

Maureen and Mike

# Mansfield Library

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**Oral History Number: 396-077**  
**Interviewee: Joe Quilici**  
**Interviewer: Bob Brown**  
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**Project: Bob Brown Oral History Project**

Bob Brown: Okay. I'm Bob Brown and I'm interviewing Joe Quilici at the Mansfield Library Archives on Saturday, January 23, 2016. Joe, when and where were you born?

Joe Quilici: I was born in Butte. We moved to a suburb called Meaderville, and I lived there for three years until my father got killed, and we moved out.

BB: What year were you born?

JQ: July 6, 1925.

BB: 1925, wow. So, at the time of this interview, Joe's 90 years old.

JQ: That's right. [laughs]

BB: [laughs] That's pretty amazing. So, you grew up in Butte. What are your earliest memories of Butte?

JQ: Well, I remember, just barely, because when I moved out of Meaderville at 3 years old, but I remember my grandfather and Danny Stefani getting a boxcar of grapes to make wine. And why I remember that so much is because we used to go there and eat the grapes. [laughs] Well, anyway, my grandfather, and later on I used to visit them in Meaderville, and him and Danny Stefani, and Father Pirinac were real, real close friends. And in the summertime, they'd sit on the porch in Meaderville there, and sit in the sun and drink wine. Well, I remember a time that went down to visit them, and my grandfather, he talks a broken English, but they run out of wine. So, he said, "Giuseppe. Vino, vino." And I knew where to get it, downstairs in their basement. I went down, and we had one of these old wicker jugs, and I filled it up and he filled Danny Stefani's, Father Pirinac's glasses for them. [laughs] I can remember that. But after my father got killed, my mother took my brother and I, who was a year younger than I, we moved to East Butte. Another suburb of Butte.

BB: Was your dad killed in a mining accident?

JQ: In a car accident.

BB: I see.

JQ: Running booze down the valley for my grandfather.

BB: [laughs] That was during Prohibition?

JQ: Yes. Anyway, we moved in my mother's parents, who were Swedes. Nordstrom was their name. My mother's maiden name was Sennie Nordstrom. Anyway, we were raised by them until I was 12 years old. But, ah, they were...my mother...That's when you look at people that you worshipped. That I loved my mother. My mother, I'll tell you, she was just a young lady, boy did she take good care of her two sons. And she was always working, and there was no work in those days. She worked at the cloakroom in Meaderville for my grandfather, who owned the Savoy.

BB: The Savoy is a—

JQ: The Savoy. It was a nightclub and gambling joint.

BB: I see.

JQ: And they had a cloakroom in those days and she lived on the tips. We did. And then, after we were in the East Butte, she worked in the sewing rooms during the WPA. And, but she sure did well. And she remarried; I was 12 years old. A lot of young men were going after her because she was a beautiful lady. And she finally married [coughs] excuse me, Jimmy Lawrence, who was a wonderful man. He helped raise my brother and I, and he was just a really good guy. And then we moved from East Butte down to The Flats in Butte there, on Fairgood Street. And I went to Greeley School, graduated from Greeley, and went to Butte High. [laughs] Then—

BB: And you were in World War Two?

JQ: Before I even finished high school, I had finished playing football, but Mel Fisher and I joined the service, Merchant Marines. And we went to boot camp at Santa Catalina Islands off of Los Angeles.

BB: You told me one time, Joe, that you got blown out of a gun tub?

JQ: That's right.

BB: Well, what does that mean?

JQ: Well, see, they had these 20-millimeter in a round tub that had steel around it, and we called them gun tubs. The concussion from bombs, we were being bombed by Japanese Zeros, like that, hit close to, well, not on the deck, but right close. But the concussion from that took it to [makes a shooting noise] right out of the gun tub, and [hits hand on desk] in on the deck.

BB: Oh, boy.

JQ: Like that. And that's when I broke my ribs, too. And that's another story. [laughs]

BB: Oh, wow.

JQ: But, yes, it...and my hearing went, because of the loud noise and the concussion.

BB: You were a gunner? Was that your job?

JQ: Actually we were all gunners, anybody. My job first was what they call a messman. Then after that I was an ordinary seaman and an able-bodied seaman. Like a boatmate first class.

BB: And where did that incident take place?

JQ: Just between Tulagi and Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands.

BB: I see. And relatively late in the war, I suppose?

JQ: '43.

BB: Oh, not that late.

JQ: Yes, in the middle of the war, there. Yes, '43. But they got me ashore, and me and a few of my buddies, shipmates. We got to a marine doctor, and boy I'll tell you, he was a wonderful fella, because you know they were bringing wounded Marines down out of the hills yet. And here he took care of this merchant seaman.

BB: [laughs] And that was on Guadalcanal?

JQ: Guadalcanal, yes. I'm just so happy to be here.

BB: Yes, well we're happy to have you here, Joe. I hadn't intended to ask you, but I'll just ask you one more question. Is there any other experiences, especially in your mind about World War Two?

JQ: Well, I'd have to think just for a minute, Bob, but...Well, I remember one time I got on a livery ship in San Francisco. And these livery ships were about 8 knots, slow. And the Japanese and German subs used to bird dog us. They had 6-inch guns on their submarine; biggest gun we had was a 5-inch 38. And they could set off a ways, and just lob shells at us. They were faster, especially on the surface like that. Forty-two days, this sub, you could see the periscope every once-in-a-while. Was bird-dogging us.

BB: Oh, boy.

JQ: But we zig-zagged every two-to-three minutes when you're at the wheel. The skipper would...or the officer the watch would tell you when to zig and zag. And because we were told that it took five to six minutes for submarines to get a bearing on you, to fire a torpedo to where they can make a sure shot. So, we zigged and we zagged. [laughs]

BB: But that would have been so nerve-racking for 42 days.

JQ: Oh, boy. I'll tell you, I'll tell you how it was. You know, here's an 18-year-old kid, 18, 19 maybe. Our bulkheads were all steel, and you had a round porthole like that. Before I'd go to sleep, I'd look at the bulkhead, I'd think of a torpedo coming into that. You just thought of things like that bothered you, especially after being bird-dogged that long.

BB: Did you sleep with your life jacket on?

JW: No, but you slept with it under your arm.

BB: I see, yes. You put it on immediately.

JQ: Yes. Because it was warm in the South Pacific, it was hot. And no lights or nothing, you couldn't, you would never ever put any lights on. But it was interesting times and I was around the world three times, seven different continents. All the way from Paros, Greece, to Bizerte, North Africa, to London, England, and all through 17 different islands of the South Pacific. And shuttled out of Sydney, Australia.

BB: So, you dropped out of high school, but look at the education you got.

JQ: I got, yes. But I got my degree; I was in the service there.

BB: Oh, really?

JQ: Yes. And a young lady that I went with, Beth Hubbard was her name, she went and made sure I got my diploma.

BB: Well, great.

JQ: I'm really pleased about her. She married a very good friend of mine, Judge Sullivan. Wonderful lady.

BB: So Joe, do you remember when you first had any...What got you interested in politics?

JQ: Well, I'll tell you, I was never really interested in politics. Not a bit, until I went to work for PPG Industries as a glazier. Well, finally becoming a journeyman glazier. And I got active in union. In fact, after two or three years in union, I was president of glazier's union for 19 years. Well, then I start getting involved with politics. Because we were involved with workers' issues, specifically health and welfare. So, I wanted to get some things done to help the working man and woman. Well, the only way I could do that was through the legislature. But I knew nothing about the legislature. So, I didn't think I'd ever run. So, one time during a union meeting, a young guy by the name of Ed Schultz, he says, "Joe, why don't you run for the legislature," because I was kind of vocal in union meetings.

I said, "I don't know nothing about the legislature. I don't even know what it costs or anything like that."

Somebody piped up and says, "It costs 15 dollars."

BB: To file for it?

JQ: To file. Well, pretty soon a bunch of the fellows there got together and they pitched in, they had little pot. Before long they had 50 bucks in there, and I used that 50 bucks to file for the legislature and buy gas to go to Helena.

BB: [laughs] That was your campaign?

JQ: That was my campaign.

BB: Well, you were obviously well thought of.

JQ: The rest of the time I campaigned, I went door-to-door, and...mostly talking to people, just meeting people. I know all kinds of people in Butte to this day. And wonderful people they are, too.

BB: Now, that was in 1970?

JQ: Yes.

BB: Because you and I first went to the legislature in the election of 1970.

JQ: That's right. That's exactly when it was.

BB: So, we started out together. Now, tell me a little bit about the Butte political culture then. I mean, you had the Anaconda Company that was a dominant, powerful force in politics. You'd think, probably in Silver Bow County, because it was somewhat statewide. You also had the union movements, you were a part of that. How did all that fit together?

JQ: Well, I'll tell you. Not easy. Because nearly every one of my relatives worked for the Company. Anaconda Company. My uncles, and that's who we lived with when...and my grandfather, who was a shift boss at the Pittsmtont mine. They worked for the Anaconda Company, and everybody, nearly everybody in Butte, that's where they made their living. Boy, they were the dominant force in all of Montana. Anyway, I really went into the legislature, I wanted to do some good if I could. But it wasn't sure how I was going to go about doing good.

