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Interviewee: Edward A. Mueller

Interviewer: Alan Bliss

Date: May 28, 2004

B: It is May 28, 2004. My name is Alan Bliss, I'm in Jacksonville, Florida at the home of Edward Mueller, that's M-U-E-L-L-E-R, middle initial "A." I'm conducting an oral history interview with him, and Mr. Mueller, would you please tell us where and when you were born.

M: Well, I was born May 12, 1923, Madison, Wisconsin.

B: Who are your parents.

M: They were of German descent, conservative-type people, my father and mother were married in their thirties, had two children, my brother and myself, I'm the older one of the two. They both worked, which was unusual in those days because this is Depression days, and in the thirties, it was kind of the rule that only one person in the family worked, because of trying to spread incomes around, but my mother a linotype operator, which was a rather skilled job for a woman in those days, and my dad was a wholesale grocery salesman, he was what you called a traveling salesman. He went to small towns within about a fifty mile radius of Madison and sold groceries.

B: Where did your parents come from?

M: Well, they both came from Wisconsin, my mother from a little town called Jefferson, and my father from a town called Walkertown. He worked for his dad in the store, grocery store that his father had, my grandfather. And my mother went to school, went to one semester of university, and then got a job as a linotype operator.

B: How did she come to be trained as a linotype operator?

M: Well, I think it was just chance, because her father was a printer, and had her on a, what they called a in those days. To get out a newspaper, you had a whole group of linotype people that set type. Linotype is a very complicated machine, and of course, the type is hot metal. That's the way the papers were printed. You run through--and do it that way. And you had to have a whole staff of people together to do it. You usually call it a _____ room to do this. And of course, they had deadlines and everything. And my _____, being in charge of one of these for a newspaper in Madison, I'm sure that's how she got the job. An opening came and the heck with school and do this.

B: Plus, _____ linotype and typesetting are generally in many newspaper organizations, those are union jobs. Was your mother a union member?

M: No. She worked for a company that, called it Democrat Printing Company, they

did a lot of library supplies. And the owners resisted the unions, I guess you'd call it furiously, although maybe not quite that obvious, by giving the employees the equivalent of what they would have had with the union. I think the argument with all this was, why join the union, you're getting the same thing now that you would if you had a union, plus you don't have to pay the union dues, of course.

B: Well, did you grow up in Madison?

M: Yeah, I grew up in Madison and went to the University of Wisconsin for three semesters. I graduated from a very good high school in town. It's called Madison East. And that was 1941. Then I went to the University of Wisconsin at Madison, which was the huge university of the day, many, many thousands. It was very big back then. I took chemical engineering for three semesters, a year and a half. The reason I selected that, I think, is because I had a cousin I was fond of who was a chemical engineer, and I also had a chemistry set when I was a kid.

B: This was prior to Pearl Harbor, I guess.

M: Well, yeah, I started school in February of '41. Of course, Pearl Harbor came toward the end of the first semester. And that had a great influence, because all of your friends went off and enlisted. All your brothers enlisted and then they heard stories of how they were flying or fighting or something, and this made everybody at home going to school very restless, because--of course, we're all in the draft, most of us just waited until our draft number came up, then decided to do something.

B: Where were you when you heard the news about Pearl Harbor?

M: Well, it was a Sunday, I was at home, the radio came on and we listened, fascinated. I think I was on a porch. We had an outdoor porch where the swing went back and forth, I think that's where I was when I heard it. It was in the afternoon.

B: Were you--obviously, had no advance knowledge. Were you particularly shocked by the notion that the US was going to wind up having to get into the war, or had you ???

M: Well, the country was very divided between _____ and doing something about it, and America first, let's wait and let someone else put out the fire. And I think I was the latter one. We used to argue that in high school, I know. I think we're really well divided. Divided evenly, but that made it ninety-ten, of course, the minute it happened.

B: Yeah. And did that change your thinking?

M: It changed everything right away, yeah.

B: And your own thinking as well. Did you, you had a service career, I noticed in 1945 and '46 you were in the Phillipines, I guess. How did you wind up getting into the military?

