

Maureen and Mike

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**Oral History Number: 396-051**  
**Interviewee: Harrison Fagg**  
**Interviewer: Bob Brown**  
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**Project: Bob Brown Oral History Collection**

Bob Brown: Okay, we're running. I'm interviewing Harrison Fagg. Harrison was a state representative from Yellowstone County from the election of 1968 to the election of '82 or '84?

Harrison Fagg: Eighty-four.

BB: Okay, 1984, so a total of 16 years, and also served as the House Majority Leader. You were a whip too?

HF: Assistant whip.

BB: Okay. So anyway, Harrison, where were you born and when?

HF: I was born in Billings, Montana. I have been here all my life. I was born in 1931.

BB: And was there anything in your upbringing or anything that kind of got you interested in politics and public service?

HF: Yes there was, I guess. From day one, I came from quite an active political family. My father was state secretary of the Democratic Party.

BB: The Democratic Party?

HF: Yes. At the same time, my mother was a Republican Central Committee chairman for Yellowstone County. So we had a mixed household. My grandmother was probably closer to John Birch than she was anybody else. She was a very, very conservative lady.

BB: This was your mother's mother?

HF: Yes. So we had many interesting discussions in our house on politics.

BB: Now is this something that goes back? Traditionally, was your mom's mom's family Republican?

HF: I don't know much about—my mother's family was always Republican.

BB: Going back to the Civil War?

HF: I think it goes back forever. Now as far as Dad is concerned, I think he became a Democrat or got interested in Democratic Party because a gentleman by the name of Grover Cecil (?). Grover was the state chairman of the Democratic Central Committee when my father was the secretary. My middle name Grover is after Grover Cecil.

BB: Maybe he was named after Grover Cleveland.

HF: That's very possible. In those days, a Democrat wasn't a Democrat like today. They were conservatives. Before Dad passed away—Dad died in '52. He was a very young man. We always thought he changed substantially and ended up, at that time, a Wendell Willkie Republican. In fact, Dad died the day after Wendell Willkie got his nomination.

BB: Were there political discussions between your mom and dad?

HF: Oh yes heavy, heavy stuff. There was funny stuff too. In those days, they had what they called Torchlight Parades. Have you ever heard of the Torchlight Parade? Every car and walker carried a torch. Mother headed the Central Committee and always led the parade. Dad got his car out and took every Democratic banner that he could get and put it on and rode next to her all the way through the parade. Another kind of funny thing, they always used to argue about politics a great deal at the dinner table. Dad always seemed to get the best of it. I remember one time my grandmother turned to mother, whose name was Francis, and she said, "Francis, I may have to live in the same house with a Democrat." She said, "I may have to eat dinner with a Democrat, but by George, Francis, I don't have to sleep with one." She marched off to the bedroom. There was a lot of that going on.

BB: And you were included as a young person?

HF: Oh yes.

BB: You'd listen in and chime in?

HF: We always had a very formal dinner. So at a very early age, I was introduced to politics.

BB: Did you consider yourself a Republican from early on or did that kind of evolve?

HF: My first political meeting was at the Democratic Central Committee meeting here in Billings. I came back from the Air Force and I was trying to decide where I wanted to go politically. I went to their meeting. I was the first one. Subsequently, I went to a Republican Central Committee the same year. I thought they were light years apart in philosophy. I certainly tuned in with the Republicans more than the Democrats. So I became a Republican at that time. I went into it with a very open mind.

BB: That was when your dad was kind of drifting a little bit more toward the Republicans?

HF: My dad had died by then. This was in 1954 or '55, and Dad had died in '52. Then of course I married into a Republican family. My wife was (unintelligible) Republican.

BB: Can you remember...what about the Republicans that kind of clicked with you better than the Democrats?

HF: I think at that time the big issue was the Democratic Party was the party of labor. To a great deal, it was also the party of spending to the more state control. The Republican was certainly more extreme in every case from that. I was more of a free enterprise and I liked the Republican Party because of it.

BB: This was after you graduated from college?

HF: I graduated from college at (?) Tech and served two years in the Air Force as a first lieutenant and then came back to Ellingsens (?). Of course you have to apprentice for three years. I was in my apprenticeship position then.

BB: You realized that as a small businessperson that was your aspiration, certainly having your own business, that you felt more compatibility with the Republicans than the Democrats?

HF: Oh, totally. There's no question about that.

BB: This was during the period of the 1950s?

HF: Yes this is the middle to late '50s. Then I came back and started getting involved more and more in politics. At the same time, I was very, very active in the Junior Chamber of Commerce, the Jaycees. They were very much to the right side of the spectrum. So I think I picked a lot of it up there. Key lines: economic justice can thus be won by free men through enterprise. That was the Jaycee creed. So I think I got a lot of it from that as well.

BB: Had you become acquainted with Orvin Fjare?

HF: Oh, very well.

BB: I know he was involved in that.

HF: Yes, Orvin was the national vice president. I later became a national vice president of the Jaycees. My last real encounter with Orvin Fjare, I flew him in my Bonanza into Terry, Montana. He was going to be the keynote speaker at a meeting when I was state president. I probably shouldn't put this on the record, but as we landed—there are two things on a Bonanza. There's one that retracts the flaps and one retracts the landing gear. I was waving at the crowd and hit the wrong one. Right in front of the whole crowd with the Congressman in my plane, I retracted

the landing gear and we skidded in on the belly. People are still laughing and telling me about that one. Anyhow, so Orvin was a good man. Of course he was a very active Jaycee.

BB: I remembered that about him. Now, in the 1950s as you're developing an interest in politics, I suppose, you mentioned that you went to the Central Committee meetings and that sort of thing. You were involved in Jaycees. Was it occurring to you then that you might be interested to run for public office?

HF: Not at all. How I got into politics, I had a call one day from Jim Battin's office. They asked me to come down.

BB: Jim Battin was the Congressman.

HF: Yes. Lou (unintelligible) was his key man. He's still around. He's still hanging on. Lou had been very active in the Jaycees too. He'd been a state president of the Jaycees. He said, "I like what you've said and what you've done in the Jaycees. You're a natural to go into politics." I had never given it a thought. He said, "Why don't you run for office?" So I ran. I ran for the state Senate. Fourteen ran and I ran in eighth place. We elected seven.

BB: That was when, in '66?

HF: Yes.

BB: Well, that's neat. So you didn't select yourself.

HF: I considered it a real honor to be asked by Jim Battin to run. As long as Jim was still alive, we were very close friends. I think we tuned in pretty close politically.

BB: I remember meeting him as a young boy at a Republican State Convention. I think it was in 1964 and I was pretty impressed with him.

HF: Jim, of course, grew up in Billings. He was in my sister's high school graduating class. So I knew him when I was a little boy. I was eight, ten, twelve years old, and he would come up the house. I would shoot hoops with him and that sort of thing.

