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Interviewee: Robert A. Poore
Interviewer: Bob Brown
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Bob Brown: Okay, we're interviewing Bob Poore, who was an attorney for many years here in Butte. Bob, when did you begin your practice in Butte?

Robert Poore: Nineteen forty-nine.

BB: And you were a native of Butte, you lived here before then?

RP: Yes, born here in 1919 in Butte.

BB: And so you've lived here your entire life?

RP: My entire life, except for periods away in the service and college, law school, that sort of thing.

BB: Now, W.A. Clark, the copper baron, died in the middle 1920s, so if you were born in 1919, you probably never met him.

RP: No, I did not, but my wife, she was Pauline Wild and her grandfather was [Jesse] Wharton. He was W.A. Clark's right-hand man. Clark gave him the actual position of head of the Butte Electric Railway. But really he was his buddy, sort of like the way [Harry] Hopkins was to Franklin Roosevelt, you know, just kind of a confidante. Clark, at one time, according to our family [inaudible] not been disputed by anybody, said to Mr. Wharton—when I grew up everybody was 'Mister'—said to Mr. Wharton, "We ought to do something for those kids," referring to the kids in Butte. This is in the tens, teens, clear up to the tragic forties when the Anaconda Company bulldozed it all down. But do something for the kids. So Pauline's Grandfather Wharton dreamed up the idea of the Columbia Gardens and then masterminded it and then lived out there. Pauline was born out there and lived there until she went away to college.

BB: And the Columbia Gardens, I remember too as a young man being here in Butte, were a wonderful amusement park.

RP: They were the greatest asset of Butte from a sociological point of view that we ever had. They were beautifully run. All the kids were truly welcome. Thursday afternoon was kids' day at the gardens. They had open streetcars in those days and everybody, not only the kids—although they didn't run them in the winter—would hang on the—they didn't have sides, they had stanchions along the edge and the little kids would get a free ride to the gardens and free

amusement tickets and the families would go out [together], though not necessarily. Thursday afternoon was kids' day.

Beautiful, beautiful gardens, award-winning. They had a gardener out there who became famous for what he could do with pansies. He would make a colorful [plantings], mostly butterflies, as I remember. Then there was the arcade that had a .22 shooting gallery and balloon-popping things and a bow-and-arrow-target thing, all up and down the arcade. Then there were three or four really fancy power-type things. The airplanes, they got up enough speed in the air, being twirled, so that they'd go pretty darn—about at least a forty-five [degree angle]—and the propellers would go around on them. They were fun. They called them the planes. Then they had a devil of a roller coaster, all wooden. My dad didn't want us to go on it, but of course we all went on it. They never had an accident that I know of. It was well-built. Of course, in those days, the Anaconda Company had the tops in craftsmen of every kind, not only woodworkers but steelworkers and the machine shops here in Butte could do anything.

Then the great crowning glory was the dance pavilion. It's supposed to have had the nicest dance pavilion west of Chicago and the coast. It had a springy floor. It wasn't so springy that you noticed it, but the hotshots said it had a springy floor. Great big pavilion, beautiful floor in the middle with a bandstand and the big-name bands, they all came to Butte. Butte was a cash treasure in those days. The miners, they brought minerals out of the surface to turn them into cash right there. Everybody had—the farmers used to come in from eastern Montana, get a few shifts in to be able to make enough payment to hold on to their farm. It was a big money place, but nobody else had any money. So that's being big.

We were talking about Clark, okay. Then my folks knew his kids, the junior Clarks, but personally I never met Mr. Clark and never heard of him until, you might say, modern times. Of course we saw his homes up there.

BB: Did Mr. Wharton ever speak of him?

RP: Well, I didn't know him. He didn't live much longer after Mr. Clark. Oh, they were very, very close. We have a family picture that was part of that collage at the governor's award thing, of Mr. Clark, Mr. Wharton, and a bunch of little kids. I could run downstairs and get that for you.

BB: That's okay, but I would like to see it after our interview. I think that would be great.

RP: Yes, it's cute because it has the big magnet, and by the way, he always dressed beautifully, Mr. Clark. Little tiny guy and a full mustache and a real fancy hat. I don't know what you would call it. It was not just an ordinary hat. Maybe it was a fedora, I don't know. But then you can notice his pants were beautifully pressed, and a vest, and a [inaudible] little lining of white there. He was a fancy dude.

BB: Now you mention Mr. Wharton talked to him about establishing Columbia Gardens, but the Anaconda Company maintained the gardens after Clark sold out?

RP: Yes, the company—yes, that's very, very true. I don't know when Clark sold out to the Anaconda Company, but you're absolutely right. The Anaconda Company ran the Columbia Gardens the whole time that I—they must have just perpetuated what Mr. Wharton and Clark said we'd like to see done, because they did it. There was one lady there, she was kind of the overseer. She was the mommy away from home, and they called her Mrs. Awful or something, but actually everybody loved her. She wouldn't let them do dangerous things. I'm not aware of any severe accidents and they had regular-type swings, the type that can hit a little kid right in the chops when it comes back. They had everything for the little kids—picnic tables, fountains, drinking fountains.

Of course, that's where they also held, on June 13th the Miners Union Day and they held all the contests—chopping blocks in half and the strength contest, first aid contest—and teams from various mines would compete in all of those. They had nice prizes for him. It was a big event and it was combined with the fourth—well, no it wasn't. Miners Union Day. But they still had lots of parades. There were, I think, as many as eight bands in Butte at one time—Miners Union Band, The Boys Central, The Girls Central, The Elks Band, [inaudible] had a band—it was a very musical town, very musical. All those ethnic countries had their own music and they kept it and were proud of it and perpetuate it. Even to this day you have ethnic dinners and dances and dressing up, some things of that nature.

BB: Here in Butte?

RP: Yes, here in Butte.

BB: And today is the year 2005 as we're conducting this interview.

RP: 2005, yes. No more Miners Union Day because there's no more Miners Union.

BB: Yes, that's right. Now Bob, John D. Ryan—

RP: Okay, I knew the Ryans very well—

BB: John D. Ryan was president of the Anaconda Company during this period.

RP: Yes, he was. He was a very, very handsome man. His son was Carlos Ryan and his son was John Ryan, and that son should be the grandson of the gentleman you're speaking of, was a very close friend of mine. We were buddies playing together for many, many, many years. Now my understanding—let's see, Cornelius F. Kelly—don't know which one was first. I think John D. Ryan. One of them made a deal. See, they were lawyers by then. The lawyers ran the Anaconda

Company for a long, long time. There were some exceptions. Mr. Steele wasn't a lawyer, but mostly they were from the legal department and elevated on up.

The story was that—I think it was John D. Ryan—that he was living here in Butte working for the Anaconda Company or Amalgamated. You know, it took a fusion to make the Anaconda Company [inaudible]. He said that yes, he'd go to New York, give up Butte, move away, settle for a million bucks. Well in those days, of course, anybody who was rich had a million dollars. That was the standard, a million bucks. It could have been true. If it was, it was a lot of money because miners were paid six dollars a day, there was no income tax, no taxes of any consequence. And he did have a beautiful home. I at least talked to on the telephone—Mrs. Ryan continued to live there after he passed away—on Park Avenue, upper Park Avenue.

