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Bob Brown: We're visiting with former State Representative Jack Gunderson. Jack was first elected in the election of 1964 to the House of Representatives. The last session in which he served was the 1977 session. He, however, was involved in politics before he ran for the legislature. Then I believe you served in state government here in Helena. You had an administrative job afterwards?

Jack Gunderson: Yes, afterwards I managed the State Hail Department for four and a half years.

BB: So you you're still living here in Helena.

JG: Yes, at that time I bought the duplex in Helena and—

BB: So you're still here.

JG: Yes.

BB: Jack Gunderson was a friend of mine of course when I served in the legislature and I'm pleased to have an opportunity to interview him. Jack, what got you involved in politics?

JG: Well, my dad was elected to the legislature in about 1941 I think it was. He served five terms in the House and—

BB: That was from where?

JG: I think it must have been right around 1941.

BB: What was the district?

JG: Oh, from Cascade County. See at that time we all ran at-large. I think we had nine representatives from Cascade County at that time.

BB: Okay, so then you served from Cascade County also.

JG: Yes.

BB: In that same system, at least to begin with?

JG: Yes.

BB: So you would have served with John Willits?

JG: Oh yes, I think he was elected the same year I was, in 1965. Another interesting thing; my brother ran for the legislature in 1959 and I can't remember who was governor then.

BB: Aronson would have been.

JG: It was probably Aronson, but then Don Nutter came in, when, in 1970?

BB: No, Nutter came in 1960.

JG: That's probably right. Anyway, my brother served in 1959, and Democrats had control of Cascade County. I don't know if there were nine or 11 representatives. I don't remember for sure. It was pretty predominantly Democratic. Then the Republicans came in. They had control of the delegation—

BB: In the 1960 election?

JG: Yeah.

BB: And the issue was the public utility district issue wasn't it; the PUD issue?

JG: Yeah, that was one of them. Then I remember there was a pretty good scandal about the Highway Department at that time. They wanted to build—this engineer wanted to build an interstate highway down on the east side, I believe, of Holter Lake. I think he got fired over it. The powers that be wanted it to go over where it goes up now.

BB: So that was an issue in the campaign that hurt the Democrats?

JG: That was in 1959, you know. Then the Republicans got had control here and—

BB: What was the issue that brought the Republicans to...that gave them a big victory in 1960?

JG: I think it was probably partially this Highway Department fiasco, and I really can't remember why, but anyway they just had control of it.

BB: Jack, wasn't this PUD deal an issue too then? I've heard this in another interview.

JG: Oh yes, that was.

BB: Do you remember that—what do you remember about that? I know that was before you became personally involved, but you must have visited with your brother about it.

JG: Well, I don't know, and then they had that Knoll dam up on the Flathead—south of Flathead Lake there. That was a big issue too during the legislature.

BB: That wouldn't have been an issue in Cascade County, though would it?

JG: No it wasn't, but you know the way the party politics run. Then the year that I ran, we just reversed it. We went from ten to one Republican—we went ten to one Democrats.

BB: Yes, because '64 was a big year for Democrats.

JG: Pat Gilfeather and John Willits, and Pete Gilligan, and well, Jack McDonald at that time was Democrat.

BB: Yes, and John Staigmillier?

JG: John didn't get elected until a couple of years later.

BB: I see. I knew him, of course, too.

JG: That's where Jack [John M.] McDonald started the whole issue of revising the constitution for the Constitutional Convention.

BB: So he was a young state representative with you then, and a Democrat from Cascade County. He was later elected to the State Senate as a Democrat from Cascade County and then changed parties. He ran for Congress, I think.

JG: He's been Republican ever since. He ran for Congress, Senator, everything else.

BB: His significant contribution to Montana was that he felt the constitution was outdated and that we needed a new one. So he introduced a bill which ultimately resulted in the calling of the Constitutional Convention that resulted in our 1972 constitution.

JG: Yes, that's the one big thing Jack did, but at that time I was a freshman legislator in '65 and just different issues I was interested in at the time. Every time you're turning around you're running into this outdated constitution. I was a big supporter of calling for a new constitution and worked on it. I was one of the few legislators when they had the Con Con that came up and I spent a lot of time with the Constitutional Convention.

BB: What were your impressions of the Constitutional Convention?

JG: I thought it was set up and run real well. Most legislators seemed to be afraid we wouldn't tell them what they thought. It didn't bother me a bit. They welcomed me with open arms.

BB: Of course you knew Speaker [Leo] Graybill a little bit, from Great Falls?

JG: Oh, sure. He was one of the ones that were instigating to get me to run in the first place. That was kind of interesting. The first time I ever ran for the legislature I got talked into it by the fellow Democrats. I went home and told my wife that I filed for the legislature. She said, "Oh, fine. I'm going to file for divorce."

BB: Did you happen to be in a meeting of some kind where some fellows came up and approached and asked you to run?

JG: No, it was just Leo Graybill who was the big one, Democratic Central Committee was looking for candidates. He called me into his office one day and just asked me if I would run. I wasn't very eager about it.

BB: Why would he have come to you? What had you done? Were you involved in politics?

JG: I was real active in the Cascade County Farmers Union, and another local issue we had up there; we had an old folks' home that was really a mess up there. I was one of the big pushers in there to finally get a new Cascade County hospital built. That was one of the ways, I think, I got more acquainted countywide. We had a circulated petition to get it on the ballot. We got it approved overwhelmingly, you might say.

BB: Good.

JG: It was well before that on an old folks' home, the County Commissioners were running it and were getting a rake off the cost and it was a pretty pathetic situation. So we got the whole mess straightened out.

BB: So your dad was a legislator and your brother had been a legislator. So there was a woman by the name of Gunderson who was in the legislature, wasn't there?

JG: Yes, my sister-in-law ran for the legislature from up at Havre. Harold had moved up to Havre and then she ran and got elected up there. She served one term.

BB: So there have been several Gundersons that have served.

JG: Gordon McOmber—he always said that he served with four different Gundersons.

BB: I'm interested in maybe some of your thoughts and observations when your dad was a legislator, but before we do that, let's talk a little bit about your experience at the

Constitutional Convention. I've asked you for your overall impression of it and that sort of thing. You served, as I did, on both sides of the constitution. You served before the '72 constitution went into effect, and after it went into effect. I was there just for one session before it went into effect, but you were there for several on either side of it. Do you have any thoughts about the legislature before the '72 constitution, and the legislature afterwards? Do you have anything as a legislator, from a legislator's perspective that you saw the constitution change for better or worse?

JG: Like I said earlier, it seemed like from '65 through that time, every time we'd have a bill of some importance, we'd always run into this constitution, you could or you couldn't do it. And then afterwards—after the Con Con—I carried a whole batch of bills to implement. Do you remember that? Oh god, we must have had about 40 or 50 bills in the new constitution.

Remember Jo Ellen Estenson? She was a researcher for them and she wrote a lot of those bills. I carried a lot of those for her. I carried most of the education bills onto education. I don't know if I was chairman at that time or not. I carried a lot of those bills with no particular problem or anything. You just had to make all these changes in the law and to fit the new constitution over the old one.

BB: I suppose this is a question that the answer is obvious, but do you feel that an improvement resulted from the new constitution?

JH: Oh, I definitely—it seemed like—well, I suppose then, when we started modeling whatever legislation we had at that time to fit the new constitution, we just didn't have the problems that we were running into in the old constitution. You never could get anything changed.