BB: Yes.

JQ: But I wanted to do good, but I didn't want to hurt the company, see anybody get laid off or anything. Balancing all that wasn't easy. But one time in the session, you might remember this, Bob, a friend of mine, George "Nig" McGrath was his name, he's our assessor. He called me one day, and he said, "Joe, let's go down to Scoop and have a beer." All right. I was in the legislature then. And he says, "You know, the Anaconda Company isn't paying their tax sometimes." I said, "Oh?" He says, "Yes. They got what they call a gross proceeds tax, and they can deduct three or four different things. Wages, materials, just about anything they can. And the reason they can do that, because in the 1889 Constitution, they got that in the Constitution that metal mines would have a gross proceeds tax with these deductibles." So, you can see how powerful the company was at the time.

BB: Yes.

JQ: Anyway, I said, "Well, George," I said, "will it run them out of business?"

He says, "No." He says, "We'll make it right. But we're going put in a gross proceeds tax." Metal mines tax, it's called. I don't know if you remember, Bob.

BB: Yes, I do.

JQ: Anyway, boy I put that in and it hit the fan. Oh, boy.

BB: Wow. Because it took some real courage for you to do that, coming from Butte. If somebody coming from Miles City or Kalispell or something, it would be different.

JQ: But it was right, though. It was right. Because we—

BB: Did the company come down hard on you then?

JQ: Oh, boy.

BB: Yes, I bet.

JQ: They even had my uncle talk to me. Yes, oh boy, did they ever.

BB: Would they have had the power to beat you in an election? Because I'd think that something like that—

JQ: They tried, but they couldn't.

BB: The people would be on your side in something like that.

JQ: That's right. And they still to this day are. No. They come and negotiated with me then. After we went through hearings, stuff like that. They found out that I had the votes from both sides of the aisle, and you know, a lot of Republicans used to go drink party line with them. But anyway, I got a lot of them, and they voted for me. They knew I was having those votes, and they knew I had enough votes to pass the metal mines tax. So, they come, Bernie Harrington and a few of them from the corporate officers, come and says, "We want to sit down with you and see what we can negotiate." Metal mines tax as it was proposed was six percent. "Can you lower to three?"

I says, "I'll let you know in a day or two."

So, I got ahold of Nig McGrath, and he runs some numbers, and he says, "Oh, three percent would be great." He says, "Yes." And until this day, that bill, that metal mines tax is three percent.

BB: But they actually pay it?

JQ: But they actually pay, yes.

BB: Before, they didn't pay.

JQ: Before, they didn't pay them, because they had all these deductibles. Well, anyway, we had that just about all cut and dried, until one of the officials from the company said, "Joe there's one thing I thought. Can we deduct tank slimes [tailings] from that bill?"

"Tank slimes? Oh, I don't see why not. But let me think about it and I'll let you know." So, I did some research. Tank slimes was gold, silver, zinc, palladium, and all that. [laughs] Yes, that's what they called—

BB: That's how it was defined?

JQ: Because metal mines was mostly the copper, and [unintelligible] like that. So, anyway, after I checked that out and found out what it was, I says, "No, that'll stay in there." And it's in there to this day.



BB: Did the guy have even a sense of humor about that? I mean, he obviously was trying to pull a fast one on you.

JQ: Oh, sure. But kind of a little quirk, smile on his face, you know, yes. So, but anyway, yes. Can we detect tank slimes, and I'll never forget it.

BB: You know, you mentioned that the Republicans were close to the Anaconda Company. When I was there, I remember that there was a more of a closeness to the Montana Power Company. That Republicans kind of frequently saw things the same way as the Montana Power Company, but not so much the Anaconda Company. And the Anaconda Company seemed to have a little more support from Democrats than the Montana Power Company had. Does that, is that—

JQ: They did.

BB: How you remember it?

JQ: Yes. If we could possibly help them without hurting our constituency, have at it. We did it, because every...all of our pe...that's where they made their livelihood. That was their jobs. It was a big balancing act, and we had to try to do what was right. Our delegation were fine, fine people. I'll tell you, they're great, every one of them, even [Jack] Healy and them, they...working for the company and all them. But still.

BB: I remember Jack Healy very well.

JQ: Oh, he was a dandy. Jerry Lombardi and...worked for the water company, owned by the company. [laughs] Yes. And, oh, it was—

BB: We've named Jerry [Lombardi] and Jack Healy. Just for purposes of this historical interview, maybe name, if you can, a couple three, more of the Butte delegation that you served with.

JQ: Sure. J.D. Lynch, who was a dandy. Yeah. J.D., he knew the process, too. Bob Lee, Bob Harper. Yes. Great guys. Hey, Bobby Pavlovich, there's a dandy. Yeah, he was a good one.

BB: And you guys functioned as a team, too, didn't you?

JQ: Oh, always, always. We wouldn't even have to meet. We just look at one another, we know how to vote. And we'd vote as a block.

BB: [laughs] And of course, this was before term limitations.

JQ: That's right.

BB: So, you all developed some real experience.

JQ: Oh, boy. And the thing is, as you probably know, Bob, Butte delegation was kind of a powerhouse in a lot of things.

BB: [laughs] I do know.

JQ: And they're a great bunch of men and women, Debby Shea, Judy Jacobson, you know?

BB: Yes. [laughs]

JQ: Yes. Boy, all of us, we just, we just got together. But, you know, we talked about this a lot. You know, it's something that they don't do anymore, but you know, we looked at a Republican, no, not as a Re...as an individual. How that person reacted and how that person was, was how we associated ourselves with them. And to this day I can say that I have a lot of good Republican friends.

BB: I know you do.

JQ: I do because, you know, all Democrats and all Republicans aren't the cream of the crop, but a lot of them are. A lot of them are good people, and you pick good people, and you want to be with good people, whether they be Democrat or Republican.

BB: You got to know who you wanted to be with, and who you wanted to work with back in the period before there were term limitations. Because many of us became real good friends over the years.

JQ: Awfully good friends. We sure did.

BB: Stayed at each other's homes when we traveled around the state, knew each other's kids, you know.

JQ: That's right. We're just—

BB: And almost, I wouldn't say without regard to party politics. You know, if you and I were both Democrats, and we were having a conversation, it might be a different conversation than if one of us was a Democrat or one of us was a Republican. But that wouldn't have anything to do with our personal feelings for each other. You know, I had some good friends who were Democrats that I didn't necessarily agree with, and I didn't share my party's secrets with, or anything like that. And you, the same thing with Republicans.

JW: I felt it the same way, exactly.

BB: Yes, yes.

JQ: I wish today the delegation, I wish they would look at it that way. I went up to the assembly, and there was a bitterness up there. It made me feel real bad to see this feeling. Because whether it was a Democrat or a Republican, I had respect for all of them. No, you know, of course there were some better than others. A lot like that, some you didn't want to associate with. You know, that just happens. But the majority of those legislators, whether it be Democrat or Republican, were fine individuals. Men and ladies.

BB: Joe, do you have the impression that the Butte delegation is as cohesive as it was when you were there?

JQ: Not a bit. Not a bit.

BB: And that's probably due, as much as anything, to term limitations. They don't know each other as well, maybe, and haven't worked together for a long time?

JQ: I could...that probably it. You bet.

BB: That's a lot of it, anyway.

JQ: Yes, a lot of it. And, oh I'm sure they're friends, but I don't think that they work together as closely as we did.

BB: And they have, maybe they have—

JQ: They got different agendas.

BB: I see, yes.

JQ: Yes. And so be it. But, oh, I think they want to be good legislators, because I know them all, and they're fine people.

BB: I see we didn't mention his name, and you and I...You might have served with Jim Keane? Jim Kane, Jim Keane?

JQ: Yes, Jim? Oh yes, he's a good legislator.

BB: I think he is, too. He's still there.

JQ: He's going to run for the Senate this time, probably.

BB: Run for the House?

JQ: He's in the House now, Oh no, he's in the Senate; he's going to run for the House.

BB: That's what I read in the newspaper, yes.

JQ: That's it. Yes, he is, yes.

BB: Jim's a nice guy, and—

BB: You know, I'm more Irish than anything else, and so I got to be friends with him because his wife's from Ireland.

JQ: Yes.

BB: And so he told me, he said, he said, "Bob, if you get elected governor," and I was running for governor at the time, he said, "I'll take you to Ireland." I thought that'd be such a wonderful experience, you know. Well, it didn't ever work out, but—

JQ: Well, it'd be wonderful to do.

BB: But it would really be wonderful, yes, we joked about that. Just as a kind of an aside, most of us have an early memory of a presidential campaign. I don't know if you ever remember Franklin D. Roosevelt, or—

JQ: Do I ever. I'll tell you, I thought he was the finest president that we ever, ever had. In fact, I couldn't wait to turn 21 years old so I could vote for him. I just think Franklin Delano Roosevelt was the finest president we ever had. He was in at a very trying time, but he got the job done, and I'm really proud of him.

BB: Overall in the course of your life, would he be your favorite president, probably?

JQ: Of course, he's my favorite president.

