

Maureen and Mike

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**Oral History Number: 396-043**  
**Interviewee: Neil Lynch**  
**Interviewer: Bob Brown**  
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Bob Brown: This is Bob Brown. I'm interviewing Neil Lynch. Neil was a state senator in the '60s and '70s from Silver Bow County. Neil, when and where were you born?

Neil Lynch: I was born in Butte on September 18, 1934. My dad was also born in Butte. That's our old home.

BB: Was your dad a miner?

NL: He started off as a rope man. He became a carpenter after that. A rope man goes underground.

BB: Did you ever work in the mines?

NL: No, I never did.

BB: Your family, your ancestors came from Ireland?

NL: Yes. On my dad's side they came directly from Ireland.

BB: Do you know where in Ireland?

NL: In County Cork. That's all we know.

BB: The miners—

NL: They were from County Cork.

BB: So you grew up in Butte? You went to the schools there and that sort of thing?

NL: I grew up in a part of Butte that's now where the pit is. The pit has taken away our home. It was called McQueen addition. I went to Holy Savior grade school and then to Central High School in Butte.

BB: So you have a Catholic upbringing in Butte.

NL: That's all there is in Butte.

BB: What created your interest in politics and public service?

NL: My dad was kind of into politics as I was growing up. What got me in it, I had gone off to school back east and came back home. First of all, I got a job as a counsel for the—

BB: You went to law school back east?

NL: Yes.

BB: Where did you go?

NL: Catholic University. When I came home, I went to work for the Montana Power. What happened to me back east, I got married and decided I was just going to challenge the bar exam. So I went back to Montana after going through half of law school and challenged the bar exam. When I came back to Montana, I went to work for the Montana Power initially.

BB: You successfully challenged the bar exam?

NL: Yes.

BB: Even before you graduated law school?

NL: Yes. In those days, you could. Now they require you to take the bar exam now.

BB: So you went to work for Montana Power Company?

NL: Yes I went to work for Montana Power. I got into a little politics there. Then when I passed the bar exam, I went to work as counsel for the Railroad Commission in Helena. That really got my taste in politics. We traveled all over the state on matters of utilities and transportation.

BB: You mentioned that your father was involved in some way?

NL: Yes, my dad was always involved in it too.

BB: Was he an elected official?

NL: No, he was just a businessman in Butte. It's just kind of the nature of Butte to be more involved in politics. In fact, there's almost no distinction between a Democrat and a Republican in Butte. You're just a politician.

BB: If you want to win in office, you'd better be a Democrat. Is there a person or an experience or anything in your early life in Butte that stands out that may have influenced you to formulate your political philosophy? You mentioned your father.

NL: It was also the unions. The unions were a big thing in Butte. Once I got to the working age, in high school summers and that, you had to belong to a union. There was a lot of political activity in the unions in Butte.

BB: You were impressed positively by that? You liked what you learned from the unions and you identified with that philosophy?

NL: Yes, I really did. I'm not as liberal now as I was then, but I was a real union man.

BB: Even though your father was in business?

NL: Yes.

BB: So you came back to Montana from law school. You worked in the Public Service Commission for a while. Then you returned to Butte?

NL: Yes I returned to practice law there. I was in a law firm called Genzberger...Genzberger and Lynch. Then in '68 I ran for the state Senate.

BB: What motivated you to do that?

NL: What started that was [when] the Anaconda Company owned the Butte Water Company and they had proposed a 500 percent [increase] in water rates. I led the fight against it. That kind of got me involved in politics in Butte. So I ran for the Senate right after those hearings and was elected. It was a good time to run.

BB: Yes, it worked perfectly for you.

NL: Yes, it did.

BB: What do you remember about that campaign? Did you have an opponent?

NL: There were six candidates and I'm kind of proud of the fact—of course it had something to do with that water rate hearing—but I got one of the highest votes for a legislator to achieve in Butte. Of course nowadays, it's single member districts.

BB: Was that in the Democratic primary?

NL: That was the general.

BB: Did you have an opponent in the primary?

NL: In the primary there were six of us.

BB: Was it close in the primary?

NL: No it wasn't too bad. I did pretty well.

BB: How did you campaign then?

NL: I remember one of the big things I did was I rented a space on the side of buses. Every bus in town had my picture on it. That was my big campaign method.

BB: It was probably a real good one. Now this is kind of broad, but describe politics in Silver Bow County at that time.

NL: At that time we had the Montana Power and the Anaconda Company. There was almost the word that if you opposed them, you wouldn't be elected. I know Pat Williams got in there and opposed them. He didn't have any trouble being elected. I think Pat kind of made us realize that you don't have to count out to the Anaconda Company. Most of us didn't after that. You didn't have to.

BB: Your impression was that maybe there was a fair amount of kowtowing before then?

NL: Oh, there was. In fact, if a candidate was up for office and he wasn't approved by the company, he might not be elected.

BB: Was there a process? Were you interviewed by the company?

NL: They would come to talk to you. There wasn't a process at all.

BB: How were they able to do that? How would they be able to swing the votes?

NL: You've got me. It just shows you the power of the Company. Everybody was interested in keeping the hill running, keeping the mines going. I think the Company would start bad rumors about someone. That was probably one of the big reasons they may have done it, to defeat someone. Maybe they couldn't get people elected, but they sure could defeat someone.

BB: I indicated when we corresponded before about this, about key personalities involved in the Silver Bow County during that period of time? Jack Healy I suppose?

NL: Yes Jack Healey and Tom Tracy.

BB: Would they have been close to the Anaconda Company? They preceded you in politics.

NL: Healy was a kindly employee. Tom Tracy worked on the hill. It's something how the company...I won't mention his name, but one person that got elected and the company wasn't

too happy about him and pretty soon the word got out that one of his brothers working at a bank was not going to be promoted because of the actions of this legislator. I remember hearing that story; that the company could possibly influence by going after your family members and the jobs they held. That never happened to me. In fact, my experience with the Anaconda Company has been positive. I did a lot of claimant work against the company and always had satisfactory results. I'm not an anti-company person, that's all there is to it.

BB: Now Neil, I've conducted a number of these interviews. I usually ask this question in different ways because people have a different impression of big corporations in the '50s and '60s. I think it probably depends on their personal experiences. So how would you describe, even though the Anaconda Company was in its twilight when you got in the state Senate, but you grew up with the Company when you were there in Butte. Then when you were a state senator, the Anaconda Company was still important. It wasn't a hugely important influence in the legislature. You and I both know it was important. How would you characterize the influence of the Anaconda Company?