BB: We're just now completing—in fact today, literally—the 2005 legislative session has adjourned sine die today as we speak. It just happened a few hours ago. They will have to meet again in special session in order to address the problem of school funding. The school funding issue was brought before the legislature as the result of the decision of the Montana State Supreme Court interpreting the 1972 constitution to mean that the legislature has inequitably and inadequately funded public education because ours is one of the few constitutions in the country that specifically mentions education and mentions the people are entitled to a "quality" education. Of course there's been a lot of difference of opinion about exactly what that means. So our constitution has directly affected our expenditures, our priorities, our method and level of taxation, the money we allocate to public schools, and other things. That probably wouldn't have happened, I imagine it wouldn't have happened, under the 1889 constitution.

JG: I'm sure it wouldn't have. It was just a matter of—when was the original constitution written, in 1895?

BB: 1889.

JG: Yes, you know things were so much different at that time, and the perspective I think of everybody in the state had changed. They wanted these different things done that the old one, just had—you had your hands tied. You couldn't do anything on it. I was very happy. I thought they had an outstanding—and that was one of the better things that they didn't let legislators run for.

BB: Yes, that's right. Legislators were ineligible to run for delegates of the Constitutional Convention.

JG: Yes, like I say, I think that's where it scared out a lot of legislators even going up to testify. I just figured it was one of the things I was interested in, and had perspective on it. They were happy to hear my thoughts on it. They adopted a lot of things that I thought should be in the new one. I can't think of any specific ones, or things like that. I spent quite a bit of time up here.

BB: Did you see any other legislators that you can recall that were up there at that same time?

JG: Very, very few. Like I say, I think where they wouldn't let legislators be delegates to it, I think they were hesitant about coming up and expressing an opinion. I think they would have been just as welcomed as I was in specific areas.

BB: Jack, in your observations of the Constitutional Convention, were there Constitutional Convention delegates that stand out in your mind?

JG: Oh yes, there always is; Dorothy Eck, for one, and then, who was it, Rick...

BB: Rick Champoux from the Flathead?

JG: From the Flathead, and—

BB: What was it about Dorothy Eck and Rick Champoux that are memorable to you?

JG: I can't even remember. Rick, was he chairman of the Education Committee?

BB: Yes.

JG: Dorothy all the way around; all the issues she had a liberal viewpoint I guess that I agreed with. I thought they had a lot of—I'd say out of the total bunch, there were probably 30 or 40 outstanding ones. It's kind of like the legislature. There's usually about 30 or 40 people that kind of are the leaders on it and bring out the ideals. The rest of them are not. Not that they're not good legislators, but they aren't leaders in the forefront.

BB: Or thinkers, or people that make things happen. I think that's true. Going back to your early life—your dad served in the House in the 1940s from Cascade County from roughly 1940 to 1950, is that what you said?

JG: Yes, about that period. [Ole Gustafson served from 1941-45, in 1949, and from 1953-55.]

BB: So were you able to visit him in the legislature? Did you come down here to Helena during legislative sessions?

JG: Not too much because I was the one that got stuck running the farm up there while he was in politics. Really, I wasn't that interested because he was gone so darn much, you know, with all the legislation.

BB: Sam Ford was Governor during most of that period.

JG: Yes, and Hugo Aronson.

BB: And John Bonner.

JG: Yeah, Bonner.

BB: Do you remember your dad talking about Ford? Do you have any impressions of Governor Ford?

JG: I'm sure he probably served with Ford when he first got elected. I know he got along good with Hugo Aronson. Hugo appointed him to some state committee to study property tax and come up with some kind of an answer. I can't remember that they ever came up with anything. They didn't change much what they had before.

BB: Then do you remember anything about Governor Bonner, or him mentioning Governor Bonner?

JG: My dad was a great supporter of Bonner. I know that. He was a great supporter of Arnold Olsen too. Arnold ran for Attorney General and, well, he was a supporter of Forrest Anderson. He knew all those guys real well, which I knew them, but like I say—

BB: What's your first memory or your first recollection of Governor Bonner?

JG: Oh golly, I can't really remember. I know Frank Murray, you know, he was always running. Frank was always around every political meeting all the time.

BB: Do you remember being at a political meeting with Frank Murray?

JG: Well, not so much with Murray.

BB: Arnold Olsen?

JG: One of the first impressions I remember from politics goes back to the old Ritz Theater when—who was it, Erickson who ran for the Senate or ran for Governor?

BB: Yes, 1934 when Erickson was running for the Senate against Murray in the Democratic primary.

JG: It seemed like he was running against somebody for Governor.

BB: He was last elected Governor in 1932. Could that have been the year?

JG: I remember he had a thumping and pounding speech that really impressed me. I always did like him after that.

BB: You know, Jack, that's interesting because he's from my hometown of Kalispell where I went to high school. Johnny Erickson was a district judge in Kalispell and he ran for Governor in 1924, for the first time, as a Democrat. He defeated Joe Dixon. Joe Dixon was a very independent-minded Republican. Maybe you've read something about him or remember something about him in the history of the politics of the state. At least according to historians, Erickson was very close to the Anaconda Company during the period of time when he was Governor.

The Anaconda Company was interested in defeating Dixon because Dixon was trying to tax them. So Erickson was elected Governor with the support of the Anaconda Company in 1924; re-elected in '28; and elected again in '32. He was the only person in Montana history that was elected Governor three consecutive times. He then went on in 1934 to run for U.S Senate. He'd actually arranged to have himself appointed to the U.S Senate when Senator Walsh died. So the speech you probably heard, my guess is, if he was running for Governor, would have been in 1932. That's the last time he ran for Governor. Then he ran in the primary in '34. He could have given speeches farther down for other Democratic candidates too.

JG: Yes, like I say, that's a long time ago.

BB: You remember him as a good public speaker?

JG: Yes, I can remember that particular speech that he gave down there.

BB: What was memorable about it?

JG: Oh, just that he was a dynamic speaker on the issues he put up. I can't remember what the issues were.

BB: He was dynamic and impressive?

JG: Oh, yes.

BB: Of course, he was a big man with a big mane of white hair and probably looked kind of impressive too.

JG: Yes, just like Mike Mansfield when he used to give those Jefferson-Jackson Day dinners. He'd really get wound up and would really impress anybody that was in the place even if you were leaning Republican. I think when you left the interview you'd vote for Mike Mansfield. Metcalf used to be able to give a pretty good speech like that too.

BB: At other Democratic dinners?

JG: Yes.

BB: So you were brought up—you went to a fair number of Democratic dinners as a kid.

JG: Oh, sure, sure.

BB: Jack, how would you characterize your political philosophy because I think you were actively involved in the Farmers Union? Your family has been involved in the Democratic Party. What are the core beliefs that you have? How would you describe your philosophy?

JG: Well, it goes back, I think, to even the '30s, and where I always got the support—we always got the support of the Farm Labor Political Action Committee. The Farmers Union and the Labor Union would sit down and discuss the issues and take stands on them. It pretty well controlled politics like Cascade County at that time. It was to get farmers a decent living, a decent wage.

BB: So that's what they had in common?

JG: Yes, sure. They knew that agriculture couldn't make money, labor couldn't get wages, and the same old token that if you wanted decent help, you had to pay them a decent wage.