BB: Here in Butte?

RP: No, no, no. This is in New York City. He didn't have a home in Butte except for his son, Carlos Ryan, who was a very smart kid, but unfortunately a real heavy drinker and a party man. He had the wherewithal and there was some real gay blades in the old sense of the word, real around-townners, real doers, and they were all fun because they were all young, they were all rich, and they really were gay blades. Carlos was maybe the leader of the pack, but he was smart, real smart. He was a purchasing agent for the Montana Power. Montana Power and the Anaconda had a shared board of directors, at least. They may have had some other close affiliations, I don't know. But they split somewhere down the line. I don't know if it was the Sherman Act that split them or just business judgment, what split them up. But they went their separate ways.

BB: Now historians, I think, regard John D. Ryan as a pretty important figure in the development of Montana because he was apparently quite a successful president of the Anaconda Company.

RP: Yes, well, I'll say yes, but I think I'd also hasten to say that in the 1879 a guy named Edison invented the electric light and a friend of his, about ten or fifteen years after, invented the Ford automobile that took 40 pounds of copper. And the electrification of the United States started in New York and then worked clear across. So maybe for 20 or 30 years every pound of copper you could dig out of the ground had a market.

BB: Huge demand for Montana Copper.

RP: Demand for the product, and then along when the automobile may have—I don't think tapered off very much—along came WWI, with brass shells, shell casings. Of course you have to drive around Butte, you have to go over to Anaconda and look at the big dumps. You have to understand a mile high and a mile deep. A mile deep is awful deep. They say there's more streets, alleys, and drifts and slopes and underground passages under Butte than there are streets and alleys [inaudible] in New York City, in the borough of Manhattan. There's thousands

of miles of tunnels under Butte because all of the stuff came out of Butte. In any event, Mr. Ryan, I'm sure, certainly didn't make any mistakes.

BB: Then he was followed by Con Kelley.

RP: Cornelius F. Kelley. Con Kelly was a great big guy. I knew him pretty well as a kid. He was about six-foot-two, a nice looking guy. He was a rough, tough kid from Butte. He was an attorney and he succeeded Ryan and he had a place at Flathead Lake. The buildings are still there. For a while it was considered to be the site of the Mansfield Center up there. I don't know what went sour on it, and I'm not saying it was a mistake not to get it, but it was on a little tiny island. Did I say Flathead? I should have said Swan because Swan Lake was the summer home for the magnates of the Anaconda Company, including John D. Ryan, including Carlos Ryan, the son of John D., and the Corettes, which were very—and other Kelleys, which was a different Kelley.

When I was being invited up there as a guest, when Carlos Ryan was—when the parties were over down at the lower end of the Swan and the cars would start home—they'd send a boat ahead to get everybody off the lake because he came up there in a Chris Craft like mad and stoned and couldn't see where he was going, so you'd better be off the lake. He ran aground once and then he put it in reverse and tried to grind himself and there was a—I forget which of the officers had the nub of his—just was a propeller shaft with a few little bumps. The rest of it was all gone into the grinding off. So that was very social. They had bands up there. Very, very ritzy, social life. They dressed for dinner.

BB: You obviously were there at sometime.

RP: Kids were never welcome. I think that an objective appraisal was they were pretty stuffed shirts, at least from the kids' point of view they were. But they had Chris Crafts and they didn't use them in the day.

BB: A Chris Craft is a boat?

RP: Chris Craft was *the* boat. There was an end-board and it was built by a guy named Chris from, I think it was, Florida. It was *the* boat in the Depression days.

BB: Now Bob, we talked about how copper was king in Montana. There was a huge demand for copper for Ford motor products and other kinds of automobiles, and light bulbs and that sort of thing. So there was a great demand for Montana Copper. So the Anaconda Company was an extremely important influence in terms of the development of the economy in Montana. But it also, according to historians, had a lot of influence politically in our state.

RP: Let's go back a little bit on what you're saying there. As far as I know, and except for strikes, the Anaconda mines worked day and night from say 1895—I'm not sure of the starting date—

right up until it sold out here ten years ago, whatever it was. First they closed for a while and then they sold out, and of course now they're going hog wild with dollar and a half copper and [inaudible] up to sixty dollars and gold over 400 dollars an ounce. So getting back to your question, politically, yes, I think so. The Anaconda used to have, at the old Placer Hotel, they had a floor—I think it was the second floor—it was above the main floor—

BB: The sixth floor in the Placer Hotel.

RP: Was it sixth? I knew it was up above. And the drinks were free and the conviviality was free and I guess the influence was there. Both the Anaconda and the Montana Power had lobbyists. They were Anaconda men. Everybody knew that they—they were on a salary. Their job was to protect—when the controversial bills would come, that the ordinary citizen like me wouldn't know what to do with, why, I'd call their people. Largey MacDonald was the one I had the most confidence in.

BB: Largey MacDonald was one of the lobbyists for the Anaconda Company.

RP: He wasn't over there as much. There was Largey MacDonald, Bill Kirkpatrick, and then there was this perpetual gentleman. He was a tall, nice-looking guy.

BB: Al Wilkinson?

RP: Well that's another one. He was a postmaster general. But there was one more and he had a brother who was a mechanic and ran the—we parked our cars in his garage. His name may come to me. He was more of a, well, compared to the other ones, he wasn't a policy maker. I think he was an order carrier-outer. But in any event, they had a lot of pull. The story is that Wellington Rankin, when he was trying a case up in the northern part of the country there, he didn't like the reports that were coming out about him so he got his own newspaper. The *Montana Standard* was—Dick, James Dick [James Dickey] was the head of that. Well, Mr. [E.G.] Leipheimer was the editor for years and years. [Leipheimer was editor from 1928-1945.] My dad was a great admirer of Mr. Leipheimer. I think he was square shooter and a fine gentleman.

BB: And he was editor of the *Butte Standard* for a while?

RP: Well, there were two of them, there was the *Standard* and the *Post*. And then along came a maverick, I think it was daily or something. It went for a while, but there were two newspapers for years and years. The *Standard* in the morning and the *Post* at night. But they were both owned and operated by the Anaconda Company. Now I don't know if they had papers elsewhere in Montana or not, but Lee Newspapers now has quite a few of them. But yes, they had a lot of political—no question about it.

BB: I want to talk to you about Bill Kirkpatrick because I knew him and I know you knew him too.

RP: Who was that?

BB: Bill Kirkpatrick. But before we talk about Bill, one of the early important operatives for the Anaconda Company, a fellow who attended, I think, political conventions, especially on the Democrats side, and who apparently had a lot of influence in Montana politics was an attorney by the name of J. Bruce Kremer. Did you ever know him?

RP: Yes, I knew Mr. Kremer. Notice again I have to shift over to the Mister. There was Kremer, Sanders & Kremer, was a law firm in Butte. There was J. Bruce Kremer [who] was the older one and he was a political big, big, big-wig in the F.D.R. hierarchy [He was vice chairman of the Democratic National Committee]. Butte actually ranked very, very high. You surely should have him down on your list, Walker, Frank C. Walker.

BB: Frank Walker?

RP: Was a postmaster general [of the United States and one of Franklin Roosevelt's closest advisors].