NL: In my career, like in the legislature, I remember there was a bill that the Department of Revenue wanted to have the Anaconda Company reveal all of their assets everywhere in the world. The company really opposed that. I remember I voted for it. One of the company lobbyists never spoke to me again. I suppose they had ways of exerting pressure that way, just being not very nice to you if you didn't vote their way. I remember the individual was Glen Carney. He really got upset over my vote. It didn't hurt me.

BB: If I said to you that the Anaconda Company was domineering and dominating, or the Anaconda Company was sort of a paternalistic influence that had a lot of influence in Montana, but wasn't particularly heavy-handed about it, which description is accurate?

NL: They weren't heavy-handed with me. I've heard rumors they were. I didn't have that experience. You have to include the Montana Power Company because they worked together. They would form alliances with the rural areas in Montana. They would help the farmers. The farmers would help the Company. There was a lot of that. I don't think it was heavy-handed. They were just sharp people. I think the Company had good lobbyists in Montana Power and the Company.

BB: The Railroad Association and the Green Stamp people and maybe the petroleum people and so on had the waterholes. They were closed down just about the time I got there. I didn't really have that experience. The Anaconda Company had one at the Placer Hotel for many years. A number of the people I've spoken with in these interviews have commented about that. Do you remember about that?

NL: I remember being at the waterhole at the Placer Hotel, but it was before I was in the legislature. When I was in the legislature, the waterhole was over at Jorgenson's. It was a motel room. The Petroleum Association had one room and the Anaconda Company had another. I just

didn't see that it was a real problem. I guess from the outside it looks like it was bad. The thing of it was no lobbying was allowed. It was drinks after the session and they kind of watched you. They didn't want you get drunk. They'd have a roast on Thursday nights. The thing I liked about it, it was a good chance to meet other legislators. That's the part I miss.

BB: Was there a cross-section? Were there liberals, conservatives, Democrats, Republicans there?

NL: Everybody was there. I made a lot of friends with a lot of Republicans. In fact, it made me less radical.

BB: Do you have any stories about an incident or an anecdote or anything that would involve the Anaconda Company and or the Montana Power Company? Is there anything that crosses your mind?

NL: I remember the big issue when I got into the legislature was territorial integrity. That was really an issue. The Montana Power and Anaconda had split by then. They still cooperated a lot. That was the big fight. I can't remember much detail about it. I just remember that was at the forefront of the battles when I first got into the legislature was whether the rural electric cooperatives would handle the expanding urban areas and when it was encroaching into the rural areas. It was resolved. I think that fight went on all through the '60s.

BB: I think it was settled when I was there in 1971 actually. In my interviews with Ed Smith and Gordon McOmber, that's come up importantly because that was a huge thing to the two of them. Anything else that crosses your mind on the Anaconda Company?

NL: The one thing I wanted to mention about the waterholes, they closed them down after the '69 session. In '71, I started to cook these dinners every Thursday night. That was the night the Company had fed us. So I started to cook these...it was chicken cacciatore. It was probably eight or ten times during the session. That was kind of the twilight for the waterhole.

BB: Did you buy the fixings or did they help you with it?

NL: Oh no, it was a bunch of legislators really. We wanted to meet legislators. We weren't so much interested in talking to the lobbyists as an opportunity to meet each other.

BB: So that everybody would throw ten bucks in the pot or something?

NL: Actually, a bunch of us would go to the store and buy all the stuff. That's how we would do it.

BB: Was it mostly the Butte legislators?

NL: Yes, I would say the Butte legislators were the ones that kind of got that started.

BB: You mentioned to me, and I can smell it cooking, we're going to have some chicken cacciatore when this interview is over.

NL: This is the same recipe we used then.

BB: I'm looking forward to it, that's for sure. How would you describe the influence of the unions when you were there?

NL: I'll never forget this story. He's now deceased so I can tell it. The unions...

BB: Who?

NL: Barney Rask. The unions had a committee and you were brought before a committee and then they voted whether to endorse you or not. One of the big gaming leaders was Barney Rask. I'll never forget this. They asked me to introduce the collar-to-collar bill. I don't know if you recall that. The collar-to-collar bill was something that said if the miner goes down in the mine from the time he passes the collar at the top of the shaft until he comes back again, he has to be paid for all that time.

BB: A collar is what?

NL: The structure around the top of the shaft of a mine.

BB: I see, so he goes down through the throat of the mine. So that when he enters the mine, until he comes out, he's entitled to be paid for all the time down there.

NL: Yes. One day, it was early in the morning, say seven or eight o'clock and I just happened to be in the Senate chambers. Someone said, "Your bill is being heard in the committee right now." This was at seven-thirty in the morning. I had never gotten notice of it. I stormed up there and when I walked in, Barney Rask didn't see me. I came in and sat down. His back was to me. He was telling the committee how the bill was not necessary.

BB: He was the guy that asked you to introduce it.

NL: I just couldn't believe that. I don't know what was behind that.

BB: What union was he the leader of?

NL: The Steelworkers in Butte, they were the miners. He asked me to introduce the bill and he was standing there talking against the bill. I don't know what was behind that.



BB: Did you collar him on that?

NL: Yes, we had quite an explosion over that one.

BB: What did he say?

NL: He said he just had a change of heart and mumbled his way out of it.

BB: Do you think he might have been paid to have a change of heart?

NL: I think the collar to collar bill was used to get the miners to think that they're doing something over there for the miners. It was just a ploy to get the miners to think that the union was doing something for them.

BB: They obviously weren't doing anything for them.

NL: There were no news reporters in that.

BB: He had to have had the cooperation of the committee chairman?

NL: It was George Siderius [senator from Flathead County.]

BB: He was supposed to just be a union loyal. George had to agree to hold that hearing without you.

NL: Yes. After that first session, that was a 60-day session. A lot of things changed the year you started, like in '71. It was a whole new ballgame. We had single-member districts. The power of the Company was just not as great. The power of the unions was not as great.

BB: Didn't the single-member districts come with the new constitution in '72?

NL: Maybe.

BB: Remember we had that big long impasse on the sales tax in '71?

NL: That's right.

BB: What do you remember about that?

NL: There's not much specific about it other than if you're from Butte, you had to oppose it. I still am opposed to a sales tax. That was more of the leadership fighting over the sales tax.

BB: You know, I found it kind of interesting that in most states, Republicans are generally opposed to taxes or tax increases. Democrats, who believe more in government, generally support some kind of way of supporting government. Most of the sales taxes in the country have been enacted by Democratic legislatures and Democrat governors. What are your thoughts?

NL: Well in the time most of the sales taxes were enacted, was during the Depression era. Because of the need for assistance, I guess, to the unemployed at that time. Once the economy got back to a point where it didn't need to help those people in that way anymore, I think the Democrats would be in favor after that. It was kind of a 1930 thing. That's when most of the sales taxes were enacted.

