

Maureen and Mike

# Mansfield Library

UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA

## **Archives and Special Collections**

Mansfield Library, University of Montana

Missoula MT 59812-9936

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

Telephone: (406) 243-2053

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

**Oral History Number: 396-025**  
**Interviewee: James P. Lucas**  
**Interviewer: Bob Brown**  
**Date of Interview: June 6, 2005**  
**Project: Bob Brown Oral History Collection**

Bob Brown: We're interviewing Jim Lucas at his home in Miles City. Jim served six terms in the House of Representatives from the 1962 election to the 1974 election, was minority floor leader and Speaker twice. Jim, what motivated you to get involved in politics? What caused you to become interested in politics?

James Lucas: Well, I think it started back in my university days. At that time I became interested in politics, first of all, facetiously. My father was a lifelong Democrat, and I always told him about the family of boys, and as soon as they learned to read and write they became Republicans. I thought I was going to persuade him and eventually he did. But in seriousness, I was interested in what was happening in Montana, what was happening nationally, and felt that if you had some convictions and wanted to do something about it, the arena of politics was the place to be.

BB: You felt you could make a difference being involved in politics more than most other things you could do.

JL: That's correct.

BB: What was there about the Republican Party, the Republican philosophy, that was appealing to you?

JL: Well, it seemed to me that it was more basic. It believed in the integrity and worth of the individual. It did not subscribe to the idea that government was the solution to all problems. I felt that it just gave a person the ability to grow more and to fit into the scheme of our country, which really was to develop freedom, develop individuality, and to move that along in the best interests of society. To me, the Republican Party at that time seemed to be more aligned to those possibilities.

BB: Was there any Republican leader that maybe was an inspiration to you, any Republican figure you can remember that might have—

JL: I think Dwight Eisenhower was very much in my mind. I attended the National Convention as an alternate delegate. I think it was in 1954 or '56—I forget which it was—and Nixon was being moved into the limelight as the candidate for Vice President. But certainly I felt that President Eisenhower governed with an even hand and he might not have been the most brilliant tactician in politics, but he understood people, he understood where he wanted the country to go. And then, of course, as the years wore on, we saw other people that I felt were great presidents. One of them in the same line and same mode as President Eisenhower, of course, was President Reagan. I think even President Nixon came in there, a brilliant mind, great ideas

on the foreign situation, and then got caught into the Watergate debacle and that was the end of that.

BB: Did you ever meet Governor [Hugo] Aronson?

JL: Good friend of mine. In fact, I headed his campaign down in this part of the state and traveled with him around this area.

BB: If someone had never met him before, how would you describe him?

JL: Well, you'd have to listen to him a while, first of all, to understand him with his brogue. And then once you understood him you began to see that there was quite a bit of depth to the man which didn't appear right at the outset. Again, he was sort of in that same vein. He knew how to govern; he felt he knew what was best for the people, the state of Montana; and was well-accepted, widely accepted.

BB: Do you remember a conversation or an experience or anything with him that you might have had?

JL: You know, we had so many. I remember about the time that he ran for governor, Miles City was developing its golf course. It was developing it mostly with volunteer labor. So he said, "I've been a cat skinner all my life. I want to get up on one of those Cats." This was during the campaign, of course, and that wasn't too bad a political move. But he got up on the Cat [Caterpillar] and somehow he got one corner of the blade hung up and it spun him around, and so we gave him a bad time and said, "Well, you know, we can see now why you're running for governor and not continuing in the dirt moving business." So Hugo took it, of course—the Galloping Swede—took it in great stride. He loved that.

BB: I understand too, I was told that when he was running for governor either in '52 or '56, he was in Butte and he went down into the mines and did some things with some of the miners and that sort of thing. He liked those kinds of construction kind of opportunities, those opportunities to associate with blue collar people doing blue collar jobs.

JL: He was right at home.

BB: It was right at home with him. He was comfortable with that sort of thing.

JL: I forget how he made out in Silver Bow County because it's always been the dream of Republicans that they're going to win Silver Bow County. I remember Tim Babcock, when he was running, and Mike Kuchera had been, I think, defeated in the primary, and he hooked up and backed Babcock for the Republican governor. He took him along one night to a big meeting in Butte and his wife sang "My Wild Irish Rose" in Hungarian, I think. Gosh, she brought the house down. That was a great evening for Tim, and he felt so confident that he was going to win Silver Bow County. Well, it never happened. He went the same way of most Republicans have.

BB: That's right. You get more waves and more smiles and fewer votes than any other town in Montana.

JL: That puts it just right.

BB: That's for sure. Well, so, if I remember correctly, you went to college at the University of Montana. Were you involved in campus politics?

JL: Yes, I was. I was business manager while I was there, elected business manager [for Central Board], and then also took part with the Young Republicans on campus.

BB: And then you were county attorney, I think.

JL: County attorney here in Miles City for five terms; 10 years.

BB: And then you ran for the legislature.

JL: Yes.

BB: And of course, county attorney was a paying job and a responsibility that kept you here. The legislature was almost a labor of love, I think, for most people who did it. It paid almost nothing and in fact probably intruded into your law practice and that sort of thing. What possessed you to run for the legislature?

JL: Well again, having been sort of tied to politics since college days, I had a keen interest and was moving along in Republican circles, and just felt that I wanted to be in the legislature. I felt there were some things to be done for Montana and that I could be a part of that. And then I had many friends that were involved in the legislature at that time. Governor Babcock, soon to be governor, was a good friend. And then with some prompting and help and those people, I decided to step into deeper water.

BB: Did you know Governor Babcock when he was a legislator here in Miles City?

JL: Yes, I did. Tim came here in, I think, 1950 or '51, here to Miles City, and I returned home to open my law practice at the same time. We became inseparable friends. We were very, very close through all the years. I can remember I represented him. He was trying to get some authority, interstate commerce authority, for his trucking firm. And we had a big hearing in Fargo, I think it was—either Fargo or Bismarck—before the ICC [Interstate Commerce Commission]. A Montana representative from the Railroad Commissioners always sat in at those hearings and was one of the people. Austin Middleton was the one that sat in on that. Well anyway—

BB: He used to be sheriff here, didn't he?

JL: He was sheriff here in Custer County at one time. Part of our exhibits was introducing a balance sheet. We hadn't really looked at the balance sheet we'd had the accountants prepare because it was a last minute kind of flurry of things. When I handed him the balance sheet, it showed that his bank account was overdrawn by 54 dollars and here we were in with the giants

of the industry—Burlington Northern was there; Northern Tank Line—and so Austin Middleton said, “My mind is made up. Anybody that’s overdrawn 54 dollars needs all the help he can get.” (laughs). So we had a great time.