M: Well, I got, my draft number came up, and in early February got inducted in the service. Now this is a great surprise because, while entering the University of Wisconsin you had to take a physical exam, which I failed due to a heart condition and a punctured eardrum. But when I had to get examined for federal service, no punctured eardrum and no heart problem. Much to my surprise, I was not even allowed to take this scholastic _____ at the University of Wisconsin, and I was excused from the ROTC, which was mandatory. That was a great surprise. And I chose the, I chose – what you did in those days, you went to an induction center, which in this case was in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and _____ and went through a whole rigamarole of stuff. And on the way you can choose if you wanted to be a marine, Navy, Army. Well, by the time I got to the Marines, which I didn't want anyway, they were all gone. The quota for the day, whatever it was, was exhausted by the time they came to me. There still was a quota for the Navy. I had no idea I was going to go in the Navy, but I said, _____ I said, okay, I'll take the Navy. So I took it. I was called a selective volunteer, which means you went through Selected Service and then you volunteered for it. Then if you didn't do that you went into the Army. And that's the way _____ was spent. You spent another day or two getting organized, then you went to wherever you were going to go in case, in this case you went to boot camp at Great Lakes. I think I went back to Madison for a day or two first, I can't remember that far back.

B: What year was all this?

M: Well, this was all in February of '43. I started boot camp in February of '43 for a couple of months, got out in probably April at Great Lakes, which is a rather cold time of the year. The temperature is very raw, it's not much snow, a lot wind and rain off the lake, Great Lakes, Lake Michigan.

B: Now you had still been a student at the University of Wisconsin while this was happening.

M: Right. I got very disenchanted with school, I started to hate chemical engineering, it was not what I thought it would be. And had I stayed, I probably, I might have flunked or had to change my subjects. I wasn't that dumb, but I just didn't have the interest. Excuse me. [Coughs.] I'm sorry.

B: Quite all right.

M: _____, the first _____ I got in the Navy was a Sunday, and I woke up to very disheartened people being taken by a bus down to Great Lakes. You go through the, because that was the time of day it was, and they give you a huge plate of food, steal plates, and there are signs all around, eat what you take, do not waste food. And here's ten times what you've ever eaten in your life, and you try to eat and eat and eat and you finally realize nobody's going to kill you if you don't eat it all. But it was terrible, terrible trying to eat all of that food the first day. And then of course the next day you've got uniforms, and go through boot camp and that kind of stuff. And I think the boot camp was very typical. We had chief petty officers in charge, usually of newly enlisted men, in this case, he was from Ohio State and _____ an athletic core program there. And these guys act as mentors as much as disciplinarians and so forth.

B: Well, you put your education on hiatus then for a few years.

M: Yeah, but the minute I got in the Navy, about the first thing I ever had anything to do was clean out a head, a latrine. And there's a whole bunch of chief petty officers around with all kinds of little _____ on their arms, and I said, my God, that's for me. No fun cleaning out bathrooms when you can go out and do something. So the minute I got in the Navy, I said, _____, no matter whether it's enlisted status or _____ officer status, I realized, get to the top as quick as you can. Because of cleaning out a latrine on your first day, that'll tell you a lot of stuff.

B: So you were set on at least trying to make some advancement in rank. When you started into the Navy, did you have in mind that you were going to use the Navy to acquire any kind of special skills or knowledge or experience?

M: Well, because of what was happening during the war, you had, I had to figure out what I wanted to do and adjust accordingly. I'd always fly, so if I was an enlisted person, I wanted to be someplace in the air program. I really wanted to be a photographer, because I also had photography _____ darkroom. But the Navy didn't have enough vacancies for that. I had very high grades so I could get in anything I wanted if there was a vacancy. There were no vacancies in photography, so I took one in what's called aviation ordnance. Picking up ammunition on planes, being a rear gunner, that kind of stuff. But then the need for electronics people came along, I _____ entirely. So I signed up for that, got accepted to that, and I was going to go for training and become a radar operator or something like that, and the V-12, which was an officer program, opened up. It meant going back to school, I wasn't sure I wanted to do that, but I did sign up for that. The ironic thing is after not being around to take ROTC at the university because of physical examination, I probably passed five or six exams in a row for

officer training. I thought that was very ironic that it was full _____. And of course, I was a lot thinner then, I was probably only 135 pounds and five-foot-ten in those days, whereas now I'm 180 and five-foot-nine, nine and a half.