BB: Would you consider him to be the most important Republican leader for that period of time?

HF: Without question, yes. Jim was very influential. He was the strongest man I think we've had in Republican politics perhaps forever. He was a politician. He was a politician's politician. He played everything right and he voted right with Montana. He was just a class act.

BB: And then he was appointed by Nixon, I believe, as a federal judge in 1969.

HF: I know when he was appointed to be federal judge he had about 25 of his closest supporters and friends over to his house and he explained before it came up publicly why he was doing it. He said, "Most people run for the United States Senate." He would have been a shoe-in, in my opinion. We needed a senator at that time. He said his wife just had a terrible distaste for Washington, D.C., and she didn't want their two daughters to grow up in that atmosphere. So he had a chance to get out and he did.

BB: Is his widow still living?

HF: As far as I know she is. I haven't seen her for a long time.

BB: He died relatively young I think.

HF: He was a pretty heavy smoker and he died of lung cancer.

BB: So you had just missed for the Senate in '66.

HF: I ran seventh out of...and it was six to elect. I mean I was running against some tough guys. Jim Haughey, Jerry Anderson, George Darrow, and Jim Felt. I mean there were some heavy guys in there. Bill Goan was there. There were some big vote-getters.

BB: So then in '68 you ran again.

HF: I ran for the House. We didn't have single-member districts then so we ran at-large. I believe that year I led the ticket. I think probably my name is pretty well-known from the time before. So I came out pretty well.

BB: Yes. Had you been in Helena before? Like, had you seen the legislature in session before you arrived there as a representative?

HF: Never.

BB: What were your first impressions? Here you are this young, idealistic guy. This is a wonderful honor, this opportunity to serve in the state legislature. What are your first impressions of the Montana legislature?

HF: It's a terrible thing to say, but my first impression of the House of Representatives—it was like a zoo. Everybody was running every which direction. There was a lot of noise and lots of confusion. It was so hard. You were there. You know the same thing. It was hard for me to get orientated to know who all the people were and to know their families, to know their politics. Then all of a sudden it settled down into an entirely different arena. When you first get there, it's overwhelming. There was so much going on and so many bills. I came from an office with a

secretary and a desk. To go up there and do my own filing and write my own letters, it was different.

BB: Did you have a young family then?

HF: Yes. I think we had the same family we have today. They grew up in politics. Of course my son Russ really grew up in politics. He became a state legislator and now he's a district judge.

BB: Do you have other children?

HF: Yes, I have a daughter Cheryl. She and her husband now are not really active in politics, but they're interested in politics. They run an architectural office. They're both architects. The youngest son Grant is in Alaska in the nursery business and rental equipment business. He owns several businesses.

BB: Here in Billings?

HF: Yes. They're all living in Billings.

BB: So was there a legislator maybe that might have impressed you or a lobbyist or anybody especially?

HF: Oh, a number of legislators stand out. Over the years, Jim Lucas is certainly one. Bill Goan certainly had a long bill going. (?)

BB: Before we get to Bill Goan...Lucas. Describe him.

HF: Young, attractive candidate, very articulate. He was extremely articulate. He had a good sense of humor. He had an incredible grasp for words and presenting himself. He was just a fine guy.

BB: And he was Speaker of the House in '69 when you arrived there.

HF: Yes. Then I think the next year too, he repeated.

BB: Yes because he was in there when I was there in '71 as well.

HF: Jim was, and I consider him a close friend still, a very fine guy.

BB: Gerke?

HF: Who?

BB: Harold Gerke?

HF: Harold Gerke was different. He always seemed a little bit—although he came from Yellowstone County—aloof. He was hard to get close to.

BB: They called him “The Great Stone Face.”

HF: Exactly. The only time he ever really warmed up is when he needed your vote and that was when his big cause down here was the University system and getting buildings for Eastern [Montana College] at that time. Then he could be a charmer. He was very, very pleasant. But as you say, “The Great Stone Face.” You couldn’t say it any better than that.

BB: I was opposed philosophically to gambling.

HF: Oh, so was I. In fact, I think the biggest—if there was one point at the legislature that I would call my black hole—disappointing day of the legislature was when gambling passed.

BB: Yes. You and I were on the same side of that. So was Gerke. He was Speaker, he might have been the same way with you, Harrison, but there were...Well after the ’72 constitution passed, it was possible for the legislature to consider gambling legislation then. Harold put me on more than one conference committee as the Republican conferee. He knew that I had the same view on gambling that he had.

HF: Yes, I know. Another great legislator I think was Francis Bardanouve. I remember the day that gambling passed, he made a speech. He said, “This state has just sold themselves out to a prostitute.” And he said, “When you sleep with a prostitute, you turn into one and pretty soon you depend on that.” I’ll never forget it. That’s what we’ve done. We’re depending on gambling.

BB: Local governments are heavily dependent on gambling.

HF: Yes. Francis’ words come back over and over again.

BB: He was dead right I think.

HF: He was a good legislator in my opinion.

BB: What do you remember about Bill Goan?

HF: Bill was a charger. He liked to take on the world. He really wasn’t happy if he wasn’t arguing or in a heavy discussion with somebody. I guess (unintelligible) too. He was always involved. They say, of course, when he died, he was flying a plane in a dangerous situation. Instead of when he crashed, he crashed the plane in such a manner that his daughter or son that was with him lived and he was killed. He was just that kind of a guy.



BB: I've heard that story before too. I never really knew him because I think that plane crash occurred in 1969 or '70, and I didn't arrive there until '71.

HF: Yes. I think that's about when it happened all right. He was a great guy. His sister Nancy was more conservative than he. Of course he had the bottling company here in Billings, Nehi Beverages.

BB: Was he an influential and important Republican during that period of time in Yellowstone County?

HF: He didn't really care for Jim Lucas. He ran against Lucas for Speaker. Of course I supported Bill because he was from Yellowstone County. In my own mind I thought Lucas would be a better man. Bill was the kind of guy—he came up to me afterwards and said, "I know you supported me. You may have made some enemies out of it, but any time you need help, you come to see me and I'll take care of your problem."

BB: He was a loyal friend.

HF: Yes. Of course his folks and my folks were very good friends. Socially they were friends. The Goan family and the Fagg family go back probably to the early 1900s.

BB: You mentioned that Jim Battin was the powerful and important Republican influence during that period of the late '50s and '60s up into the '70s. Were there other individuals that you can think of here in Yellowstone County that were pretty prominent during that time?

HF: Jerry Anderson, Jim Felt was the guru of the legislative finances for years and years. He could put together a budget and see where we were going to be better than the fiscal analyst could. There were a number of them—George Darrow environmentally, but a very strong good legislator. There were a lot of them that came out of Yellowstone County.

BB: How about in the business community? Were there business leaders that were maybe especially influential during that period of time?