BB: Now the Farm Labor Coalition existed in Montana. I think it existed in Minnesota. It existed in North Dakota, I think, to some extent. But I'm not sure it does so much anymore. Do you have any thoughts on that, at least as far as Montana is concerned?

JG: I don't know. The Farmers Union has lost memberships because the people are moving off the land. The land gets bigger and fewer and far between, and then now I had to go to Stradden

(?) because the AFL-CIO [American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations] has just completely switched in their philosophy.

BB: How do you see that now?

JG: They have just changed their attitude to get jobs for the workers in Montana. They've gotten in dead with the big industries and big companies.

BB: Do you think it's possible that a labor union could still be a strong advocate of workers' rights, and at the same time be open to letting businesses expand so more jobs can be created?

JG: Oh sure, because I belong to this progressive labor party now. Some of the things we've discussed there with—they're against the environmentalists all the time and progressive labor is taking the attitude that you would probably create more jobs with strong environments, and clean-up and follow up, and doing it in a proper way to start with than just going in and demolishing a mountain or something. Then you have a problem on your hands like you have at Landusky that you'll be fighting for the next 100 years.

BB: Now Landusky is where there's a mine that wasn't properly reclaimed. It's been a controversial thing.

JG: They tore that all apart and they didn't have half the money to go do the reclamation. They've done a lot of work up there, but I don't know, they just can't seem to solve the water problem with all those open piles and stuff that natural moisture comes through. It picks up all the pollutants out of the soil piles and the open cups and everything else.

BB: Now that kind of an issue—there was a lot of mining that went on in Montana in the '40s and '50s and '60s when labor and the Farmers Union were together. The mines were functioning in Butte. The sawmills were functioning in the western part of the state. A lot of the employees of the mines and in the sawmills were labor union members, probably mostly voted the Democratic ticket. Now that there are few saw mills still in operation, now that there are few mines in operation there aren't as many of those unionized workers any longer voting the Democratic ticket. At least as a partial consequence of that, the Democratic Party hasn't had as much success the last 10 or 15 years in Montana politics as before. Do you have any thoughts on that?

JG: I don't know why any working man—they always bring this up, and there's been corruption in unions. I don't know particularly in Montana, you know that they're squandering their union dues, like the teamsters nationally, this and that. I know some of these people are—well, I don't know if the times are that much tougher. I don't know how much their dues were, but that was their objection was that their dues weren't being spent in the way that they thought they should be. These companies are smart enough that they'll say, "Well, we'll pay you over a union scale if you'll drop the union." They got their ways of convincing people, like worker would have

another ten bucks in his paycheck for his dues to buy a new camper than think 20 years ahead about his pension plan or something like that. That just seems to me like what's happened on it.

BB: Do you think though that in the period when basically you had labor on one side and management on the other side, generally Democrats won the elections? When that ceased to be such an important issue, and when the issues were more social issues and more environmental issues, maybe that divided farmers in the labor movement and that sort of thing. I'm not sure if I understand that. It seems as though our politics have really changed as a result of that, doesn't it?

JG: Oh yes, I think the environmentalist movement came through where a lot of the workers felt that by environmental [activists] stopping certain mines, we were going to raise hell with the countryside. They could see their jobs weren't showing up. I think it's still true, like out here—what's this mine out here over at Clancy? You know, they expanded that but those are really good paying jobs for up from 50,000 to 60,000 dollars a year. Anytime the environmentalists say, "Come out, you've got to clean up this mess," or, "You can't do this because it is making a mess," why then people getting those salaries like that immediately decide to flip over to Republican.

BB: Jack, one of the things I'm especially interested in our interview today is your perspective on the role in Montana politics of the Anaconda Company. Historians, of course, write in many cases that the Anaconda Company had a dominating influence in the politics of our state from the early 1900s into the '60s or '70s. Do you have any thoughts on that?

JG: I know back when my dad was in the legislature in the '40s, they were in full force then. I remember one of the issues he was always shook up over was the silicosis. He always felt like the ACM should be paying that instead of the taxpayers in Montana. I know he fought that all the way through his legislative years. It's still around, as far as I know.

BB: It's interesting that you should mention that because when I first came to the legislature, there was a fellow that served in your delegation from Cascade County by the name of M.F. Keller. Keller was a Republican who chaired the Public Health Committee. So as a new freshman legislator, I was put on the Public Health Committee. That wasn't a committee that most of us wanted to be on. So a lot of times that was a committee where freshman would be placed. There was a bill that had something to do with silicosis benefits that came into that committee, and I remember leaving the committee meeting that day and Keller telling me, he said, "Well Bob, as a practical matter, this is something that never should have been the responsibility of the state of Montana. This should have always been taken care of by the Anaconda Company." That's what he told me. He was a Republican. Now you're a Democrat telling me that you and your dad think the same thing.

JG: Like old J.D Lynch even before I left; every year they'd come in and say, "Well, there were only 100 old silicotic widows there. You don't need 100,000 dollars. They're dying off." The next session you come back and there would be 250; it would increase.

BB: The state continued to do that. In fact I think that's why the—wasn't it Galen? There was a state institution at Galen for people with lung illness that I think was...

JG: Probably mostly due to that.

BB: Yes, I think that's right.

JG: Then that metal mines tax. That was always a big issue clear back through there. I think the Democrats are always trying to get that increased, which they were violently opposed to that. My years in the legislature—in '65 I remember it was probably the last year—they used to have the watering hole down at the Placer Hotel, and I might have been up there once or twice. I can't remember. That was about the time that their power started downhill. The ACM [Anaconda Copper Mining] and the Power Company went downhill and the power company just stepped right into the void.

BB: Did you see that the Montana Power Company and the Anaconda Company as pretty close together?

JG: Oh yes, they were like gold dust twins. You know speaking about those water holes, you probably remember them, but I never had any objection to them whatsoever because that was the one place that members of the House would mix with the members of the Senate and we'd talk over different things. Nowadays I don't know if the House members down here even know the Senators. They just don't seem to have any mix there to where they get to know each other. Heck, we used to talk over all the bills all the time. Not that we ever made deals particularly, but you got to know the issues and why the guy was doing this and he'd listen to your side of it too. There was a lot less fighting and acrimony, or I guess—

BB: The watering holes maybe provided sort of a melting pot for Democrats, Republicans, Senators, representatives, city boys and country boys to get together and have a cocktail and eat a sandwich and kind of get acquainted with each other?

JG: Sure.

BB: And when they're not there anymore, people go their different directions at the end of the day and maybe there isn't as much opportunity for that? Was the Placer Hotel still—was that still the common meeting place when you first got here?

JG: Yes, I think that '65 session was probably the last one.

BB: The fellow I interviewed just before you, Jack, was Norris Nichols. He mentioned kind of the same thing. He said that he didn't know that there were any places that you could go to, but he said the Placer Hotel—whether it was the so-called “water holes” or whether it was the bar or the lobby or wherever—but most everybody hung at out sometime or another at the Placer Hotel. It was kind of the common meeting place for the whole legislature, at least when he was here in the '50s, and maybe up into the '60s. There doesn't seem to be a place like that now as we speak after 2000.

JG: I don't know. After that was closed up, they moved those watering holes up to Jorgenson's. I don't know, for some reason, I don't know when the Colonial—when Babcock built the Colonial, but Democrats kind of congregated at Jorgenson's, and the Republicans were always out at the Colonial.