B: So you went into electronics training and then into officer –

M: Yeah. Electronics training, by the time I would have gone into it, I was already in this officer training. I was sent to Notre Dame. The last place on earth I ever wanted to go, because some of the P.I. that came out about this program was of the horrendous physical training, especially at Notre Dame, which you could expect from their football program, it would be horrendous. Well, it wasn't horrendous, but I am not a very good swimmer. I was probably the worst swimmer of 2,000 people in the program at the time. Terrible swimmer. And that was very, I guess distressing is the word. The classes and stuff weren't bad. I switched to civil because I figured I'd get outdoors and I didn't like _____ engineering doctrine.

B: Civil engineering.

M: Yeah. I was an engineer, and the three semesters of _____ were a great factor. And they allowed you, depending on the program you're in, you're even allowed to take the equivalent of two years and be a deck officer or take the equivalent of four years and be a specialty, like maybe supply or engineering or something like that that took more training. The Navy really built up a really good future officer corps by doing this, although nobody realized that at the time I don't think. But over the years it really paid off, I think. Even though the Navy trained a lot more officers [both talking]. That's for sure. But a lot of them dropped out, after the war everybody dropped out of the Reserve and, you know, wanting to get back to civilian life.

B: Yeah. I'm going to ask you to get to that a little bit more _____, but let me back up for a second. Your family is of German heritage. Did you grow up with any particular emphasis on religious faith or church or ???

M: Well, Lutheran – my mother was Catholic, but she was, I guess you'd call a lapsed Catholic, and she joined my father's Lutheran church. My father was pretty strict, he made us kids go to Sunday School church.

B: Notre Dame being, of course, a Catholic university, did that resonate with your religious background at all?

M: [Laughter.] Well, that's kind of funny, I later went to a Catholic university in America and I'm still Lutheran, and I went to Lutheran churches when I was at Notre Dame. They would take, and other churches, they would have _____ to take the kids to church on Sundays. And there was no, during the Navy time

there was no, absolutely nothing, no matter what your reason, you didn't have to go to Catholic Mass. If you were a private student there you had to go to Mass every day. If you weren't Catholic you didn't have to go to Mass, all you did was kind of sleep in the time that you would have gone. You know, you're just excused from doing anything like that. Yeah. There was no pressure.

B: So you just by happenstance happened to wind up at these two Catholic institutions of higher learning.

M: Right. Right. And I say, I'd rather _____. [Laughter.] Yeah, the P.R. came out ahead of time, he thought this was one of the most rigorous place and it would grind everybody to pieces and maybe only one of about every ten people would even surprise this _____. The P.R. was just – well, it just was there to, I guess, that's the way I took it anyways, it wasn't that bad I don't think. _____ I really wanted to go back to _____ Wisconsin, but we had no choice, you just went wherever they sent you.

B: Did your learning at Notre Dame – did that change your ideas about what you wanted to do with your career, with your profession?

M: Well, it solidified the idea I wanted to be a civil engineer, it solidified that pretty good, but I didn't know what I wanted to do in civil engineering except I probably started something like construction when I got out of the Navy.

B: Okay. Do you remember any particularly influential people or events from your time as an undergraduate there?

M: The civil engineering department at Notre Dame had experienced people who had worked in private business. They were not Ph.D.'s. Today the university system is all Ph.D.-related to get anywhere. Not at Notre Dame. These were just skilled people. The classes were very small, eight or ten people were all that I graduated with, and most of these, the ones that weren't in the Navy, were sons of contractors. Mostly Irish contractors. And they sent their kids here for learning and for discipline. The discipline, if you were a private person, was pretty tough. You got kicked out for a lot of things you would never even get a reprimand _____, but they were very, very strict, outside of, you know, the non-military people. Military people, of course, military _____, the military taught discipline.

After the war, when everybody was _____, I guess, classes got bigger, but not much. It took several years before our program got to, well, today it would be a very respected, pretty well-known program in that field. These professors were quite good, but they'd leave, and everybody _____, because we'd have this whole class of, I think, five or six people, on an intricate subject. Well, _____ after a couple of hours, they'd know you.

B: When did you finish up there in that program?

M: Well, I finished, I got out in, let's see, after five semesters, I got out and went to midshipmen's school, I got commissioned. _____, and I got commissioned around V-E Day, which is early May, 1945. Went to New York on a leave for a couple of days, I went back and kind of hung around and went to San Francisco in August, spent V-J Day, the end of the war, in San Francisco in August, and then got shipped to the Phillipines.

B: Did it seem surprising that you were going west across the Pacific when other soldiers were maybe expecting to turn right around and come back east, back to the United States?