HF: Oh, in Yellowstone County, the key man at that time was Russ Hart, Hart-Albin Company. Without any question, he was Mr. Billings. My dad had been Mr. Billings. In fact, even when Dad died, it was editorialized and it said, "We've lost the leading citizen of Billings." They called him Mr. Billings. After that, Russ Hart came along and was Mr. Billings.

BB: Your dad was the postmaster?

HF: Right. He was a whole lot more than a postmaster. He was president of the Chamber of Commerce for six years in a row. He was on a number of state committees, highway

committees, getting roads in Billings. He built the YMCA and raised the money for the YMCA. He was more than a postmaster. He was very influential in the community.

BB: It's hard for those of us who lived through it to imagine that it could have happened because the Anaconda Company and the Montana Power Company, the so-called "Terrible Twins" had influence on the business side in Montana. They were pretty prominent in the '60s and '70s, and then they just disappeared. Any thoughts on that?

HF: Yes, several things. The Anaconda Company owned *The Billings Gazette*. They owned all the papers in the state. When they sold the papers, they lost a lot of their influence. I know I take a little bit of pride in it, but I passed the Hard Rock Mining bill. There was an editorial in the *Gazette* and said the matter broke the "Copper Collar." It was about how the first time the Anaconda Company had ever been beaten in the Montana legislature. Well, it was a good bill. It was a necessary bill.

BB: Was it your bill?

HF: It was my bill, yes. It wasn't so much that it was my bill, the Anaconda Company had begun to lose a little bit of their grip. We still had Lloyd Crippen up there everybody liked. Everybody liked Lloyd. He was an effective lobbyist, but we also had Ted Schwinden. Schwinden was governor. He liked the bill and many things were working for it.

BB: As you say too, they really weren't at their peak anymore.

HF: They owned every paper in Montana of any size.

BB: Do you remember the watering hole?

HF: Oh, do I remember the watering hole? There were three of them. They had one of them.

BB: Those things were gone in 1969. Sixty-nine was the last session that there were watering holes.

HF: Okay I was there.

BB: But I wasn't, so tell about that.

HF: Well the watering hole—there were three of them; S&H's Green Stamps had one. The Anaconda Company had the second. I think the [Montana] Power Company had the third. You could go. They were a room in a hotel, normally over at the Holiday Inn. You could go there and you could get anything from a T-bone steak to a bottle of whiskey. At the same time, you were

briefed on what was going on in the legislature. It just was that you left the legislature and you went to the watering holes. Then you went to dinner. Everybody did it.

BB: It was kind of a melting pot?

HF: Yes.

BB: People could socialize and talk politics and that sort of thing?

HF: I don't know of a time that I was ever lobbied hard in a watering hole. It was a social hour.

BB: Now were they just a motel room?

HF: Yes.

BB: It wasn't very large?

HF: No.

BB: You had a lot of legislators in there?

HF: You had three of them and you made the rounds if you were a regular attendee. I made the last session of the watering holes. They were made up to be a lot more in the paper than they really were. They catered to you. Anything you ordered, you could get at the watering hole.

BB: So describe what would happen. The door was open and—

HF: Yes, the door was always open. You'd just walk in and you got a drink. There was a bar there.

BB: There was a bar set up somehow or other? They would have a cold cut maybe?

HF: That was the second thing. You'd always have a complete meal there. You could stay and drink all evening long. Or you could take neither and just visit.

BB: Was it crowded?

HF: They were smoky, yes. They were crowded. I don't think I've ever been to one that it wasn't. That was where things happened. That's where you did your lobbying one legislator to another.

BB: Did you see many Democrats there?

HF: No, there weren't as many Democrats as there were Republicans. It was primarily Republicans.

BB: All three of them?

HF: The Democrats came. Don't get me wrong, but it was primarily more the Republicans. They were the big business...run by the big businesses, the Anaconda Company and S&H Green Stamps. That doesn't sound very big, but they had a big block up there. The Montana Power was there. They were more Republican-orientated than Democratic. So the Democrats stayed away from it.

BB: Some have observed that the Anaconda Company might have been a little bit closer to the Democrats, and the Montana Power Company a little closer to the Republicans?

HF: I think that's true.

BB: You would see some of that?

HF: I think that's true. I think their lobbying goes that way too.

BB: But you might see some Butte Democrats at the Anaconda Company watering hole?

HF: Yes they'd come over. The Butte Democrats frequented that quite regularly.

BB: Do you remember any other Democrats? I know it's a long time to go.

HF: No, I really can't. I know at that point, the Republicans pretty much hung out in the Montana Club and I can't remember. There was some bar down on Montana that the Democrats hung out in primarily.

BB: The Rialto or Jesters?

HF: Yes.

BB: They began to change. The tenure of the party changed. At one time, when I first started serving, the Republican Party by and large had a higher educational level than the Democratic Party. There were more college graduates and more white collars there. The Republican Party perhaps wasn't as astute as the Democratic Party. That of course has changed. I remember one time, the Democrats—Jim Murry, an interesting guy—but he was head of the AFL-CIO and I turned around to him one time I was on the floor of the House. I looked up and Jim was putting his thumb in the air. Then he put his thumb down.

I noticed that to correspond with votes. When his thumb went up, the board went green. And when his thumb went down the board went red. So we passed that around the floor, that it seemed like it was pretty much being run by the gallery. So I think Lucas was chairman then, Speaker of the House. He said, "Let's confuse him." So he started making a lot of quite difficult motions and things to follow. They got the Democrats confused. This wouldn't happen today I don't think. At that time, it did. So at that point when you've got the Democrats confused, he crossed his arms back and forth. That would mean to call a recess. Then he'd go meet them down in the lobby and he'd say, "Now this is what's going on." Then he'd go back out and direct again. That is an absolute happening.

BB: That's incredible.

HF: It really did happen on key labor votes, not all votes, on key labor votes, and things that Jim Murry was really interested in. Jim's a good friend. I saw him not too long ago. We sat and reminisced over it. I got the Sheraton Hotel primarily because of Jim going out and finding me laborers around the United States. When I couldn't get bricklayers, for example, he'd get on the phone and get me bricklayers. So I'm not saying this derogatorily. He had a heavy command of the legislature at one time.

BB: The Democrats in particular?

HF: Republicans never followed him at all. It was the Democrats. If he had Democratic control, he would sit to the left of the Republicans. So most of us would be looking forward. You don't turn around and look backwards. The Democrats could look up and see him.

BB: Because he was seated in the gallery on the Republican side. The Democrats could see him and the Republicans were too close. They couldn't see him.

HF: Exactly. That's exactly right. He was very effective.

BB: He was literally giving hand signals?

HF: Yes. That would not happen today. It only happened one or two sessions. He was helpful on the bills.

BB: Did he ever lobby you?