BB: Do you remember state politicians like Burton K. Wheeler or Senator Jim Murray, or—

JQ: I do, but I—

BB: Don't really—

JQ: But I've never, I never met them.

BB: I see, okay.

JQ: Yes. I never met them. But I knew Mike Mansfield, Mike real well.

BB: Tell me about him. What was he like? What were your impressions?

JQ: Mike was a real down-to-earth guy. And I'll tell you how I first met him. You know, he was a professor or something here at the University. My uncle and him were very good friends. My uncle, Leonard Nordstrom. And we come down to visit my uncle one time, and he introduced me to Mike Mansfield, then. And I really liked the guy. And I got to be close friends with Mike. And I thought he did a terrific job for us. He really had the clout.

BB: Yes, he really did.

JQ: He sure did.

BB: He sure did. Majority leader of the United States Senate for, I think 16 years or maybe 18 years. A long time, anyway.

JQ: Something like that, yes. He was a great; really good man. Had a fine wife, she dandy. In fact, I was looking in my office the other day, a picture of Georgia [Georgia Quilici], and Mike, and his wife, and I. And, you know, I liked Mike, I think we had pretty good representatives, whether it be Melcher or Mike, Pat Williams. I think they did good jobs.

BB: Can you remember an experience, or a conversation, or anything that might have been memorable to you that Mansfield...with Mansfield, anything he said, or...Anything you did with him, or—

JQ: Yes, I'll tell you one thing. You know, when they asked me if I wanted to run for the legislature with this union meeting, I didn't know whether I should or not, even though they had that piggy bank there. Because I didn't know anything about the legislature. Although I don't know how I could say it, but I believe I was civic minded. I wanted to see things good for our community. I wanted to see Butte build up, and...Anyway, I was at a Democratic Party dinner. A couple days after that, Mike Mansfield was there, and we were talking. And one of the...well, he was a painter. Painters and glaziers were together in the union. He said to Mike, he says, "You know, we're trying to talk Joe into running for the legislature."

Mike says, "Oh?" So, he says, "Joe, come here." So, I thought...he says, "That's how you're going to get it done, Joe." He says, "You file," and he says, "If I can help you in any way, let me know." So I filed.

BB: Wow! [laughs] That was pretty important in your decision to actually go ahead and file.

JQ: That was pretty important in my decision, yes it was.

BB: Well, that's a great story.

JQ: Yes. And—

BB: You knew Pat Williams?

JQ: Oh, ever since he was a kid.

BB: Tell me about Pat.

JQ: Well, Pat was always looking for bigger and better things, but he got them, too. But Pat got things done. Yes. He—

BB: I understand he was a kind of a studious, kind of a bookish kid?

JQ: He sure was. But I'll tell you this, he was smart and he knew how to get it done. And that's the name of the game.

BB: That's the name of the game, isn't it? You bet.

JQ: That's right.

BB: Yes, you bet. So, you didn't know much about the legislature. Had you ever been there before to testify on a bill or anything before?

JQ: I'd never testified on a bill—

BB: Had you seen it, had you been—

JQ: My uncle took me up there with my aunt. My uncle Jimmy Bennett, who married my mother's sister. And we visited assembly, just visiting—

BB: When you were a kid?

JQ: When I was a kid. Never knew nothing about it; still didn't know much about it after I left.

BB: So, there you are, 1971, you walk in the door, great House of Representatives chamber, 100 people, galleries full, all being sworn in on the opening day. What did you think?

JQ: Well, I took one look at the assembly, boy I was overwhelmed. And I said, "Joe, you better sit down. You got to learn the process." Because I sure as heck didn't know it. Then.

BB: Were there any...Go ahead.

JQ: I was just going to tell you. There was one individual there, Jim Lucas was the speaker. And Jim had married a Butte girl by the name of [Carol] Dunston, and they lived in Miles City where Jim was from. And Jim was a parliamentarian. And he was one tough cookie as a speaker, as you probably remember.

BB: But I don't remember him as personally tough. I remember he was—

JQ: Oh, I got to know him real close, real close. But anyway, I guess I learned the hard way, because when you know, when we're in the union meetings, if you had something to say, you just got up and have at it, like that. Well, I thought that might go in the assembly. Well, it didn't take long for Jim Lucas to sit me down. Finally after a few times of getting a little what-for from him, I started learning the process. It wasn't easy, but it was smart to do. Because the more you learned about it, the more you could do for your constituency. I got so I could do pretty good. I knew the process.

BB: Well, you had a reputation for doing pretty good. No two ways about that.

JQ: Yes.

BB: And you had wonderful people skills, too, Joe. Most people liked you, and you were able to cultivate people and work with people, and build a network of friends.

JQ: You know why? Because I like people. Yes, I like people. And I'll tell you, I felt very gratified to be associated with some of them people, because they were so smart, and all that. It just made me feel good to be with them.

BB: And Jim Lucas, the name you mentioned to begin with was...He liked people, too. And he had a host of friends, also.

JQ: Oh boy. Boy, he could be tough, but Jim was always fair.

BB: Yes, that's kind of how I remembered, but I knew him, you know, maybe in a slightly different way. But I remember him more as really shrewd.

JQ: Yes.

BB: Understood the rules six ways from Sunday—

JQ: He sure did.

BB: Didn't hardly ever make a mistake of any kind that I could ever remember. A beautiful public speaker.

JQ: Oh, boy.

BB: But also, warm and friendly, and, you know, somebody like you. I mean, I went to him for advice lots of times.

JQ: Oh, I always did, yes. And I'll tell you, you know, that Harold Gerke wasn't too bad of a speaker, either now.

BB: No, he was a good guy.

JQ: And I'll tell you, he's a darn good guy. And Harold and I got to be good friends, too. In fact, I got to be good friends with so many of them up there. Most of them. Because I just had a mutual feeling and respect for them. Because 99 percent of the legislators were fine people.

BB: Yes.

JQ: Yes.

BB: They probably wouldn't have been elected if there hadn't been a lot of people in their communities that liked and respected them.

JQ: I think so, yes.

BB: You know, funny thing, you mentioned Harold Gerke, and I remember, I...He was a...Lucas was a Republican.

JQ: Yes.

BB: He was speaker when we first arrived there. Then Harold came in, Harold Gerke came in, Democrat from Billings, which was a little unusual then.

JQ: That's right.

BB: And he was the speaker that followed Jim Lucas. And it seemed to me that...We called him, on the Republican side, although Gerke was, I would say, you know, not as not as loved and respected as Jim Lucas was on the Republican side. But he was a good, solid, fair guy. I mean—

JQ: Yes, he was.



BB: He definitely was. He had a kind of an expressionless face, and we used to call him “the great stone face,” you know—

JQ: Because he didn't have no expression on his face.

BB: He didn't, hardly ever.

JQ: Right.

BB: But if you'd sit down and...I did this with him a number of times, because he and I...You and I probably didn't agree on this, but Harold Gerke and I were opposed to the expansion of legalized gambling.

JQ: Well no, I wasn't opp—

BB: And I know you weren't.

JQ: No.

BB: Yes, I know you weren't. Anyway, Gerke had me into his office, Gerke worked with me. Well, we...think it might have been in the...Well, it was. Because he was speaker in the '73-'74, the annual sessions. We had an interim committee, between the '73 session and the '74 session, to figure out what we were going to do on gambling, because the people in 1972 had passed the new constitution—

JQ: Yes.

BB: And made it possible for the legislature to get into, to gambling. And so, Jean Turnage, of course, was probably more influential on me than any other legislator.

JQ: Boy, and he was one man that he could influence a lot of us.

BB: He influenced a lot of us, and he didn't like gambling.

JQ: No.

BB: And he influenced me, and so...and Gerke knew that, so Gerke put me on that interim committee. Another thing, that was really interesting, too, to serve on that. We recommended legalization of bingo and raffles and some other stuff. I can't remember how it all came together, and then it was expanded further by court decisions. But Gerke...and another thing, you may remember this, too, about me, too, Joe. I was a not always a real conservative Republican.

JQ: That's right.

BB: And so, Gerke knew that, and he put me on conference committees.

JQ: That's right, I remember that.

BB: I didn't always—

JQ: I remember that, and I do remember that, Bob.

BB: Well, I didn't always, I thought, even belong on the conference committee, but he'd bring me in, and he'd sit me down, and of course he was old enough to be my grandfather, and we'd talk about the bill and the legislation, and this sort of thing. And then if he thought, "Well, I think he sees this the same way I do," when we only had three from each house on a conference committee—

JQ: Yes.

BB: Then I'd be the Republican. I might not be that representative of the rest of the Republicans, but I was a fair and square a Republican who saw things his way. So, as you mentioned, I was on a ton of conference committees with...by Gerke appointing me.

JQ: You might not have been on the conference committee as a straight Republican that...so conservative, so conservative, because you got on there because you worked on the facts. You worked on what was right. It didn't make...if it was way right or way...but you worked on what was right.

BB: Well, I think that's something else we've got in common, too, because you're a Democrat, and a true Democrat, and I'm a true Republican. But that didn't govern my thinking, and it didn't govern your thinking. You know what I mean? I mean, you tried to do the right thing, but you were a Democrat. Well, I tried to do the right thing, and I was a Republican. So, party line was important, but not totally important.