M: Well, in the civil engineer corps, which I was in, these were part of the service courses of the Navy. And the Phillipines were the training place and the storage place for all the young officers that were going to go and be the cannon fodder when we invaded Japan. And we had an inkling about this. And then what they did, all the older officers and the men, all had more points, but you know, they used the point system depending on how long you'd been in service, and they deployed all the _____ people rapidly, and these young officers just had to take everything over and just do what they could. Everything was la-dee-dah, you didn't have to do much, but you had to take care of your people, make sure they were fed and housed, and when they get their orders, they'd _____ and that kind of stuff. For example, I ended out the war in a place called Samar [Island], which is right next to Leyte, and I was –

B: Lady, Lehty?

M: L-E-Y-T-E. Right. And Samar is S-A-M-A-R. Forty percent of _____ on the Pacific were in Samar and Leyte when the war ended, I'm told that. I gathered that from all the construction equipment I saw. Well, anyway, getting back to what I'm trying to say, I guess, is in Samar, I was in the _____, we had forty incidents under one Lt. J. _____, commanding officer, and one chief petty officer involved. Everybody else was a seaman second or seaman third, seaman first. All raw recruits. And it was – since we didn't have a lot to do, it wasn't _____, but you just had to keep people from just going off and bothering the natives too much, and all that kind of stuff.

B: So what did you get to work at when you were ???

M: Well, I was a transportation officer, I ran _____ in Leyte for a couple months, and I ran a _____, it's like a motor pool, in Samar for a couple of months, until my _____ came up and I could go home.

B: How did you wind up being assigned to the transportation officer?

M: Just, I don't know, I really don't know. I think that the second time was because I had done it the first time. The first time was probably about the only vacancy they had at the time. It was not, well, if you want to do this, it was just, you are the transportation officer.

B: Do you think that influenced you?

M: Oh yeah, it certainly did, it _____ our purpose. You see, in civil engineering, you know quite a bit about construction from school, because all of the school _____ in those days was pretty well-related to either design or construction. So you knew that sort of instinctively, plus you live in a world where they built buildings and built highways and things like that. So you see that kind of stuff all the time, so you kind of know about those things even if you're not a civil engineer. See, it's just kind of the way it works. Civil engineering is very broad, and involves working with earth materials to make something that men use, people use.

B: Backing up again just a second to the war and the end of the war, particularly, the war ended, as you say, in August in 1945. You are in San Francisco at the time. When you heard the news about the use of the atomic bombs in Japan, was that a big surprise to you?

M: It did. As I recollected, I don't think that, _____ I was going to San Francisco and I was on leave in Madison, and my cousin there who was a chemical engineer expressed all the, not the horror so much but the terrific force that's behind this, so I was pretty well acquainted from what he had told me or had had conversations with before I had ever gotten to San Francisco. That happened a few days before the end of the war, which you might remember. I just happened to be in my hometown at the time. And _____ we had some conversations with my cousin, who's about fifteen years older, who was pretty knowledgeable about this stuff, much as you could be.

B: Up until then, had you been expecting that you were going to be part of a large invasion force?

M: Yes, I really expected that, no question that we would be in the – well, it's not the first line, it's the second or third line, and you come in, you build bases and roads and things to keep things going, you know? So I did not expect really a lot of danger of it. But I did expect that there be a lot of people like myself that be involved in doing this. It wasn't a, it might have been a worrisome thing for a bit, but the minute the war was over, it changed. See, the war came very quickly. We thought it'd go on for many more months, and it came to a quick, a pretty quick end, as most of it realized, you know.

B: As you have looked back at that, thinking about your reaction at the time and the way that the war did wind up ending so fast, ever have any second thoughts

about the United States' decision to use the atomic bomb to end the war?

M: No, I don't think so. It's just never, to me it's just another weapon, and in those days you didn't understand what nuclear was, the ____ and all the dreadful things that happened with nuclear-type things. You just didn't know those things. It was just like more dynamite, you might say.

B: Well, it was 1946 when you got out, I guess, when you returned to civilian life.

M: Yeah, June 1946.

B: And what was your rank when you finished?

M: I was still an ensign.

B: Okay. But you have, in the meantime, acquired a bachelor's degree, bachelor of science from Notre Dame.

M: Well, I had to go back for one semester to get that. I started school in the fall of '46, and then finished in February of '47. Each semester, many of their courses were Navy courses, once I changed over from chemical engineering. So I was short about fifteen credits, so I had to go back to get my degree.

