Bonner?

JD: Just—don't make any waves.

BB: I see.

JD: I had a bill in, a guy from Townsend wanted to change the name of the lake from Canyon Ferry to Lake Townsend, and I thought, well, there won't be any problem with that. Oh, jeez [laughs]. Even Bonner talked to me about that one.

Both: [Laugh].

JD: So I had to back water on that one.

BB: Is there—because I haven't even thought to ask you about Governor Bonner. But is there a governor of Montana that maybe—all the governors, because of course you've had experience with; Bonner, with Aronson, with Nutter, with Babcock, with—

JD: Well, I thought Nutter would go the farthest. I thought he had the qualities, the ability to speak, on bills, and knowledge—I guess he made more of an impression. [Marc] Racicot impressed me very much.

BB: What was it about Racicot that impressed you?

JD: Well I couldn't believe the vocabulary of that guy.

BB: [Laughs].

JD: I mean I never heard—well, I just thought it was great.

BB: Inspirational speaker.

JD: Oh, my. I never heard anybody like that.

BB: How about, any impressions of Governor Schwinden?

JD: Yes, I thought he did a pretty good job. He had some good people helping him. I thought Governor Schwinden did a good job, on the whole. You got to weigh the good with that bad.

BB: Sure, yes.

JD: So many people in Montana say, well he voted for such and such, so he's no—well you can't take just one, but it seems like we have more single-shot deals now, you know abortion, and some things shouldn't even be political.

BB: Yes, but they become center stage through the political process and they attract a lot of attention.

JD: Yes.

BB: So Schwinden was someone who you felt was somewhat more moderate and practical perhaps?

JD: Yes, very practical.

BB: And so that would contrast him a little bit with who, Governor Judge?

JD: Yes.

BB: Who you thought was a little more of a philosophical liberal.

JD: Yes.

BB: I see. In the course of your involvement in the politics of Montana. I think historians are going to look at the importance of the, I guess probably of the decline of the influence of the Anaconda Company. In early Montana history, back at the turn of the last century, and up

through '20s and '30s and '40s, and I wasn't here then, but I understand that the impression was that the Anaconda Company owned the newspapers, with the exception of the *Great Falls Tribune*, and they had a very large influence in our state economically and politically, and so forth. And then you were kind of here in the waning time of that. You kind of watched the sun set on the Anaconda Company. Do you have—?

JD: I'm glad you brought that up.

BB: Do you have any thoughts or impressions?

JD: I'm glad you brought that up. I thought the papers were run pretty good when the Anaconda—I knew the head people there in Butte and you could talk to them.

BB: Who are they?

JD: Mr. [Law] Risken and—oh, I can't think of the other guy's name, but they were—I talked to Mr. Risken quite a few times. [At the time James Dickey managed all the newspapers in Montana owned by the Anaconda Co.]

BB: And he was a publisher of the *Montana Standard* in Butte? [Law Risken was managing editor.]

JD: Well, he was—over all the newspapers.

BB: And he was associated with the Anaconda Company, or an officer with the Anaconda Company?

JD: Yes. I'm glad you brought that up. I personally, I think the media pretty much did Judy Martz in. I mean here the other day, they got a picture of our new governor with a map of Montana. And he predicts we're going to have drought this summer. Well, whenever he opens a map or whatever, he invites the press in and the cameras and so on. Martz said we were going to have a drought; well that's no big deal. I mean it's a big deal but it's no—in fact I told the Dean [Jerry Brown] at the Journalism School that I thought that the press had done Judy in, and of course he didn't agree.

BB: What was it about the press when the Anaconda Company ran it, I mean it's been criticized, Ross Toole is the historian that has really made war on the Anaconda company ownership of the newspapers, and indicated that Montana was the only state in the nation that did not have a free press. We had a captive press, that it was unhealthy for one economic interest to have the controlling interest that they had—

JD: Well ,that's what we got now.

BB: Same thing now.

JD: Same thing now?

BB: Because the Anaconda Company sold its newspapers to the—

JD: Lee.

BB: Lee Newspapers, and so your feelings are that our press is as controlled now as it was then?

JD: Well, I think you got the same situation, and—

BB: Now there's a different bias, would you say?

JD: Yes. If you check the people that are running the various papers, the dailies, they are very liberal, they're of the wrong party.

BB: When the Anaconda Company owned the newspapers, there was a different philosophical point of view then, less liberal?