HF: We just agreed to disagree. Particularly on the sales tax, Jim never could give me a real argument why we shouldn't have a sales tax. So we just maintained a good friendship.

BB: What do you remember about that sales tax issue?

HF: "Pay more, what for?"

BB: That was in 1968. Governor Anderson was elected over Tim Babcock.

HF: Exactly.

BB: Then in the '71 session, my first session and your second session, there was a battle royal over the sales tax.

HF: Yes. That's when we put the 10 percent surtax. Wasn't it versus the sales tax on the ballot?

BB: It was 30 percent surtax.

HF: Yes. That was when Jim Lucas was basically running for governor more than anything else. The Republican Party was going to make that their issue.

BB: Do you remember a story about a briefcase that was mistakenly left in an elevator?

HF: Yes.

BB: Tell that story.

HF: I don't remember much more about it. A lot of the financial records and that sort of things were lost.

BB: The story that I think I remember hearing was that Jim Lucas was involved in an important leadership way getting the sales tax passed. There were some records indicating who some of the key contributors were, which apparently included some of the major corporations in Montana. Apparently they had made important contributions to the sales tax effort. I'm not sure what else, but the people who were involved in many cases had corporate ties, and this information was in Jim's briefcase.

He carelessly left his briefcase in the elevator in the capitol building. Who do you suppose recognized his briefcase but Jim Murry? He was the lobbyist for the AFL-CIO. So Jim thought, "Well, I'll return Lucas' briefcase to him after I carefully examine the contents." So he did and found out this information and made photocopies of what was the most damaging to the pro-sales tax side. Then he exposed them as a bunch of corporate lackeys and that sort of thing. Of course the sales tax came crashing down importantly because of that. And Jim Lucas' political career went with it.

HF: As I recall, at that same time, that same briefcase ended up in the hands of Ken Nybo here in Billings who was a person running the campaign for the sales tax. He lost it and then the press started after him and he disappeared on a vacation. It was quite a fiasco in there.

BB: You remember that Nybo lost the briefcase and it wasn't Lucas?

HF: I think Lucas may have lost it, but in the meantime it got back to Lucas. Then Lucas didn't want any part of it so I believe he gave it to Nybo and Nybo then lost it. Then the press started after him, "How could you lose such a thing?" That's when Ken Nybo went some place on vacation.

BB: Nybo was what?

HF: He was just a Republican. He ran KBMY radio station.

BB: Here in Billings.

HF: He's a good guy. He's a good Republican and he was the chairman for the sales tax.

BB: And remember too that 1971 session lasted for a long time?

HF: That's when we covered the clock.

BB: The problem was that the Republicans had the majority in the House and wanted to enact a sales tax. The Democrats had a majority in the Senate and didn't want to, but were amenable to an increase in the income tax. Of course the Republicans had decided that it had been increased enough. So an impasse developed and we ended up being there until June.

HF: We went out and then we came back in again as I recall. We stayed there into June. Then I think that's when it eventually ended up on the ballot. We served in the '66 Republicans [House had 58 Republicans, 46 Democrats in Fagg's first session in '69] and the next session we served as 33. [It was after the defeat of the sales tax that the House had 33 Republicans and 67 Democrats in the 1975 session.] It wasn't a popular thing.

BB: Now you served in the '69 and '71 sessions prior to the '72 constitution and then for several sessions after the enactment of the '72 constitution. Do you have any thoughts on how the '72 constitution might have changed the legislative process?

HF: I know one thing. Of course, I went to both annual sessions.

BB: Briefly.

HF: Yes. I think I served in two annual sessions and then they went out.

BB: Why do you suppose the people got rid of annual sessions?

HF: The people were so afraid of the legislators and they were so afraid of the legislation that might be passed. They always said that the less government, the best government. They voted it out. I really don't know that it was a great impact. Certainly it was an improvement for the state. I think probably the biggest single issue of the legislature was when we went to single-member districts. Of course that was federalized legislation. Because you see, you take Yellowstone County. For instance, we always had the Straight Eight. Then the final 12, or something like that.

We elected nobody but Republicans. If you take Billings and if you run an east-west line through it about Polly Drive and go north about six blocks, you're at the Rimrocks. That at that time was about 80 percent of the voters. It was almost 100 percent Republican in this district. So we were electing, and I'm sure other districts were the same way, and once we went to single-member districts, we had a totally different type of proportional representation.

BB: Sonny Lockrem, whom I interviewed earlier today, mentioned that when the legislators were elected at large, he said that the county-wide vote total was important. It kind of forced legislators regardless of where they lived to listen to the guy who was the Farm Bureau guy, and to listen to the AFL-CIO guy, and to listen to the Billings Chamber of Commerce guy. They were all important in the whole county. He felt legislators tended to take a narrower point of view and they just had to represent their constituents in single-member districts.

HF: I don't think there's any question about that. I think that so many legislators are very concerned about re-election. So when we went to single-member districts, they perhaps changed their viewpoint. My legislative district, at that time, was the only district in Montana that didn't have a bar and it had two colleges. Also, I think it had the highest education because of the two colleges. It was a different kind of a district. You take that kind of a district that's highly Republican and it's just impossible for a Democrat to get elected in. So if you continue with the Republican trend, you're pretty difficult to get beat.

BB: And it was a good fit for you I think.

HF: Yes, I had no real problem with it.

BB: Because the tavern keepers had been an important influence in the legislature. They obviously weren't much of an influence in your district.

HF: None at all.

BB: Now the environmental movement, the first Earth Day I think occurred about 1970 or so. The environmental movement was just beginning as you were a young legislator. So, any thoughts about that?



HF: Yes. When the environmental movement started, we had some people in the state that were really concerned about the environment. At that point there had been a lot of heavy power by the big companies, the Anaconda Company and the Montana Power Company. So they were pretty much anti—they really didn't care a rip or a ruin, so to speak. I think there was a genuine movement of sincere people to get environmental climate in Montana that was friendly to nature and try to get a balance. That subsequently changed. The environmental movement became more of a cause to stop business than it was to protect the environment. At the very beginning it was a genuine effort. I think we passed some very good legislation in the early '70s that did that. You were a part of it.

BB: Yes, right. There was a particularly controversial bill. I think it was called the Wild Rivers Bill. You paid a price for that. Could you tell that story?

HF: Yes. Sure. I was awakened one night about three or two in the morning. It said, "Your cabin is on fire." I said, "My cabin's on fire?"

BB: It was an anonymous telephone call?

HF: No, it was from the fire department.

BB: This is a wilderness cabin up near Nye?

HF: Yes, it was more than the cabin. It was really quite a nice cabin, about 1,200 square feet. It was quite a nice cabin. It was above Nye. It had burned to the ground. So that was—

BB: Why?

HF: Well, it was totally arson, yes. Interesting, the state fire marshal went up there and said, "A woman burned down your cabin."