BB: Yes, that's right. I remember that too. That's my first clear recollection. I am told that there were watering holes at Jorgenson's, which is a hotel a mile or two east of the old Placer Hotel down at Last Chance Gulch, but when I arrived here in 1971, I don't have any recollection of them.

JG: Down at the Colonial?

BB: Well yes, I remember the Colonial, but I don't remember—I've heard about the watering holes at the Placer, and I've heard that they briefly were at Jorgenson's after they closed them down at the Placer. But when I got here in '71, I never was to one if they were still there in '71.

JG: That might be a result of the Con Con too.

BB: That could be.

JG: That's about the time that they closed them up. It switched over to the Democrats congregated at Jorgenson's. But the watering holes, I think, ended about that time.

BB: You know another thing too, we talked about the new constitution and the legislature and how it changed and maybe that the legislature's a little more partisan now that legislators don't know each other as well now. Do you have any thoughts on term limitations?

JG: Oh, I think that was one of the mistakes. I'll tell you the biggest mistake I ever made, I think, in the legislature, although your hands were tied on that, but I was really a supporter of single-member districts. In fact, Tom Towe and I stayed up for a week until four in the morning drawing the first single-member district map. My idea was that you'd know everybody in your district, like we were elected countywide before that. I don't know, but when they went to single-member districts, they ceased to be state legislators. They were district representatives. All they cared about was representing their district and kind of lose the big picture of what's good for the state of Montana.

BB: Yes, they have a narrower view I think, that's true. I think that is true.

JG: We had no choice because the Supreme Court ruling, one man, one vote.

BB: You have to make that work out. You've mentioned Governor Aronson and of course your dad had some experience with him. Did you ever meet him personally?

JG: Oh, yeah, I met him. He was Governor and I had some state land lease. At that time, you know, the state insisted that at harvest time, you haul your wheat in, regardless of the price. It just made me mad, so I came up to the Land Board meeting and Hugo was governor. I think Forrest Anderson was the Attorney General, and I explained what was going to happen. They know that all the state wheat has got to be sold that day. So naturally the price—that period or year—I just got it so that a land owner or a producer could take out a wheat loan just like they do on their own, and hold it until the price went up. Hugo said, "That makes sense." Forrest Anderson, head of the Land Board, opted it with no problem at all. I think over the years it's made the state a lot of money.

BB: That's great. Was that your idea?

JG: Yes, I just knew what was going on.

BB: That's why Leo Graybill came to you and said, "Jack you ought to run for the legislature."

JG: Oh, I've had a lot of fun with different things. I fought the federal farm program clear back to Washington, D.C., a couple of times too. Every time I did, I won. They'd come out with some bureaucratic rule that just didn't make sense. You sit down with those people and explain what's going on really. They have no problem at all and they agree with you and get changes made.

BB: Governor Nutter?

JG: He was one of the reasons I think that I did run too. He must have gotten elected in '60?

BB: 1960.

JG: Yes, and you remember they came in and just cut the budget and boy, I tell you, all the state buildings and institutions really got beat bad. I know the first year I was in, in '65 we went over to Warm Springs, and good Lord, they had people stacked three deep out in the hallways. You could hardly stand the smell in there. I always say, and Francis Bardanouve could agree too, it took us about four sessions to make up for that drastic cutback they had where they didn't repair buildings.

BB: That was in 1961. How would you compare then, say, Nutter to the governors on either side of him; to Aronson and to Babcock? Was Nutter different than the other two?

JG: He just had this philosophy, no government, all cut at the bare bones. Hugo, I think he went along and realized people had to have services, and the institutions had to be kept up. I think Babcock learned after Nutter's big cutback that you still have to provide certain services to people in Montana regardless of if you have to increase taxes.

BB: Did you ever meet Nutter?

JG: I think I met him, but I never had any, really any dealings with him.

BB: Did you have an impression of him?

JG: Yes, that he was just an anti-government person.

BB: Yes, philosophically, but if somebody was asking you to describe him as a person, would you say he was dynamic, opinionated, impressive?

JG: Well, he was opinionated.

BB: Conservative? Or did you have a close enough experience with him to form an impression like that?

JG: I really didn't have a close enough—I just judged by what he did. He was opinionated, conservative—eliminate government.

BB: Now you certainly knew Governor Babcock?

JG: Oh yes.

BB: What are your thoughts and impressions of him?

JG: Oh, I don't know, he was just kind of an average Governor, I think. He didn't do anything either way too drastically. I got along with him okay and never had too much direct contact with him or anything. I think we used to fight the school foundation program every year. They always wanted to keep it down. We kept saying, "What do these schools costs (unintelligible)? You've got to fund them."

BB: You were Chairman of the Education Committee in the House for some of those years too, weren't you?

JG: Well, two sessions. I was about '75 and '77, I think. That was just an accident. Nobody else wanted to be on the education. I, like you, just got stuck.

BB: I had the same job on the Senate. That's right.

JG: You build up seniority and then you're chairman.

BB: Do you have any—do you work with the School Board's Association, the MEA?

JG: Well the MEA, Dee Cooper was the head of that, and then I forget. Who was it? His numbers man all the time? They were real good as far as—

BB: Helping you understand school funding and that sort of thing?

JG: Yes, and the foundation program and how it worked and why you have to—

BB: Was John Board involved at that point?

JG: John, yes, I think he was head of MEA.

BB: Yes, that's what I thought I remembered too.

JG: In fact I ran against John Board. I think I beat him in '65, not directly, but I think he ran as a Republican that time. I ran as a Democrat. John Board and I were always good friends. I think over the years, I think he's a good Democrat now.

BB: Yes, I think he probably is now too. You've mentioned you had an early experience with Governor Anderson that you remember him when he was Attorney General and so on. Was that an experience you just told me about?

JG: Yes, that's when I went to the Land Board. He was a member of the Land Board at that time. I remember Forrest thought, he was—he came up with that governmental reorganization, which I supported, but I still don't think it ever did a damn thing.

BB: That was the "Twenty is Plenty" idea, right? We needed to only have, what was it, a maximum of 20 departments of state government?

JG: Yeah, and it really looked good on paper, but I can't see that it ever did a darn thing, did you?

BB: Well, you have more experience because you see, when I came in, I didn't really hardly know what happened before then. I arrived in the 1971 legislative session. I think that's when

we implemented "Twenty is Plenty." So I guess I don't know that much about what occurred before then. Apparently there were a lot of independent state agencies that—

JG: They were, but they were directly responsible to the people too, like the [Montana Board of Hail Insurance] Hail Board that comes under the Department of Agriculture. Now you've got to go to the Director of the Department of Agriculture to get to the Hail Board. I don't think it saved anything at all. I think it took a lot away from people instead of getting more direct. His idea was like, if you had a problem with the Hail Board, you'd go to the Commissioner of Agriculture and that would take care of everything. You'd go to the Director of Agriculture and he can do what he wants on way or the other. or He would help you out, or he'd steer you off.

BB: And when you look at the arrows and the lines and the boxes on the organizational chart, it looks pretty good.

JG: Oh, it really looks good when you come to dealing with it I think you've got more opportunity now than you had before. You have two or three more people to get to where you want.

BB: I remember Governor Anderson. I remember several things about him because he was Governor when I first arrived in the legislature. I remember certainly that he pushed strongly for this governmental reorganization concept. I think if it hadn't been for his whole leadership in that regard that probably wouldn't have happened.

JG: No, that was pretty...