JQ: Well, if I possibly can, I'll stick with the Democrats. Absolutely, I will. But there were times that I had to go down my caucus, and the caucus speaker would say, "Joe, how could you possibly vote for and sign that Republican measure?" Reason I can do that is because it's good for Butte, and it's good for its people, and it's going to keep the mines working. We had that type of legislation, the possibilities of shutting down the mines, and I want to see our people working before a lot of things. That's why I did it.

BB: And that's your primary job. Who elects you to the legislature? The people from your area, the people from—

JQ: It's not easy going down your caucus, and tell them, "Well, I'm sticking with the Republican on..." you know. But you do it.

BB: And you were in leadership. Weren't you whip?

JQ: Yes.

BB: At one time?

JQ: I was minority whip; I was majority whip a couple of times, and I was Democratic whip when we were 50-50.

BB: So, you were in the leadership. They thought enough of you, obviously, to put you in the leadership and keep you there.

JQ: And they still did, even after that.

BB: And then, the committee that you served on, most importantly, all the time, was the Appropriations Committee, right?

JQ: And if we were in the majority, I was chairman of the subcommittee of General Government and Transportation. We had, from the governor's office down, the auditor's office, and all executive agencies in our committee. We had the DOT, highway department. That meant a lot to me because I got to know the governors and all that real well; they'd have to come to me with their budget. [laughs] So, we got to know one another, both the Republicans and, well, and Democrats. Yes.

BB: Your first governor, the governor you first served with was Governor Forrest Anderson.

JQ: Forrest Anderson, yes.

BB: What are your recollections?

JQ: Well, I never knew Forrest too well except, I'll tell you he was...When you'd talk to him, you'd say, "Boy, that guy knows what he's about." He was a knowledgeable man, and I think he done a good job as governor.

BB: A lot of accomplishments, that's for sure.

JQ: Yes. I didn't get, even while being a legislator, too involved with the state races because I was never going to run for governor, I was never going to run for anything, I wasn't even going to run for the Senate. Because I want to stay on the appropriations committee, and if we were in the majority on the Subcommittee on Appropriations.

BB: Yes, because that's real power.

JQ: That's where we could get some things done, too. Not only that, when you had the executive agencies, then various people come to you, if you needed something for your community, you made a phone call and it got done. [laughs] Yes.

BB: Tom Judge.

JQ: Oh, Tom was a good guy. You had to get to know Tom a lot, because, boy I'll tell you, he could wheel and deal. You know, Tom was like that. But Tom got things done, too. And trying to think of [unintelligible], because I worked with Tom a lot. Tom used to come to Butte, and we'd get together and have a few sips together. Oh, you know, we were always looking for jobs in Butte, because there weren't a lot at the time. Either they were on strike or something like that on the hill. If the mines were on strike, boy things was down in that. So, anyway, one of the biggest agencies, state agencies around Butte, was a highway department. They had the highway complex there. We were head of the district out of Butte. Well, I don't know if this is right or wrong, but I used to call Tom, get ahold of him, say, "I got a friend, really been out of work, and he needs a job, like that. Where can we find him a job?"

"Oh, we can probably get him on the highway." All right, great. To this day, there's a couple.

BB: Really? That you put in a good word for Governor Judge...with Governor Judge for—

JQ: To Governor Judge for, yes.

BB: And he's still there?

JQ: And, in fact, two grandsons.

BB: [laughs] That are still working for the highway department?

JQ: They sure are. One's a section foreman out of Whitehall to Butte, and the other one's a snowplow driver out of Butte. Two grandsons.

BB: Yes.

JQ: Yes.

BB: Well, I had good luck with Judge, too. How about the governor? Any more about Governor Judge?

JQ: No, he—no, but he got involved in a lot of other things, so and—I'm surprised he didn't go for really big jobs, you know?

BB: Yes. Well, he wanted to be a U.S. senator.

JQ: Yes.

BB: But that didn't ever quite work out.

JQ: No, it didn't, no. It wasn't the right time and the place, with these others in there.

BB: Yes, that's right.

JQ: Yes.

BB: Ted, Governor Ted Schwinden.

JQ: Well, Ted run against Tom Judge and defeated him. That bothered me a little bit, but then I got to working with Ted Schwinden. Ted Schwinden turned out to be a real fine guy. One of the things I worked with him a lot on, metal mines tax. The company even got to Ted Schwinden, to see, if and when the metal mines tax got out of committee and on the floor, up to his office, he would veto it.

BB: Wow.

JQ: Oh, yes.

BB: I wouldn't have thought that.

JQ: Yes.

BB: He didn't want to see it changed?

JQ: No, they bought it up. They wanted [him] to veto. He would not veto it.

BB: Okay, okay, yes. That's what I would think, yes.

JQ: No, he would not veto it. In fact, they put a lot of pressure on Ted. I know that. They did to all of us. But he did not veto it. In fact, if you come to Butte, take a look at it, I got a lot of pictures in my office of various things, and a picture with Ted Schwinden and I and one of my grandsons and we're doing something there, and he wrote a memo on there. And he says, wrote on it, "Joe, you did an admirable job."

BB: Great.

JQ: And we were talking about the metals mines tax. Because they really pushed him to veto it.

BB: How would you compare him, personality-wise, to Tom Judge?

JQ: He wasn't as outward as Tom, and more conservative. But a likable guy, yes. But didn't, wasn't outwardly boisterous, get out like Tom Judge did. Tom just was a wheeler and dealer and got after things, and didn't mind taking a look at pretty lady now and again, either. [laughs] Yes, I went with him a few places. Boy.

BB: Governor Judge?

JQ: Yes.

BB: In Butte?

JQ: And different places. Washington, D.C., once. Yes. I'm not saying that.

BB: Schwinden was pretty straight-laced, I think.

JQ: He was straight-laced, but he was a very honorable man. An honorable man in a lot of ways. He could even see things that, oh, should have been just straight like this, but he could evaluate it and say, maybe we could lean a little bit the other way to get at that. That was Ted.

BB: And well, Judge was governor at the time when the state had a lot of money.

JQ: Oh boy, yes.

BB: Schwinden was governor when the state was broke.

JQ: Damn near broke.

BB: Yes, so that kind of made a difference, too, I suppose in how they approached their jobs.

JQ: Well, we were all looking. I remember, I remember working on their budget. Boy. And a few places we had to cut, because we didn't have it. But I remember going down with Teresa Cohea [legislative fiscal analyst].

BB: Yes, I remember her. She was the governor's budget officer, I think?

JQ: Yes. Well, and also before that she was on the Legislative Services. Yes. I remember going down, going over things with her and Ted, and trying to see how we could fit their budget in.

Because he had some ideas on doing some good things, and we worked things out the best we could with the funds we had. So, that's how we did it. Yes, but I remember sitting with him and Terry, and yes. She was one smart cookie.

BB: She was one smart cookie, that's for sure.

JQ: You know, that's another thing, you know. When I got up to the assembly, I knew I wasn't the smartest guy in the world. But I was smart enough to hire the smartest. And be around the smartest.

BB: Yes, and that's what's important, and to respect them and take advantage of their smartness.

JQ: That's right. And listen to them. Take the time to listen to them and evaluate what they're saying. Boy, I'll tell you.

BB: Joe, another smart cookie we served with in the legislature that we might not have always been on the same wavelength with, was Tom Towe?

JQ: Oh, boy. And Tom and I used to get our hackles up a little once-in-a-while. We'd bristle one another because, well, I thought he was too liberal in some cases, and one was shut down the mines. In another case, and mining, whether it be coal mining, metal mines, or what, there he—he wasn't really for them as much as the rest of us. So, we rubbed one another the wrong way on the way. But he had a good head on his shoulders.

BB: Yes, he was smart. Really smart. And a really hard worker.

JQ: Yes. And I remember going down to Billings, and him and I had lunch a couple of times together. Yes. Even though I couldn't say I really had a real respect for him. But I—no, I wouldn't say that. I did have respect for him, but not closeness like I did with the other legislators. And—but he was a smart cookie.

BB: He was a smart cookie, yes.

JQ: Yes. And—

BB: We served in the legislature with Stan Stephens. You and I both did.

JQ: Yes.

BB: And then he went on to become governor. What do you remember about him as a state senator, before he became governor?

JQ: You know, I don't remember a lot about Stan, because I didn't work with him a lot.

BB: You were in the House and he was in the Senate.

JQ: Yes. We were friends, and we'd communicate quite a bit, but we didn't have, do anything specifically together. But—

BB: Did you work with him then as governor?

JQ: Oh, yes, yes. Have to work with him on his budget.

BB: That's what I'm thinking, yes.

JQ: Sure.

BB: What are your recollections?

JQ: Well, I'll tell you, one thing he wanted to do, he wanted to take care of the farmer. And Stan did. Yes. And there was a specific—something in his budget there to set up a committee for agriculture. And we give him the money for it because he made sense. I can't remember what exactly it was, but it was a pet project of his. And we helped get it done, because seemed like it was the right thing to do for the farmer. Yes. Which I didn't know much about. But Stan seemed to know well. And I thought, "Well, that's good enough for me, too." Yes.