JD: Yes, but of course you didn't have news written up then like you have now, you know what I mean. Somebody suing somebody that touched her on the rump or something like that. You know, they didn't run stuff like that.

BB: John, in addition to the newspapers, do you have any other thoughts or impressions on the Anaconda Company as an influence in Montana, did you have any experience with the Anaconda Company?

JD: Yes. We had a lobbyist for the railroads, but of course we did not work together, but touched base—

BB: How did you do that?

JD: Denny Shea.

BB: Who is Denny Shea, I never—I heard of Denny Shea, but I never knew him.

JD: Lloyd Crippen.

BB: I knew Lloyd Crippen, but Denny Shea was a lobbyist for the Anaconda Company?

JD: Yes.

BB: How did you work with Lloyd Crippen and Denny Shea?

JD: He was a former legislator.

BB: Shea was?

JD: Yes, he could take shorthand, which I thought was—man that's valuable. You know, go to a meeting and he would be taking stuff down in shorthand. But he was essentially a labor guy. He got along good with labor and, of course, with the Anaconda Company.

BB: His background had been as a Democrat legislator in and a labor union member. So I suppose he frequently contacted Democratic legislators in his process of lobbying for the Anaconda Company?

JD: He was a kind of a guy that talked to both sides of the aisle. You had more talking to both sides of the aisle in those days. I—it's a different ball game now.

BB: And then do you remember Al Wilkinson?

JD: Oh, sure.

BB: And Al Wilkinson was basically the head lobbyist for the Anaconda Company. How would you describe him?

JD: Well, I didn't know him that well, but he made decisions and of course Crippen and Shea did what they were told.

BB: Do you feel that the Anaconda Company, represented by this fellow Riskin, who you mentioned, you know, had a lot of influence with the newspapers in this state, and by Wilkinson here in the legislator, and perhaps also through Denny Shea and Lloyd Crippen. Do you feel that they had a great influence in Montana's politics?

JD: Yes. But I'll tell you this. On the other side, the Anaconda Company paid well, and they did a lot of good in this state. People have forgotten, or I mean they were building parks, and hell, they even built a trap shooting range in the city of Anaconda. And I had a Catholic priest tell me that he probably wouldn't be here today if his mother had not had a job that cafe in Anaconda. And they let her take grub home at night and that's what fed the big family. Her husband had died. But he told me that people forget the good that the company did.

BB: So you think maybe some of the history has been left out in terms of characterizing the Anaconda Company.

JD: Oh, yes. Yes.

BB: And how would you describe the Anaconda Company, how do you think of the Anaconda Company?

JD: They provided a lot of damn good paying jobs. And people wonder why we're 50th and everything. Well hell, you haven't got anybody cutting trees any more, you haven't got any mining any more, you know it's just...the earthies have taken over [laughs].

BB: And in terms of the influence of the Anaconda Company in the legislature. Certainly if they had big influence they could have some influence on bills pertaining to education, and highways and other things. And I think where I hear you coming from is that you feel that their influence, while an important one, was perhaps a benign one, that they didn't necessarily try to—they wanted—would you say they wanted an adequately funded University system in Montana?

JD: Well, yes.

BB: So, I guess—I don't want to put words in your mouth John, but it sounds as though your impression of them was that they were an important influence but not necessarily a negative or heavy-handed one.

JD: Yes right. You had a lot of independent legislators even in those days. I mean the east end of our state, they didn't—oh, sure they got to know Denny Shea and Crippen. My God, they had 6,000 miners at one time.

BB: Yes.

JD: And good paying jobs, put people through school and college. Sure I know—but any time you got an outfit that big you're going to have some things that people think they did wrong. Well, I don't know—we just don't have it any more.

BB: We don't have the job base any more, that we had to associate with when the Anaconda Company was in its heyday.

JD: Same with the railroads. We had, I don't know, 3,000 employees, and I don't know how many we got now, several hundred.

BB: So Montana's economy is really in a transition now, it's waning away—

JD: Yes. They keep talking about, bring them out here and let them fish. Well, that isn't a paying deal like the Anaconda Company [laughs].

BB: No. Is there anything that you would like to, we're getting near to the end of our tape here, is there anything that you would like to say, anything that maybe I should have touched on more than the questions I asked, that—

JD: Oh, I'm glad you brought up the press thing. You had to know John Pierce from Billings.