BB: So we talked a little bit about Governor Aronson and I think your description of him was kind of a big, good-natured sort of a guy who probably didn't have a real radical political philosophy one way or another. Governor Nutter was pretty much a hardcore conservative ideologue with a strong personality. Governor Babcock was maybe a little more like Governor Aronson. How would you characterize Governor Anderson?

JG: He was very, very opinionated and wanted things his way. He'd do his politics and back in those years, I don't know, did you ever get caught up in one of these special sessions?

BB: Yeah.

JG: Yes, when I first started the legislature, I think we got ten bucks a day for 60 days and that was it. I remember we really had a battle over the budget. Forrest—was that when we, what the heck was it, put on the surtax?

BB: Yes. That was '71 and the Republicans in the House wanted a sales tax. The Democrats in the Senate wanted an income tax.

JG: Yes, about a 35 percent increase.

BB: A big increase in the income tax and the Republicans were posing a two percent sales tax and that raised about as much money as the 35 percent increase in the income tax. Of course, Anderson would have vetoed the sales tax if it would have reached him anyway. So the Republicans were really in almost a hopeless kind of a situation. Anyway, we pushed for it. I was a Republican legislator at the time. Ultimately what happened was the legislature was supposed to have met for 60 days and we met for something like 107 or 108 days. It just went on and on and it didn't appear as though the impasse could be broken, so finally what happened was we put the matter on the ballot before the people. The people voted for the 35 percent income tax increase [surcharge] in lieu of a two percent sales tax.

JG: Yes, those were tough old sessions.

BB: Do you remember much about that sales tax?

JG: Oh, yeah. Who was it, [Jim] Felt, who had the big push on it?

BB: In '67, yes. In '71 when I was there, [Jim] Lucas was the Speaker. He was a supporter of it. The fellow that carried the bill was a young representative from Helena here by the name of George Bennett.

JG: I remember that first one when Felt was the big push on it. God, it was a bill probably 50, 60, 80 pages that nobody could understand what was all in it. I remember Larry Fasbender was just a freshman legislator and Pat Gilfeather was the one that really fought it too. It was between him and Larry. They started asking Felt, "What does it do to the cast on your leg? Is that taxed? Is this taxed?" John Hall was around too.

BB: Somebody I think mentioned to me—I missed out on this, this might have been in '67—but they figured out that the sales tax as it had been drawn would tax Girl Scout cookies, they made a big thing out of that.

JG: Yes, it was just different things in that. They just didn't really have anything tied down exactly.

BB: Jack, what would the philosophical argument against the sales tax be?

JG: Oh, it's just a darn nuisance. Personally, I'd be better off with a sales tax, you know, like with your groceries and stuff—

BB: They'd be exempted in most sales taxes, those groceries would be.

JG: Yes, the farm, you had to pay a sales tax on a hundred-thousand dollar tractor or cars, and things like that. If you wanted to buy something, I'd like to buy it, it's mine, and that's it, without a tax on it.

BB: Montana is just one out of three or four states that doesn't have a sales tax. Most sales taxes in most states have been implemented by Democratic legislatures and Democratic governors. Yet in Montana, our tradition has been for the Democrats to oppose the sales tax and the Republicans to support it. Do you have any thoughts on that?

JG: Oh, I don't know. I think it's just...

BB: It can't just be this nuisance thing can it?

JG: Yeah, it's a nuisance thing to me.

BB: Isn't there a deeper philosophical issue?

JG: I think so. People just don't like the idea. If you're going to buy a bottle of milk, it's a dollar. They don't want to have to pay a dollar and three cents for it.

BB: From the viewpoint of someone who believes in government, that there's more revenue for government if they pay the three cents—

JG: Yeah, but I'm a great one on the income tax. If I make money, I'll be damned and real happy to pay my tax on it. If I'm not making money, how do you pay the tax?

BB: So that's the philosophical argument?

JG: That's mine anyway. I have no problem at all with that 35 percent income tax increase. If I'm making money, I'll pay it. If I'm not, I don't. I remember one year, I think we left here and we had a 40,000 dollar balance in the state budget, I think it was 40,000. (Unintelligible) gets up on the floor and said, "One hail storm across the triangle will wipe out our surplus."

BB: Oh, I'm sure he was right.

JG: Bill Groff—

BB: Senator Bill Groff from Ravalli County.

JG: Senator Groff and Stan Nees and Dave James and—

BB: Other senators from up in the Hi-Line; Senator Stanley Nees and Senator Dave James. What about them?

JG: They had been around here a long time and I would go to them for advice. They knew what was going on. They saved me from getting in a lot of trouble.

BB: They were good advisors to you when you were a young legislator?

JG: Yes, I'd sit down and talk to them. I'd be up there at seven every morning and Stan Nees and Dave James and some of the little boys around would sit around. They'd tell me the facts of life. There were a lot of good old boys around at that time.

BB: I remember once I befriended Dave James a little bit too when I was a young legislator. He seemed like such a proper gentlemen. That's always how he was around me. He told me a funny story. He said that sometimes the guys would go into the cloak room in the Senate and they'd have a bottle or two of whiskey in their lockers, and they'd have a cocktail in the afternoon sometimes, even when there was a floor session going on out of the sight of the public and the reporters and so on in the cloak room. It wasn't even uncommon for them to maybe even come up there in the evening and drink a little bit in the cloak room or maybe at the end of the day.

So apparently this happened, maybe at the end of the legislative session one day. There were two bottles of whiskey, one with a little whiskey still left in it and the other one was empty. So paper cups or something were lying around and the place was not real well cleaned up. This was in the cloak room and he said that he had some folks from his hometown of Joplin that were there coming to visit the legislature. He said, "Look, I've got a committee that meets first thing in the morning. If you want me to give you a quick tour of the legislative process, let's do it early."

So they met some place for breakfast and they were following him upstairs—no, no, no. I think somehow he was in the cloak room, and they came through the back door and they were going to meet him in the cloak room. Then he'd take them around the capitol building at that time. So he had just walked in the cloak room and like 30 seconds later they walked in the door and there Dave is standing by this half empty bottle of whiskey on the coffee table with one of them empty and paper cups laying around and that sort of thing. He wasn't much of a drinker. In fact, I think he was a pretty straight-laced kind of a guy.

So he said, "I was embarrassed and I had to explain to them that—they looked at me like, 'Oh, you're up here having your eye-opener.'" He didn't expect them to walk in. The janitor must not have done a good job of cleaning up the night before. Maybe he was going to come do it the first thing in the morning, I don't know. Anyway, he was a very kindly and wise old gentleman I remember. He just died here a couple of years ago.

JG: Yeah. Is Fred Barrett still alive?

BB: I don't know that. When I was a young legislator here also, Fred Barrett introduced me to his father-in-law, Leonard Plank, who had served in the Senate I think back in the late '20s and early '30s. I had a great visit with him once about the early legislature.

JG: Oh, I'm thinking that Dave James was related to Fred Barrett.

BB: Could be. I didn't know that.

JG: I'm not sure of it either.

BB: That could be.

JG: There were a lot of good old guys. Miles Romney was one of my favorites around here.

BB: What is it about Miles Romney that you find most memorable?

JG: Oh, he just was a good liberal thinker and being editor of that paper, he was well versed on a lot of these issues. He was the one that first came up with the coal tax. I remember, I don't know if I was a freshman or a sophomore, but I think they were taxing at three cents ton?

BB: Yes.