B: Did the federal government help support you through the end of the degree?

M: Yeah. Yeah, you had the – when you got out, you had the 52-20 program, and you got \$20 a week for fifty-two weeks if you needed it, you just had to go in each week to sign something, and give you twenty dollars, and that's spending money. And then they paid your tuition and your books, and a living stipend. I don't remember if they paid it directly to the university, because I stayed in a university hall or what, I don't remember, but I know I didn't have to pay anything except spending money.

B: And you were still single at that time.

M: Still single. I did not have a car or anything like that.

B: So, and you went back to Notre Dame to finish.

M: Yeah, because I had all my credits there, of course.

B: Gotcha. And when you finished it was a B.S. in civil engineering?

M: Right.

B: All right. Then at that point, when you finished that bachelor's degree, what was

your thinking about what you were going to do with your life?

M: Well, I wanted to go to my hometown, which I'd been away from quite a while, and get a job in Wisconsin. So I got a job in Madison working for a consulting engineer. Jobs were not very available, nothing like it is today where you've got maybe _____ ten jobs. When I graduated from Notre Dame, there was one routine announcement on the board offering you a beginning job in the federal government. Nobody tried to solicit anybody there for employment. Today you have tons of people trying to get you to work for them. Not in those days. It just, there was so many people available and not that many jobs, yet. That happened later on. But I signed up for a job at a hotel in Monte Carlo and I worked for a consulting _____ doing rural electrification work, mostly in northern Wisconsin, away from home. Did that for a couple of years.

B: In dealing with electrification, that just happened to be –

[speaking together]

M: – the only job I could find, to be honest about it. I applied for a job with the city of Milwaukee, and maybe thirty people applied for five beginning jobs, you know, take exams. That was pretty depressing. And I tried to find something that was out of the hometown, no vacancies. See, a lot of civil engineers work for governments, that's the type of work it is. Especially in those days, there were so many consulting firms. And the only other job I had, this firm in Chicago someplace wanted me to work selling Quonset huts, but I'd seen enough of those when I was in the service. [Laughter.] I really didn't care too much if I was in transportation or not, because being young and haven't been home for a while, stick around home, get a job, get a few years' experience. Engineers, after four or five years, get what they call "registered," as a professional engineer, this is very important if you're going to get anywhere in life, to get that, because that gives you immediate status, it gives you a respectable salary, and it's just one of those moments you go for. I think every engineer, certainly a great, high percentage of us try to get this professional engineering status as soon as they can. But it takes four or five years of experience to get it.

B: In addition to the degree.

M: In addition to the degree, yeah. Well, you can get it without a degree, but you have to spend more time.

B: The work you did for this engineering company on rural electrification, was that part of the federal government's REA initiative?

M: Absolutely. REA, the federal government gave grants of money with very low interest, like one or two percent, to pay back to _____. The power system in this

country did not recognize people who were too far away for economical electricity, like farmers and things like that, people like that. So this other _____ stepped in and helped him out, simply because the power companies didn't do it.

The greater demand for electrical energy over the years, if the power companies had decided to go ahead and do this, they would have made one heck of a lot of money. But they couldn't see any profit in doing it. The federal government had to do it as a, almost as an emergency in some cases, because some of these people are very desperate and you can imagine, trying to milk ten cows and not having electrical power to use a milker, you'd have to have a generator, something like that. And it was a wonderful program, everybody thought at first it was pretty socialized and subsidizing, and plus, in a way, power companies simply missed the opportunity. All of them.

B: When you were engaged in doing that work, how did it strike you, is this something that you consider to be valuable, worthwhile –

M: Well, it was certainly worthwhile, because these people would do anything to get electricity. Free land, stop in and have a cup of coffee, that kind of stuff, you know. They liked to see you coming.

B: So you felt it was –

M: The good thing it was, it was _____, because of priorities. So there was a great demand right after the war, and for a couple of years this was a good business. After that it was all built up and you, it just about wiped out for a year or two.

B: So you felt sort of virtuous about what you were doing.

M: Well, a little bit, yeah, not too much. It was a job.

B: So, when did you wrap that up and move on to something else?

M: Well, the company went bankrupt. It didn't go – well, the work is seized almost automatically. The company laid off all the single people and one or two of the married guys they had and tried to keep going on that. And I took another job in Milwaukee with a well-recognized firm, and we did the preliminary plans for the Milwaukee Expressway system.