BB: Then, I think, wasn’t Middleton also the prison warden at one time? No, no, he was the sheriff and then he was—well maybe he was prison warden before he was Public Service Commissioner.

JL: I think he was, if I recall correctly. And then Public Service Commissioner for many years.

BB: His son, it runs in my mind, was the college roommate of Jimmy Carter at the Naval Academy in Annapolis. I think I remember that little bit of trivia.

JL: You might be right, and I wasn’t aware of that.

BB: I think I do remember that too. So you ran for the legislature in 1962. Was there an incumbent that you had to run against, or was there an open seat, or how did that work?

JL: I was opposed. I’m not sure that there was an incumbent. That’s a few years back and my recollection isn’t as sharp as it might be. I was opposed and won. I think I was opposed both in the primary and general, but I’m not sure about that. At any rate, it was a contested election and I was fortunate enough to be elected.

BB: Had you ever been to the legislature when it was in session before?

JL: Oh, yes.

BB: So you were somewhat familiar with it?

JL: A little bit. I went up, for example, with our Chamber of Commerce Highway Committee to promote some things, and I was always up there on behalf of the junior college, Miles Community College, here in Miles City. So I was in and out of the legislature occasionally and appeared before committees; that type of thing.

BB: And your first session was the 1963 session.

JL: That’s correct.

BB: So Frank Hazelbaker was the Speaker of the House and was Jerry Anderson the majority leader? [Alex Blewett of Great Falls was majority leader.]

JL: You know, I don’t recall. I’m not sure if Jerry was in the legislature that year. I don’t think he was, but I’m not sure.

BB: He was majority leader, I think, when Clyde Hawks was Speaker in ’61.

JL: That’s correct, yes.

BB: Do you remember, were there any legislators or any people that stood out in your memory that first session?

JL: Well, there are quite a few legislators that stick out in my mind in that era, whether they were in the first session. For example, Jim Murphy of Kalispell—your part of the country—and Con Lundgren and Matt Himsl; three great Flathead County representatives at that time. And then Tom Harrison from Helena, who was the son of the Supreme Court Judge Jim Harrison. Tom, a very effective legislator. And then when you go across the aisle to the Democrats, of course, you always remember Francis Bardanouve, who was an effective legislator. There were a number of them that sort of run together in my mind at this time, but there were some great legislators.

BB: Now, later to be governor, Tom Judge, was a legislator then. Was he in the House with you?

JL: He was in the House, yes.

BB: Did you ever imagine that he might become governor?

JL: No, in fact I had no idea that he might move on into the governorship area, but for some reason he was able to do that.

BB: Now Tim Babcock had served in the legislature but before you, so you didn't know him as a legislator. You didn't serve with him as a legislator.

JL: No, I didn't serve with him. He served from Custer County, and then he served from Yellowstone County, and I did not serve during those times that he was there.

BB: Did you know Governor Nutter?

JL: Yes, Don Nutter from Sidney, our part of the country.

BB: Even though you didn't actually serve with him.

JL: No, I didn't serve with him, but...

BB: Did you ever visit with him or got to know him a little bit?

JL: Oh, many a time.

BB: How would you describe him?

JL: Forceful, effective, strong-minded, and usually pretty well thought out. Don came back after I think serving in the military, and by that time he was, if I remember correctly, a little older person, and enrolled in law school. I think he went into law school maybe when he was about 40 or 42. He just hung right in there. He was a determined person. He got his law degree and opened his practice in Sidney and then got into politics and became governor.

BB: Now you served with, well, actually let's see—Tom Towe, I guess, came there later, didn't he?

JL: Yes, I'd say maybe I'd been there a couple of sessions at least before he appeared on the scene.

BB: He was very much a legislative activist. He introduced a lot of bills and that sort of thing, especially pertaining to taxation legislation and so on. Did you ever have dealings with him? Do you remember?

JL: Yes, I liked Tom. He had a keen mind. His wife helped him, incidentally, in a lot of research. Tom was capable but he was also a loose cannon. You never knew quite where he was coming from and sometimes got off into some outrageous comments and outlandish circumstances. But he made an impact.

BB: Now you, I think, maybe in your second session there, you were the minority leader. Is that right?

JL: Yes, I became minority leader and then the next session majority leader.

BB: The Speaker when you were minority leader was Ray Wayrynen from Butte?

JL: That's right.

BB: Did you have a working relationship with him? Did he collaborate with the minority or...?

JL: (laughs). Well, yes, I think so. My recollection of Ray was he was a congenial person, sort of a tough person, sometimes maybe liked to party quite a bit. He also started running late sessions because the legislature was running behind, and I told him, I said: "Ray, that's a mistake because if you let the guys out of here for an hour for dinner, they're going to go and have a drink or something. They're tired and they'll probably do that."

"Oh no," he said, "that's fine."

Well, we just had a couple of nightmarish sessions, one of which, the former mayor of Great Falls was a legislator. [John] Obstarczyk, I think, might have been his name. He got up and went into some wild tirade and Ray answered him from the podium as Speaker. There was shouting back and forth and finally in all this bedlam, Ray slammed the gavel down and said, "We're adjourned."

He came to me later and said, "You're right. We're not going to do that again." (laughs).

BB: He was trying to get more hours in after dinner, trying to get a few more bills off the board.

JL: Absolutely. That was in the days, Bob, when we always ran over. We never adjourned within the 60 days. We went through the subterfuge of stopping the clock at midnight the 60th day, and so it always read midnight the sixtieth day, even if you were there into the 70 days and 75 days, as we sometimes were.

BB: Yes, the journal always showed a tremendously long day on that last day.

JL: That's right (laughs).

BB: Now, you were there, I guess, in kind of the waning days of the power of the Anaconda Company. Any thoughts or impressions on the Anaconda Company and its influence on the legislature when you were there?

JL: Definitely the heyday of the Anaconda Company had gone by, although they were still somewhat of a force to be reckoned with. They had some pretty astute lobbyists that represented them—Lloyd Crippen, John Lahr, Bob Corette—those fellows were all very excellent lobbyists and they were excellent in a couple ways. One is, you always knew that they were out there for Anaconda Company, of course, but they knew that if they misrepresented things to a legislator that their stroke or connection or communication with that legislator was gone. So sometimes you had difficult things or even some legal research that might be involved and in those days legislative council wasn't big enough to give you much help and so you might get some help from those people. They might give you a position paper.