BB: And if you can be helpful to the governor in a way that's workable to you, then maybe that's—

JQ: It's a two-way street.

BB: It's a two-way street, right? [laughs]

JQ: [laughs] Yes, yes.

BB: Anything more about Stephens?

JQ: No. Stan was just...I'm trying to think. Oh, we'd go down to Jorgie's [Jorgenson's] once-in-a-while together.

BB: Yes. [laughs] Just you and Stephens?

JQ: Yes.

BB: I see. Well, that's pretty neat, too, Joe.



JQ: Yes, especially if we were in a subcommittee meeting then. After a while he'd say to me, "After the meeting—"

BB: Yes. [laughs] And you were able to talk over some things then, I'm sure, just privately between the two of you?

JQ: And go over them. Yes, and we did. We got a lot of things done down at Jorgie's. [laughs]

BB: [laughs] Marc Racicot.

JQ: Marc?

BB: Marc Racicot. Governor Marc Racicot.

JQ: Marc was a smart man. I liked him. I really liked him. We had a little different philosophies, but still I respected him. [coughs] Because he had a good head on his shoulders. Yeah, Marc did.

BB: How would you describe his personality?

JQ: Well, I never much thought of that, but likeable. Yes, yes. I thought he was a likeable man, yes.

BB: But you wouldn't describe him, necessarily, as like Governor Tom Judge?

JQ: Oh, no, no. Not a Tom Judge.

BB: More reserved than Judge, right?

JQ: More reserved than Judge. But likeable.

BB: Did you ever have a conversation or an experience with him you can remember?

JQ: No, I should have...I'll have to think because we talked a lot. Yes, we did. And I'll have to go back on some stuff and see, because it's been awhile. But we worked on different issues, and I just right now can't pick them up.

BB: You, I think, were out of the legislature when Judy Martz became governor.

JQ: Yes.

BB: But you were over there, weren't you, helping out? Weren't you an advisor to the speaker or something like that during that period?

JQ: Yes, yes.

BB: So, you got some impressions of Judy Martz, both as a, someone from Butte—

JQ: And a friend from Butte.

BB: So, tell me about Judy Martz.

JQ: Well, I thought Judy Martz was not a Tom Judge or Stan Stephens, but she was a hard, hard worker. She was like a bulldog. When she got into something, she really went after it. Yes. Nobody frightened her. If she thought it was right, that's the way it went. That's something I learned from her, yes.

BB: Did she ever consult you? Because she hadn't had any experience in the legislature. You knew her, you knew her from Butte.

JQ: Yes, well, we had talked a lot. I don't know if it's consulting, but she asked me a lot of questions—

BB: That's what I'm thinking.

JQ: And I don't even remember some of them. But we talked a lot, Judy and I did, yes. And—

BB: Well, you've certainly had a lot of interaction with lots of governors.

JQ: Oh, boy, yes. And I'm trying to think of very...really incidents, but right now I...We just seem to be admirable friends after a while. You know, I could walk down, walk into the governor's office and they would see me in the front desk, and they'd just go like that.

BB: Just wave you in?

JQ: Yes.

BB: Joe, what do you remember about her in Butte before she got into politics?

JQ: Oh, she was a fine athlete. Oh, boy. And she was a skater. Oh, she was a world-class skater.

BB: Olympic speed skating.

JQ: Yes, yes. Judy was a fine girl, too, growing up. She wasn't promiscuous or nothing. She was just a fine lady. And I think she was a fine governor.

BB: And she and her husband had the garbage business, didn't they?

JQ: Yes, they did. Yes. Yes, they did. She drove the truck and hauled the garbage just like the rest of them.

BB: So she was a hard-working person—

JQ: Oh, boy. She knew how to work. I'll tell you that Judy Martz was strong. You didn't want to tangle with her. You bet, yes.

BB: Well, I suppose, what is she, about 5'11"? Maybe almost six feet tall?

JQ: I would say pretty close to that, because I was nearly six foot, and I didn't have to look down at her. In fact, I looked straight up or up a little bit at Judy. Yes.

BB: Joe, you've served with so many legislators and so many lobbyists, and so many agency people, and that sort of thing, that I wouldn't even hardly know where to begin. But for people listening to this interview in the future, historians and that sort of thing, who would maybe be served by having some impression of a, you know, of a person, let me just ask you a few questions. We've covered the waterfront, I think real well for governors. But you served for a long time with Representative Francis Bardanouve. And probably one of your closest associates in the legislature.

JQ: Francis and I were very, very, very good friends.

BB: He was chairman of the Appropriations Committee for—

JQ: Oh, boy, I'll tell you.

BB: I don't know how many years.

JQ: I would sit down there and we would talk, and I would pick his brain. Because he knew more about the state budget in his head than they had in books. He could tell you from one session to the other, how the budgets went and what didn't go on that. I think he lived for the Appropriations Committee, because he spent more time down there—

BB: On his own.

JQ: On his own. Even when we were not in session, or if we're out of session. He would be down [in the] appropriations room working on things. He knew the state budget better than any person in the legislature. Him and I would talk a lot, and I would get some marching orders every once-in-a-while before I went into the subcommittee hearings. From Francis. He just—

BB: But you didn't resent that? I mean, you—

JQ: Not a bit. I was glad to hear them, see what...because he was so knowledgeable on the budget, that I could sit there with mouth open and listen to him talk.

BB: Was there a Republican who was especially knowledgeable and influential during that period, on Appropriations?

JQ: Well, you know, there was but I can't—

BB: Norris Nichols?

JQ: Oh, Norris, great guy. He was in Senate after a while, and, but—

BB: But he spent a lot of years, I know, on the House Appropriations Committee.

JQ: Yes, yes, he did.

BB: And the story about that, of course, was that there were a couple of sessions when he was chairman, when the Republicans had the majority—

JQ: Yes.

BB: When Bill Groff was chairman over in the Senate of the Finance Committee, and they represented the same district. And they called them the gold dust twins.

JQ: Gold dust twins. They sure did. And they got things done. Boy, I'll tell you, those two. But Norris...I don't...he wasn't pushy, but you could go to Norris with something you really believed in, and he'd have it on the agenda for you. Yes. That's what I remember. When things come to mind I'll tell you. There there was a bill on workers that I put in, that I wanted him to see. It had to do with health and safety working conditions, and we wanted to form a workers committee. Yes, I'm trying to think exactly how that went. Well, it took a little funding, but Norris says, "We can get it done." And we did.

BB: He helped you find the money.

JQ: He helped me find the money. Yes. Yes, it was, yes, there was six person on this committee, and they were appointed by the governor. I can't think of the name of the committee, now. That's what's bothering me. But anyway, they had to do a lot of research on various industrial equipment. And safety equipment. Oh, like if you were working in a specific type of job, you had to have a respirator, and stuff like that. Well, we made it mandatory. Because some companies wouldn't come up with them like that. And yes. And things like that in this bill.

BB: Joe, we touched on the number of names already, but there are a few more that are really interesting individuals that you served with in the legislature. One I'm sure who would be memorable is Representative John Hall?

JQ: Oh, boy. Remember John Hall, always with the...going like that.

BB: With the pipe in his mouth.

JQ: With the pipe in his mouth. Well, you'd look at him. When I first seen him, John Hall from Great Falls. I said, "Boy, who's that stoop?" I said to myself. Well, that was the biggest misstatement I ever made in my life. Because I'll tell you, he didn't talk like much or do like much, but he was one smart cookie.

BB: And he could talk pretty well, too, when he needed to.

JQ: Oh, boy. Once he got on a subject, I'll tell you, you listen to him because it'd be from the start to the end. All the way through. He'd explain every part of it as you went along. He was just one...boy, I'll tell you.

BB: Brilliant mind.

JQ: Really smart.

BB: And a kind of a strange personality—

JQ: Very strange person, yes.

BB: And disheveled looking and that sort of thing—

JQ: Yes.

BB: But, boy, I sometimes I was just in awe of how smart that guy was.

JQ: When he'd get on the floor, all of a sudden you'd turn around and listen to him. Because he made sense in what he was talking about.

BB: Regardless of what you thought about it, he was worth paying attention to.

JQ: What you thought about it, but it made sense.

BB: Yes, you bet. Do you remember the debate between he and Jim Lucas on a coal moratorium?

JQ: I remember the debate, yes.

BB: It was at night, I think, as I remember? Maybe not—

JQ: Yes, we were in the night session.

BB: I think it was at least after supper or something, and it was whether to proceed with the coal development in eastern Montana.

JQ: Yes. And boy, John Hall held his own.

BB: He held his own, yes, that's right.

JQ: And boy, that's something with Lucas.

BB: That's something with Lucas. [laughs] Exactly, you're right.

JQ: And that's what I thought at the time.

BB: I think a lot of people remember that as perhaps the highest quality debate in all the years they were in the legislature.

JQ: That's right. Two of some of the most knowledgeable people in the whole assembly right there. And boy, when they went over there, they make sense. And, oh—

BB: I remember, Joe—

JQ: So articulate.