B: That was _____ Whitney.

M: Amman & Whitney.

B: Amman & Whitney.

M: Whitney is a very prominent, a thin-shelled concrete. In those days, how would

you ever design a roof made only three inches thick of concrete. Unbelievable that people could do that. Well, he pioneered that. And Amman was the guy that built, designed the George Washington Bridge and many other bridges. Both very prominent engineers, although we hardly ever saw the prominent guys. They had a big New York company, huge New York firm, and a small Milwaukee firm. Because that's where Mr. Whitney, with his son, lived mostly.

B: Why did the electrification work dry up so suddenly?

M: Well, the lines were all built to all these rural consumers.

B: So you were just done.

M: We were done, yeah. There was no more lines to build to speak of, you know. They could do it themselves, you didn't need any consultants to do it, because you might do maybe ten customers a year, whereas before you had three hundred to go see. And this is just a nationwide thing. It's almost like the Depression, to ____ another segment of electrification. But after that, people started using electricity and needed more and more voltage and better lines, and it's never-ending today. We're still doing everything we can. Now we go underground. No one ever thought of putting anything underground. That's dangerous. You don't do things like that. They're up in the air and you put screwball stuff up there. It just – I think at that time, had I ____ to see a digital subdivision like this, I wouldn't have believed it, really, from what I knew and did. I just didn't really think those things would happen. And the subdivision might be the size of this house instead of the huge map of Archer, you know, what we have today. Never dreamed of anything like that.

B: Well, you went from that company to work with Amman & Whitney in highway engineering.

M: Yeah. We were doing the master plan of Milwaukee, trying to get the –

B: Hold up for just a second. You say, we were doing the master plan. You mean Amman & Whitney?

M: Amman & Whitney, yeah.

B: Not just highway engineering, but other planning as well, or just the highway plans?

M: The main job they had was doing this highway plan. They had hardly anything else to do with the _____. The office was sort of set up to do, they had a contract to do that with the city, and we worked with the city engineer. They had a very good traffic engineer, and he would come in and review what we did and we

talked over traffic and that kind of stuff. Now, this is all before anything like computers, which have revolutionized engineering. Everything was manual. You had a ____ and you'd do a drawing, and you'd have ____ come by and mark it up, the draftsman would read through it. You'd do another drawing, a tracing, you just did drawing after drawing after drawing, trying to get something done. That's how we did things in those days. And you'd write reports all the time. A report of what this activity was, and so forth.

B: When you say highway work, are you referring to limited access highways?

M: Yes. The interstate program came along in 1956, as Congress, it had been talked about for a long time before then, and Milwaukee knew it needed a limited access system, so it started planning for this in the mid-fifties or a little bit before that, maybe. And, you know, ____ it to the interstate for most of the highways that were built. And that's for all over the place.

B: It had been Milwaukee's intention to build some of this whether the interstate system came into reality or not?

M: Right, right.

B: How were they going to pay for it?

M: Well, that was always a problem. The old central cities of this country, like Milwaukee and Chicago, realized after a while that they could not do anything without having the rural areas, the county. Like the library system, went from a city library system to a county library system, because the finances, the highway still had an urban area, but it'd be mostly a county highway system that you tried to finance to do this. You just couldn't do it yourself. Plus, they were trying to get the state to help a lot; the state – ____ in those days only worked with states, and that's still the case today, they only work with states. So you try to get the state to build your highways, too, which required a pretty good approach, because you had a ____ in your city, because they'd much rather build something out in rural Wisconsin where there weren't any problems. And the needs are, many times, where the money is. So the interstate system changed all of that, because it made federal government so powerful because it provided ninety percent of the money.

B: Did Milwaukee consider toll roads as part of the ____?

M: Oh yeah, that's part of it, but not to a great extent.

B: But none of this had really ever did come into being until the interstate highway system, at least in Milwaukee.

M: Right. Right. Or anyplace else, really. Well, no, no, the New York area, you had specialized regions of the country with real tough problems that did tolls and other things, you know, to get the highway problem solved.

B: I understand Jacksonville did a bit with toll roads as early as the – about 1950 or '51.

M: ____ in Milwaukee, they were very – see, there was a state highway department, wants to build, could in those days build a mile-high for \$10,000 in a rural area.

B: Two-lane highway.