BB: I see, do some background research.

JL: I think that happened, you know, with many of the lobbyists and we found at times that they were valuable as long as you remembered they were lobbyists and they're trying to promote their position. But we found that they were truthful. They might omit something, but they weren't going to misrepresent something.

BB: Now Jim, the Montana Power Company probably worked closely with the Anaconda Company, and I say that because it's my recollection that Corette was a Montana Power Company lobbyist.

JL: Oh, you're right, he was Montana Power Company.

BB: But I think in your mind you kind of associated the two.

JL: In those years I think the three biggest lobbyists—or maybe four, I should say, lobby groups—were Anaconda Company, Montana Power Company, the oil and gas lobby and, to some extent, Green Stamp for a while was a pretty effective kind of lobbyist.

BB: And the railroads, I think.

JL: And the railroads, that's right. And the labor unions too, MEA. But they were on a tier below the rest of them, I think.

BB: Do you remember a fellow by the name of Al Wilkinson?

JL: Yes, I do, with the Anaconda group. And there was, let's see, I think there was a Kirkpatrick also.

BB: Bill Kirkpatrick was with the Anaconda Company.

JL: Again, those were highly qualified individuals.



BB: Boo McGillivray.

JL: Boo had to be rated as the number one character of the lobbying and legislative groups. Boo was a great guy and an incredible sense of humor and an incredible knowledge of Montana history. He just was—if you wanted to know something fairly factual about your state and the background on it and some of the history, you just spend a few minutes with Boo and he usually gave that to you.

BB: Apparently he was a wonderful storyteller.

JL: Oh yes. I don't recall any specific stories, but I recall sitting and listening to him on a number of occasions with his stories. I'll tell you, if anyone knew he was telling a story, pretty soon the crowd grew.

BB: Ty Robinson?

JL: Very effective lobbyist. He had a brother, Calvin, and the two men were very effective.

BB: You mentioned the AFL-CIO [American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations]. Do you remember a fellow named Jim Umber?

JL: Jim Umber, and there was a fellow named Crosswhite.

BB: Joe Crosswhite.

JL: Joe Crosswhite. I think they were the two major forces early on.

BB: Jim Murry and Ernie Post also.

JL: Yes, Jim Murry.

BB: And then for the Farmers Union.

JL: Well, the Farmers Union, my recollection there is Clyde—

BB: Clyde Jarvis.

JL: Clyde Jarvis. Farmers Union was pretty antagonistic to the Republican Party at that time and they had a program at eight o'clock, I think it was, in the morning—

BB: "Featuring the Facts."

JL: Yes, that's right. Usually Clyde spent at least a significant portion of his time lambasting me. So I could count, when I was Speaker, on my phone ringing about 8:15. It was my wife saying, "Did you hear what he had to say this morning? What are you going to do about that?" (laughs). But Farmers Union was pretty prominent. I have to tell you something interesting about when you mentioned the labor people. If you can visualize the House with the Charles Russell painting at the end where the Speaker is standing and then the body of the legislature out in front of the Speaker? Well, up in the gallery is where the lobbyists sat. In the upper left-

hand corner usually sat the labor representatives and they were right where the delegation from Silver Bow County, which was all Democrats, down below could watch. When something would come up, you could usually count on one of those fellows giving a signal as to whether they ought to vote down or vote up. The Butte guys would look up there and then the signal would happen and, not every one of them—some of them were independent thinkers—but it happened often enough that it wasn't coincidence.

So finally one day on sort of a hotly contested vote, just before I called for the vote I said, "Now, fellows"—pointing up to the labor representatives up there—I said, "Will you fellows stand up and give your signal to the Butte guys again. They haven't been able to see what you're signaling." So the rest of the gallery started to clap and laugh. We had a great time.

BB: One time when I was there, I think it was on third reading, a bill that was supposed to have passed third reading died by a couple of votes and it was a bill that was important to organized labor. Then consternation broke loose a few seconds later up in the front row where the Butte legislators sat. So you were probably Speaker because I think it might have been in '71—well, I'm not sure about that exactly. It could have been in '73. Anyway, Con Lundgren went over to see what the deal was, and he said he talked to Jerry Lombardi and he said, "Jerry, what happened?" Those guys were just fit to be tied up there because they were supposed to have voted for the bill and they weren't paying attention and [John "Jack"] Jack Healy, who was the guy that was kind of the dean of their group, and was the guy that was kind of the most conscientious, he was giving them hand signals. And somehow or other, as we were going through those third reading books, he got one bill ahead or one bill behind and Jerry told Con. Con said, "I asked Jerry what happened and Jerry said, 'That damn Healy gave us the wrong signal!'" Blamed Healy for it! (laughs) Healy was the only one that was paying attention.

JL: They were quite a crew. I tell you, I always had a great deal of good feeling towards the Butte fellows. We seemed to hit it off pretty well and of course when I married a Butte girl that didn't hurt things either. But there were times when I knew I had to have some votes and I could talk with those fellows and I could get them. And there were times when they needed some support, and politics is, whether you like it or not, it does involve some horse trading. I found them sensible. Now, when it came time to consider the community college legislation that made community colleges a separate entity in Montana law—prior to that time they were just an arm of the high school board—we were able to get great support from the Butte delegation for the community college legislation. I always sort of appreciated that connection we seemed to have.

BB: Well, you probably gave some votes to Montana Tech (laughs).

JL: Oh, no question about it.

BB: Do you remember the watering holes?

JL: You know something, I not only remember them but I have a very strong feeling about the watering holes. I felt that the press did a disservice when it started, and built the crescendo of the idea that the legislators were hanging out at the lobbying rooms and the waterholes, as

they called them, and eating their food, and they were hand in glove with them. I saw it from a different aspect. Some of that may have been true, but I saw it from a different way. And that is that after a tough day it was a time in which you could talk with others from across the aisle, people who opposed your legislation. You could discuss and communicate. You could resolve some problems. And that happened many, many times. I felt when they closed that avenue down they were doing a disservice because the overall impact, I think, was that it served an area where legislators could let their hair down and talk about things and express themselves. There was great give and take in that process.

BB: I think now, as I think about it in the modern legislature, there aren't very many places where legislators can just sit down and visit. Oh, there are probably a few taverns and so on in Helena where that might happen, where legislators could exclusively just sit down and talk over what had happened during the day, and maybe that is something that we kind of miss. I don't know.