BB: Philosophically, what would be your problem with it? Why would Democrats have a problem with it?

NL: It's not based on the ability to pay, that's the only argument I can see.

BB: You feel that the income tax is more based on the ability to pay.

NL: Yes, a progressive income tax. I don't know. That's the way I felt then. I know people will say, "The sales tax is the way to get the tourists." Well, the highest figures I ever saw for getting money out of tourists via the sales tax was eight percent. The thing is, it seems to be working in Big Sky up here and places like that.

BB: I think it's also working in Whitefish.

NL: Yes it has it too, doesn't it?

BB: Whitefish is the best-looking town in Montana from the standpoint of its streets. Everything is kept up real well. They'll tell you there that the money they collect from the tourists from that little two percent sales tax. So maybe it works well in some places.

NL: Yes, and in tourist towns like that it does.

BB: Are there any other pieces of legislation that stand out in your memory?

NL: Let's see, this is an interesting story that hadn't been revealed. There was a legislator from Bozeman in the Senate, Paul Boylan. Paul had a dairy farm. There were four different agencies coming down on him over his dairy farm. I started talking about it. He said, "I wonder how many state agencies there are." So we sent a letter to the Secretary of State and asked for a list of the state agencies. Frank Murray was Secretary of State and he couldn't form such a list.

In a way, I think, because of Paul's problem, it started the ball rolling for executive reorganization. I know that was the first big issue that came up about the number of agencies. Poor Frank, he didn't know there were 150 or close to 200 agencies. He didn't know which ones had been abolished and which ones were still in existence. So there was a real need for executive reorganization. Then I think once they got into executive reorganization then the move came for a new Constitutional Convention.

BB: Those things fit together during that same period. The governor at that time was Forrest Anderson.

NL: Right.

BB: Of course he was enormously involved in executive reorganization. Were you involved in that legislation?

NL: Oh yes, quite a bit of it. Usually the leadership handled the bills. I know that they talked to me a lot about it. Especially after Paul Boylan's problem, it came up that everyone was having problems with these agencies. These agencies weren't coordinating. The boundary lines were inadequate, where one agency took over. There was a real need after that was revealed to do something.

BB: Not that it's important in our interview, but it runs in my mind that the problem Paul Boylan had was related to a substance called chlordane [a pesticide]?

NL: Oh right. I think it was chloroform. One agency said they had no problem with it and another agency said they did. He really had a problem with them.

BB: How would you describe Governor Anderson?

NL: When you walk in to see him, he'd put his feet up on the desk and use some foul language. If you didn't like—

BB: I had that same experience.

NL: Yes, and if he didn't like what you were doing, he'd just say, "What the hell are you pulling that for?" I never saw him drinking. There are stories about his drinking that I have never seen. Forrest was really a good friend of mine. I got along with him real well.

BB: When you say he was a good friend and you got along well with him, what was it about his personality that you liked?

NL: He was just like a Butte person.

BB: Meaning?

NL: Meaning he was just down to earth. There was no flamboyance about him. He was just a sincere, honest guy.

BB: Use some adjectives to describe him.

NL: Well just frank, honest, sincere, compassionate. If he didn't like what you were doing, you found out about it. There's no doubt about that. If you were pulling something that he didn't like, he had a way of getting to you.

BB: He was very direct in his approach?

NL: Yes, very direct.

BB: How would you describe his philosophy as you understood it?

NL: Populaced. That's what I would think about Forrest. I remember I ran for the Supreme Court and Forrest called me up one day. He said, "I don't like you running for the Court." I said, "Why not?" He said, "It's too boring." He served on the Supreme Court. He had that experience. He said, "It's the most boring experience I ever had." That was typical of Forrest. He wanted some action. He didn't like the Court, sitting there. He was only there for one term.

BB: When did you run?

NL: I ran in '76.

BB: Okay, right, when you were ending up your service in the Senate. Who was your opponent?

NL: Dan Shea.

BB: Is that right?

NL: Yes.

BB: Gosh, I had to remember that.

NL: Two weeks before the election, Dusty Deschamps and—

BB: The county attorney in Missoula.

NL: —raided Dan Shea's house and no one knew exactly what the purpose was. I had no idea this was going on. Supposedly someone was worried about Shea winning I guess. So they raided

his house. His wife was there with their children. He scared the devil out of everybody. No one knows what they were even searching for. There were talks that they were looking for dope. There was a talk that they were looking for income tax records or something. I don't know what it was really about.

BB: Was that the deal where they found a whole bunch of parking tickets? Don't I remember something about his wife having 50 parking tickets?

NL: I don't know if it had anything to do with the raid.

BB: What you think is that may have cost some sympathy for Shea.

NL: His dad was in the Senate with me, Jimmy Shea. Jimmy went to the capitol the next day and started a rally up there in Helena. I mean, for a whole week, I was bombarded. I denied I had anything to do with it. It's a stupid thing to do even. I lost 52 to 48. Dan beat me.

BB: Maybe it's largely on that incident?

NL: I think it was. To show you what it was, I had posters all over the state in people's yards. After that incident, half the people...they were tearing up my signs. They didn't want them in the yards. Jimmy Shea did a good job of exploiting that for his son.

BB: Do you think you were perceived more as a moderate and Shea more liberal?

NL: That's true. Shea was radical. He was radical then and really anti-Company. He was ringing a bell that people wanted to hear, that's for sure.

BB: In that period too.

NL: It was revealed Shea wasn't paying his income taxes and he had more problems, but he whipped me.

BB: Who won in Silver Bow?

NL: I did. We were both from Silver Bow. At least I won in my hometown.

BB: That would have been important to me too. Governor Judge, someone else you served with. You served with him when he was lieutenant governor and then you served when he was governor.

NL: Tom was a decent, hard-working guy. He wasn't controversial like Forrest was. His philosophy and my philosophy were pretty well in sync. I got along well with Tom. I just didn't have any trouble with him.

BB: You mentioned that Forrest was controversial and that Judge was less so. How would you compare them? How would you contrast their personalities and their leadership styles?

NL: Tom was just more of a manager. Forrest was more active on impulse a little bit more. He wasn't as good of a manager as Tom. Tom really ran a good ship.

BB: What makes you think that Anderson was controversial? What might have caused that?

NL: I think some of his behavior. It's just that when you're involved in politics, you hear things that maybe the public doesn't hear about some of his drinking behavior in the early years and things like that. I think Forrest made some statements that certainly...I can't recall any. He wasn't afraid to speak his mind.

BB: Judge was...if I asked you for some adjectives to describe him, how would you?

NL: He was astute and well-spoken and thoughtful. He was just an easy guy to get along with.