BB: Here in Butte?

RP: He came from Butte. He lived on West Broadway in a beautiful home now that Jim Adresco(?) now lives in. Mrs. [Hallie] Walker, a lovely, social, gracious lady. They had two kids, Frank Jr. and then Laura Hailey. [The Walker children were Thomas J. Walker and Laura Walker Jenkins.] In any event, Mr. Walker was very personable. He was a nephew of [Michael E.] Cumerford. His name was Frank C. Walker, Frank Cumerford Walker. His uncle took a great fancy to—well, now we're talking not about Kremer, and I'll get back to him, but about Frank Walker. His uncle took a fancy to him. Frank had an office in our building and his name was still above the door when the place burned down. But he took a fancy to him and brought him to New York, set him up in everything. Head of the Columbia Artists, Columbia Pictures, and whatever other industries—Columbia Artists Management. So he was very wealthy so he made a big contribution, getting more relevant, to the Democratic Party [he was treasurer of the National Democratic Party], and F.D.R. made Frank C. Walker postmaster general.

So there's a little dinky town of Butte, Montana, with a person on the President's Cabinet. He and Kremer, Alf Kremer—now Alf Kremer was a wheeler-dealer. He was a very personable, clever, know-it-all type of guy. By know-it-all—not smart-alecky, but he knew everybody. He knew who was doing what. He was a business getter, big business, for Kremer, Sanders & Kremer. The younger Kremer was Alf Kremer, who was a dear, dear friend of mine. Very artistic, he was a community concert, local man. And in the middle was Sanders. And Cap Sanders was a workman, the real first-class lawyer, first-class. So the answer is yes, and I left out one somewhere. Oh, and also of a political nature that people should never forget was Rowe, Jim Rowe. Jim Rowe was the son of [inaudible] Rowe. His father was a realtor in Butte. Lawlor and

Rowe was a real estate and insurance—typical agglomeration of real estate-related businesses. His son, Jim, and his name obviously wasn't Jim—James.

BB: James Rowe?

RP: James Rowe was a brilliant guy. He went to Harvard Law School, was tops in his class, was a member of the Harvard Law Review and then was offered and accepted a job in Washington, D.C., and was the last clerk for Oliver Wendell Holmes. Interesting, really interesting. [Rowe headed the Commission for the Reorganization of the Executive Branch of Government, commonly known as the Hoover Commission. He was later the administrative assistant to President Roosevelt, from 1939-41.] He was at the end of the—well, he got embroiled—that isn't the right word—he got interconnected with all of the ins and outs of the Democrats, he and Corky the Cork, Corcoran and Rowe.

BB: Yes, Corcoran, James Corcoran I think [inaudible] James, but—Thomas Corcoran.

RP: Tommy the Cork [who received that nickname from Roosevelt]. They had a law office in Washington, D.C. that—

BB: Corcoran and Rowe.

RP: Sure, they knew what the law—they were lawyers but they were also fairly knowledgeable about political intrigue. Well maybe that's too strong, but I don't think so. But in any event, Jim Rowe never lost his love for Butte, came back here all the time. His mom lived quite awhile after his dad passed away. In any event, you add them all together—Bruce Kremer, Jim Rowe, Frank Walker—Wilkinson was the creation of all of those guys. Well, of course, then you get into the senators, Senator Murray, he came along a little later. But Butte had a lot of Democratic clout for a while in Washington. I was invited to dinner at Mr. Walker's house and Wallace, the vice-president, was there. I remember he was a left-winger and very controversial, I think—

BB: Henry Wallace?

RP: Henry Wallace. Even in his own party, I think, Mr. Wallace was controversial. In any event, I had dinner with the vice president of the United States and then when I went to New York City—I was the Navy, and I came in—there was a gal there. I invited her to dinner and I said, "Where would you like to go? What's really big on Broadway?" She said, "*Oklahoma!* is really big." I said, "Let's go!" "What do you mean? You can't get tickets good for two years."

So I called Frank C. Walker, Cummerford. So we showed up that night in about the third row in mid center and she was just—we were all impressed, but they always have a few seats. If you're the head of Columbia Pictures, you can get a seat in a theater in New York City.

BB: And who was the head of Columbia Pictures?

RP: Frank C. Walker. Frank Cumerford Walker.

BB: And he had been postmaster general?

RP: No, Frank C. Walker was the postmaster general under F.D.R. He was the only cabinet member from Butte, from my knowledge.

BB: But then how would he relate to Columbia Pictures?

RP: He was president of it then. His uncle Cumerford was—Cumerford and Columbia Pictures—Cumerford was the founder of Columbia Pictures. Then it has a tragic end which I know little or nothing about. Somewhere during the war, somebody made a big miscue in Columbia management. I don't know if there are any Columbia Pictures now. The Walker family went out and I don't say they got on hard times, but they came from the exalted to the ordinary humans. Lovely, lovely people, very nice people, but their empire, something happened to it during the war when I was away.

BB: Did you ever meet Bruce Kremer? [Kremer was secretary and, later, vice chairman of the Democratic National Committee.]

RP: I would say no, but Alf was such a dear friend of mine that I might have at some social doings. J. Bruce Kremer built that beautiful southern style mansion on Park Street just east of Excelsior. You might want to drive by it. It's been beautifully maintained since then. But then a lot of money was put in by the Anaconda Company that took it over as their western general operations president's headquarters and a lot of money was poured in it. But it was pretty impressive when I was a little kid. I lived within a block of that.

BB: Now tell me about Bill Kirkpatrick, because I knew him as a young legislator. He was quite a prominent figure in Helena in the politics representing the Anaconda Company.

RP: I didn't know that. I knew Bill. Three young lawyers came over from—Chestrap(?), Frank Chestrap and Bill Coldiron and Largey MacDonald—all came over from Missoula together, more or less. They took jobs on the sixth floor of the Anaconda Company and they were all hard-working and smart guys.

BB: Sixth floor of the Hennessy Building here in Butte?

RP: That's the Hennessy Building, which was then owned by the Anaconda Company. Frank Chestrap somehow he struck it rich in oil. I don't know how in the heck he would have done that. But he moved to North Dakota. As far as I know, Frank's still alive. Very well-to-do because he got tied up in oil and legal; this is in the thirties, well, late thirties, forties. And then Bill

Kirkpatrick was related to Con Kelly. Bill Kirkpatrick—I guess he was a nephew of Con Kelley. I never got the feeling that that entered into anything. He was a good lawyer in his own right and very, very affable. Well, you knew him. A tall, nice-looking guy. A real jolly guy. His wife was very close in our little group. She died of cancer. Oh, she must have been only 35 years old, 30, 35. And he remarried and I think she's still living in Missoula. Then Largey was the other one. Largey, there again, Largey MacDonald, the Largeys were the rich miners outside of the Anaconda Company. There was a Largey estate perpetuated on all kinds of mining claims out and around in here. Largey, in addition to working for the Anaconda Company, ran those.

BB: He also owned Wild Horse Island in Flathead Lake for a while.

RP: Well that's his brother.

BB: Oh, I see, OK.