JL: Yes, you know, if it's abused, it's no good, and there were times, perhaps, when it was abused. There were times, maybe, when legislators just made it their nightly routine with nothing in mind but eat what little food was put out and have a few drinks. But my experience was it was a means of exchanging ideas and information and even convincing people.

BB: Now you mentioned, Jim, that when you were there—at least the early part of the time that you were there—of course the Anaconda Company had a hospitality room and then you mentioned that the big forces were—we talked about the gas and oil lobby and the railroads and you also mentioned trading stamps.

JL: Yes.

BB: What was the issue?

JL: Well, I think the issue was—if people don't recall, that was in the days when you went into a place and bought something and you got eight trading stamps, depending on how much you bought.

BB: Typically grocery stores.

JL: That's right, mostly grocery stores, but other places too. And then you filled a booklet and a booklet was worth so much and you could come in and trade that in. It was a means of accumulating credit, I guess.

BB: So if you did a hundred dollars worth of business at the grocery store and you got whatever, how many stamps you get for a hundred bucks, then when you came in with your groceries the next time, and you turned in your book of stamps you'd get credit for two dollars or five dollars or whatever that book was worth on your next sack of groceries, or something like that.

JL: That's exactly right and the big fight was that the Green State Trading Stamps—and there were others than just the green trading stamps, but they were the most prominent—ought to be taxed. So there was a big fight every year over that issue, and of course there was great

support by Montanans not to tax them. They liked the Green Stamp thing, at least the input we had. And so after about three times of these terrific fights and beating that down it was pretty obvious that Green Stamps were not going to be taxed in Montana. But I always accused my friend Jerry Anderson, who was a lobbyist for Green Stamp Trading, that he'd always get somebody to put the bill in to tax Green Stamps so he could keep his lobbying going (laughs).

BB: He was a good one, I'll tell you that. He was really a good one. Now, later on in your legislative career—I think it was 1967—when you were the majority leader, after you'd been the minority leader when Wayrynen was the Speaker of the House—the Republicans got the majority back in 1967 and a fellow named Jim Felt became the Speaker and you were the majority floor leader. That was the first session, at least in modern times, when the sales tax was a big issue.

JL: Yes. Jim Felt was a strong supporter of the sales tax, as were many of us, and Jim was an attorney but he also had some great training—he might have been a CPA also. He certainly was an astute person in taxation and very knowledgeable and so the sales tax surfaced at that time.

BB: Now Jim, I think it was Jim Haughey who told me that, oh, perhaps in the '63 session, some kind of special committee—I think he may have told me that all the lawyers in the House of Representatives, or at least on the Republican side—maybe all the lawyers—were members of this committee and the purpose of the committee—I might have the session wrong—I think it was the '63 session—carefully went over the tax laws in Montana and a fair number of the bills were passed over to the Senate where they were all summarily killed. If my recollection is right, he felt that that was kind of the beginning of interest in what became the sales tax. Do you remember anything about that?

JL: Yes, I remember the committee.

BB: Haughey was the chairman of it. There was a package of bills, something like 11 bills. He said, "Gosh, we worked all session long and we got this package that we put a lot of thought and a lot of effort into, and it got over to the Senate and Senator Melcher, John Melcher, was probably the chairman of the taxation committee and he just killed them, the whole bunch of them, without even much of a hearing. It was a big disappointment to Haughey, and I asked him why and he said, "Well, that was probably the beginning of what ended up being the sales tax fight."

JL: Well as I recall—

BB: Would Felt have been there then, in '63?

JL: Yes, I'm sure he was. I'm sure he was. Part of the discussion that became pretty much a clichéd expression as time went on and the sales tax came more and more into the picture, but part of the comment was the necessity of the tripod of taxation.

BB: Yes, the "three-legged milking stool."

JL: The three-legged stool, that's right; income tax, property tax, and the sales tax. That was sort of the beginning of a discussion involving that.

BB: So a bill was introduced in 1967—with the support of Governor Babcock?

JL: Yes, because you remember that later became an issue in the governor's campaign: "Pay More, What For?"

BB: In the 1968 campaign for governor. Now, as I understand it, we know most states have a sales tax. Montana is one of three or four that doesn't. As I understand it, most of the state sales taxes were enacted back in the 1930s in the Depression era, most of them by Democratic legislatures, in order to raise more revenue for government. Generally, Democrats are the party that believes in government. They're more the party of the public sector and the Republican Party is more the party of the private sector. And so it was a little bit unusual for the Republican Party in Montana to take a leadership role in a new tax, and especially—well I mean, not especially—but a new tax and the sales tax. Any thoughts about that? Philosophically, what was our—why were we for that in 1967?

JL: Well, for a variety of reasons. First, there was a feeling that property taxation was too high and so part of the revenues that came from any sales tax bill would have had to have blended into it some property tax relief. That was important. Secondly, there was a feeling that because our income taxes and property taxes were quite high in connection with the rest of the country, and we weren't able to create enough revenue to do the things that were needed to be done for the state of Montana, that we had to reexamine our tax situation. And that we had to enjoy the benefits that every other state, practically, was having, and that is the benefit of tourists and tourism contributing a substantial part to your state revenue coffers.

My recollection—and of course part of this depends on the design of the particular sales tax bill, but one of the bills we were considering—my recollection is that we estimated that about 22 percent of the revenue that was produced by that sales tax would be paid for by tourists coming into the state of Montana. I think that's a little higher estimate than some of the later ones, but the sales tax bill each time was a little different creature. So that was an important kind of consideration. So first, relief of property tax. Secondly, providing more revenue. And third, letting out-of-state tourists contribute towards the expense of our state.

BB: You'd think that a Democrat legislator wouldn't object to the first and the third of those reasons. He would probably want to have more money to spend on government services and he probably wouldn't care if we taxed the tourists. So the Democrats' philosophical problem came in the area of not wanting to reduce property taxes?

JL: You know, I'll never understand where the—I think it became involved in too much of a political issue where if the sales tax were passed it would have been credited to the Republicans. It would have been a Republican coup. The politics of the moment was we can't let that happen—I'm talking from the Democrats' side—because it is true that back in the earlier years, in the '30s and maybe even the '40s, it usually was a coalition of labor and education that got sales taxes enacted. In Montana, here was education clamoring for more

money but generally at that point the MEA—and teachers generally—were opposed to the sales tax. Labor was opposed to the sales tax. Farmers Union was opposed to the sales tax. Driving a good part of that was the political consideration that we can't let the Republicans get a sales tax and then start to do all these things that we think might be done and claim credit for it. That was a significant part of—

BB: They used the so-called “regressivity” argument.