I said, "How can you be so sure of that?"

He said, "Well, I can guarantee a woman did it."

It's amazing how they can track a fire. These guys are very, very good. He said, "A man would go up there and throw a can of gas, throw a match and walk away. The person that burned down this cabin took wood out of your wood pile and made a pile on your front port and slowly got a fire going there and it slowly started and burned up the side of the cabin. I can trace the fire all the way through the cabin." He said, "A man would have never done that. It was a woman." Interesting enough, about a year later a lady came up to me in a (unintelligible) conference. She said, "Did you ever find out who burned down your cabin?"

I said, "No, I never did."

She said, "Well, maybe I did it," in kind of a kidding way.

I said, "Well, Mary, you're bad, but you're not that bad."

She said, "Don't you be too sure." Whatever the case happened, my cabin was burned down.

BB: That was Mary Domino (?)?

HF: Mary Domino, she was on my side. This is another Mary. This is a Mary from the Big Timber Valley. I don't want to get into last names because I have no proof of it. That was interesting. Shortly after my cabin was burned down, her husband invited me out for a steak dinner. We weren't friends at all. I would often at times [think], "Why did he bring me out for a steak dinner?" I think he was saying he was sorry.

BB: Why did those people do that to you?

HF: The bill. Two or three things happened. The bill was during the winter when a lot of farmers weren't busy. One of the newscasters, a farm newscaster, went on and said things that were totally untrue about the bill. That got involved lots of times over. One of the things that were said was that every river that was in the Wild and Scenic River [Act] would be fenced and the cattle couldn't get to the water. As I told many people, if there was one tenth of the things you think was in that bill, I'd be against it too. It's just not that kind of a bill. It's funny how things heal. I just talked to a guy on the Smith River. He's got a ranch on the Smith River. It's a dude ranch. He was spending some time there. He said, "I was one of the guys that really hated your bill. I think we needed something." That's the background of the bill.

BB: Remind me of what happened, because I guess I remember the Wild Rivers Bill, but you also mentioned the federal Wild and Scenic Rivers?

HF: Yes. It was a federal Wild and Scenic Rivers bill. The bill that I had, Bob, was a bill that was taken from a piece of (unintelligible) legislation that had been used across the United States. It was the law of several states. I think South Carolina was one of them. So I just took that piece of legislation down to the legislative council and had them draft that into a bill and include four or five rivers in Montana that I thought needed some kind of control, particularly the high portions of those rivers. It was basically a bill that required some setbacks for construction from the river. That's about the thrust of the bill.

BB: That's what mostly was in it?

HF: Yes, but it got interpreted by something totally different. I had death threats three times I was in the legislature. I had a call in that they were going to kill me and kill my family. One of

the scariest moments in my life was when my good friend Senator Mitchell was the cause of it. I still kid him about it. We left the session one day—

BB: Harry Mitchell is a Democrat from Great Falls.

HF: He's a very good friend. I left and my wife was with me. She walked to her car and I was walking to my car. I got back to my house. Half hour later, she hadn't come. This was when the death threats were out. I was really getting agitated and concerned. Come to find out, she had run into Harry Mitchell, who was standing on the street corner talking to her. I still tell Harry he about caused me half of my hair and lots of grey. We also had another bill that was kind of interesting. I think I'm the only legislator that was ever taken into a legislative hearing under armed guard.

We had carried a bill for the League of Cities and Towns. It was an annexation bill. There was a wild guy from Butte that decided that it was going to lead to a one-world government. He was going to kill me. He showed up at the meeting and I'm walking down the hall in the capitol with my wife. All of a sudden there's a National Guard on both sides of me with a rifle. I said, "What are you here for?" He said, "We've been told to put you under protective custody." I got down to the meeting and the police came over and said, "Don't worry about it. The guy that was making all the threats, we took care of him." The police testified for my bill.

Unidentified Speaker: Reminiscing?

BB: Yes, we're reminiscing. Let me think. The wonderful debate that so many of us remember was a debate over Representative Dorothy Bradley's coal moratorium bill. It was between Jim Lucas, who was Speaker of the House, and John Hall, who might have been the Democratic floor leader at the time.

HF: He was the Minority Leader at that time.

BB: What are your recollections about that?

HF: It was probably, as you pointed out, the most elegant debate I've ever heard. They went on for—it seemed like—forever back and forth. It was just very well done and both of them were very articulate. They both made very good points. I was surprised by John Hall. I expected Jim Lucas, but Hall did a magnificent job.

BB: Now what would the bill do? Dorothy Bradley's bill was a coal moratorium that—

HF: I can't recall the details. We were going to stop coal mining for a period of time. I can't remember all of the particulars.

BB: Do you remember what happened to the bill?

HF: It didn't pass.

BB: It passed on second reading?

HF: Yes.

BB: And then it was on the board for a long time. Do you remember that?

HF: Yes. It bounced up and down on the board. That board's an interesting thing too, how you keep a board on third reading. I can't think of the name of the bill. I'll think of it in a second. We bounced around and bounced around.

BB: What was it about?

HF: Economic development where you use taxes to de-firm...you froze the taxes in a geographic—

BB: Was that your bill?

HF: Yes.

BB: The MELDA [Montana Economic Development Act] Bill.

HF: No, the MELDA bill is my bill too. This is where you froze taxes in a given area and then all the taxes that came into the area went into urban renewal and development projects.

BB: Isn't that sort of what the MELDA bill was?

HF: No, the MELDA bill was a little bit different. The MELDA bill was, if I can oversimplify, the further you live from the source of the service, the higher your taxes. As an example here in Yellowstone County, the people at that time and pretty much the same that lived out in Yellowstone Club subdivision, maybe 10 miles from the sewage treatment plant and the water treatment plant paid the same tax as the people that lived downtown. So I tried to say that if you wanted to live out in the country, and if you wanted to be a part of urban sprawl, that it would cost you money. A sheriff's call or a police call to the country was certainly a lot more than one downtown. So basically my bill set up the cost of...their taxes were proportional to the cost of the delivery of services.

BB: Okay, that's ringing a bell to me too. There was some kind of a concentric ring?

HF: Yes.

BB: Because I think you had something I saw when you presented it.

HF: Yes. I did many different types of visuals on it, but that was one of them. It is true. The people that live in the rural areas, now they're getting around that now because they're putting special improvement costs in taxes to bring lines out. It's not like it used to be. But at that time, it was not that way at all. Then I also, if you could remodel your house and make it more tax efficient, for example, you could get tax breaks and things of that nature.

BB: Yes. And these bills were sort of involved in the early environmental movement and they were kind of—saving energy and we were trying to plan intelligently and that sort of thing. So they were somewhat in keeping with that era.

HF: Yes. Then they came along a little later on. The one I'm grasping for the name of is where you took...it was an urban renewal bill, you might call it that. You froze the taxes in a geographical area. Why don't you shut that off for just a second? I have a mental block on that.