RP: That's Bourke. Mr. MacDonald, well I guess he was just an Irish kid in Butte and he married into the Largeys. The Largeys were a very wealthy, prominent people. Largey MacDonald obviously took his mother's family name as a first name. Then there were four kids. They're all gone now. Largey and Bourke and Wilkis(?), Sammy. [The other MacDonald siblings were both female, Mary Montana, known as Tana, and Lulu Ann. Lu was married to Judge W.D. "Dub" Murray.] I don't know, but Bill Murray is right down below me here. He's a neighbor. But that was very prominent family.

BB: And Bill Murray was the grandson of Senator Jim Murray?

RP: Yes, Senator Murray. His son was "Dub" Murray, W. D. Murray. They called him "Dub." He was a federal judge. He came after Brown. I think you and I talked about Brown and you're visiting with Lou Brown Jr. Judge Murray went on the bench the year—

BB: So Lou Brown's father was also a federal judge?

RP: He was a federal judge, yes, he was. I never practiced before him. He was an austere looking guy, but Judge Murray went on the bench when I came back and started practicing in Butte. He and I were exact contemporaries in that phase of our careers. Very smart guy, very—took his judicial duties very seriously. He was socially very, very prominent, which came to my disadvantage because whenever he was in doubt, why, he wouldn't take a case I was involved in if he thought that he—he was a good friend and he was very, very dedicated to the administration of justice. So he was a fine, fine judge. For quite a few years I was a lawyer delegate to the judicial conference, which was a conference of western judges held at some ritzy place in the middle of the summer. I get an invitation when my brother and I were together.

"Well, what do you think?"

"You've got to go," my brother said.

"Gee, how can we afford that?"

"You can't, but you've still got to go."

So off I traipsed to San Francisco, Pauline and I, or L.A. or Glacier Park. Once they went to Hawaii and I didn't go. But in any event, I got to know an awful lot of federal judges with that type of thing.

BB: Now, James Murray, the Senator, had a reputation for being maybe the most liberal man in the U.S. Senate, and yet he was a kind of a part of the aristocracy here in Montana. He was very wealthy.

RP: Yes, it's kind of a parallel to the president from Boston, that family.

BB: Kennedy?

RP: The Kennedy family, yes. The Murrays owned some very valuable mineral interests, I guess at the turn of the century. I'm just guessing that they must have sold out to the Anaconda Company because they had a lot of cash for many years. In fact, "Dub" Murray, the judge, said it cost his dad, Senator Murray, a million bucks to get elected. Well geez, nobody had—they didn't get big contributions in those days. So it was his own money. And yes, he was a fine-looking man that came to Butte a lot. His wife—no, I was thinking of "Dub's" wife—was just a super lovely, lovely lady, the epitome of gentility. But it may be that Jim Murray, getting back to the senator, that he was unfairly categorized as far left as they put him. See, he ran for senate against Tom Davis and on the street I ran into Lou Murray. He grabbed me by the lapels like that and said, because I was identified with the Republican Party, "Tom Davis is just murdering our family," or something the equivalent of that. It was very embarrassing, very hurtful to me, very, very unfair. I [inaudible] say, "Gee," because that was the age of McCarthyism and Davis was trying to equate Senator Murray to a Communist. Well he wasn't a Communist. He may have been pretty far left, I don't know that stuff, but he wasn't a Communist. His family weren't Communists. They were staunch Democrats. They were Irish Catholics, strong, strong Catholics, but they were good, true American citizens and they weren't Communists.

BB: Did you ever meet Senator Jim Murray?

RP: Meet who?

BB: Did you ever meet Senator Jim Murray?

RP: Oh yes.

BB: How would you describe him?

RP: Very impressive. He looked like a Senator. I would meet him at the social doings. I never had any business and had no political connections whatsoever. Judge Murray, by the way,

speaking of Communists, appointed me to defend John Hellman, who was a member of the Communist Party.

BB: What was his name again?

RP: John Cyril Hellman. It was a very, very big case. It was when Jim and I, my brother and I, were alone in the office. In those days there was no public defender. This is an important story. There were no public defenders and so I get a call. I remember fairly frequently one or the other of the district judges, or Judge Murray [would call], Mr. Judge Such-and-such, and I thought, "Oh God, yes, Judge?" And we'd like you to—I've appointed you to defend thus and so. Well this one was in the federal court with John Cyril Hellman. So Jim and I talked it over and in those days you didn't get paid anything for your time, you didn't get paid stenographic time, you didn't get paid postage or paper, and this thing went all the way to the circuit court at Jim and my expense. A year and a half of work. In any event, Judge Murray appointed me to defend John Cyril Hellman.

BB: Was he from Butte?

RP: No, no, he was from—he was the valedictorian in a high school class in a Montana city, a little western city. It might have been up in the Flathead, John Cyril Hellman.

BB: There's a Hellman family up in Kalispell but there was also a literary figure named Lillian Hellman, who was supposed to have had some left-wing connections and that sort of thing.

RP: He was smart. He was valedictorian of his high school class and he was a philosophical Communist. He was on the board of directors, they had a fancy name for him. These are all admitted facts. We had to live with this. He is a Communist. But then we would defend it that the membership clause of the Smith Act, when he was arrested, was unconstitutional, and we prevailed at the circuit court. Lots of fun stories through that.

BB: Bob, when would this have been?

RP: Early fifties.

BB: I see, in the McCarthy period.

RP: Oh yes, in Irish Catholic Butte. We didn't have a prayer. The Communists decried any religious connection at all, values at all. But in any event, it was a very memorable experience and probably—at the same time as that I was chairman of the Republican Party Central Committee. [Laughs]. In fact, W.D. Rankin wanted me to become state chairman. Well there was no way. You had to take some time off to—and there again, my poor old brother Jim, all along, "No, I can handle it." I said, "You cannot," and he couldn't. But in any event, that was a very—

BB: And the key was you were assigned to defend this fellow, this Mr. Hellman, and he was convicted under the Smith Act and the facts were there to convict him, but when you defended him the ultimate result of that was that the Smith Act was declared unconstitutional.

RP: Yes, we went to San Francisco on it. Now I'd just as soon not have this part of the thing, but actually Krest Cyr—the Cyrs were prominent in Missoula, and particularly Krest [was]. He went to school there and was in a fraternity and sorority, the social life. He was a very nice, nice guy. So he had a big four-holer Buick and this is the early fifties so it was either train or—so he said, “Why don't we ride together?” His wife was Barbara Hastings—parted the ways and Pauline and I, we were all social buddies. So off we go to San Francisco. And if the press could have gotten a hold of it, they would have—

BB: Because Cyr represented the other side?

RP: Yes, he was a U.S. attorney, so he was going to hang John Hellman and I was going to get him off. And we went together.

BB: You just shared transportation with him is all.

RP: Well that's exactly right, that's exactly—well here I am, I'm doing all this on my own, at my own expense, and when we got down there the court was all ears for me and they didn't want to talk to him. They'd say to Krest, “Yes, we understand that, Mr. Cyr, we understand that he is a Communist and that the Communists are bad guys and blah blah blah. What we want to talk about is the constitutionality.” Well, then I would perk up, you know, “That's me! I'll talk about that.” [Laughs]. So we had a ball. The U.S. Supreme Court and the Lightfoot and Scales cases decided that it was unconstitutional and Hellman never served a day anywhere in jail. When we were still in Butte, when he was on bail, out on his own recognizance, he came to me and said, “I have to go to California to get a job. Would you see if you could get me—see if it was restricted to Montana?” So he told me what he said was the truth and I put in an affidavit and we applied for permission to leave Montana on the basis that he needed to support his family and get a job in L.A. This was under oath.