BB: I did know John Pierce. He died, my first session in the legislator was 1971 and we had an impasse on the sales tax. During the 1971 legislature session and we put in some grueling, tough days. That was under the old constitution, where the legislature met for 60 days, 60 calendar days. So, that even included weekends. And we worked for something like 37 days straight, I think, at one point, and John Pierce died. He was one of three legislators that died during that session. There was a fellow named Ben Brownfield in the Senate that died during that session, and you probably served with him.

JD: Yep.

BB: There was a fellow named Jack Fitzgerald from down in the Bitterroot that died during that session, and John Pierce died during that session. But what were you going to tell me about John Pierce?

JD: Well, the Republicans, I don't mean the Republicans are all the good guys. They put up a bill one time to attack the Anaconda Company, tax-wise. And I didn't think it was fair.

BB: Pierce was one of the guys who did that?

JD: No, no. Pierce and I voted no on the bill.

BB: Who do you remember were the legislators, the Republican legislators, who were behind the bill?

JD: Well Felt was the guy, and he was Speaker of the House.

BB: Jim Felt, from Billings?

JD: Yes. So the next day Pierce shows up with a necktie, and he has a stone about that size.

BB: Large stone on his necktie.

JD: Well it looked like a diamond, you know...

BB: [Laughs].

JD: And he says, "I voted right on that Anaconda bill."

Both: [Laughs].

BB: Joking that he had been given this big diamond for his vote on the bill.

JD: I got a picture of that.

BB: Why do you suppose Felt—?

JD: Well, he thought they weren't paying enough taxes, and by God he was going to get them.

BB: And the bill failed?

JD: Oh, yes. Well, eventually.

BB: Even though Felt was Speaker of the House.

JD: Yes.

BB: But he got a fair amount of Republican support for it in the House?

JD: Oh, yes.

BB: Did some Democrats vote against it?

JD: As I recall they did. The bill didn't go very far, and of course we caught hell, Pierce and I, but Pierce...it was water off a duck's back to him. I took it a little hard.

BB: [Laughs].

JD: I didn't think it was fair.

BB: Sure.

JD: Well I don't know—I thought I was there for the whole state.

BB: Do you remember, and I know this is an old memory John, but Jim Lucas was a legislator then with you at that time.

JD: Yes.

BB: Would you have any idea how he might have voted on that same legislation?



JD: Well he must have voted for it, because there were just two Republicans voted against.

BB: Oh, I see, so it must have passed the House then?

JD: Yes, but I don't know what happened to it, it didn't go—

BB: It might have died in the Senate.

JD: You know in those days we had, one thing I forgot, was *The People's Voice*.

BB: Yes, Harry and Gretchen Billings were the editors of *The People's Voice*, which was a liberal newspaper.

JD: Oh my, God yes, they rated us all at the end of the year, and I got a book where they rated. And I called Hank Hibbard up, I said, "You and Judge got a pretty good rating from *The People's Voice*." And he said, "What do you mean, me and Judge?" And I said, "Well you add the two together and you got a six, and he got a 94."

BB: [Laughs].

JD: So you add those together, that's a pretty good rating.

BB: Now Hank Hibbard was the state senator from Lewis and Clark County.

JD: I think he was in the House.

BB: House and Senate, I think wasn't he?

JD: Yes.

BB: And he was somehow related to our current senator, Max Baucus, I believe.

JD: Oh yes. All the Hibbards and—

BB: And the Baucuses.

JD: Share the Seiben (Ranch).

BB: Okay, yes. So he was Max's in-law of some kind, or blood relative of some kind.

JD: Yes. That's a long story.

BB: Yes. What story?

JD: Oh, about the big Seiben Ranch.

BB: Yes, okay, yes. And Senator Baucus has owned a share of that. I think he sold it recently.

JD: He sold it. For several reasons.

BB: Is there anything—?

JD: Well, it gets into marriage and everything.

BB: I see. All right, okay. Well, anything else you want to say?

JD: No, I can't—well there's a lot of little stories and stuff, but—it's still a pretty good process and all you need is good people to have good legislation.

BB: So you're a believer in the process. You've devoted your life to it.

JD: Yes.

BB: Well that's good. Well I sure appreciate you taking the time.

JD: Well my pleasure.

BB: I think I didn't make it clear on the tape, but you're John Delano and as we've discussed, served both as a legislator and a lobbyist, and I'm really pleased that you have taken this time, John. Thank you.

[End of Interview]