JL: Yes, we felt—there probably was some regressivity in the sales tax, but at the same time when you offer some property tax relief—and currently, of course, there's talk about tax credits if anything went that way—you're taking away the sting of regressivity. But you cannot achieve a perfect tax structure. It's always going to have some area of criticism and fault. But the creation of the general picture, bringing a sales tax into it, I think, would have been the best thing Montana could have done.

BB: Just to explain this regressivity business, because I can remember my first experience with the sales tax was 1971 and then, as I recall, that proposal didn't tax medicine and it didn't tax groceries. I think I remember that.

JL: I think that's right. It was patterned after the Minnesota tax to some extent.

BB: So right there, the idea would be to try to relieve the burden on people who had a small income and had to spend most of it on necessities. They wouldn't have to spend anything on—the tax wouldn't apply to medicine or groceries, so that protected them in that regard. But I think the argument also that the people in opposition to it used is they said, “But the general public is all going to be paying this sales tax, regardless of their ability to pay taxes, in spite of the fact that you've exempted medicine and groceries, but you're going to provide property tax relief, and the more property you own, the greater the property tax relief you could have.” So they would argue that this is the opposite of Robin Hood—this is taking from the poor and giving to the rich and that's, I think, how they built that case for regressivity.

JL: Yes, that, and they would take the typical example and that is that: why should a low income-earner that's buying a car pay a three percent sales tax, where somebody else with much more affluence buying a car pay only a three percent sales tax? Our structure of taxation through the years was built around the principle of progressivity—the more you earn, not only the more you pay, but that you pay at a higher rate. So the argument there was that that wasn't—

BB: But the response could still be made, “the more you buy, the more you pay.” So if you can afford to pay [for] a new Cadillac, you're going to pay three percent of that. If all you can afford to buy is a used Chrysler—

JL: Sure, and a person who enjoys a high income, they're going to buy more goods and commodities, not just higher-priced ones, but more goods and commodities, and pay a greater amount.

BB: And we'd still have the property tax. We weren't eliminating the property tax for the sales tax. We still had the income tax. So the high income earner is still going to pay a higher income tax than the low income earner. In addition, he's going to pay sales tax on all the things he buys. Somehow or other they just managed to win massively on this thing.

JL: The effective campaigning. Of course, to start with, most of the time if you're campaigning against a tax, that's the favored position. And then you can enter all these other arguments into the picture and it just never—you know, in the two elections we had, if I recall correctly, the vote was about the same: three to one against it. You start out with the feeling that, well, it's about a 50-50 kind of a deal, but the devil was in the details, and as soon as you start to design it then you've got this group running off, and they're mad because they're not going to get exemptions and pretty soon—

BB: It collapses.

JL: It's too bad.

BB: I think too that the Republicans generally opposed to taxes, generally opposed to government spending, a lot of people who regarded themselves as Republican loyalists and conservatives and voted for Republicans for the legislature, a lot of them had to have voted against the sales tax because the margin of defeat was so great. And I think it probably just gets back to the idea that in spite of the fact that it's based on a defensible theory of taxation, your typical Republican is probably not going to vote for a new tax.

JL: Yes, you'd have to think that because of the overwhelming vote against it.

BB: Yes, I think that's right.

JL: It's very interesting. We missed the boat, and we missed it more than once, and we're continuing to miss it.

BB: Yes, because that continues to be an issue. And, as you say, if you poll the general public in Montana, the polls will show it's close, but then as you actually craft a sales tax, you don't seem to take on new allies. It seems as though more and more people fall off the buck board until there's only a small minority left that still supports it.

JL: Well, and it always seemed that in the campaigning against it, the design of advertising was always more creative and more compelling when they were against it. The first and greatest example of that, of course, was Forrest Anderson walking into the room, pointing to the refrigerator: "Pay More, What For?" That took off and became a by-word. We never seemed to quite be able to get the positive and sensible slant across to the public.

BB: Jim, I know there were many of us on the Republican side that thought that you, at one time, maybe had thoughts about running for governor. There were a lot of us that were enthusiastic about the possibility of supporting you. What effect do you think your association with the sales tax may have had on that?

JL: Well, up until the time the sales tax was rejected at the polls so heavily, I had started to organize campaign committees around the state and had in mind running for governor. But part of my campaigning and part of my identification in the legislature, of course, was the sales tax issue. When that was knocked down as dramatically and forcefully as it was, I felt that with it went my realistic hopes for the governorship. So I, at that point, backed off and did not file.

BB: And that was, I think, your last—you didn't run for re-election, when, in 1974?

JL: That's right. In '73, I served in the only annual session that they had, and at that point I decided not to run for governorship. It was becoming increasingly difficult to me to spend the time I was having to spend in the legislature, having been in the leadership positions and so on, and I felt my law practice was suffering, and that was going to be my main thrust in life at that point, and so I, anticipating that annual sessions were going to stay—and I misjudged that one—I did not file again and of course annual sessions then were voted out the next time.

BB: So you didn't run again for the legislature again in '74 and you didn't run for governor in '76—

JL: Or in '72.

BB: Oh, you were kind of looking at it in '72 too. Oh, sure, okay. Because the sales tax went down in the special election, didn't it?

JL: That's right.

BB: Yes, okay, it wasn't on the ballot in the regular election of '72. It was a special election. I see, okay. So, did you ever consider maybe getting back into politics again later, letting a few years of grass grow on that thing, and maybe getting back into the political arena again?

JL: Yes, I thought about it more than once but you know by that time, your life takes some different turns. I still had a young family then and politics, as you know, Bob, robs you of your every moment and your energy and I felt that, well, I talked it over with my family, and we just came to the conclusion that we would go that direction instead of back into politics. I've stayed in the perimeter through the years, but not in the center of things.

BB: So I suppose this question kind of goes without saying, but I wonder if it had occurred to you maybe to run for some public office that would take you back to Washington, D.C., such as congressman or senator. A different area in politics?

JL: The year that Conrad Burns first filed for the Senate, before he filed, I had given serious thought to that.

BB: Ran for the United States Senate in 1988.

JL: That's right. I had a call from the distinguished Wyoming senator asking me—

BB: Alan Simpson?



JL: Alan Simpson—if I should be interested, and would I be considering running for that office? I declined and it wasn't long before Conrad's name surfaced and he was pretty agreeable to that, pretty eager to go, and fortunately generated some good support and was elected.