Judge Murray listened to the evidence and didn't say anything until it was all over and then he said, he turned to Hellman and he said, “Mr. Hellman, I don't believe anything you say. You don't want to go down to Los Angeles to get a job. You want to go down there to the headquarters of the West Coast Communist Party to do Communist activities. I deplore that and all that there is about Communism, but I am very concerned about the legality of the whole procedure under which you've been convicted and so your motion is granted.” I about fell out of the chair. Everything we'd put in, he threw out and then he came in with another reason, much more cogent, and that was that. And then—oh, I wasn't paid a dime by anybody and after the trial the Communist Party thought I was big stuff. Suddenly this impecunious guy had

unlimited—they said, “Mr. Poore, we would like to engage you to take the appeal to the circuit court.” I said, “Oh, boy.” They said, “We’ll pay you 25,000 dollars.” Well, gosh.

BB: The Communist Party?

RP: Our firm, yes. Our firm didn’t gross that in a year in those days. So my dad had passed away. Alf Kremer, he wasn’t a trial lawyer. So I went to Billy Meyer. He was a Jewish lawyer in town and he was a great friend of my dad. In the summertime when he’d go on vacation, Mr. Meyer would send whatever pressing business matters up because he knew he’d get his clients back. I went to Mr. Meyer. Mr. Meyer said, “Well, I’ll tell you one thing you’ve got to do. You’ve got to ask Judge Murray. You can’t go just making a decision like that on your own. He appointed you. You’re still, as far as he’s concerned—you gotta go.” So I went to Judge Murray. Judge Murray said, “Well, I—” I told him about the fee and everything. He laughed at the impecunious guy who suddenly got wealthy and didn’t do anything about it, you know, it wasn’t worth fighting about. He said, “You do what you want, Bob, but if I were you, I wouldn’t take it. So to assuage whatever’s left of your decision, I’ll appoint you to go to San Francisco.” In other words, I’ll appoint you to go down there for free again. So we spent another—

BB: [Laughs]. But he was trying to protect you from accepting 25,000 dollars from Communists.

RP: It was the right thing to do. I’m glad I don’t have any—I never did get a dime from the Communist Party, but I did get—for years after that I made talks all over, “The Defense of the Unpopular Client.” And I think I lost a few clients that equated me to the Communist Party and out they went, but by and large it was a business maker for us in the long run. That’s a long way from whatever—

BB: Well that was really interesting. I’m glad you brought it up.

RP: It was. Okay, that’s Judge Murray.

BB: And then another person that you might have come into contact with and have known here was a fellow who was elected to congress back in the early 1930s, Joe Monahan, and I think continued to practice law here.

RP: I knew his son very, very well. He passed away. He was in Miles City and his partner was Jim. Jim was on the board of directors of the old Power Company. Now that particular Monahan is a fireball and a prince. He was—now this is the son—he was on the board of examiners with me for many, many, many years. I was on the board of examiners for thirty-five years and chairman for about ten. And Tom, Tom Monahan—but his dad—

BB: Tom Monahan was a lawyer in Miles City.

RP: He was a lawyer here in Butte.

BB: And his dad was a lawyer here in Butte, Joe Monahan.

RP: Was he?

BB: Yes.

RP: Okay, well, all I can say is they had an extremely liberal and a little bit on the screw loose category. So I really didn't know anybody above Tom who I much admired, who was a little bit younger than I. He just recently died in the last three, four, five years.

BB: So you didn't actually know Joe Monahan, the guy who was the congressman?

RP: Well, I knew him in court because he had Tom sit there on a lot of his stuff trying to soak up law by just listening to his dad orate. He was a very verbal and vocal guy, but he and I never had any cases together and no, I knew him to see him, to talk to him. He had a client up there at Woodville that was kind of—in any event, no, I didn't know him to have coffee with him or a beer or anything.

BB: What was your impression of him?

RP: Little bit odd.

BB: [Laughs]. Well you know, there's a story that he got—when he was a congressman—he got in a fist fight back in Washington, D.C. and wasn't re-elected.

RP: No, I just think he was out on the periphery, even with his own party. But I really didn't know him that well.

BB: How about Jerry O'Connell?

RP: No, I didn't know him, except that there was another one that was supposed to be pretty much of a maverick but no, I did not know him.

BB: He was a congressman also.

RP: Didn't he relocate to Helena, more or less?

BB: Yes, I think so.

RP: No, all that when I came here he was a myth. They were always talking about Jerry O'Connell but no, of all the big names, I knew of him but didn't know any of his relations. No, I didn't know him at all.

BB: Senator Burton K. Wheeler.

RP: Well yes, he was from Butte, he was a lawyer. He had the Wheeler Block up there on Broadway Street. He was a contemporary of my dad. He had a lot of clout. He was an F.D.R.-vintage guy. He should have been included in those people from Butte with a lot of clout. He differed, fought with F.D.R. over the packing of the Supreme Court halfway into—brought him back a long way with my dad into respectability. [Laughs]. He had a lot of power.

BB: Did you ever meet him?

RP: Yes, just, again, as socially. Yes, Burton K. Wheeler. Yes, I remember Mr. Wheeler, Senator Wheeler. But not—the age differential quite a bit there, but so were the other ones we were talking about there.

BB: How about Jacob Thorkelson?

RP: Well, just that he had the nudist colony down there on Rowe Road, the same Rowe that we were talking about, and the kids were always wanting to go down and peek through. He had a big—

BB: Nudist colony!

RP: Nudist colony. He had a shrub fence around it. This is a repute.

BB: Now where was this, in Washington, D.C.?

RP: No, right down here.

BB: In Butte?

RP: Yes, right where the Rowe Road makes the corner. If you're going to Hanson Park you just turn left and there was Thorkelson's nudist colony. Now that I can't say was really was. (?)

BB: Well now, Thorkelson was a Republican congressman from Montana and he had a nudist colony here in Butte?

RP: That's what I was told when I was a little kid.

BB: [Laughs].

RP: Not being a nudist, why, I didn't join. I didn't have any friends who joined. I wish you could get that corroborated by somebody. I don't know to whom to turn you anymore. Everybody's

kicking off that remembers those old days. Maybe young Bill Murray—no, I don't know whether he would or not. But that's what we were told. But I didn't know him.

BB: He didn't last in Congress very long and he was defeated, I think—

RP: He was a doctor, I think. [He was a physician, having graduated from, and served briefly on the faculty of the College of Physicians and Surgeons at the University of Maryland.]

BB: A chiropractor or a doctor of some kind.

RP: Yes, I don't know, was he an M.D. doctor?

BB: I don't know.

RP: I think so. I think he was. I think he was a Republican, though he was, I think he was a maverick. [Laughs].

BB: Did you ever meet Jeanette Rankin?