[Break in tape]

BB: And that was the—

HF: Tax increment financing bill.

BB: And you said Pat Williams jumped up to argue against it?

HF: No, he was for it. We headed there. It was complicated. It was controversial. The League of Cities and Towns had presented it to me and asked me to carry it. We had a lot of trouble with it, and particularly with the real Republicans. They didn't like it at all. We were talking a minute ago about third reading. You can keep a bill on third reading for indefinitely if you want to, by moving it to the bottom of the board or the top of the board. I kept moving them back because I knew one of these afternoons it would be a real hot, steamy afternoon and people would be mostly asleep. So then on that particular day I moved it down after House Bill 332 or something. So I knew it was going to come up right away. It came up and I got up and explained the bill. It's just a rather simple bill. It was done by the League of Cities and Towns. It was for the betterment of downtowns. I explained a little bit about it. Then Pat Williams, who not was the champion of the Republican Party, particularly the conservatives, jumped up and said, "Ten years ago this would have been socialism. This is the finest bill that's ever come before the House of Representatives." He just about killed the bill with kindness. He woke up everybody.

BB: Was he considered pretty partisan then?

HF: Oh, very partisan. He was not liked at all by the Republicans, by the conservative Republicans. The real conservative people were really down on him.

BB: He was outspoken?

HF: He was very outspoken. Another little story that could come up with the sales tax, you touched on that. John Melcher was getting ready to run for Congress. Every time there came time for a vote on House Bill 333, John went to the restroom. One time they were getting ready for a vote and he went to the restroom. Bill Goan got up and he said, "You know, members of the assembly, I think we should just one recess for a minute because Representative Melcher just went to the restroom. I know he wants to vote on this bill." Five minutes later red-faced John Melcher came out and Bill called his bluff and he voted.

BB: He finally got him.

HF: Yes. That was Bill. He was a fighter.

BB: You served with Melcher just one session?

HF: Yes.

BB: Any recollections of him?

HF: He's a very nice guy. I enjoyed John. We served with Max Baucus too. A story of Max Baucus that may be fun to pass on is Jim Burnett, our key to the capitol. He was the only legislator [who had a key] because he was a farmer and he got up early. He had the key. He went down there one morning about four o'clock in the morning and here was Max Baucus up before all of the television cameras putting on a campaign speech.

BB: Up in the gallery?

HF: No, he was out on the floor. He was a member then. He had every right to be there. He wanted to be taped in the chambers.

BB: It was real early in the morning. He was just doing a—

HF: A dynamite speech addressing—

BB: Even though there wasn't anybody there.

HF: There wasn't a soul there. But nobody knew that. Burnett broke in and caught him. Jim never let him live that down. I still get to kid Max about it every so often when I see him.

BB: You know, did you work with any legal legislation with Dorothy Bradley?

HF: Yes. We worked on several bills together. She was a very effective, very bright, articulate lady. I think she's a very good legislator.

BB: And she was associated with the environmental movement?

HF: Oh, totally. I think she was 100 percent with the environmental group.

BB: She was also associated with another pretty controversial bill, do you remember that one? It was the abortion bill.

HF: Oh yes, very much so.

BB: What do you remember about that?

HF: I just was obviously diametrically opposed to her on that particular bill. I remember one day she was walking by me in the restaurant. One of her friends said, "Well why's it such an issue? It's just a bit of protoplasm." That was a pretty hard statement. So Dorothy and I certainly split on that.

BB: Dorothy had a bill that was introduced maybe prior to the *Roe v. Wade* decision. That would have made abortion legal in Montana.

HF: Yes, I think up to the second trimester, I believe. It was quite late in the pregnancy.

BB: And so it was, of course, tremendously controversial. Most of us voted against it as I recall. I don't even know how many votes in addition to Dorothy's own vote the bill got.

HF: Yes, very few.

BB: Then a couple of years later after the *Roe v. Wade* decision came down, then the legislature passed some abortion legislation to implement *Roe v. Wade* in Montana. Is that how you remember it?

HF: I can't really remember that. I remember those were the days when we had the Equal Rights Amendment too. I remember one day I got cornered in the elevator with ladies. They had a Bible in one hand and they had the constitution in the other hand. And they stopped the elevator between floors. Here's Harrison in the elevator with about 20 women.

BB: And they were opposed to the Equal Rights Amendment?

HF: They were very much opposed to the Equal Rights Amendment. They were giving me all of the reasons. I'm in the back of the elevator. I can't get out and they stop it.

BB: I voted for that.

HF: I did too. I think it was necessary legislation. That wasn't endearing to the hearts of conservatives.

BB: You know I could never really understand why.

HF: I couldn't either. There were bills that you couldn't understand why. When I carried the Hard Rock Mining Bill, and of course (unintelligible) in the center of small mines. And there are probably 300 or 400 mines around there. You may remember those small miners came in droves. I just felt there were 10 or 15 of them around me. Then we finally put the small miner exemption in there. They were gone. You know, they turned out to be wonderful people. After it was over, that was the session I think my cabin was burned down. One of them invited me over to his place and invited me out for dinner and showed me his mine. He was a very nice person.

BB: Often times I think things do work out well that way too. You served in the legislature with several governors. Governor Forrest Anderson and Governor Tom Judge, and Governor Ted Schwinden were there. You probably met them all.

HF: I knew them very well, all three of them.

BB: Let's begin with Governor Anderson. Any thoughts or impressions that kind of typify him? Any experience you've ever had with him?

HF: He was a real politician. He really did play politics hard. He was a hard ball politician. No (unintelligible) with Forrest. He was out to get his way. The best I can say about him was that he was a strong politician.

BB: He was very much in opposition to the sales tax.

HF: Yes, he was the voice against the sales tax. When we didn't pay attention to Forrest, I think that's when "Pay more, what for?" came up. We still have that. You talk about a sales tax and there's still "Pay more, what for?" You hear it occasionally.

BB: Describe him in terms of his demeanor in terms of, what was he like?

HF: He was very sharp and very quick. He was very positive. He was very opinionated. He was fun to talk to in many respects. We set down the barriers early in life that his guys and my guys in many cases weren't the same. So we just agreed to disagree and from that point on, we were friends. He was probably the most political governor of any. Tom Judge would have been a good second to him.



BB: Describe Tom Judge.

HF: He was a nice guy. He was fun to be around. He was pleasant, affable, but a politician.

BB: Would you use the same descriptive terms to describe Tom Judge that you would Forrest Anderson?

HF: No. Forrest Anderson would basically, he would go to any extent, in my opinion, to make his point. He played hardball. Tom played politics more in softball. Tom was a unique person. I think he had a good sense of values, whereas I don't think perhaps Forrest had that same sense that Tom did. He did have a real set of values. I remember one time when I was state president of the Jaycees and Tom was the featured speaker and it was in West Yellowstone. We had about 1,000 young guys there and their wives. I remember he talked to me. He said, "If I had a political race like this, nobody could beat me." Then he says, "You're not thinking about running, are you?"