BB: But you did consider running.

JL: I did consider, yes.

BB: Well, it's addictive, but like you say, it can consume your whole life. One of my friends described politics, he said, "Politics is a jealous mistress" (laughs).

JL: That's absolutely true. It is. You've got to be at it all the time.

BB: It can be tough on your law practice, and on your personal life, and your family life, and that sort of thing. It has been in the case of a lot of people I know. Now, in your involvement in politics you become acquainted—we've already discussed you became acquainted with Governor Babcock. You knew Governor Nutter—both Republicans. And then you served in the legislature with Governor Judge and then also you continued to be a legislator after Judge was governor. I think that's right, isn't it?

JL: Yes.

BB: Yes, Judge was governor in '72. Let me ask you first, any impressions of Governor Anderson? You were Speaker of the House when he was governor.

JL: Yes. Well, Governor Anderson was a tough governor. Criticism and problems ran off his shoulders like water off a duck's back. He just hung in there and he seemed to have a cadre of equally dedicated people. We disagreed on quite a few things, but he had captured the imagination of the people, and at least on the surface of things seemed to present to them a governor who was there, and who was busy, and who was aggressive, and who had ideas for the state of Montana. So those were some tough times. There were a couple of things I tried to visit with him on, and of course one of them was the sales tax. But we could never bring him around to our point even in terms of trying to do some horse trading on legislation he might have been interested in. So that was my experience with Governor Anderson.

BB: When he was governor, of course executive reorganization passed. There had been, I think he reduced the number—

JL: To 20 departments.

BB: "Twenty is Plenty" was the slogan, and I don't remember how many there had been, but considerably more than that. Any recollections on that? That was a big issue in the state and in the legislature as I remember.

JL: Yes, not really. It was a hard thing to oppose because it made sense trying to bring together and make government more cohesive, and so he was moving in a pretty good kind of circle on that and had strong support.

BB: Governor Babcock, you served with him as a legislator. Did you have a working relationship with him, then, he was governor? I'm sure you did.

JL: Yes, extremely close working relationship. As I mentioned, we had been great friends. I had been his attorney for some time and we were very close and I was on his sort of council, if you want to call it that.

BB: Did you have regular meetings with him? Like, did you meet down in the conference room where Republican legislative leaders would go down there and meet with him? How did—

JL: We had regular meetings with him. Probably, I want to say six-to-eight people, and he might indicate what his thoughts were, and maybe what his desires were. We would take some of that back to the caucus and present it, and do that. He also had another little group of advisors, which I thought was great. He had himself and Lowell Purdy, who I think was Department of Agriculture at that time; and Sonny Omholt, who was State Auditor and Insurance Commissioner; Dick Kimball, who was with the National Guard; myself. It seems there were a couple of others.

BB: Jack Hallowell?

JL: Jack Hallowell, who was his sort of right-hand man in his office.

BB: Yes, chief of staff.

JL: Chief of staff. One of those fellows had either owned, or had access to, a little cabin out in the valley, and we would meet maybe once a week or once every 10 days, or once every two weeks. We might be there for five hours just kicking things around, having a great time, very congenial. The impression I carry from those meetings is, to me, an interesting one. I think most people who get into politics and who become governors and things like that really do have the best interests of their state at heart. They may ride a different horse to get there, but at least I give them that much credit.

Some of them maybe have other problems that get in the way, but I felt that Tim Babcock was dedicated to what's best for Montana. Dick Kimball, outstanding person, who was head of the National Guard; Sonny Omholt—these were people who really loved Montana, and their time was spent not saying, "How can we put this over on the Democrats, or how can we do this?" It was spent mostly on, "What can we do that's best for the state, and what are the things that are best for the state and how can we get them done?" Those were great times because there was just a commonality of great feeling about our state of Montana and it was uplifting and inspiring.

BB: Would you consider that group kind of Governor Babcock's kitchen cabinet? Is that kind of what it would be?

JL: Yes, I think certainly you could call them that to a great extent.

BB: Were there any private sector people involved at all?

JL: Not that I recall in those things, but there were other meetings at other times when people from the private sector were called in and people who on their own asked to come in and see the governor who had great thoughts and good suggestions, things like that. Yes, he drew pretty heavily from the private sector because people felt that he was an accessible governor, and they at least could be heard.

BB: I think he was a believer in the free enterprise system. You mentioned this idealism that he had about Montana, and I think that manifested itself, too, in terms of his philosophy about trying to keep the regulatory burden as minimal as possible, and the tax burden as minimal as possible so our state economy could move ahead. I think that was his general philosophy, that's how I remember too. Let's see, you were only there in the legislature for a couple years when Judge was governor. Any impressions at all?

JL: I wouldn't call him a strong leader. He did have some separate ideas and he did have some people who had his ear and whom he listened to. My recollection of the state in the couple of years that I was there was that we got along reasonably well and there was communication. It wasn't quite as—he wasn't as powerful and dogmatic as Forrest Anderson had been.

BB: You used the term forceful to describe Governor Nutter and you used, I'm not sure the same term, but similar terms, to describe Governor Anderson. So I take it they both had maybe similar personalities in the respect that they were sort of take-charge kind of guys?

JL: Yes, I think that's true. Governor Anderson was devious. Nutter was more straightforward. But they were people who knew what they wanted to get done, where they wanted to go, and most of them believed that the shortest distance was the straight line between two points and that's where they went.

BB: Would you say Aronson might have been maybe more like Babcock, maybe a little more—

JL: Politic in things?

BB: Yes, a little more charming and a little less forceful?

JL: I would say so. Hugo Aronson could get his dander up when he wanted to and needed to, but generally I think that's right. He worked with people in his own way, handled people.

BB: Tim Babcock told me one time that there was a bill that got away from him in the legislature that he thought was a bad bill and he was really concerned about it. It had passed the House of Representatives and he didn't expect it would, and it got over to the Senate and they thought they might stop it—he and the people who agreed with him—and they couldn't. He went down to visit with Governor Aronson and he said, "I'm just sick about this. I think it's a bad piece of legislation." He explained to the governor why, and he said, "I think it's going to get through the legislature." Governor Aronson said, "Well, Tim, there's something we can do about that. We can weto [sic]!" (laughs).

JL: We can "weto" [veto] it. I can just hear that.

BB: I guess he did too! I guess it did get in and I guess he “wetoed” it (laughs). Now, did you serve with Stan Stephens? He was maybe in the Senate when you were in the House.