BB: He presided over the Senate when you were the Majority Leader?

NL: Yes. I became Majority Leader in '73. I was Majority Leader for the '73, '74, and '75 sessions.

BB: At the same time that Gordon McOmber was president of the Senate.

NL: Right.

BB: Is there an incident or a story or something that would kind of typify Tom Judge?

NL: Nothing that sticks out, I hate to say that. After knowing him as well as I did, we just got along real well. I didn't have any conflicts with him. The one problem area was that when the work-comp scandal took place. Tom and I talked about that quite a bit because he was really worried about what it was going to do to his administration. They went after Luke [McKeon]. I was in the leadership at the time. We just didn't know what was going to happen. It was a real shock when Luke was convicted. I don't know if there were any other convictions or not. There were a lot of indictments.

BB: I remember the name of a guy whose name was James Carden? He was implicated somehow. I don't know if he was convicted of anything. He was associated with that I think.

NL: He ran the Workman's Comp department.

BB: You had personal conversations with Judge about that?

NL: Oh yes.

BB: And he was deeply concerned about it?

NL: We were very concerned. We were wondering what was up and who was in trouble. Tom even said, "Are they after you?" And they weren't. I think everyone was worried about who they were after. There were indictments out of Butte of attorneys. They were dropped and there was a lot of name calling and back-biting. It was just a bad time in the legislature. You were in there at the time.

BB: Yes. I don't remember the details of it very well, but Stan Stephens was involved in some way because he owned a radio station up in Havre. Stan would do radio commentaries. There was an incident that occurred...I better be careful about this because I'm not sure I remember it. It runs vaguely in my mind that some guy that Stephens knew in Havre worked in a grocery store or something and dropped a case of peaches on his foot. So there was some kind of a worker's claim or worker's compensation claim thing that Stan heard about that seemed to have been grossly mishandled. He made a telephone call or two and thought, "Boy this is outrageous." So he did a radio commentary and I think that was part of what triggered something that led toward Jim Carden and eventually toward Luke McKeon. That may not have been what started it, but that was during the early beginning of it.

NL: I vaguely recall that. I think you're right about that. It's just like so many of these things. It's just a little incident that starts the ball rolling. That's what happened there.

BB: You must have known Stan Stephens?

NL: Oh very well, yes. Stan and I were good friends.

BB: Describe him.

NL: Stan is a guy I really like. He just is a guy that I always could relate to. He was on the other side of the aisle. We just cooperated a lot. He was easy to cooperate with and easy to work with; sincere, and honest.

BB: He had good interpersonal skills?

NL: Yes, he really did.

BB: His philosophy was more conservative?

NL: Oh yes.

BB: Now you served both before and after the 1972 constitution. What were the most notable changes in the legislative process?

NL: It was between Gordon McOmber and I.

BB: Gordon McOmber was a senator from the Great Falls area.

NL: Right, Fairfield.

BB: Oh, I was thinking of Gordon McGowan, yes but Gordon McOmber was from Fairfield.

NL: McGowan was from Highwood. McOmber is who we're talking about.

BB: Yes he was president when you were Majority Leader.

NL: The first session that I was Majority Leader, we just followed the way it had been where the Majority Leader ran the Senate. Then the second session comes along and Gordon said, "You know, it's not the way it's supposed to work." We never had any problem about that. I'll never forget that. I would just continue and pretty soon I'd call Gordon up and make committee appointments and things like that. Gordon said, "Well, I'll think about it."

BB: Because under the old constitution, the Majority Leader was really the leader of the Senate. Under the new constitution, there was a president of the Senate, like the Speaker of the House. The president didn't have all the power of the Speaker of the House. For example, the Committee on Committees still existed in the Senate. The committee was elected by the majority party that made the committee assignments. I always thought when I was president of the Senate that really there was the president of the Senate, the Majority Leader, and a majority of the members of the Committee on Committees. They were essentially the equivalent, those five people, to the Speaker of the House. So it was necessary for us to work closely together.

I think sometimes people wondered, "Well, why was the Senate so much more collegial? Why did it work together so much better than the House?" It was sometimes acrimonious and the politics were more bare-knuckled over there and that sort of thing. I think part of the reason was that the Senate was a smaller body, or still is, with four-year terms instead of two-year terms, but also that there had to be collaborative leadership in the Senate. So basically you had five people that would buy into the same decisions when they were made and they all had friends. So you generally could make it work better that way. At least I thought it did.

NL: They were just more seasoned people, more experienced.

BB: Any thoughts on term limitations?



NL: Oh, I'm totally in favor of term limitations. I don't think it should be abolished. These arguments say that the acrimony in the last session was because of the lack of experience of the legislators. Well I just don't buy that. I think that this is a time of acrimony. I don't care how you're elected here. There are going to be problems about it.

BB: You feel that term limitations have worked well?

NL: Yes I do. Especially in some areas like Butte, you could be in there until you die. So I think there should be new blood. I don't think that hurts a thing.

BB: Any other changes connected with the new constitution?

NL: I guess the single-member districts was really the big one. That practically destroyed the power of the Democratic and Republican Party. There's no doubt. When I ran the first time in Silver Bow, there were seven House members and four senators. We were running countywide. We all kind of caucused and did things alike and stayed closer together. Once single member districts started to take place, it was a different ball game. Everybody was doing their own thing regardless of what the party said, which is good. I do think there is a need for the party, but the party just has to learn to adjust to that.

BB: Have you noticed any differences in the Democratic Party since you started in politics back in the '60s and today? Do you have any perspective or thoughts on that?

NL: I don't know. I find that the workers in the Democratic Party like the central committee people in Butte, there were certainly a lot more liberal than me. I didn't get along too well with the central committee members.

BB: Oh I see, even when you were there?

NL: Yes, when I was in the legislature. I remember Dan Harrington was the Central Committee chairman in Butte. He didn't speak to me.

BB: Why?

NL: Because I wasn't voting the way the Central Committee wanted me to vote. The Central Committee had been that way in Butte. Whatever the Central Committee said, that's the way legislators were voting. Silver Bow Political Committee was dominated by the Anaconda Company until right before I came into the legislature. There was a tradition of voting as the way the Central Committee wanted you to, because that's the way the Anaconda Company wanted you to. When Dan got in there, obviously the Anaconda Company wasn't controlling things anymore in the Central Committee. A guy named Bill Renouard.

BB: Say that again?

NL: R-E-N-O-U-A-R-D, Renouard. His brother was the president of the Anaconda Company. Bill was chairman of the Democratic Central Committee. So it was a very cozy relationship. Bill was a real good guy. The thing about a lot of those things—

BB: They felt maybe that you were...Your dad had been a businessman and you had worked for the Montana Power Company and you didn't have any particularly bad experiences with the Anaconda Company. You'd voted against them a few times in the legislature, but maybe they felt that you weren't populist enough to suit them? Is that fair?