JG: He had a bill to raise it to five. He couldn't get anybody to sign it. I said, "Hell, I'll sign it with you."

He said then, "You know, there's a sleeping giant in Montana that is going to be worth millions and billions." Boy, how right he was.

BB: How right he was, no question about that. Why do you say he was a "liberal thinker?" Can you think of issues that he was associated with that would leave that impression about him with you?

JG: He was always active in the Farm Labor movement too. I think that's where I knew a lot about him before. Harry Billings, the old *People's Voice*, they were pretty much the same, thought all the way through. That Farm Labor organization, between Miles' paper, too, that made a big difference in Montana. *The People's Voice* under a Republican view; they hate it. Boy they'd be right now at—Harry Billings was thinking about particular bills and boy, he'd lay it on somebody too.

BB: Now the Anaconda Company owned the newspapers in the state, the major dailies with the exception of *The Great Falls Tribune*. So here you have Miles Romney, who is an independent weekly newspaper owner, and you've mentioned Harry Billings. So we talked a little bit about the Anaconda Company before. We characterized both of these people as liberals; Harry

Billings and Miles Romney would be liberals. Their reason for being, perhaps, was to create some kind of an independent voice from the Anaconda Company. Is that accurate, you think?

JG: Yes, to get a voice for both labor and farmers on the issues that were important at that time. I think that's where the ACM used to—well, the Butte Miner's Union, that was a bloody warfare between the ACM and the workers down there all the time. The ACM used to be able to control that Butte delegation. How they could do it, I don't know.

BB: Because they were solidly Democrats, solidly pro-labor union delegation, but it's come up in several of my interviews that they generally were pretty heavily influenced by the Anaconda Company.

JG: Oh yes, I think Anaconda picked them out and said, "You vote with us and we'll get you elected."

BB: How do you think they had that influence in Butte? How did the Anaconda Company have more influence than the AFL-CIO in Butte? Maybe that's not accurate.

JG: I think it's just a matter of money. Like now, they actually go buy votes, I think, if they had to to get their boys elected. You know enough about some of that early vote fraud in Montana.

BB: Yes, I've read some things. I think we were around some of that, or we could have been. You know, there's the old saying that W.A. Clark was supposed to have said, I don't know if he did: "I never bought a man who wasn't for sale." So I suppose if you were dishonest and you were kind of behaving that way around the halls of the capitol building, maybe somebody would offer you a bribe. But if you had never given any indication that you'd accept one, or that you were interested in that sort of thing, you probably would never even know what happened. That would be my guess anyway.

JG: Yeah, like you know, down at the old Placer in their heydays. They said you could leave your transom open, throw the money over the transom, money to get their way with it.

BB: I don't think anything really that flagrant occurred when we were here, but I don't know.

JG: No, I think—

BB: Did your dad speak of anything like that in the '40s? Did he ever suspect anything like that?

JG: Oh, I think it was going on then. I can't remember it directly about a guy being paid off. Some good people would come up here and be elected, a real good liberal member, and boy, they'd just lose them one way or another, between booze and money and women.

BB: Any Republicans that stand out in your memory?

JG: Oh, yes. I always used to get along real good with Bill Mathers. He was Chairman of the Senate Education Committee or the Chairman of the House. Heck, he'd have trouble with Republicans over there and I'd have trouble with Democrats and vice-versa. I would tell him, "Oh hell, if you're having trouble there, send it over. We'll take care of it on the same token." I thought he was one of the better Republicans I ever knew in my life.

BB: He was a very reasonable man. I had a great experience with him too. In fact, he followed Gordon McOmber as President of the Senate. They had a similar leadership style.

JG: Yes, I think so, kind of low-key and tried to work it out rather than fight it out.

BB: Yes, that's right. What do you remember about Jim Lucas?

JG: Jim, I thought, was always pretty fair. Being a Democrat and him a Republican, but he was an eloquent speaker. We had John Hall at that time and those two guys used to—that was fun to sit down and listen to them...

BB: Do you remember the great—what was it about? There was a debate that had something to do with the coal development. It was a night session and it was basically between the two main gladiators. There were other people involved in it. The two main gladiators were Lucas and Hall. Do you remember that?

JG: I can't remember what the issue was, but I remember those two debating. John Hall used to just sit there and he'd be working a crossword puzzle or something. Republicans would think they'd catch him off guard, and he knew every word that was said. He'd give an hour speech on it when they thought he was half asleep. He was one of the most brilliant men I think I ever saw.

BB: John Hall was a minority leader in the House of Representatives, a Democrat from Cascade County, I think my first session there perhaps in '71.

JG: That's probably about right.

BB: I remember he smoked a pipe and—you remember this too—when he'd get inspired, sometimes he'd blow and sparks would come out of the pipe. I remember he was very brilliant.

JG: I've met some really good, sharp people over the years. It's hard to think back to name them offhand.

BB: Well let me name a couple more: Tom Towe?

JG: Oh, yes. He was, I thought, one of the better-informed legislators of all the issues that would come up all the time. I had somebody else that I was thinking about just before you mentioned Tom Towe. Well, Francis Bardanouve was always a really outstanding legislator. He did his homework and knew the issues. He could get up and really explain himself even with his speech impediment. He was one of the more effective legislators all the years that I was there. Mike Meloy too, he was one of the outstanding legislators.

BB: He was a young, smart lawyer from Helena who was Majority Leader his second session, I think. He wasn't there very long.

JG: Well, as an attorney, I suppose he figured he could make more money.

BB: Well, Gene Donaldson beat him. I think he was only there two sessions.

JG: Yes, that's about all.

BB: Yes, he started out as a freshman. The second session there he was a Majority Floor Leader. The third session he was gone. I remember him too as a brilliant young fellow.

JG: That's kind of interesting. I know as Chairman of the House Education Committee and we wanted a 15 percent increase in the foundation program. He's in the leadership. "No, we only have money for seven percent." I know him and I got in a big debate in a late night session. I finally did prevail. They had problems with Tom Judge over that too. Finally we were able to get some decent increases in the foundation program, at least schools could stay even with that.

BB: Now Jack, you were in the legislature with Tom Judge. Then you also were in the legislature when Tom Judge was Governor. So you should have some pretty interesting impressions of him.

JG: Oh, yeah, I remember when he was in the legislature he had this cat house bill they called. It was simply that if people would go on vacation, they had to provide a house or something for their pets and not just turn them outside and let them freeze to death. So that got labeled the cat house bill. Tom went along with it but it seemed like he was one of the first sponsors of the Medicaid bill, Medicare and Medicaid. He did a good job. I thought he was an effective legislator. Did Tom serve in the Senate too?

BB: Yes, he moved over to the Senate. Then he was Lieutenant Governor under Governor Anderson. Then he became Governor in 1972. He beat Ed Smith, I think. No, is that right? Yes, he beat Ed Smith in 1972.

JG: I thought Tom was one of the better Governors we ever had. He was somebody who could lead, but he'd also listen to you too. I know I had a few run-ins with him. "Oh come on down and we'll talk it over to see if we can't work out something." I always did feel like you were able

to talk to him. I always got treated fairly. He never tried to bulldoze you or anything. I thought he was real easy to work with. Boy, we passed a lot of good legislation back then.

BB: In the middle 1970s, yes.

JG: I think probably more legislation passed in the '70s. You got in on a lot of it.

BB: In fact that's been called "the second progressive era" in Montana state politics. I think basically that wasn't a very long era. It was probably '73, '74 and '75, maybe '77.