JL: Yes, yeah Stan was there.

BB: Did you get to know him at all?

JL: Yes, quite well. Enjoyed Stan. We were good friends. As you probably remember, Bob, the liaison between the House and Senate Republicans, and Republicans or Democrats, is not quite to the extent that you think it ought to be or it was. In fact, sometimes it goes back to the old joke I remember about I think it President Coolidge or somebody, that the servant came running in to him and said, “Mr. President, Mr. President, there’s a thief in the house!”

And he said, “In the Senate, perhaps, but never in the House.” (laughs).

Sometimes there seemed to be the proprietary feelings between the House and Senate where you didn’t work hand in glove quite like people think you probably should have. Plus the fact that time—gosh, you’re just snowed under all the time, trying to read bills, and get ready, and be on top of them, and you just don’t get the communication going like you should, and it’s too bad. But despite that, we always enjoyed an excellent rapport with Stan Stephens and as far as that goes, most of the people in the Senate.

BB: This is probably politically incorrect in this day and age to say this, but one day I remember I had moved from the House over into the Senate. I was at my desk and my old good, dear friend Matt Himsl had gone over to the House to talk to somebody about something and he came back over to the Senate and he said, “Geez, I was just over at the House of Representatives. That damn place is like an Indian camp!” (laughs). Because there was a lot of activity and a lot of people talking to each other, not paying attention, you know.

JL: The Senate has always been a little more composed, maybe, a little more sedate. And of course we used to say, “Now, if you’re going to go over to the Senate, go over there and walk with a cane so you’ll feel right at home.” (laughs). A lot of good-natured joking.

BB: A lot of good natured joking, a lot of rivalry and that sort of thing. I remember, it must have been about 1979 or maybe even ’81—did the Senate and the House, they must have had the basketball games, didn’t they, when you were there?

JL: Oh, yes.

BB: The House always won the basketball games because there were twice as many members of the House of Representatives, and generally the younger people were in the House.

JL: That’s right.

BB: Well, somehow or other, whenever this was—it might have been in the early ’80s—the Senate had Tom Beck and Bill Yellowtail at the same time, and they were both in their forties, but they were big, tall men in reasonably good physical condition who had been outstanding

basketball players when they were young. Joe Mazurek might have been on the team at that time also, and he was quite a good basketball player. Anyway, in an incredible upset, the Senate won the Senate-House basketball game and that kind of changed the dynamics of that whole legislative session. The senators were all walking with a little bit of a spring in their step, you know. Made them all feel about ten years younger, I think (laughs).

JL: That's great. Yeah, those were good times.

BB: Lot of fun. Do you remember the mock sessions?

JL: Yes, sure do.

BB: I wasn't there when they were going on, but we've mentioned Jerome Anderson—Jerry Anderson—and I think he was kind of the director of—

JL: The designer.

BB: The designer of those. What are your recollections of them? Maybe describe those a little bit.

JL: Well, they were great because you didn't want to be at a mock session if you were thin-skinned because they would take off on you and if you'd had a bad day or a bad moment, somebody remembered it and they'd embellish it from there. But they were a mock of the legislature in session and the Speaker would call on someone and they'd take off on that, and it was just a lot of good-natured ribbing back and forth.

BB: So Jerry Anderson, Jerome Anderson—who had been a legislator and by then was a lobbyist—would kind of keep notes, kind of keep a recollection throughout the session of interesting things, funny things, embarrassing things, and so on, that happened during the legislature. Then he'd get, was it the legislative staff? He got the clerks and the secretaries and those kinds of people, and they would maybe dress up as different legislators. Did they do this in the House chamber?

JL: In the House chamber, because that was the larger area for that.

BB: So the legislators themselves, I suppose, would sit up in the gallery or around the sides of the floor and that sort of thing.

JL: Well they sat in their seats, many of them, and around the sides, and of course there was a big crowd. Many of the wives or spouses were there. Some of the legislators themselves would participate because there were some that were musically talented and they had a song or two that they would have along the way. In fact, if I remember correctly, Jerry might even have written a song or two, or at least composed verses to the songs.

BB: I wonder if any of those were filmed? I wonder if there are any records of any of those?

JL: I doubt it, for this reason. Today, if that happened, and it does happen, they would be filmed because it's just a matter of course. Everybody's got a VCR and a camcorder and everything. In

those days, you didn't have that. You had the old motion picture machines. Most of the time they didn't work. I don't know of any of them that were filmed, but Jerry would be the guy who would know. They were great. I think the two great fun events of the year were the mock session and then the Attaché Party, which was early in the year, when all of the attachés and clerks and staff for the legislature—and all the legislators—would have this big evening party and dinner and dance, and it was just a great time. That happened usually before the session was too old, and it was a means of trying to get everybody sort of acquainted with everybody. It worked very well.

BB: Was Jerry Anderson an organizer of that too?

JL: No, he wasn't. In fact, I think one year Walter Marshall, who acted as clerk of the House for a time, was the organizer of that. I'm not sure who else really took the lead on those attaché parties.

BB: Walter Marshall had been the Secretary of the Senate for a while when I was there, and didn't he own the voting machine, the voting equipment in the Senate and the House?

JL: Yes, I think he did.

BB: He purchased them and leased them to the legislature or something.

JL: Leased to the House, and he had more side businesses going than you can shake a stick at, particularly during the years when the party he was affiliated with was in power. So Walter could do no wrong, he was sort of the runner and the chief arranger.

BB: He was a real character. One time I remember—he wrote a book called *I Met Them All*, which wasn't a real great book, frankly. And this might have been in the book, but I don't think it was—I think he told me this: John F. Kennedy, while he was a senator from Massachusetts but considering running for governor [president], came to Montana in 1958 or 1959, and I believe he spoke at the Democratic State Convention. Walter got to pick him up at the airport. I don't know whether it was just Walter or not, but anyway, Walter was in the car and somehow or another—it was Walter's car and Walter had his dog in the back of the car, according to the story. Anyway, the dog managed to reach up and lick the back of Kennedy's neck and Kennedy was a little unused to that kind of treatment, and Walter had to apologize about his dog. And then, according to Walter, a couple years later, after Kennedy was president, he came to Montana and he went to Great Falls and he visited Senator Mansfield's parents in Great Falls; they went to their house. And Walter, of course, was there, and on hand and that sort of thing, and got right up in front and shook hands with Kennedy and reminded him that he picked him up at the airport. He said Kennedy said to him, "You still got that damn dog?" (laughs).