BB: So articulate. I remember Hall standing there, I've got a mental image of him puffing on that pipe, but that might be just a general recollection—

JQ: Even when it wasn't lit, he's had it there.

BB: And sometimes he had a cover on the top of it so it wouldn't burn holes in his clothing, and that sort of thing, but there were times when, I saw this happen one time, when something happened that really inspired him, and he blew and the lid came off the pipe, you know. Anyway [laughs] he was something. But I remember this, and see if you remember it, too. In that great debate between him, he and Jim Lucas, Hall, I remember, said that because Hall wanted to...I think the coal moratorium was that we wouldn't develop the coal for a year or two or something. That was the idea. Until we better understood what the ramifications were. Lucas thought we knew enough, and we could go ahead and just proceed carefully and slowly, and we wouldn't get in trouble. So, those are kind of the two sides. But I remember Hall saying,

“Act in haste, repent at leisure. Act in haste, repent at leisure.” Repeated that a couple of times, pretty effectively.

JQ: Oh, boy. Funny thing now, thinking back about that, John Hall knew what tank slimes was.

BB: Really? And he helped you make sure that didn’t happen?

JQ: He was the one that brought me to the section in the book that showed you what they were deducting.

BB: [laughs] Well, that was a significant thing, then, wasn’t it?

JQ: Oh, yes. Yes, John Hall, yes.

BB: Oh—

JQ: Well—

BB: Go ahead.

JQ: Well, Nig McGrath, though, researched it, too, with me, but John knew about it.

BB: Mike McGrath who was...became attorney general?

JQ: No, Nig McGrath.

BB: Oh, Nig McGrath, the county assessor in Butte?

JQ: County assessor, yes.

BB: A couple more names. [Lloyd] Sonny Lockrem?

JQ: Oh, Sonny. Wheeler and dealer.

BB: Minority leader, Republican from Butte.

JQ: Yes.

BB: I mean, from Billings.

JQ: From Billings. I’ll tell you, Sonny was a real likable guy.

BB: You talk about people who could get things done.

JQ: Oh, boy.

BB: He was really capable.

JQ: Yes, he did

BB: Even when he was the minority leader, I think the Republican had something like 33—

JQ: Yes.

BB: They couldn't even stop—

JQ: You know, and I saw Sonny as a good friend. We went out together a lot on different things. But you know, and he was a strong Republican. But you know, he was one that voted on issues, too. Yes. Sonny was one that you could talk to him on something, and we'd sit down and could work out things with him. Yes. Especially, him and I used to travel along quite a bit.

BB: Like to national legislative meetings? Council of state legislatures, or what we belong to, I think—

JQ: NCSL.

BB: NCSL, yes, yes.

JQ: Yes. Yes, we did.

BB: So many names here. John Driscoll was speaker?

JQ: Oh, John. John was a decent guy, yes. And we didn't work together, we were close, because his father was a highway patrolman from Butte at one time. But John—

BB: I knew he had Butte connections.

JQ: Oh, yes, yes. John always voted with us. And we always voted with John, because of those connections, too. And—

BB: Didn't the Butte delegation have a closeness to, oh, the Beaverhead [County] Republicans?

JQ: Oh, yes.

BB: Frank Hazelbaker—



JQ: Oh, yes.

BB: Frank Hazelbaker in the Senate.

JQ: Frank Hazelbaker—

BB: He oftentimes kind of considered himself even a part of the Butte delegation.

JQ: He sure was, too.

BB: Yes, yes.

JQ: Yes, he sure was, Frank.

BB: Bob Marks.

JQ: Oh, Bob. Bob and I—

BB: Republican speaker for—

JQ: —were close friends. In fact, I used to stop at Clancy [Montana] on the way from Butte back and forth lots of times. I'd stop at the ranch there, and him and I would have varied discussions. Sometimes we would even have discussions about legislation that was on the agenda, and how we should interact on that. So many times, we found out we were in agreement with one another about how it should go.

BB: But Bob was a moderate sort of a—

JQ: He was a moderate, yes.

BB: Yes, tried to work things out in a common-sense way, and that sort of thing.

JQ: He sure did.

BB: Now, he was of course a...I hope you remember this, because it's a funny memory. He was a...You're a Catholic, right?

JQ: Well, I was raised a Catholic when I was...before my father got killed. Then we moved in with the Swedes, the Protestants. I end up being a Protestant.

BB: Okay, well I didn't know that. But do you remember Marks was an Orangeman. His, both his mom and dad came from England.

JQ: That's right.

BB: And he was very proud of that English ancestry, and so I think it might have been on St. Patrick's Day? See if you remember this. Everybody came into the House chamber, and Marks was the speaker. And he got these—there were foam rubber kinds of things that go over the top of a microphone.

JQ: Yes, yes.

BB: And they were orange.

JQ: Yes.

BB: So, everybody's microphone in the whole House of Representatives had—

JQ: That's right.

BB: Remember that? Had those orange things? And that was just to play a joke on the—

JQ: Well, because the Orangemen didn't get along with the Irish, you know.

BB: Exactly, yes.

JQ: Yes, the Catholic...and—

BB: But with him doing it, it was a good-natured thing. I mean—

JQ: But it was a good...I'll tell you, it was laughable. Even J.D. and Menahan [laughs] boy, who were, you know, straight from the old sod, especially Menahan. Like that.

BB: Representative Red Menahan from Anaconda.

JQ: Yes, right. And—

BB: Very much an Irish Catholic.

JQ: But, oh, boy. But [laughs] they saw that, he says, [stomps his fist] "What is this?" Like that.

I said, "I don't know, Red. But it's not green." [laughs]

BB: [laughs] It was something like it happened on St. Patrick's Day, and I think Marks said...he was the speaker at the time, I think this is right, and he said, "You know, a lot of the fellows have been asking me if I couldn't get something on those microphones to keep them from

squawking and screeching. I didn't pay any attention, and they just showed up orange. And it's just a total coincidence that I happened to, you know, put them on the microphones, today is St. Patrick's Day." Of course, nobody believed that, it was hilarious, you know, but. [laughs]

JQ: Yes. But they served a purpose. But boy, why they had to be orange, I'll never know.

BB: [laughs] Well, we know, I think.

JQ: Yes. [laughs]

BB: What do you remember about Jack Ramirez? Republican leader of the House?

JQ: Oh, Jack? From Billings.

BB: Lawyer from Billings.

JQ: Yes. Very, very knowledgeable. Very smart man. But I never worked with him a lot. But had a few conversations together, and stuff. And I respected the man, though. Because—

BB: He was, had a reputation for being more of a partisan than Marks. You know, Bob Marks was a speaker that kind of regarded himself...kind of like Harold Gerke—

JQ: Yes.

BB: —as the speaker of the whole body.

JQ: Oh, yes.

BB: But whereas Jack Ramirez was never speaker, I think he was the Republican floor leader, maybe a couple of different times. He was pretty much a war chief for the Republicans.

JQ: Yes, he was.

BB: That's my recollection.

JQ: Yes, he was. Jack Ramirez was more party line than anyone. But I, maybe that's why I never worked with him that closely.

BB: John Harp?

JQ: But, you know, even at that, you had to have a respect for him.

BB: Oh yes, sure.

JQ: Yes. I surely did. He was well-liked, if you went down to Billings, he was well liked down there.

BB: Representative John Harp.

JQ: Oh, John. You know, even though both was Democrats, we never worked together a lot on things. I don't know why.

BB: Well, Harp was a Republican.

JQ: Oh, oh. That's right. He was, yes.

BB: Yes. He went over to the Senate after he was in the House. He wasn't there a long time, I know.

JQ: No. Yes, he was a Re...that's right. And the Reverend was his father.

BB: No, you're thinking of Hal Harper.

JQ: That's, oh, that's who I'm thinking of. Yes, John Harp. Oh, now I got it. John, yes. For a minute, there, yes, he was in some kind of business, I remember.

BB: He was a line contractor.

JQ: Line contractor. That was it. And—

BB: But I know he was...Did dinner and lunch and stuff like that a few times with you guys.

JQ: Yes, he was.

BB: The Butte delegation. He thought highly of you.

JQ: But you know, a funny thing with John, now that I remember him, I thought for a minute there, [we were] talking about Hal Harper. But John Harp, he...we voted together a lot on lot of things. Especially where it come to industry and stuff, to where you could keep people working and getting a tax base. This was it. Without doing a detriment to the state. Boy, that's hard to—

BB: Sometimes a balancing act, isn't it?

JQ: It's a balancing act, I'll tell you. But we tried. We tried.

BB: Well, Harp was up from my country, up in the Flathead. So, I got to know him real well.

JQ: Yes, he was, yes.

BB: Just a couple more names, and then I want to ask you about the Freeman incident.

JQ: Oh, boy.

BB: But Ray Peck? Representative Ray Peck was a minority leader.

JQ: Right, yes. Never worked much with Ray, for some reason. But amicable guy, and...but never was close with him. No.

BB: A couple more things here too, Joe. Thinking about, anyway, when you and I talked about doing the interview. Do you remember anything about the sales tax controversy? That's clear back in the '70s.