NL: Or conservative enough.

BB: They thought you were too liberal?

NL: Oh, yes.

BB: The Harrington Central Committee?

NL: Oh no, not that. They thought I was too conservative. The Harrington Central Committee did; thought I was too conservative. I just wasn't bowing to them. That's all there was to it. I wouldn't do it.

BB: Dan Harrington went on to serve both in the state House and the state Senate for many years. There was another fellow who served there for along time too by the name of Bob Pavlovich, who was also in the House with Harrington. When term limitations limited them both out of the House of Representatives, they ran against each other in the Democratic primary for the Senate. Harrington easily defeated Pavlovich. Did that surprise you?

NL: No, Dan is well known in that neighborhood. That's his home area. I could see it. The word was around Butte to Pavlovich, was kind of the spokesman for the bars. That would have helped Dan out a lot. It's something how the strength of Butte, at one time there were 11 legislators in Butte. It went down to four House members.

BB: Yes because the population has declined. Also I get the impression that perhaps the Democratic Party has changed somewhat there as well. Maybe it was more moderate in years past and it's more like Harrington now.

NL: Yes, it's more like Harrington now. It is definitely a party that I don't think I would work too well with today.

BB: You'd feel somewhat more moderate?

NL: When I was in the legislature, a Democrat in Butte was more moderate. They were known to the liberals and other parts of the state, we were turn-coats. I just always more of a moderate.

BB: What was your relationship with Gordon McOmber?

NL: He was a great guy. We got along well. We had no trouble.

BB: He was a Farmers Union man, essentially, from over in the wheat country. So he came from a different tradition or part of the Democratic Party than you did.

NL: Yes, I remember one time when I was campaigning for the Court, I went to Gordon's home. He was sitting in his living room and he let me come in. We had the pleasant conversation. I asked him what he was doing. He said he would just sit in a rocking chair listening to the wind. That's nothing you could ever do in Butte.

BB: Anything else about the new or old constitution?

NL: You know, you weren't in the Con Con. I think about that Constitutional Convention and they're saying what a great document it was. It wouldn't have passed if it wasn't for the gambling issue.

BB: Yes, I think so. Explain that.

NL: There were three side issues to the constitution that we would vote on. I know that one of them was capital punishment, one of them was unicameral legislature, and then gambling.

BB: So what happened was the Con Con delegates finalized their product. They said, "We want the people to decide these three things. In addition, should the new constitution continue the prohibition of gambling? Should the new constitution have a unicameral legislature or a bicameral legislature? Should the new constitution prohibit or allow capital punishment?"

NL: I think it bears out that in order to vote on the other issues you had to vote on the constitution itself. I know around Butte, if it wasn't for the gambling issue, the constitution would not have passed around Butte.

BB: They figured in order to get the prohibition eliminated from the old constitution on gambling so they could have gambling in Butte. They'd have to take this new constitution. For Butte, that was no problem.

NL: Yes, it wasn't. It wasn't a problem in a lot of areas. That carried the constitution. It was a smart way to get it passed, that's for sure.

BB: There was a fellow from in your area by the name of Joyce? Was it Tom Joyce? I think some people give the credit to him for that idea.

NL: Tom was sharp. He was a sharp guy.

BB: I don't know that for sure, but I've heard that Tom Joyce's idea was that there was a lot of controversy about gambling and he couldn't succeed in the Con Con and get the gambling prohibition removed. He said, "Let's put it on the ballot." I'm told that he informally mentioned to some people that it would be what it would take to get it to pass like gangbusters in Butte and perhaps therefore in the whole state.

NL: Great Falls went in that way.

BB: Yes, perhaps for that same reason.

NL: Yes.

BB: Any other impressions of the Constitutional Convention?

NL: You know, not especially. I know I handled a lot of the legislation to implement the constitution. That was more formal than anything. I don't know, but single-member districts initially, I think helped the Democrats. Then it obviously changed in later years. When you had single-member districts, I think the environmental movement was really sparked then. We did pass some tremendous advanced environmental laws. I remember one particular law, the Hard Rock Mining Act. The Company did not want the law passed. They did not want regulation in mining like the state was proposing. They had it killed until I made an amendment to eliminate all small miners from the law. Then once the small miners were out, the opposition to the law failed. The law passed.

BB: That shouldn't have endeared you to them too much.

NL: No. Again, that's an example. I know the company. They knew they had to face that. They knew they were going to have to have some more regulation. They weren't really upset about it. The only bad experience I had with the Company was Glen Carney. He really got mad at me over that vote on reporting their income in other places. I never had any problem. In fact, I went on to become a partner of Lou Brown, who was a lobbyist for the Anaconda Company.

BB: Yes, I've interviewed Lou and also Lloyd Crippen.

NL: Oh, have you really?

BB: Yes. Do you remember Lloyd Crippen?

NL: Yes, very well.

BB: What about Lloyd?

NL: I always did like Lloyd. He was a high class guy. He was a good lobbyist. He knew how to handle it well. He was a good man for the Anaconda Company. Denny Shea was another one, a good lobbyist. I liked them. There weren't many bad lobbyists, that's for sure, or they wouldn't have been there. I remember one lobbyist, Socs Vratiss. I don't know if you remember Socs. Al Dougherty was another one. They were the old-timers in Helena. All the lobbyists were well met and good guys. You had hardly any trouble with any of them.

BB: What were the characteristics of a good lobbyist?

NL: I think just that he really knows what he's talking about. I lobbied myself for two sessions.

BB: Who did you lobby for?

NL: I had all kinds of clients. I lobbied for the Montana Trucker's Association, for the World Bank on one bill, and for the Outfitters and Guides, the accountants at one time. I must have had about 10 or 12 clients.

BB: When would that have been?

NL: In '77 and '79.

BB: The World Bank?

NL: Yes. There was a law on the books in Montana that Montana state investments could not be invested in any foreign corporation. The World Bank wanted that changed so they could...it was good for Montana to be able to have those investments. There was quite a bit of opposition to that bill.

BB: The banking community?

NL: No, just the conservative element that we were giving in to a one-world government of some kind.

BB: What did your bill allow?

NL: The bill allowed the state of Montana to invest in foreign countries. That's basically what it did.

BB: So maybe our local banks wouldn't—before then you could invest outside of the state, still in the country. So they probably didn't oppose your bill especially.

NL: No, the banks did. The opposition wasn't from the banks. The opposition was philosophical.

BB: Do you remember who the leader of the opposition was?

NL: No I don't. It was mainly out of the House. I'm sorry but I don't recall that.