JL: Walter could weasel his way into any situation easier and quicker than anybody I ever knew. He was incredible.

BB: Well Jim, any other thoughts or observations or anything you'd like to say?

JL: No, I think Montana still has great problems. We have great problems in this end of the state in the development of our natural resources. As you're aware, the Powder River Coal Basin extends from Wyoming north into Montana, into the Ashland-Broadus area. That's some of the finest coal in the world. Wyoming has reaped the benefit of mining that coal, doing good reclamation—you don't hear any complaints about that. I think the days of suggesting that you don't reclaim coal mining areas are probably pretty well gone, because industry knows, and business knows, they've got to reclaim it and there are ways to do it, and they've done it. But we can't seem to get off dead center in developing that great asset. It's something that needs to be done, should have been done. It's there waiting to be utilized and you've got the consortium—under the name, generally, of Tongue River Railroad—of people and financial backers that are ready to move on it. But there is always something in the way. There's an environmental group here, a group there, and they're into court and they're managing to stop and stall those things and we just keep looking for it to come.

It can be done, I think, in a way in which the earth is protected, in which the environment is protected, in which there's not going to be undue damage to ranchers across whom the railroad must cross. And it's got to come. And if it does, it will be an enormous thing for southeastern Montana. Here's Custer County, one of the poorest counties in the state. The railroad would come here and hook up with Burlington Northern. There's talk of course of a power generating plant that also would be created. It would be a great thing for the state of Montana and for this area. It's frustrating that we can't seem to move those kind of enormous things forward at the right time. So I sit here and watch and wonder, and feel that the legislature can't seem to seize the moment in an effective way.

BB: Sometimes I think events force decisions to be made. Right now our country is embroiled in what looks like maybe an unending conflict in the Middle East, and we're heavily dependent on that part of the world for our energy. It may be that we'll decide to become more serious about becoming energy-independent, and if we do, that could mean that Montana coal and other domestic sources of energy are going to have to be developed. Maybe that will happen sooner than later.

JL: Yes, you may well be right. I think the seriousness of our dependence on oil in that part of the world, and the fact that the spigot can be turned on and off, has brought more of a realization, and maybe that will be the underlying impetus that moves these things forward. I hope so, because I think it's the right thing to do.

BB: We're just about out of tape, and this would probably be a good place to end our interview, but a couple more things have just jumped into my mind. Did you ever meet Mike Mansfield?

JL: Yes, certainly. I had great admiration for Mike Mansfield. Very solid kind of a person. A deep-thinking person.

BB: Did you meet him back in Washington, D.C.? Did you visit with him back there?

JL: A number of times. My first real contact with Mike Mansfield was back in the '40s. At that time, I was on the University debating team and we were preparing—we were fortunate

enough to win a number of debates, were preparing to debate in West Point in the national finals. One of the issues was something to the effect that: resolved that the Chinese uprising is a solid kind of movement and not backed or sponsored by the Communist Party. In other words, China was in a stage of unrest and I think Mao Tse Tung at that time was coming to the forward. So Mike Mansfield was considered as an expert in that area and I got in touch with him and asked him for some papers and some facts and some figures, which he sent me. You had to be prepared to debate both sides of the question. So that was pretty helpful to me. I used a lot of the materials that he sent. We did extremely well when we were back there, in part due to the resource material we had. So from that time on, I had intermittent contacts with Mike Mansfield. When I was back in Washington, I'd stop at his office sometimes and always managed to get an audience with him if he was there. I appreciated our contacts through the years.

BB: You probably knew Congressman Battin too.

JL: Yes, Jim Battin was a close friend of mine and I worked on his campaigns as a congressman.

BB: Did you know him as a lawyer too?

JL: I knew him as a lawyer, and knew him later as a judge. He became an exceptionally good judge. When he was appointed judge, I'd known him more in the political end of things. I wasn't certain about that appointment. But it turned out to be an excellent one because Jim Battin became a very, very good federal judge.

BB: And then died kind of young. Was it cancer?

JL: I think that's right. I don't recall for sure.

BB: When you were a county attorney, Arnold Olsen was Attorney General.

JL: Yes. Arnold Olsen was Attorney General, but later on Forrest Anderson was Attorney General.

BB: Then did you ever cross paths with Senator [Lee] Metcalf?

JL: Just occasionally. I couldn't say I was a close acquaintance of his at all.

BB: You knew Melcher, of course, because you served in the legislature with him.

JL: Yes, sure did.

BB: Any thoughts or impressions at all?

JL: Well, sort of an embarrassing moment. He was out of the legislature, and then he came back and ran and was elected to the House. He, in my mind, was a freshman.

BB: He had been in State Senate, and then he came back in the House.



JL: Yes, and he had an interlude between the Senate and the House. He wanted to be on, as I remember, I think it was the taxation committee, the finance and claims. I was determined that he wasn't going to sit on that committee and I didn't put him on it. I put him on a couple of other committees and so he actually stood on the floor of the House and made a motion that he be added to that committee, and this was when I was Speaker and appointing committees. The Speaker appoints the committees. I said, "Well, I'm not going to rule your motion out of order, Representative Melcher, but I want to remind you that you have another committee or two that I've appointed you on, and I guess it's within the province of the Speaker to disappoint anybody who might have been on a committee and you may not be serving on those committees."

So there was a lot of fuss, and finally the minority leader, whoever it was, from the Democratic Party, said, "Well, Mr. Speaker, I think probably it's right. That is out of order." Well, he didn't get on that committee and later on, when he became a United States senator, I thought, "Geez, Jim, you goofed up. You insulted your future United States senator." (laughs).

BB: Pat Williams: you served in the House with him.

JL: Yes.

BB: He was there, what, in '65 and '67, or '67 and '69?

JL: Something like that, yes.

BB: Any recollections of him?

JL: No. I don't have really any recollections of Pat. I knew Pat. I knew him fairly well and his wife was a classmate of my wife's in Butte during those years. But never really knew Pat real well.

BB: Then of course he served briefly as a congressman for the whole state.

JL: That's right.

BB: The last couple years he was in Congress, I think. And then of course you probably knew Congressman [Ron] Marlenee.

JL: Yes, in fact my daughter worked for him for six years or so back in D.C. I knew Ron quite well. I knew him before and then knew him as the years went on.

BB: Anything else?

JL: No, I don't think so. It's been very interesting. Conjures up a lot of recollections.

BB: Well, we sure appreciate the interview, Jim. Thank you so much.

[End of Interview]