JQ: Oh, boy. I was always opposed to the sales tax. Boy, as you remember, Bob, there was a lot of arm twisting on sales tax. Boy, I was just adamantly opposed to it, because all unions were opposed to a sales tax. I come from the union family. And so I just automatically would vote against the sales tax. Right. That's all I remember about that.

BB: The coal tax? Remember, there was an effort to jack the coal tax up to 40 percent, and then up 30 percent, and that sort of thing.

JQ: Yes.

BB: A big battle about that.

JQ: You know, I believed in a coal tax, especially a coal trust. But I wanted, in some way, to make sure it was a fair tax. If there's ever such a thing as a fair tax. But yes, I went down to Colstrip a couple of times. Went down with Lahr, once. John Lahr.

BB: With John Lahr, the lobbyist?

JQ: Yes.

BB: Montana Power Company lobbyist?

JQ: From Butte. John's a good friend. Anyway, looked at the mining there, and they'd [have] an overburden different places from 16 to 12...16 feet of overburden. But then they'd have 32-foot coal seams. You would look at that and say, "Boy, oh boy." Not thinking about the pollution at the time, thinking how many coal-fired plants would pop up, which did all over the country. So, while looking at that, you know, nothing stays on, go, go, go forever. But if they're going to

mine all that coal, why not put something away, like a trust? I was a strong supporter of that. I did what I could on it, never really involved, but supported any way I could, the coal trust. And that's paying off to date.

BB: Yes. I've forgotten what it is, but it's close to a billion dollars now, isn't it?

JQ: Yes, the last I...well, last time I worked with it, it was \$557 million. Because—

BB: And that's when you were still a legislator?

JQ: Yes. And now it's close to a billion.

BB: I think it's close to a billion.

JQ: Yes. But you know, they're hardly mining any coal now. But still—

BB: We've got some—

JQ: Too bad we didn't have a coal...copper trust for Butte.

BB: Isn't that true.

JQ: Yes. Then we'd have something to fall back on for the people that in some cases, lost their land over there, or sold it to the mining companies. But still, it's not farmland. And the open pit mining like that, there has to be someone to take care of the waste from the mines, and the infrastructure that was created by all this coal mining. And the coal trust was one of the smartest things that Romney ever come up with.

BB: Representative Miles Romney.

JQ: Miles Romney.

BB: Hamilton.

JQ: And I didn't get involved, or sign on or anything, but I worked with them on it. And our good delegation voted for it. Yes.

BB: Well, it was sure an example of long-term thinking, wasn't it?

JQ: Oh, it sure was. And so, Miles was the one that pushed it, I remember that. And helped them any way I could.

BB: Yes, well that's great. I remember the same thing. You were involved in an interesting episode in Montana history that I somewhat understand, but never fully understood. And that was when this group of political extremists of some kind or another, I think who called themselves the Freemen, occupied some property over in Garfield County—

JQ: Jordan, Montana.

BB: Near Jordan, and they called themselves the Justice Township, or something like that?

JQ: Yes.

BB: And the reason I know about that, well, I mean a lot of people in Montana knew about it, was because then State Representative Karl Ohs, who later became lieutenant governor, somehow or other was contacted by these Freemen who had the ranch that they were occupying up there, and declaring it some kind of a separate country or other. And so my uncle, Representative Dick Knox, and Joe—

JQ: Was Dick your uncle?

BB: Dick was my uncle, my mother's brother. And you, went to...Karl chose you and my Uncle Dick to go into compound—

JQ: And John Johnson.

BB: Oh, was there another one, too? Representative John Johnson from Glendive?

JQ: John Johnson.

BB: Okay, so, with that as—

JQ: There was four of us went to the compound.

BB: Well, just tell that story, because I remember seeing on television—...there were...I think you went in on horseback, didn't you?

JQ: No, no. Karl went in on horseback.

BB: Well, that's what I guess I have a...yes. But eventually the four of you went in and it was at night, and there was a mistake about having your headlights on, or something like that I think. I don't know.

JQ: No.

BB: Tell the story.

JQ: No, I'll tell you, Karl Ohs was a great guy. Anyway, he was from Harrison, Montana, and a rancher and that, and he communicated with those people.

BB: They knew him somehow.

JQ: They got to know him in various agricultural seminars and stuff together.

BB: Yes, yes.

JQ: So, anyway, he talked to them, and he...This is how they tell me, how he told me...that they thought they were absolutely right. Not [that] they didn't want government of any kind. They didn't need a police department, or anything. They didn't need a school mill levy because they could homeschool. So, anyway, that Waco problem, and Ruby Ridge had just gotten over with, and there was some bad things happened. Some killings. Bloodshed. Well, evidently Karl must have talked to them, a little bit like that. And he says, "Why don't you talk to a few people I know, and you can research them," which they did. "Because I think, they'll listen to you, and see what can be done." So anyway, Karl got a hold of me and says, "FBI's going pick you up in their little plane and fly you to Jordan."

BB: The FBI?

JQ: FBI. So, they did. I get in this little single-engine plane, and they fly me to Jordan, Montana, and landed in this field.

BB: But how did Karl Ohs choose you and Dick and John. I mean, do you know?

JQ: Well, because Karl thought we were all objectionable, he thought—

BB: Objective.

JQ: Yes. That we would listen to him, you know. Rather than make our minds up right away, we would try to resolve the problem.

BB: And you had a reputation along with the others for being—

JQ: We did, yes. So, anyway—

BB: But did you know what you were getting yourself into?

JQ: Not a bit. I knew that—



BB: He just called you up—

JQ: Karl says, “Joe, it's going to be real touchy, so watch what you say. All right?” So, we gets in there, that's when [they] took the horses into the compound. Like that. Well, Karl was there when I was there, and Dick was there. John wasn't there yet. Anyway, goes in there. As we're going in, there's this big gate that they use to...You can drive a truck through. And here's an armed guard there.

BB: One of the Freemen, standing there with a rifle?

JQ: One of the Freemen. I looked at that, and I thought, “Oh, boy.” So, anyway, gets into the compound, and this lady, I think it was either LeRoy Schweitzer's wife or Clark's wife, or one of them. Never did get her name because I didn't want to say much, because every place you went there was either somebody with a sidearm on or a rifle. So, they found us a place to sleep. So, they give us a cup of coffee. Karl comes in, he has Schweitzer with him, and Peterson, and one of the Clarks. Well—

BB: And these were all Freemen?

JQ: These were Freeman. You should have heard Schweitzer. Boy, oh, boy. Wat a glib tongue. Man. And talking to different people around the compound, they swore by him.

BB: They swore by Schweitzer as their leader?

JQ: Yes. And I'll tell you, when you looked at him, he was really, really scary. You had to be very careful what you said to them. Because they could get agitated very, very easily. So, anyway, I'm talking with Dan Peterson, and one the Clarks and another one, I can't...but anyway we're talking there, and I said to him, “You've got to have some type of government. You've got to have some because if you don't there's chaos all over. You can't have armed guards and that all around.” I says, “You need a Congress, you need a legislature, and you need commissioners, and a council.”

“Oh, what for?”

“Well, so that you can talk to them and express your opinions.”

“Well, we can't get in to see them.”

I says, “That don't seem right.” I said, “Because there's never a time that somebody couldn't get in to see me.” I would prefer my constituents, like that, but if somebody else come in with a problem, a legitimate problem, we'd sit down and try to work it out. You can't work by armed conflict. Oh, boy, well we might blast your ass. You know, like that. I said, “That's not the way to do it.” I said, “Work through the people.” I said, “If you got a problem, and I said, “Government

isn't always right. There are problems, but you can rectify them problems if you do it the right way. Whether you do it through the legislature, or your City Council, or your commissioners or Congress, that's how it gets done." I said, "You've got to have something like that, that you can come to."

"But we can't talk to them."

"Did you ever really try?"

"Well, not a straight answer."

Okay. And I said, "Locally," I says, "you've got to have roads and streets and sewers and education. Even the mill levy, like that."

"Oh, no, no." Well, I had it wrong there.

We don't need no levies or taxes, stuff like that, because we'll homeschool. Oh, boy. And they really believed in that. And especially Schweitzer. No government whatsoever. I says, "Well, why don't we sit down and try to talk things out. See if we can't get these arms done. Because look at what happened in Waco and Ruby Ridge. There was killings and bloodshed. You don't want that any more than I want it." I says, "Why don't you sit down, even with the FBI here, and see if you can't work out some compromise to put your guns away and still they will listen to you and help to rectify the problems that you have, or think you have or whatever. But work the problem out."

"They won't listen to us."

I said, "I'll bet they will." So, I got a hold of one of the FBI guys there. He come to me, and we come...Schweitzer wasn't around. To Peterson, Dan Peterson. He was another one. Anyway—

BB: Peterson was a little scary, too?

JQ: He was a little scary, too. Wore a sidearm. We talked and talked and talked over things. Come up with the agreement; we didn't want bloodshed. The FBI sure didn't want bloodshed.