BB: Who carried the bill for you?

NL: I don't even remember that.

BB: Now you've mentioned some lobbyists that kind of stand out in your memory. Are there legislators that stand out in your memory? Are there two or three members of the Senate?

NL: Dave Manning, who could forget Dave? He was such a straight shooter. He was really interested in helping Montana in the correct way. You talk about a guy who really knew what was good for Montana; that was Dave Manning. It would be hard to get people to even compare with him.

BB: Dave Manning would be a good example of someone that you would have never known if there had been term limitations.

NL: That's for sure. I still am in favor of them.

BB: So Dave Manning was a senator from Treasure County from Hysham. He first entered the House of Representatives in the election of 1932 and he was the Speaker of the House at one time in 1939. Then he moved into the Senate in the election of 1940. You and I both served with him in the state Senate until he retired. He wasn't able to complete the 1985 session or something like that. He was the longest serving legislator in the country at the time. Use some adjectives to describe Dave.

NL: Dave was noted for being reserved and not too vocal. He had a lot of silent power. That's the way to put Dave. He was a guy you listened to. You wanted to cooperate with Dave. He was great for getting people to cooperate with him.

BB: I heard a guy joke one time that Dave was so respected in the Senate and he was so proper, you remember he dressed very carefully and he conducted himself with propriety? You just naturally respected him. Who was it? Somebody said to me one time that voting against a Dave Manning bill would be like pushing your grandpa down on the ice.

NL: He would work so hard on the legislation that he was behind. I remember there was the bill about bentonite mining. He flew us to eastern Montana and we had a look at the bentonite mines. He really worked a bill. He was in charge of it.

BB: He took a lot of time and effort into it. He was deeply knowledgeable.

NL: He really was.

BB: Especially I think in coal and oil, gas, water, resource issues that are in eastern Montana.

NL: The big thing that Dave did, his line company installed a lot of the rural cooperative lines in Montana.

BB: He had a company. He was a contractor that put in power poles and power wires.

NL: Yes, that's what he did.

BB: Going back into the '30s, I think.

NL: He sure was a good businessman and a real straight shooter.

BB: You'd characterize him as a liberal, a moderate, a conservative?

NL: I remember one time he was chairman of the Reapportionment Committee. We were having a real battle over reapportionment one session. Dave had four senators and we only should have had three at the time. I remember Dave talked me into eliminating my seat.

BB: Wow.

NL: So I did. I made an amendment that there be three legislators, eliminating my seat. Before the vote, I talked to my fellow senators Steve Shugrue and Frank Reardon. I can't remember who the other one was. They were both behind me on doing it because our population didn't deserve four senators. That's all there was to it. So I made the motion. As soon as I made the motion, they stood up and called me a traitor.

BB: What?

NL: Yes, they called me a traitor.

BB: On the floor of the Senate?

NL: I'm telling you I was never so upset. The two guys, I asked them. I wouldn't have done it without their concurrence. The minute I did it, of course, Shugrue started...and Steve had a little

bit of a drinking problem. Then when he got to going on it, calling me a traitor and how I had sold out Silver Bow County, Reardon jumped on the bandwagon in spite of the fact that the two of them had agreed to back me when I did it. We thought it would help in other ways.

BB: What ultimately happened?

NL: Of course it passed. I made the motion in my own seat to be eliminated. It passed naturally and it was forgotten later.

BB: They knew it was right, but they also knew that it would be bad in Butte?

NL: It would sound bad.

BB: They sure left you hanging out.

NL: Yes they really did.

BB: You survived and Shugrue didn't. I think I served with Reardon. I don't believe Reardon was in the Senate when I was there. Reardon was still in the legislature when I was there. Shugrue wasn't. He must have gone down instead of you.

NL: Yes. He did.

BB: Do you have a story about that?

NL: Steve's alcohol got to him. He ended up in Warm Springs after that session. The poor guy just had a real bad time with alcohol. That's all there was too it.

BB: When the seats got narrowed from four to three, did you have a primary opponent?

NL: After that first election, I never had an opponent again.

BB: So when you got into a single-member district, you didn't have a primary in the single-member district. Was that the district that Shugrue would have represented?

NL: No. Shugrue was on the other end of town. We wouldn't have opposed each other. Reardon didn't run again.

BB: That must have been what freed that up for you then? You probably would have been in the same one as Reardon?

NL: Yes. The thing is it all came out in a wash.

BB: There was a guy named [Leonard] Vainio. He might have been the other guy. Is that right?



NL: Yes he was the fourth one. That's right. He was with me. He didn't stand up and condemn me.

BB: Okay, another senator that you can remember that stands out in your memory?

NL: Jimmy Shea and Skeff Sheehy, there was a good senator. Skeff later became a member of the Supreme Court.

BB: From Billings, but he grew up in Butte.

NL: Yes. He was a Butte boy. He always stood out for me as a real good legislator, honest, dedicated, and a public servant. Bill Groff was kind of the big wheel in the Senate when I was there. I remember we had a secretary of the Senate that was called Walter Marshall. Groff came to me one day and said that a bill had come over from the House. Walter had the secretary change the bill somewhat. I know Groff came to me and he said, "I'll leave it up to you. Whatever you do I'm behind you." So I fired Walter Marshall. I know Groff was that kind of a guy. If he knew something wrong, we were together on it. That ended Walter Marshall.

BB: So Walter Marshall, secretary of the Senate was doctoring bills in his clerical capacity as secretary of the Senate, making amendments to them basically. Why was he doing it?

NL: The bill was really innocuous. Walter was not taking money from anybody. It wasn't that way. There had been a mistake made over in the House. Rather than having them send the bill back and forth, which it was eventually done, it was corrected just the way Walter had corrected it. So it wasn't a big deal, but I think that had been going on a lot.

BB: The stories I've heard was that Walter...that wasn't the only time, and that might have been a factor in your decision too. You felt there was a pattern there with this kind of thing.

NL: You know, there was never any way to prove it because the girls up there were on his side. It happened that there was a secretary up there Bill knew. She went to Bill and said, "I just don't like doing this." She wasn't after Walter. She just didn't like being crooked. Like I say, I don't think Walter was getting paid.

BB: At least that you knew of.

NL: Yes.

BB: Bill Groff; why was he such an eminent figure?

NL: He was an old-timer there. I think that was the big reason.

BB: Term limitations again, Neil.

NL: Yes, you're right. I don't know. I'm still in favor of them.

BB: Describe what made Bill Groff so influential.

NL: He just was a smooth operator. Every year, he and the Republican leader in the Senate, Jean Turnage, would go on vacation together. So Bill was just a guy who could work with people. I can't think of anything else other than it was his idea that we start the reunion.