RP: Not meet her, no I didn't, but I was fairly close to Wellington Rankin. When they wanted me to be a state Republican chairman, why, I asked my brother and he said, "Sure, go ahead." Well that was when we were growing. I shouldn't have even asked him. I should have said no. So I went to George Gossman—

BB: Who was lieutenant governor at one time.

RP: Was he? He was from Dillon. He was of the Gilbert family, very, very prominent. George Gossman could do no wrong in Beaverhead County. He was Mr. It. He was a druggist there and he and I were good friends. George was a down to earth, good guy. So I said, "George, they want me to be chairman."

He said, "How do you get along with Wellington Rankin?"

I said, "Well, as far as I know. What are you talking about?"

He said, "Well, you know, you know, he's the real head of the Party."

I said, "Well, in other words, if I were the chairman, why, I'd have to jump through to Mr. Rankin's drum call?"

He said, "Sort of, yes, I guess so, maybe, blah, blah blah..." He said, "He's the richest guy in Montana."

I said, "I think he's one of the poorest guys. He's got lots of dollars but he ain't got many friends."

You know he had that funny office there with that funny elevator? And then that one little guy, let me see, Wellington Rankin...Acher did all his legal work.

BB: He was a partner of Wellington Rankin's, right?

RP: He was a what?

BB: Acher was a partner?

RP: Well, he was in the safe office. That word partner is quite a—I don't know. But Acher did the work.

BB: Arthur Acher.

RP: Of course, Rankin was a notorious criminal trial lawyer. He'd do anything. He'd come in, when you were arguing your side of the case, he had about this many silver dollars, a dozen silver dollars, and he'd go [*makes trumpet sound*] and they'd go clink, clink, clink, and then pretty soon you'd get them all [*inaudible*] [*makes trumpet sound*]. I don't know why the judges didn't say, "Sit down. No more of that stuff."

BB: Because that was a distraction.

RP: Exactly. And he would parade all over the courtroom while the other guy was speaking and they'd be watching him doing these tricks and it was a distraction, it was an unfair. He better not try that before Judge Murray. But in any event, Rankin was a huge name in the Republican [Party]. He ran the show for a decade or so. Then of course he and—she was a lovely lady; they married late in life—

BB: Louise?

RP: Louise.

BB: Replogle.

RP: Replogle, yes, she was a lawyer and she and I were chatty buddies and I always thought she earned whatever she got out of old Wellington. But in any event—

BB: She was much younger than he.

RP: Oh much. She was my age.

BB: She and Rankin were married some time in the fifties or something.

RP: Oh yes, they were married. Is Louise still alive?

BB: Yes, yes.

RP: She'd be in her mid-eighties. Yes, she was a lovely lady.

BB: And so, did you meet Rankin personally?

RP: Oh yes, more than meet him. As I say, I was the chairman of the Republican Central Committee when he was Mr. Republican. Oh yes, he was an affable guy.

BB: Why did he not have friends?

RP: Didn't pay anybody. He didn't even pay the newspaper boy, the rumors had it. He really was foolish that way. He had all kinds of money but he didn't ever spend any. Didn't pay his creditors. He had a terrible reputation for just—and then he's going to win the case no matter what. And I guess anybody with that much clout, because he had a real party—then he had satellite lawyers around the state that were associated with his offices and there's nothing illegal or improper about that. So some of the lawyers may have resented his intrusion in their domain. I don't know about that so much. I don't think he had a particularly savory reputation. That's my view.

BB: How about Congressman Arnold Olsen, who was Attorney General before he was a congressman. He was a Butte man.

RP: He was a Butte man and he was a district judge for quite a few years and Judge Olsen—I tried many [cases] in Judge Olsen's court, knew him very well, we got along fine. He had gotten his name by being—as Attorney General he had tried to close up Butte. Funny stories about that. He closed the Walker's Café, which was right next to the Metals Bank Building on Park Street. Billy Meyer, my mentor, was defending him, and George Hill was the vice president of the First National Bank in Butte and Mr. Simon Pure, Mr. Epitome of Gentlemanliness—Honesty, Integrity, Aplomb; everything nice you could say about anybody. And Billy Meyer called him as a witness to prove that there was no gambling at Walker's Café and he was supposed to have asked him, "Well, Mr. Hill, you're familiar with Walker's Café?" "Yes, I walk by there every night on my way home." And he said, "Have you ever seen any gambling in there?" "No, Mr. Meyer, I have not."

Well they should have cross examined him because he'd never been in there. [Laughs]. Now whether that's true or not—but in any event, Arnold was a—let's see, also wasn't he a—no, I guess that was—I guess that was one of my—no, Arnold Olsen, I don't know whether he had a connection with the D.A. here or not. I guess he didn't. I guess that was McClernan [inaudible]. So yes, I knew Arnold Olsen very well.

BB: Attorney General and congressman and then later district judge.

RP: Yes. And of course where I knew him was district judge. And he was judge for several terms.

BB: Now did you know Lieutenant Governor Paul Cannon?

RP: No, not very well. He had a clothing store here in Butte, but he seemed to be in Helena all the time. No, I hardly knew him at all, although he was a Butte businessman. I can't say why I knew him so little except, again, I was really tending to my net and I wasn't social. We worked all day and we worked until ten o'clock every night and Saturday we worked half a day, so we hit the ball there for twenty, thirty years.

BB: Now Bob, of course, the Butte-Silver Bow area has a reputation for being heavily Democrat—

RP: It is Democrat.

BB:—political sympathies. That's been the case for a long time. And yet there was a fellow I know that was elected to the state senate from here by the name of Troy Evans, as a Republican.

RP: I didn't know you were going to name Troy, but it's a strange thing. We had a Republican mayor and we had—

BB: Who was that?

RP: I'll say his name. His name's still on the wall over there on East Mercury Street. I knew him real well. We had several Republican people from Butte. I think they must [have] won on their own. You know, they used to tell the story when Butte was not consolidated, when it was just a city, it had 30—what would they be—city councilmen. Twenty-eight Democrats and two Republicans, and they always voted as a block. One of the measures, why, they voted as a block and one of the Democrats says, "Those Republicans sure stick together." [Laughs].

BB: What do you remember about Troy Evans? Did you know him at all?

RP: Yes, wasn't he a labor guy?

BB: I don't know for sure.

RP: Yes, he was a very pleasant, energetic, short—I just knew him to see him and say "Hi, Troy." A very pleasant guy. I thought he was in the labor movement somewhere.

BB: Could be. How about George Sarsfield?

RP: Oh yes. Real, real, real close friend of mine.

BB: He ran for congress in 1960 against Arnold Olsen.

RP: Yes, they called that to my attention yesterday at a meeting and I said I'd forgotten that. I don't think he got very far. See, he was the son-in-law of Tom Davis and Tom Davis ran for U.S. Senator against Senator Murray and that was earlier. George must have got the bug, the political bug, and so he apparently ran for—but I don't think he had—he wasn't an inveterate politician. He must have taken a crack at it and said, "That's enough for me."

BB: Now the Anaconda Company, of course, had this reputation for being the great and powerful influence in Montana politics and you mentioned you knew some of the people who were involved with the Anaconda Company. We talked a little bit about John D. Ryan and especially Con Kelly and Con Kelly's son and so forth.