JG: It seemed like we had a special session damn near every summer or something. I can't remember what the issues were.

BB: I want to ask you more about Tom Towe, but we didn't talk much about Governor Anderson as Governor. You were a legislator all the time he was Governor and knew him when he was Attorney General. Did you have a working relationship with him? Do you remember much about him? You've mentioned that he had a strong personality.

JG: I don't know. It seemed like I might have agreed with most of the things he was promoting. The different stuff I was involved with, it seemed like he would go along with it. I never had any problems with him whatsoever. I thought he was a strong Governor, too. He got the executive reorganization through, which we talked about that earlier. Then I remember the fights over the budget at that time too.

BB: Did you ever meet with him in his office? Ever have a one-on-one conversation with him that you can recall in his office or anyplace else?

JG: Well, I used to—even after he was Governor, I used to—he'd go out of his way and he'd come over and talk to you. I always got along good with him, although I never had that many direct dealing with him. In fact, I ran into him in Hawaii a couple of different times.

BB: Really?

JG: Yes, and then he had a place down in Lake Havasu too. I run into him one in a while there. We'd always sit down and visit.

BB: Because you went south in the winter?

JG: Well I used to go down for a month or so. I had a motor home. I never was interested in going down there and buying a house.

BB: But you connected with him when you were down in Arizona in that month in the winter. You would just happen to run into him in Hawaii?

JG: Yes.

BB: I'll be darned.

JG: In Arizona there too, I just happened to run into him. He had a townhouse down there in a complex. We sat down and he wanted to know what was going on. He wanted to be filled in a little bit of the politics. He always got interested in that.

BB: Now Tom Towe—we talked about what Miles Romney's vision of the need to impose a higher tax on coal and we talked a little bit about Representative Tom Towe. You mentioned that you worked with him on single member legislative districts. From my recollection, Towe was really significant in terms of establishing the coal tax in Montana.

JG: Oh, he was.

BB: What do you remember about that whole coal tax debate?

JG: You know, I can't remember that we had that much controversy over it. What did it come in at, 30 percent?

BB: I don't think it existed until he imposed it at 30 percent. I think it was Towe's bill.

JG: Right, and I don't know if Towe had the environmental bills to make them redo the (unintelligible) reclamation. He was really a big push on that. He was darn well versed about it. He was one of the guys that—one of Tom's problems was that he could talk everything to death. It's not a nice thing to say about him, because he knew what he was talking about, but you'd have to tell him, "Come on, you've made your point, Tom. Sit down." He sat right in front of me a couple of sessions.

BB: As you mentioned, he was well informed. He did his homework, but unfortunately, he did his homework on many things. He commented on many things until most of us got damn tired of listening to it.

JG: That's about right.

BB: Now in terms of the coal tax, obviously the coal tax was opposed by, oh, Montana Power Company, would be a good example.

JG: Sure, sure.

BB: Do you remember John Lahr?

JG: Sure.

BB: What do you remember about him? John Lahr was a lobbyist for Montana Power Company.

JG: I first got to know him when he was lobbying for the railroads. His heart was really in the railroads. I think he lobbied for the NP [Northern Pacific] and BN [Burlington Northern], and I don't know. Then he finally did go to work for the Power Company. John was—I sat down and visited with him over a lot of legislation. Usually I was opposed to him. He'd sit down and say, "Well, I just want to tell you our side of it...Okay, I don't agree with you." He'd never hold a grudge.

BB: He was the Montana Power Company lobbyist for Democrats.

JG: Yes.

BB: The Montana Power Company also had a lobbyist for Republicans.

JG: Oh sure. They played both sides.

BB: Did you think of John Lahr as a Democrat?

JG: Oh, not particularly. I just knew he was a lobbyist for the Power Company whether he was a Democrat or Republican. I think I knew the Republican lobbyists.

BB: I think he even attended Democratic—wasn't he a delegate to a Democratic National Convention or two?

JG: Oh, he probably was. He was always at state conventions. They still have a Democrat like—

BB: Mike Pichette.

JG: Yeah, Mike Pichette.

BB: Now the Anaconda Company also had Democrat and Republican lobbyists. There was a fellow by the name of Denny Shea. Do you remember Denny Shea?

JG: Yes. I never had much to do with them because I think they knew my position pretty well. As a freshman, you know, from your background and my dad, brother and the people I associated with, they just didn't waste much time with me. I didn't think they'd ever get me to change my vote anyway.

BB: So Jack, were there other legislators that you consider yourself especially close to?

JG: Oh, well we had a real close delegation in Cascade County in '65 when I first got elected, like Pete Gilligan and Pat Gilfeather and John Hall, and after Pete died, his son, was it Pete Jr.?

BB: Yes, I think so.

JG: We always had a good Democratic delegation that we would get together and like I say, that's how I ended up on the education committee because with 90 people, we liked to have one on each of the—particularly the main committees. We'd meet to discuss different bills so that hopefully we thought we'd have a little more clout than anybody holding a different impression.

BB: You mentioned Arnold Olsen?

JG: Yes, my dad knew him better than I did. I know my dad, when he first ran for attorney general, as a—

BB: Your dad was a legislator when Arnold Olsen first ran for Attorney General?

JG: Yes. I had to go out and put up a bunch of big signs for it. I was just a kid and I didn't know Arnold at that time.

BB: Did you ever know Senator Mansfield?

JG: Oh, yes.

BB: Did you ever have a chance to visit with him personally?

JG: Yes, I used to go back to Washington D.C maybe three or four times a year even when I was involved in all the stuff I was involved with the Farmers Union, Grain Growers, Vocational Education, and everything. We would get back there and he'd call upon Senator Mansfield and Mike decided that it didn't matter how busy he was, he'd always take time to come and say hello to you and see how you've been. He knew everybody in Montana by first name. He would say, "How's your dad doing?" He'd name him. Like another guy always impressed me like that was Hubert Humphrey. I met him through Farmers Union or GGA [Montana Grain Growers Association] and met him once. I was going up to the Senate office building one day and he stepped in: "Hey, Jack, how's everything in Montana?" I hadn't seen the man for four years.

BB: That is amazing isn't it?

JG: All those guys could do it.

BB: I don't know how they could do it either, but there's got to be a technique of some kind. So you have a good recollection of Mansfield?

JG: Oh, yes.

BB: Do you remember working with him on any particular issues?

JG: No, not really. Any time you had something particular, as far as what was going on in the Senate, he was more than happy to hear from you. Most of the time it seemed like the issues I was interested in, he was too.

BB: I met him several times and he had an expression at least that he used with me. When I met with him at his office after he had finished being U.S Senator, and after he had finished being ambassador to Japan, he was working for a company back in—his office was in Washington D.C., I'm not sure where their headquarters are. It was called Goldman and Sachs. So I visited with him in his office there three or four times I think. He had a favorite expression that when the conversation was over, he'd get up—and he was in his 90s—

JG: "Tap 'er light."

BB: Yes, he liked that too. That was his trademark expression. Instead of saying goodbye to you, he'd say, "Tap 'er light."

JG: I know more than once we'd be back there and he'd always be in session and you'd go into the cloak room and ask Senator Mansfield, if he was available, and he'd take us out. You might wait 10 or 15 minutes but he'd always come out and say hello, see what you're doing in town.

BB: How about Senator Metcalf?