BB: Oh was it? The legislators' reunion?

NL: Yes, that was Bill's idea. Then when I was involved, he never came to a dinner. I guess he did in later years.

BB: You haven't been to many recently.

NL: No, I haven't been. I haven't been well for a lot of them. My problem is health problems and having to stay around here. I'm what you call an incomplete paraplegic. That means I have all the internal paralysis, but I can walk. So that means a real problem with bowel, bladder, and things like that. I have to stay close to home. I can't go anywhere over night. Now I'm on oxygen at night too.

BB: Tell me about Turnage.

NL: Jean Turnage is a real friend of mine. He was the kind of guy, I'll never forget, I'd get upset about something and he'd come over with a note and hand it to me. He would say, "You're violating the 13th commandment: Thou shall not take thyself too serious." Jean was an easy guy to work with. The other leader I worked with Frank Hazelbaker. Frank and I were real close friends. It's funny how when I got in there, I was kind of a rabid liberal Democrat. By the time I left, I was a moderate Democrat. Butte has two parties: a Democratic Party and the cocktail party. I belong to both of them.

BB: Any thoughts on Frank Hazelbaker?

NL: Frank was certainly a likable fellow.

BB: A senator from Dillon, Beaverhead.

NL: Yes. He and I got along very well. There's that story. Dusty Deschamps was his son-in-law. There was always something to say that Frank and Dusty put that deal together to raid Shea's house. I wonder how it happened, but it's interesting.

BB: It didn't do you any favors.

NL: No, that's for sure.

BB: As you look back, what conclusions can you draw as a legislator and as an observer of Montana politics in the years since you've left the legislature? You've been an active participant and a very astute, knowledgeable observer for decades now. What have you learned that would be useful for present and future generations of Montanans to know?

NL: Everyone has to get involved in politics. I think the problem today is just apathy. If people were involved in politics, they would feel like I do. They would take issues to heart. If you just don't care, like most people don't, that's what's wrong with the country. Look at the turnout in elections and how low it is. Even a write-in or a mail election, you're lucky if you get 40 percent. Now, that's crazy when you won't even mail it back. It is an apathetic public. I just think somehow we've got to get over that apathy. I hope it doesn't require tragedy to do it.

BB: In other words, some big cataclysmic event that would cause or force people to become interested.

NL: Maybe one of the problems is until they're financially strapped or under the gun economically, they don't care. Everything is going fine. They have their new car and house. Why be upset? The other thing that was interesting in my legislative career was the governor had appointed a blue ribbon commission to study the university system. One of the things that the panel had decided to do was to make Montana Tech a junior college. That was one of the biggest fights of my career, is fighting that. We not only came away with Tech remaining as it was, in fact a little stronger, but we got them a new library. That was Hazelbaker's idea. There were a lot of legislators who were opposed to a 2.5 million dollar liquor warehouse. So Frank said, "Why don't you make an amendment to switch to eliminate liquor warehouse and include instead Montana Tech library?" So that amendment was made. I remember it passed that day and eventually Tech got a new library.

BB: Wasn't there also a liquor warehouse that also got passed?

NL: I don't know.

BB: What I vaguely remember, I'd have to go back and think about this some more, but there was some kind of a deal involving the library at Montana Tech and the liquor warehouse in Helena and the cable TV installation over in Bozeman. That was the deal that got put together so all three of them passed. That's how I remember it.

NL: Yes. Believe me, a lot of trading went on there. You know, I remember some of the legislators—

BB: You said that was Hazelbaker's idea?

NL: Yes. He came over to my desk and suggested it. I thought it was a hell of a good idea. It's something how people like Frank Hazelbaker were so helpful. That's the thing that I came away with. You look in the newspapers and you think these legislators hate each other. Really, they don't. There's a lot of show talk, but down deep they get along well.

BB: You think they still do today?

NL: I think they do. I don't know why, but it doesn't seem to me that it's any more vociferous than it always has been. I remember that sales tax fight in '71. God, there couldn't have been anything more bitter than that. Some sessions have more issues that can reek of controversy than others do.

BB: Who were the leaders in the sales tax fight? How do you remember that?

NL: Jim Lucas was the leader on the Republican side. He actually risked his political career on that fight. Of course, he lost.

BB: Did you have any dealings with him?

NL: His partner was Tom Moynihan, who was a close friend of our family from Butte. That's the only way I knew Jim as much was through Tom.

BB: Who was the leader in the opposition to the sales tax?

NL: Dick Dzivi was the leader, a senator from Great Falls. They both did a credible job, that's for sure.

BB: Who debated Dzivi in the Senate? Who was the Republican in the Senate? There must have been a Republican carrying the bill because it got over from the House, right?

NL: Yes. I wondered if it wasn't Stan Stephens. I suspect that. It would be something that Stan would be capable of.

BB: Jim Moore?

NL: Jim would too, to some degree. Jim was a good guy. There was a high-class guy, Jim Moore. No one can say a bad word about Jim.

BB: He was a Senator from Two Dot.

NL: Right. And he lives in Bozeman now.

BB: He never went to law school, but became a lawyer and left the ranch at Two Dot and eventually moved to Bozeman and went into the practice of law.

NL: He had a great law firm.

BB: Anything else?

NL: Let's see, I've got some notes here. There's one statement I made. I remember during that fight over the downgrading of Montana Tech and changing the whole university system. I came up with this thought and I remember it was repeated over and over that we shouldn't be listening to these asphalt jungle exiles coming in here. I remember that statement.

BB: Who were you referring to?

NL: The staff of the Blue Ribbon Commission. They were all people from other states. Larry Pettit [Montana commissioner of Higher Education] was the only one that wasn't.

BB: The Blue Ribbon Commission was the commission that was authorized to look carefully at the university system in Montana and make a recommendation. Their recommendation initially was to degrade Montana Tech to a junior college.

NL: Yes. And Dillon to a junior college. And Havre.

BB: Did they ever change that recommendation?

NL: No, it was just abandoned. The report was abandoned I think.

BB: Okay.

NL: The report was never implemented. The other thing that happened is that one day Jim Moore came to me and said, "There's some guy in here that wants to introduce an acupuncture bill. I just don't feel like doing it. Will you do it?" So I did it. I introduced the acupuncture bill. That was quite a fight.

BB: Was it a bill to legalize acupuncture?

NL: Yes. We succeeded, but boy I'll tell you, the medical profession sure was opposed to that. They almost stopped it, but we got it through. One time I took a trip to Las Vegas, my wife and I. When I got down there I noticed personalized license plates on all the cars. So I came back to Montana and introduced the personalized license plate bill.

BB: Is that right?