RP: I don't know if they were—that seems to be pre-politics days, but are you still talking politics?

BB: Yes.

RP: Or economic clout?

BB: Well, kind of both, because where I was going with—

RP: I don't even know what party Kelly and Ryan belonged to. To me they were economic giants. Another one that should be listed somewhere is Will Thornton.

BB: Tell me about him.

RP: Well, Will Thornton was, again, one of these kids that we were talking about, the same age as Kelley and them. He was not a lawyer, he was businessman. I don't know where he picked up his nickels for his family, but he built the Thornton Hotel on East Broadway. You ought to go by and just touch the bricks on that. It's 110 years old and it looks like they [inaudible] out of the kiln yesterday, perfectly beautifully built. Then he went east as a real business tycoon, really big. He never married. He was a staunch Republican and he was in all kind of—he was in the trust-busting area and had a lot of clout with Montana Power. When Montana Power was one of the six or eight power companies of—was it Consolidated Edison? I forget the name—he was a big shot in that and then they broke it up into the Florida Power, Montana Power, Idaho Power and Light, I think Utah Power. They broke them all up and I don't know which one he—but he was a big, big shot from—a businessman. He had a fishing cabin over just downstream of West Yellowstone on the Madison. And Mr. Hoover, President Hoover, came every summer for a week or two as his guest.

The four horsemen from Butte were all gathered together. They were old cronies from their early twenties age, when they were real buddies, and that was Will Thornton; Charlie

Henderson was the sheriff, a Republican sheriff. Unless I can see him now, I'll say his name for sure; and then another one, and then Mr. Hoover. My dad would send me over there to occasionally—me or my brother Jim; Jim went more frequently—to be a flunky to do anything that needed to be done around the camp, as they call it. Mrs. Huggins, was that the lady? She ran the—she was the cook and fixed the beds and all that sort of stuff. And Mr. Hoover—I would be in the kitchen and I could hear them talking but we were never invited in to where Mr. Hoover was telling his stories.

One story he told was that it was customary that as the president you got oodles of gifts from around the world and they had somebody who would log them in and thank the somebody of Bangalore for thus and so. But on this one—it was a bamboo fishing rod came through for Mr. Hoover and whoever the putter-awayer was took it to show Mr. Hoover and Mr. Hoover said, "Well, that looks—let's not put that away." So he had that out there fishing. Extremely light weight. Split bamboo and then glued back together very, you know, just feather light and he loved to fish with that fishing pole.

Let me see, [Ben] Calkins, Mr. Calkins was the fourth—four horsemen, all from Butte, all from this vintage. None of them wealthy except, well, Mr. Hoover was in his own right. [inaudible] Metalica(?), he was a mining engineer from Stanford and he was on the board of directors of Stanford and the board of trustees or whatever they were. Very wealthy man. In fact, his salary—75,000 dollars a year—he kept one buck of it and donated the rest back. Have you ever heard the story about him and Babe Ruth?

BB: You're talking about Herbert Hoover now?

RP: Yes, Herbert Hoover. Well it's the same time as Babe Ruth was King of Swat. He was paid 85,000 dollars a year, and somebody said, "Why, you're paid even more than the president." It wasn't a scurrilous remark, it was just drawing the comparison. And Babe was supposed to have said, "Yes, I had 10,000 dollars more than the president, but I had a better year than him." [Laughs].

BB: So you didn't actually meet Herbert Hoover but you were there...

RP: Yes, I must have met Mr. Hoover. I rode for him one summer. They fished at weird times. Right in the middle of the day they'd fish, rather than the morning or in the evening, and right in front of the cabin. Well the Madison was reasonably good fishing then, but then Mr. Thornton always had a few tricks up his sleeve if the fishing wasn't [good]. One was to go to the lake in Idaho. I never went on that trip, but they'd get some private lake, some real monster fish. Then the other one was to fish Hebgen Reservoir. I rowed Mr. Hoover one afternoon. I just shut up and rowed. I was good, as any Butte kid was, with a boat. You knew how to row. That's another story. One of our kids [inaudible]. In any event, so I rowed and I just shut up. But he was courteous and nice. I think he called me Robert. "Can you go a little closer to shore, Robert?"

"You betcha, Mr. Hoover."

But yes, he probably patted me on the head a time or two. I was about 14. They had an old-fashioned Cadillac car that was about a '27. It looked exactly like the Cadillacs in the movies that the Dillinger guys [had]. You know, it had curtains but—it didn't even have curtains, it just had a—it ran okay. And there was a garage, the Broadway Garage here in Butte. That was a Montana Power garage and I don't know who owned that. But in any event, I would, one of us—Jim drove it more than I because he was older—we'd drive it over there. Well, first we'd be sure it was in good shape and get it all nice and stuff like that. Over we'd go for the summer to the camp. Huggins, Mrs. Huggins, was awful close. She was a lovely lady. I think she was a widow. She was the only one in camp.

BB: And this camp was on the Madison River down near West Yellowstone?

RP: You know, you come up from the—there's the Gallatin River. The Gallatin Road comes in from Big Sky and then the road comes in from Ennis and they meet here and then they form one road and go three or four miles at the most, directly into West Yellowstone. Well, they cross the Madison River right there where that junction is, at least they—that's awful close, no matter what they did with the highways. We could see Mr. Hoover's camp from that bend, not very well, but you could see it. It might have been a quarter of a mile upstream from the bent, so it would be downstream from West Yellowstone maybe two or three miles.

BB: I see. And it was owned by a fellow named Thornton?

RP: Thornton, Thornton Hotel.

BB: What was his first name?

RP: Will, William D.; W.D. Thornton. I saw him in something recently about—oh, he was related to these ladies who were real characters around town because they'd lost their minds—Baldwin, Baldwin sisters. They were real problems. But Mr. Thornton, he had my dad as his local attorney and represented him, and my dad's job for him was to, if some person called up [inaudible] "We'll take care of it. How much do we owe you?" type of thing, because they'd get rouge on the garments that they were trying on. Tragic thing. They walked about 10, 15 feet apart. Everybody my age in Butte would verify all this stuff. And they would talk [inaudible] louder. They could converse from here to the TV apart and then going to some shop and pestering, trying clothes on. But I don't know just what the relationship was that he—he had a lot of connections in Butte, did a lot of good after he left, Will Thornton.

BB: We've got just a few minutes left, Bob, and I want to talk to you a little bit about Bob and Jack Corette.

RP: Oh boy. Well the Corettes, I remember Bob one time said, about him and me, that we spent a lifetime within a block of each other. Mr. Corette, the father of Jack and Bob, was of the social echelons we've been talking about. He was a lawyer, and a fine, fine person. He married a lady named Driscoll. No, no. Let me see. Robert D.—Robert Driscoll Corette. In any event, Mr. Corette officed in the Hennessy Building and so he was strongly identified for many, many years, until into the eighties, with the Anaconda Company, okay? And he had a place at Swan Lake. They were just delightful people. They had four children and Jack was the oldest and Jack, whom you must have known well, to me he was the handsomest man that I ever knew or met. He was movie star handsome, as far as I was concerned, about six-foot-two, extremely affable, very, very smart. He went to the University of Virginia law school. He came back to Butte—well, he first went to Missoula and he practiced, I think, with Murphy and the [inaudible] one became a circuit judge—Pope, Walter Pope. But then he came to Butte and practiced...No, then he came and joined the Montana Power Company at the time when Frank Kerr of [inaudible] was president and Frank Kerr had a son, Bob Kerr, the same age as Jack.