BB: So that's what the thought that occurred to him when he saw the Jaycees. It wasn't service, it was politics.

HF: Yes. How would you have judged him?

BB: Oh, I think pretty much the same way. Forrest Anderson was Newell Anderson's father. When I was a college kid I was student body president at MSU in Bozeman. Newell was the student body president at Northern up in Havre. So we knew Forrest Anderson through Newell. I remember he had kind of a brusque demeanor, but he was especially nice to us college kids because we were friends of Newell's. So I remember him that way and then I don't remember him--I didn't have much to do with him actually as a legislator.

I remember him as looking like a governor. He had that mane of white hair. He was a handsome looking guy even though he was small in stature. He had broad shoulders and he was well proportioned. He seemed to have kind of a confident sort of an air to him. He was very confident and very in control. He had kind of a heavy voice. He was smart and articulate, quick, and tough. He was somebody that you just kind of had the impression that you better take this guy seriously. Governor Judge was young and he was an immaculate dresser. He was kind of debonair, kind of a prince charming kind of a guy. He had a softer voice. He had a softer approach. I guess those are kind of my recollections of them.

HF: Yes. He was a real politician. Being in the first case with you, I was down in Arizona and we had the Arizona Days down there, Montana Days in Arizona. Your opponent, now governor, came down and Tom was introducing him to the crowd. He came by and said, "And this is Harrison Fagg. He's a former Majority Leader." [Gov. Brian] Schweitzer just walked right by me and he [Judge] grabbed me by the shoulders. He said, "You know what you did? This guy was a

former leader of the politics (?) in Montana.” He kept right on going, which satisfied me, but it was interesting.

BB: He probably knew you were a Republican.

HF: Probably so.

BB: He was probably wise enough to know that and just thought, “This guy isn’t going to do me any good.”

HF: It was interesting that he came all the way to Arizona to get votes. I don’t know if you ever knew that.

BB: Oh, yes. I was down there too.

HF: I didn’t see you.

BB: Maybe not at that same one with the Montana reunion—

HF: I remember talking about Allen Kolstad. Allen was the chairman of the Montana Days down there when I was there one year. He got up and he said, “This is probably the most tasteful job that I’ve ever had in my life. Potential governor for the state of Montana is here and it’s my job to introduce him.”

BB: Well, he was a good one, that’s for sure. How about Governor Schwinden?

HF: He was a smart politician. The other guys were maybe hard politicians and soft politicians. I’d put him down as a smart politician. He was very shrewd and very quick. I remember that was when I was Majority Leader and I thought it might be smart to start the session and think of a jest. So I sent to California and I got an olive branch. So on the first day of the session when he came over, I presented him with an olive branch and decided that from then on we’d be friends. Later on, at the very end of the session, we always get them polarized and they brought the leadership over to the governor’s mansion to meet with him. He set that olive branch and it was in a flower vase in the center of the table.

BB: That’s a great idea.

HF: I think that sums him up. He was a good politician and a very honest man too.

BB: I always thought he embodied the term competent.

HF: Yes.

BB: He understood state government thoroughly and I remember one time I asked for an appointment with him. I can't remember what it was about. He probably still could. So I went into his office and he's wearing a flannel shirt and I think corduroy pants or something. It was probably not during the legislative session, but he was very informal. You'd think that there might be a top bureaucrat or two that would be there in the office with him to discuss in specifics what I wanted to discuss with him. I don't think he ever needed anybody like that. He had such a thorough understanding of the details of state government that he could conduct a conversation perfectly confidently by himself. He did. He also was decisive. He could make a decision. You'd look him in the eye and you would know it would happen.

HF: He stuck with—he was land commissioner when I did the Hard Rock Mining Bill. He was a tremendous ally. It was a difficult bill to pass and we finally got it passed. I'll never forget it. He called me up. He knew I was a Republican. Of course, he was a Democrat. He congratulated me on it. I was very much impressed with the guy.

BB: How did you come to run for Majority Floor Leader?

HF: You know, I don't know why. I think that I was concerned with where the taxes were going more than anything else. I thought I could be persuasive, and another thing I thought, I could work with both the liberal and the more conservative [side] of the party. I tried to be in the middle. I think some people thought I was more to the liberal side than the conservative side. I tried to be in the middle. I just thought I could work with them and I thought we needed to get some things done.

BB: Was it a contested caucus?

HF: No. I think it was unopposed.

BB: Who was the Speaker during that session?

HF: [Bob] Marks.

BB: I see, and when was that, '81?

HF: Yes. I believe so.

BB: So what does a Majority Leader do?

HF: I think the biggest thing the Majority Leader does is try to unite the Republicans and make sure they're all on the same team. Then the second thing he does, his job is to present the Republican position and argue it with the opposition. I think those are the two big jobs that we had up there.

BB: So the Speaker is the Speaker of the whole House. He's an officer of the Democrats as well as the Republicans, the minority as well as the majority. The Minority Leader and the Majority Leader are just elected by their party caucuses. So the Majority Leader is kind of the war chief of the majority party, and the Minority Leader is sort of the war chief of the minority party. Who was the Minority Leader? Do you remember?

HF: A guy from in Great Falls, Dan Kemmis. I mean, from Missoula. Dan Kemmis, in his final speech, he said, "Harrison, the difference between you and me, when you give a talk, you always win." I was Majority Leader. He said, "I always lose. When you stand up, we have 53 votes. You always had 53 lights. I always have 47."

BB: Well, that's how it works.

HF: That's the system.

BB: Do you have any recollections of Kemmis?

HF: Yes. He was a very articulate and very bright man. He was extremely bright. He was on the genius level I would say. He was very liberal, a very deliberate thinker, a very positive thinker, and a progressive thinker.

BB: He went on to be Speaker sometime later.

HF: He became Speaker later on, yes. He was very low-key.

BB: Any recollections or anything of any other prominent leaders? I'm thinking maybe Senator Metcalf or Senator Mansfield. We talked about Battin. Did you ever meet Mansfield?

HF: Oh yes, I knew Mansfield quite well. I had a tie to Mansfield because my father—we go back to where we started now. My father was active in the Democratic Party and Roosevelt got him nominated and made him the postmaster. As a result he was very close to Mansfield, who was active at that time. Burton K. Wheeler (unintelligible) was governor. So because of Dad's tie to Mansfield, after Dad passed away, Mansfield was still in power. Because of his friendship with my father, we became friends. We were speaking acquaintances. He was a real statesman, no question about that.

BB: How would you describe him?

HF: A statesman.

BB: How did he come across when you had a visit with him?