JG: I knew him pretty well too, but I never really had that much direct contact with him. I think I had more contact with Mansfield than I did Metcalf. Metcalf was always around more of the environmental issues and which at that time, I supported it and stuff but never—

BB: Never was involved with it as he was involved with it.

JG: Yes, not directly.

BB: Did you ever know General LeRoy Anderson?

JG: Oh sure, sure. He was a neighbor up there when he was in the Senate too. Yes, I worked on his campaign. He ran for Congress. I was always mad at him that he ran against Metcalf—

BB: No, Metcalf and Murray—all three of them ran. Why were you mad at him?

JG: I thought he was doing a damn good job in the House and we had good candidates.

BB: I see, yes.

JG: Like John Melcher too. I was a good friend of him.

BB: Started in the legislature with him?

JG: Oh yes, and helped him with his campaign for Congress and Senate. I wanted him—I really worked to get him re-elected. I wanted to get on the National Crop Insurance Board. I think I would have had it if he hadn't got beat. I told him he was in trouble in Montana, you know, like particularly up in—

BB: Why do you think he was in trouble?

JG: They came out and he was supporting the Philippines, and he wasn't paying that much attention to people in Montana. He wasn't around. [Conrad] Burns came out and really worked with the sawmills going down and everything else. I think that if Melcher had come out instead of running around the Philippines and stuff—

BB: What did he do? He took a trip to the Philippines while he was a U.S. Senator?

JG: Yes. I think he was gone until about two or three weeks before the election. He'd come home and didn't think he had any trouble. Burns was really beating the boondocks and man, he really just caught him off guard.

BB: That was a big upset. I remember that too. I was amazed that it happened. I didn't see any polls or anything. I was probably as surprised as Melcher was. I didn't expect Melcher was going to lose.

JG: I didn't either.

BB: Now we've got just a few minutes left on the tape, Jack. I want to go back and explore briefly again this business of the Anaconda Company and the Montana Power Company and that sort of thing. If there's anything in our conversation that we've left out about that, or maybe you want to add?

JG: Not back from my legislative years. I was almost diabolically opposed to everything that they had and they blew it. So I didn't get lobbied all that much on it. Thinking about now, and it's '97 and that electric deregulation, that was the biggest fiasco. I did everything I could to try and defeat that.

BB: In 1997 the legislature passed legislation that has been characterized as de-controlling electrical power. I think to some extent, it did that. I'm not sure exactly completely what it did. Your feeling is that it was a big mistake?

JG: Well, we had the cheapest electricity in the United States. Deregulators were trying to get it cheaper and it didn't make sense to me in any way, shape, or form. It was just too bad because they just sold the state out. I don't know, you had some other environmental- Enron deal like, who the president who walked out with millions? All these people that had stock in it, including me; I lost about 3,700 bucks on it.

BB: I think most people agree that was a mistake.

JG: Oh, yeah. Like I say, I don't know—like Ash Grove out here, they thought they could buy a big block of power and maybe buy it directly from Bonneville or something like that. Boy, as soon as that passed, they even had diesel locomotives out there trying to generate their own electricity because it was so damn sky high. Even Butte closed down for three years because of that. I think it was 350 jobs that they lost right there.

BB: Oh yes, that was a real torpedo at the water line at Montana's economy. There's no question about that.

JG: The railroads like UP [Union Pacific] and the ACM smelter going out, that had a lot to do too with the politics in Montana. There were a lot of good working labor guys there. All the monster jobs are gone. I think that's changed the political climate. Now it's mainly service jobs and the future doesn't look that bright to me right now.

BB: Yes. Jack, you have been a loyal Democrat all your life and I think you regard yourself as a liberal Democrat?

JG: Very liberal.

BB: What advice would you give to your party as you look into the future that you feel would help them succeed in terms of Democrat and liberal principles?

JG: You have your principles and you've got to stand up for them. You can't compromise them all the time.

BB: So what principles should Democrats stand up for that they shouldn't compromise?

JG: Labor, well even taxation now, like these two bills of evidence that they just killed the other day to try and give the homeowners some tax relief. Why they got killed yesterday, I don't understand. If you believe in fair taxation, fair wages—

BB: And what does fair taxation mean to you?

JG: Everybody pay a fair share, and I'd almost go for a—what do you call it—no exemptions. That's where the tax system gets screwed up so fast if you pass a tax bill and you exempt me from it. Everything gets exempted pretty quickly under one left in; Bob Brown, Jack Gunderson.

BB: That doesn't sound like a good idea at all! Anything else, environmental issues or social issues that you'd advise Democrats to do?

JG: I think we have to keep—environmental issues are an ongoing thing all the time with global warming. You've got to think these things through and not just today; tomorrow, where we're going to be at 50 years from now. This taxation thing; we've got to get this national thing straightened out. My great-grandkids aren't going to be able to pay off this deficit. Health insurance, like, I'm at that age now where I'm having lots of needs. If I didn't have insurance, boy, I'd go for a national health insurance program right now.

BB: Of course that's something Democrats have generally been supportive of that Republicans have generally been opposed to. The national debt thing is kind of the opposite of that. Generally, the Republican Party has been the party that's been opposed to deficit spending and the national debt. The Democrats have thought, "Well, in order to accomplish good purposes, maybe you have to spend a little money sometimes." Now the opposite seems to be the case.

JG: Yes, like Conrad Burns, boy we're going to have a lock box on Social Security. We're going to lock that money up. In the last few years that doesn't mean anything. With reforming Social Security, I just cannot understand Bush. Especially like the last week, the stock market's dropped 800-900 points?

BB: Yes, his idea is that Social Security may be in trouble because at this point in time in the year 2005, we have fewer people paying into Social Security all the time because of the way the birth rate is. We have more people living longer taking money out of Social Security that has been the case up until now. So his idea is that instead of paying for Social Security in the conventional way, we allow people somehow or other to invest in private accounts and the idea would be that the stock market and the natural expansion of the economy will grow faster than the way the Social Security money is managed now.

So since we don't want to cut benefits, and since we can't keep people from living so long, and since we can't force people to have more babies, his idea is that we make the money work harder. That's a good argument as long as the stock markets expand. When you're going through a time like we are right now where the stock market is dropping like a rock, then people think, "That's a good way to lose money."

JG: Like right now, take out a 401K is the same thing he wants to set up. You know how you end up with—

BB: (unintelligible).

JG: As far as with not having workers go in there or having many workers to support it, look what's happened to salary. You and I pay 100 percent that anybody over 90,000 dollar—I'd take the cap clear off and it funds that god damn thing forever. Salaries are going up, so why shouldn't they pay more?

BB: So the cap seems to be arbitrarily there? It could be at any number that you wanted.

JG: I don't know why they ever put that on. I think that was the deal to gain votes.

BB: That could be easily adjusted I think. Just a few seconds left. Anything to say in closing?

JG: That's about all I can think of. I wish I was more help to you. My legislative experience was something you'd never forget and you meet some wonderful people. It's equivalent to a college education, which I didn't have.

BB: You were a good legislator and I remember that well. It was my great pleasure to serve with you. You have contributed to Montana history. I appreciate you making yourself available for this part of our Montana state archives, Jack.

JG: One thing I should always say about you in the legislature, you were the person you could always talk to even on the Republican side, not that we always wanted the same, but we could talk it over.

BB: That's true and I value your friendship. Thank you, Jack.

JG: You bet.

[End of Interview]