BB: So, that was kind of the key to the rest of what happened? When you first agreed to that—

JQ: That first was how she got started, then. So anyway, they met, and there were a couple like this one lady and her young kid, baby. She didn't want none of this, she believed in the Freeman movement, but she didn't want these guns and everything else like that. So, she moved out and there was three or four others start moving away, although there were just about 10 at the compound at the time that were armed. So, they might have looked at their hole card, and they sat down with the FBI, and I wasn't in on them hearings. But they worked

some things out. So, Karl and I come back, we're going to have breakfast at the compound, and we have breakfast with LeRoy Schweitzer, the Clarks, and Peterson—

BB: And that was just you and Karl?

JQ: Yes. Dick, I don't know where they...Dick or John was. But Karl had a...They respect one another, it seemed like. And we worked, all of us, Dick and John and I, to get their respect and let him know that we understand. That there can be problems with government. Government can't be perfect, but there's way to rectify it, and that's not by armed conflict. Do it the proper way. Even, any one of you people, get into the legislature. These people are your people, they'll vote for you. This is, different places, you get it done whether it's there, or on the commission, or council. Wherever. But do it the proper way, so that you don't have to bear arms. And they start looking at the hole card a little bit, and eventually it got pretty well resolved.

BB: Were you there when they, when they put down their arms and left the compound?

JQ: Yes.

BB: You saw that happen? Wow.

JQ: Yes.

BB: And I understand they had a truck load—

JQ: Shook hands with everybody, and patting on the back.

BB: Really, really? Wow. And they had a truckload of stuff, records and documents and things that they wanted preserved?

JQ: Oh, boy. Justifying what they were doing. Yes, yes they did.

BB: And I know some of them went to jail. I think Schweitzer may still be in jail, I think.

JQ: He could be, because of other things, too. Bad checks and embezzlement and things like that.

BB: Yes, yes. Well, what an incredible experience, Joe. And of course it got national television coverage. It was—

JQ: Well, I kept away from the TV and that a little bit, because, you know you might say something on TV that they could pick up at the compound that you didn't want. Because they could get excited at the least little thing. So, you had to watch what you said.

BB: Had to be really careful. To begin with, we knew there were people negotiating with these guys in their compound, and that the guys they were negotiating with were heavily armed and that sort of thing. But I didn't know my uncle was involved, I didn't know Karl Ohs, or you, or John Johnson. I didn't know who—

JQ: Karl had known a lot of them prior this.

BB: Yes. But it wasn't until the negotiations were well underway, or maybe even over, that we knew you guys had a critical role in the whole thing.

JQ: Yes, yes we did. You saw that happen? I wish I had been smarter, maybe even...but I let them know I was sincere, and I could understand that they had a problem with government. But armed conflict was not the way to get it done. There's other ways, and because government is not perfect, but there's things that you work on to get it changed, to make it as perfect as you can. And I'll tell you, there was some, especially some that come into the compound that wasn't staying there, you know, that were Freemen though. You'd see them shake their head, yes, yes. Down deep, I don't think they wanted bloodshed. I know the FBI surely didn't want bloodshed. But the least little thing could have excited it, and it could have been very bad, another Waco or something like that. And we surely didn't need that. Thank god it worked out.

BB: Thank god it worked out. My hat's off to you for what you accomplished. I guess I think that beginning about with that incident, politics nationwide, and certainly in our state of Montana, has become more radical. It's become more extreme than it was before. And we've seen the rise of the Tea Party as an example. They're not as extreme as these guys you were working with, but they were kind of spawned by these guys you were working with. So, it's kind of a connection that's been going on for the last 20 or 30 years.

JQ: I couldn't say it better, Bob. Exactly. And you know, I'm sure that people that people are pushing this Tea Party believe they're right, but that is not another way to go, either. You can't have it one way all the time.

BB: Right.

JQ: You got to negotiate and work things out.

BB: Yes. In our system, I'm fond of repeating this, but it's that when our system works at its best, everyone has their say, but no one has their way.

JQ: Exactly. They have their say, but not their way. Absolutely. And as long as you can—

BB: If everybody can kind of understand that, then you can compromise.

JQ: See, that was the Freeman, though. They didn't think...I don't know if they tried hard enough, though. But they didn't think that they could talk to their elected representatives. Until I explained to them, you could come up any time you want to the capitol, or anywhere I'm at, and talk to me, and we'll see if we can work things out. If you got a specific problem about something, I'll take it down to that agency and you can speak to them. "Oh. We didn't know." See, they didn't know, either. And once you let them know that there's legitimate ways to get problems fixed or that, do it. You don't need armed conflict. That's not the way to do it.

They got to thinking about that. And the more they thought, the more their wives and kids and them would come to the compound and stuff, because a lot of them lived on the ranches, you know, like that. But Schweitzer and them, they were going to really go after things, with, and I mean, oh boy.

BB: [laughs] Related, again, to this, and we're getting near the end of the time for our interview. But, you know, when you began service in the legislature in the 1970s, you, of course, were a member of the Democratic Party. And it's been a few years since you've been involved in politics, but I'm just curious to know, and I'll ask you the same question about your perception of the Republicans. But have the Democrats...how have they changed? Typically the Democrats think the same thing in the '70s as they think now? That, you know, over time everything evolves, you know, somewhat like political parties. But I'm curious to know, just from your perspective, having been a, one of Montana's elder statesmen, statesmen, and very, very involved for a long time, how you'd think, how you'd describe the Democratic Party in the '70s and '80s and the modern Democratic Party.

JQ: Well, you know, to tell you the truth, I was never a real strong party person. People were my main concern.

BB: Do you think you'd have trouble, more trouble now than you had then, in the Democratic Party?

JQ: No, because I'll tell you, there are a lot of Democrats that are thinking like this. Yes. They, they, they want to vote on issues before they vote people before party.

BB: So, you don't see the Democrats being taken over by the extremism—

JQ: I don't think so, no.

BB: Particularly, yes.

JQ: When I look at those Democrats that are elected out of Butte right now, some have a little agenda of their own, but that's natural, what the heck. But they're, they're, they, like Jim Keane for instance. I think they want to get along with the other side of the aisle, because I think

they're smart enough to know, if you want to get something done for your constituency, your people, you're going to need both sides working with you, to get it done.

BB: Right. Is Jim typical of Democrats?

JQ: Oh, I don't know. I couldn't say one way or the other, how he is. No. But—

BB: Because I guess I see him as more moderate than a typical Democrat.

JQ: I would say, because he's been a businessman. Yes, and he knows that you just can't have things one way. The Anaconda really pushed things for years. But still, they employed thousands of people in Butte. See, and even those older legislators before I even got in there, a lot of them had a copper collar. But still, they did it because they worked...either worked for them, or relatives worked for them, or something like that. And it was their livelihood.

About once, for two weeks, worked for the Anaconda Company. My stepdad, Jimmy Lawrence, got me a job as assistant nipper down Leonard Mine. What you did was haul dynamite and caps and air hoses and stuff like that to the contract miners. Well, you'd go in the drift, up arrays, and then into a stope, all hundred feet underground like that, carrying this stuff. Little box of caps that sets off the charges. And I was about 18 years old, yes. And it was in '43, just before I enlisted. And I thought, something's got to be better than this.

Work, I could not hack it. I lasted about two weeks, and I told my mom, "Mom, would you sign for me so I can..." "But it's right in the middle of the war." Well, I says, "I think I should serve. And Mel Fisher's going." We signed together, we went to boot camp together. And anything would, in my opinion, be better than these mines. And I had my grandfathers, and my...well, my grandfather, my Italian grandfather was an operator of a gambling joint and restaurant.

BB: Ad that was your father's father?

JQ: My father's father, yes. Morill (?) Quilici. He run the Savoy. But my grandfather, my mother's father, was shift boss in the mines. And my uncle worked there, my uncles, I should say. And nearly everybody I know worked for the company.

BB: Joe, we're going to have to come to a close here pretty quick, but I'm just curious to know, from your long life of public service and being involved in politics and that sort of thing, you look back, and you shared with people who will listen to this tape, historians and interested people in the future, your impressions of what you've lived through. This is probably an impossible question to answer, but based on that body of experience, what do you, what do you think, what do you see as you look into Montana's future?

JQ: Well, tell you the truth, I wouldn't change nothing. I'd do exactly what I've always done, and what I tried to do. No, I, I tried always to do what was right. Sometimes I won, sometimes I

didn't. Whether it was join the Merchant Marines at that age, had my mom sign the papers for me, whatever, I just thought it was the right thing to do. I didn't know how I was going be in the legislature because I didn't know nothing about it. But once I got there and I saw how things worked, I says, "Joe, you're a real dummy. You've got to learn what's going on here." Fortunately, I could talk to guys like Jim Lucas and Harold Gerke, and Bob Marks, yes. Jack Healy, Jerry Lombardi, that were there.

I'll tell you another one. A freshman like I, but knew his way around, J.D. knew what it was about.

BB: J.D. Lynch?

JQ: Yes, J.D. Lynch. Great guy. And I was fortunate to be able to sit with such a fine delegation, both men and women. I was very lucky.

BB: Well, Montana's fortunate to have had you serve there with them, too, Joe.

JQ: Thank you.

BB: Sure appreciate your service.

JQ: Yes.

[End of Interview]