Well, there was competition for the successor to Frank Kerr. Jack was about five years older than I was. When I was in high school he was gone to college. I don't think he was ever in the service. But I don't know how that—the Corettes had the more clout. It had a lot to do with Anaconda and Montana Power. Mr. Kerr didn't have any place up there so he may not have had quite the social standing amongst them, because we're getting now down to each other's kid, who's going to get the... Well, Jack got the job and Bob Kerr left town and he was a [inaudible] old Hennessy Building, okay? So Jack went on to do a great job as, ultimately, he didn't immediately go into the presidency but he was chosen to be in line for it and he went out there.

Frank Bird was ahead of him, but he was a generation older, and Jack just climbed the ladder into the presidency. He was president of just about everything you can name—the Edison Institute—he was a very, very prominent—absolute teetotaler, but you'd never know it—very social. Montana Power was our number one citizen under Jack Corette. And of course they were very close to these guys, the guys we're talking about—Largey MacDonald and Bill Kirkpatrick and Frances Kelly and Boze Bertoglio(?). They were gay blades once, you know.

BB: So there was a closeness between the Montana Power Company and the Anaconda Company?

RP: Well as I say, Malone, a historian, and the guy from—Toole, Bruce.

BB: Ross Toole.

RP: Is it Ross Toole? I'm sure somewhere I read that they had, well, they called it interlocking directors, something like that. Yes, there was definitely a—I would think that that choice of Jack Corette was as much personal as business. Of course he had a fine schooling, fine reputation, fine. He was a good choice.

BB: And when you say they were the number one citizens of Butte—

RP: The company was.

BB: Why?

RP: Well, so was Jack, but they were encouraged to participate in everything, and they did. Of course in those days, the Anaconda Company was a paternalistic company. If somebody got injured in a mine and there was a—it used to be that at every crossing where the railroad tracks crossed the BA&P [Butte, Anaconda & Pacific], why, there would be a watchman's shack. That guy probably had a leg off or he had something. They made jobs. I guess you can't do it now under the laws and everything else, but they took care of them. They were very paternalistic. Well, so was the Montana Power. It was a very family-oriented company. Everybody knew everybody. Everybody was pulling for Butte. Not to the detriment to the company. Any event, they were our number one citizens. They looked like it, they dressed beautifully, and I think they always had to have a tie and a coat on. I'm not sure of that, but they belonged to all the—they were just our number one citizen, Pauline and I always thought.

BB: How about Bob Corette, Jack's brother?

RP: Okay, well, he played second fiddle to his brother. Bob was a politician.

BB: I knew him a little bit in Helena when he was a lobbyist.

RP: Oh, you would have had to. Bob took great pride in making political decisions behind the scenes. He knew all the representatives and whatever you call them from all over the state. He and Boo McGillivray were great buddies. Jack never went over there, as far as I know, as a paid lobbyist, but he went over there just because he loved politics, or maybe he fooled me, maybe he was. Not that he—because his connection with the Power Company was obvious—his brother was president there for a long time. Bob loved politics. He didn't do much in the—Kendrick Smith was the lawyer. He was the Sanders of the...Bruce, Kremer, Sanders & Kremer. Corette Smith and Dean Smith was the lawyer, and a good one. He and I were always at each others' throat. Of all the people that I've spent time with, Kendrick was the most.. But I remember Bob once in all those years, so he was—he loved politics. He was kind of a business-getter.

BB: How about Boo McGillivray?

RP: Yes, well Boo, he's a story in himself. He got the name Boo from—he came from Baraboo, Wisconsin, and he went with the circus, the Ringling Brothers, and he knew them very, very well. He was very close to them. Traveled with the circus. He had a wonderful story he told. In the early twenties, there was a Depression hit and this bank in Chicago was going to go belly-up and it was the bank that the Ringling Brothers used, and Ringling was in his heyday and was

making a lot of money touring the nation as the Big Top. It was very successful. Well Mr. Ringling was supposed to have—this is Boo's story—heard about the bank's troubles and he sent 100,000 dollars, which was a heck of a lot of money, and he said, "Dear Mr. Bank President, sorry for your troubles. Here's 100,000 dollars. Make her or break her on this. This is it." Well the bank survived. The hundred didn't necessarily do it, but it didn't hurt any.

Well, then came the big Depression and by then the circus wasn't doing as well. They had to stay on the move because if they holed up in any town, they still had all their lions and tigers and all that and somebody—they hadn't paid for something or other on one of their travels and it looked like Ringling was going to go under and the bank knew about it, and according to Boo, why, the president sent him 100,000 dollars: "Make her or break her on this." He was able to pay off whatever debt was in Spokane, or wherever the heck it was, and get his show back on the road. The only way he could stay alive was keep his commitments and—

BB: And of course Boo McGillivray was the lobbyist, or one of the lobbyists, for Montana Power.

RP: And he was the cleverest guy. He just was a job. He was so much fun. He has such quaint language, some of it on the naughty side, in fact, 90 percent of it. He had a penchant for the stock market and he owns quite a bit of land in the Flathead. I don't know where he made his money, but he was in real comfortable circumstances. He was an investor, he was just a retired investor with a great love for politics. I don't think he was ever elected from Butte, but he was mister—I don't think he was an official—if so, it must have been the Power Company. I don't know what the heck he—he just was over there all the time as a lobbyist. It must have been for individuals. I don't know who—

BB: He represented the Montana Power Company part of the time.

RP: Well, he was a real delight. He and I were great buddies. He was in our building, the Silver Bow Block, that you just saw the Indian head on. And when it burned down, it was a terrible blow to me because I felt so badly for Boo. Never griped. He lost his whole—he had a little bitty office, enough, but he had a large collection of silver coins. He also had a collection of barbed wire. Did you ever hear about that?

BB: No.

RP: Well there's barbed wire and then there's barbed wire and then there's barbed wire. The ordinary ones you and I see, it goes like this and then they stick out, the barbs. But there's all kinds of them. He had 30, 40, 50 kinds of barbed wire. He was a collector of silver coins and had a lot of them; very valuable.

BB: And that was all lost in the fire?

RP: No, it wasn't. He had his coins at the—he was a great friend of the—I guess with George Hill of the First National Bank and I don't know why because the Montana Power was identified with Metal's Bank. My dad used to get the biggest kick because the Metal's Bank was somehow owned or controlled, the real estate, by Andy Davis, so that the Anaconda had to basically pay rent to Andy Davis. That's just rumor and scuttlebutt.

BB: Bob, we're done with our tape. It's just about out of time. Anything you want to say?

RP: If you need more time, we can go ahead and squawk. Who else you got there and I'll shut it up.

BB: Well I think the tape's about ready to expire.

RP: Hmm?

BB: I think our tape is about ready to run out.

RP: Okay, well, anytime. I hope it's of some use to you. It's always fun to reminisce about good old Butte.

[End of Interview]