HF: He was very calm. He would puff on his pipe and kind of look over your head sometimes. Then he'd kind of come back and ponder and come back and answer. Nothing fast, he thought things through very well. He was always a real gentleman.

BB: Metcalf?

HF: Metcalf was a neat guy. I enjoyed him because he...At that time, I was pushing the Beartooth Absaroka Wilderness Act. He was a strong supporter of that. The fact is, his untimely death probably caused that bill to pass with no modifications. It became a tribute to him and it just went through. It was highly controversial. That's another story. It's certainly not a state legislation, but there was the Beartooth Primitive Area and Absaroka Primitive Area. They were divided by a gold mining road that had come through the top of the mountains. It went from the top of the Boulder River and a heavy faction wanted to keep that road open. It would have been a much easier access into Cooke City than the Cooke City highway. (Unintelligible) all the way through. So we were trying to unite the two so the road wouldn't separate them. That's how I got involved in that. He became a close friend afterwards. I wanted to name a mountain in Montana after him, as a matter of fact. His wife said that it was a high honor, but that she didn't want to do that. I thought of it afterwards that they named a whole wilderness area after him.

BB: Yes, the Lee Metcalf Wilderness Area. That's right.

HF: He was another fine person. You don't get elected to a high office in politics without having a lot on the ball.

BB: He was somebody that you had a good relationship with.

HF: Yes.

BB: Because you hear Metcalf and Mansfield described differently. Mansfield is typically described as a statesman. Metcalf is more of an advocate and more of a scrapper.

HF: I had no problems of either one of them as a Republican. I think I consider both of them, not good friends, but good acquaintances.

BB: As you look back over 16 years of service in the legislature and then having had that experience...you've lived a nice good life longer than that and you've been more than an astute observer of Montana politics. Can you draw any conclusions? Are there any important lessons that you feel you've learned?

HF: Of course, I think some things have happened very definitely in my span. Going to the single-member districts, it had an incredible difference in the composure of the legislature. All of a sudden, minority areas and low voting areas got representation, Indian reservations and

Southside of Billings and that sort of thing. So that brought in a lot of new faces and different types of voting patterns. I think that was one big thing. I think another thing we've seen as Montana has grown up and developed, the rural areas diminished. Urban area has increased. So we've gone from more of a solid conservative state to more of a borderline liberal state. We might almost be a purple state now.

BB: So because in this day and age when conservatives and Republicans run well in a state, that's called a red state. When liberals and Democrats do well, the states they do well in are called blue states. So the term you just used, "purple," means that Montana is now—we're probably more on the red category as far as presidential elections and now that's a little more blurry.

HF: We used to be such a strong conservative state in Montana. It was always peculiar to me because we would elect Democrats more on the liberal side, like Baucus and Metcalf. Some of our governors have been more on the liberal side. Yet we consider ourselves to be conservative. I think that's changing because of the diminishing rural influence and more impact of the urban influence.

BB: And the urban influence tends to be somewhat more moderate.

HF: I think they tend to think they're smarter. They tend to think they think things through. They tend to think they would want to be more of the independent variety. They have a different attitude. They're not the hardcore right wing or left wing. Like when I first went to the legislature, there were some strong differences between the Republicans and the Democrats. I think that gap is narrowing somewhat.

BB: You know too, Harrison, I think that in the '90s and in the early part of this century, the last three or four legislative sessions in particular that our party, our Republican Party, seems to have taken a pretty hard turn to the right.

HF: Oh, recently they've gone—

BB: Because guys like you and I probably couldn't get elected to leadership jobs in the last 10 years. We could pretty easily about 20 or 30 years ago.

HF: I think the turn came with [John] Mercer when he was Speaker. I think that was one of the big turns as far as the legislature was concerned. He was a real politician and he played hard ball.

BB: Yes. Even Mercer might have some difficulty now.

HF: I think he would be too liberal by some of the standards now. I was down in Arizona and I picked up the *USA Today* and I see an article in there about how the conservatives are going to

start drumming out some of the Republican candidates in the House because they weren't conservative enough.

BB: That happened here. There were two or three conservative leaders that listed 14 Republicans as socialists. They identified them as socialists. So some of whom, it's just absolutely laughable.

HF: Like Bill Glaser [Republican from Huntley].

BB: Yes, he was one on the list. We know Bill, and that is just preposterous. Anyway, they've gone too far I think.

HF: The pendulum has come back.

BB: The guy that made the threat is Representative Roger Goodman. He ended up being faced with a primary challenge of his own and didn't file. So he basically backed down from the challenge that he was going to deliver to everybody else.

HF: When I was in the legislature, a Democrat came to me and he said, "The Republican Party is like a guy looking through a keyhole with blinders on." I thought of that. We were pretty open at that time. Somewhat today, it would be a Republican looking through a keyhole with blinders on. Some of them really don't have very much vision for what's going on around them. It has turned a sharp right. I think it's going to hurt the Republican Party.

BB: It probably will, although there was enough of a reaction to that, a lot of those 14 guys found out that they had a heck of a lot of friends that they didn't know they had before.

HF: I'm sure of that.

BB: In fact, I think what happened was that this, to some extent, has seriously damaged—if not broken—the power of some of these real hardcore right guys.

HF: It was (unintelligible) related the sales we served with? Scott Sales, and Walt Sales was the one—

BB: No, they're not related. Walt Sales was a state representative from Bozeman back in the late '70s or '80s. Then this guy that we're talking about now is an ultra-right wing speaker of the House of Representatives also named Sales, and also from Bozeman. I don't believe there's any relation.

HF: I just always wondered. Well, there has been a noticeable change in Montana, certainly.

BB: Well, anything else? As you look into Montana's future, what do you see? We've touched on that a little bit already.

HF: I think as much as probably (unintelligible) like in natural resources is certainly a key to Montana growth. If we can do it in a proper and sane method, there's no reason we shouldn't get into our natural resources and use them. I know the Stillwater Mining Company is mining up by my cabin now, the one that was burned down. They've done a beautiful job. As soon as they dug up something, they'd plant it back into grass. They're planting trees and landscaping. There are some high-class workmen up there. I think we need to see more of that.

BB: We can do a good job of timber harvest and mining of all kinds of things now with modern technology and modern knowledge.

HF: I think that's the key to Montana. We were sitting on a gold mine here.

BB: Because the world will always need the resources we have and if we can let the world have them without sacrificing ourselves in the process, we can probably raise our standard of living.

HF: Yes. I know a guy told me one time that if you looked at what Montana ships out and use it, and looked to what Montana ships in and build it.

BB: That's a pretty good line.

HF: That's not too bad a way of looking at it. Then make yourself a living, more self-sufficient.

BB: That's for sure. Anything else?

HF: Nope that's it Bob. I appreciate the opportunity.

BB: You bet. Thanks for your public service.

[End of Interview]