NL: Yes. That's where it came from, my trip to Vegas. Let's see, I don't know. I guess we covered it. Another issue that was quite controversial and interesting was ERA amendment.

BB: Equal Rights Amendment.

NL: Yes. That came over from the House. I think it was two states short of passing. That was a big fight.

BB: What was the issue?

NL: In my mind, the issue was the Christians versus everybody else. I think there were a lot of members in the Senate that felt this was anti-biblical. It shows you the effect of religion on politics. I think the thing that killed the ERA was just the fact that it was giving women equal rights as men. That's not the way the Bible preaches it. I think it was a lot of feeling that way.

BB: Do you remember a guy we served in the Senate with was Senator C.R Thiessen from Sidney? Do you remember his involvement with that issue?

NL: I don't remember exactly. Do you recall anything?

BB: Cornie was such a deeply devout evangelical Christian. I'm thinking that when you mentioned that, I thought you might remember the Thiessen story about that.

NL: The only story I remember about Cornie—and he's not around anymore—but we wanted to get Cornie off of a bill. We had a hard time. So what it was, to get the bill out of committee, and Cornie was already for it, we took a *Playboy* magazine and put it on his desk under all of his stuff. Just at the time we knew he was reading the *Playboy* magazine, the report was made on the committee to have the bill sent before the full House. Cornie didn't even know it happened. I remember that *Playboy* magazine served a lot of purpose.

BB: He was engrossed in it?

NL: Yes. He was totally engrossed in it.

BB: He had some kind of a crusade against pornography. One of his nicknames was "Porny" instead of Cornie. So that doesn't really fit with that description at all.

NL: When he was looking at it, I remember he was right behind me. The whole place was in stitches watching him. Everybody knew what was going on.

BB: Anything else?

NL: The other thing that happened to me was in my second session. I was opposed to the new highway building. Anyway, it had passed. The way it passed left some loopholes in it. Why I was

opposed to the highway building: we get 90 percent of what we put in highway money. That highway building would have taken all that money out of highways.

BB: The money that could have gone to maintain and build highways was used to build the building?

NL: Yes. I can't recall who called me. A news reporter called me. Ben Stein and I filed a lawsuit—

BB: Senator from Livingston.

NL: —to stop the construction. The administration, the governor then—Tom Judge or whoever it was—went to the district court where we had filed that and talked the Supreme Court into taking the case over. So a news reporter called me and said, "What do you think of the Supreme Court taking the case?" I made the statement that's just a typical whitewash.

BB: About which case?

NL: This was about building that new highway building.

BB: There was a suit involving it?

NL: Ben and I filed a suit to stop construction. The administration went in and asked that our case be sent immediately to the Supreme Court.

BB: Was it the highway diversion? Was that the idea?

NL: Yes.

BB: It might even be in the constitution. I can't remember for sure. You can't divert gas tax money for a purpose other than building and maintaining highways.

NL: That was our argument, yes.

BB: Yes.

NL: Anyway a news reporter called me and said, "What do you think of what the administration is doing and going to the Supreme Court?" I said, "Oh it's just a typical whitewash job." I'm sitting in my office. Next door comes three highway patrolmen and said, "You're under arrest." I said, "What for?" They said, "We have to take you right now. The Supreme Court is waiting for you. You have to go up to the Supreme Court and explain that comment, that whitewash comment." So I went up to the Supreme Court and I said, "I need time to have attorneys and to get everything." Turnage and Dzivi represented me. I just had to stand up before the Court a

few weeks later and say, "I didn't really mean that it was anything wrong. I'm sorry for making that remark." Talk about a sleepless night.

BB: Holy smokes.

NL: Yes, I had learned to watch my tongue a little better.

BB: Who sicced the highway patrol on you?

NL: The Supreme Court issued an order that I was to be arrested and brought to the Court immediately. So they came over. Mel Mooney was the guy in Butte. Two officers from Helena came over and Mel Mooney and the three of them came into my office. They took me out. They didn't handcuff me or anything. They put me in the patrol car and drove me to Helena where the Supreme Court was just waiting for me.

BB: They thought you...

NL: They thought the remark was...

BB: Directed at them?

NL: Yes at them. They thought I made the comment about what I thought was going on. I said, "It's just a typical whitewash job."

BB: This was after the Supreme Court had ruled against you and Stein?

NL: Yes, they ruled against us. They were assuming jurisdiction themselves.

BB: So then in response to that, you said it looked like a whitewash. They thought, "What the hell does he mean about that?"

NL: It's something. I've seen lawyers make much worse comments than that. I don't know what the hell is going on.

BB: What do you see as you look into Montana's future?

NL: I have a feeling that we're going to become another outpost for California. It's something since 9/11 that has really affected the population in Bozeman. There are a lot of people coming in here. They just want to get out of those cities, which they consider more dangerous. They want to live in places like Montana, which obviously is a little safer as far as a terrorist attack. What terrorist would want to hit Montana?



BB: So you see Montana as maybe a place for people to retire? Montana will be a good place for people to live?

NL: Yes, I don't think the development in natural resources is going to expand any further. I think that has reached its peak. It's going to have to be technical and to use brain power. I think that's the future for Montana rather than our natural resources.

BB: So are you optimistic? Do you see Montana as a place where technically minded people and smart people might choose to live?

NL: Yes. I see them moving in around here, around me. One great example of that is wherever there's a—

BB: Maybe I should clarify. We're not in the Butte area now. This interview is being conducted in the Bozeman area.

NL: Yes. It's something how the future, even for Butte, looks good. Even though the mining is not doing that well, that's for sure. With the world demand for metals, we won't have much trouble. Now the price of gold is going up. We're liable to have some natural resource extraction, but that provision was enacted that doesn't allow cyanide leaching is really going to cripple the mining industry, that's for sure.

BB: There was an issue on the ballot four years ago that prohibited the use of the chemical cyanide in the leaching process of gold mining. So that will probably severely set back—unless we can develop some kind of a new technology—the gold mining in Montana.

NL: In a way, I am not in favor of gold mining that much. It's something that during World War Two...did you know all gold mining in Montana was stopped?

BB: I didn't know.

NL: Yes gold isn't an essential metal for war.

BB: A lot of copper was developed then obviously. Copper was used in shell casings.

NL: Yes and in World War I, the Butte copper was 40 percent of the world's production at that time. Of course later on, there were a lot of other places that developed it. I think Montana is going to look good. I don't think we're going to get the influx of people. The weather reports are best programmed to keep the population stable.

BB: And global warming might even change that a little bit.

NL: Yes, that's another problem.

BB: Anything else?

NL: That's about all, Bob.

BB: Okay, well, we sure appreciate your public service to Montana, Senator Neil Lynch.

NL: Thank you.

[End of Interview]