M: Two-lane highway. Why build a \$10 million model highway in an urban area with all the problems you've got in an urban area to build a highway. The utilities, the people problems, everything. It's just – why do a lousy – why take on a tough job when we can do a nice, easy job? It was that kind of attitude. And why are we going to put a bridge across a big river? Oh, God, we could do 100 miles out in the country rather than do that one bridge, two-mile bridge, right? So nothing was done. So the people in Jacksonville, because of the river situation, had their toll. They had tolls on the Acosta Bridge, all by themselves, even took an act of the legislature to get them to do that. That ferry system was terribly against it at the time because it put them out of business, and there's twice as many people ride the ferries, how you're going to pay for the bridge, that kind of stuff. Plus, back in the 1920s, and the city was very progressive – this is history again rather than me – very progressive to get that done.

B: I'm going to pause for a moment.

M: Sure, sure.

[pause in tape]

B: Testing. All right. Looks like we've resumed recording. And we were just talking about the alternative approaches to highway improvements in urban areas, which is what you were engaged working on with Amman & Whitney and Milwaukee, and let's digress from your professional career here for just a moment. When was it that you were married.

M: I was married in September 1953.

B: Would that have been during this same time?

M: What happened was this. In the spring of 1952, I'd worked for ____ for about two years, and a fellow who was a couple of years younger than me, probably, working next to each other, he did things a lot better than I could do, and I said,

how come? He said, well, I went to the Yale Bureau of Highway Traffic. Oh, what's that, I said? Yale University, it's like a graduate program in traffic engineering. Now today there are graduate programs in traffic engineering at many, many places, but in those days there was only one, or two maybe. And one was at Yale. How do you get in? Where do you apply, etc. etc. So I applied and I got a scholarship to go – funded tuition and maybe a small amount of money, but not very much. It would have cost me several thousand dollars to go there. Well, being young and single, I determined to go there, so in the fall of that year I enrolled at Yale. Fall of '52. And meantime, the summer, I got engaged, I certainly got engaged to my wife. Probably engaged in February '53 in New Haven, Connecticut, which is where Yale is. And this was a two-semester course. It gave you a certificate, not master's degree, but fairly equivalent to a master's degree, and the graduates were fairly well sought after, and you could almost have your choice of where you wanted to work. But I stayed on there two years after we were married; I stayed on two years, I was the newest member of the faculty, doing a little research, helping the professors out, teaching a class or two, they had ____ you sort of helped on that. You were only a year or two older than the students, or the same age as the students. The students were all in their thirties and twenties. Mostly it was people who had been out of school several years and realized that they really didn't know as much as they should to do their jobs.

B: Similar to you.

M: Yeah. And so they came to school, and also, in particular, to get a lot of better financially and technically _____. And today it's nothing to think of going to graduate school. In those days it was quite a step.

B: Did you quit Amman & Whitney to do that?

M: Yeah, I quit Amman & Whitney. Well, about the time I quit or a little bit afterwards, the principle in charge lost his life in a diving expedition some place in the Caribbean. And that sort of put a very bad ____ on the company. They just – didn't go under, but they weren't the company they had been before. I really didn't want to come back to them. I really – when I left them, I didn't want to come back. They offered me a stipend, 'though it wasn't very much.

B: So you really took sort of a flier by –

M: Well, I was still single, so it didn't make too much difference. Didn't get married until I got out of college.

B: Where did you meet your wife?

M: In Madison, blind date. She was a nurse.

B: She followed you to _____?

M: Eventually, yeah. We lived two years there _____.

B: And were married there.

M: No, married in Wisconsin, but moved there – came back for the marriage and took a honeymoon across northern Canada to New Haven.

B: Now, also, before we return to your profession _____, looking back here at some of the activities you've been engaged in, a lot of government work and a lot of response to education. Where would you say your political sympathies lay during these years? For example, what was the first presidential election you voted in?

M: Well, I became a registered Democrat, probably in Tallahassee when I moved to Tallahassee in '55. I was pretty middle-of-the-road, I guess, politically, but there were no Republicans in Florida in '55, and the very few Republicans there were never could vote for any local elections because _____ the Democrats' primaries determined it. So I think I became a registered Democrat because of that, that I've always tried the best I can to vote for the person, but in Florida for many years, I had the choice of Democrats.

B: Up until then, had you considered yourself a Republican, or –

M: No. Never even thought about it one way or the other.

B: Did you approve, for example, of Franklin Roosevelt and the New Deal, and that sort of thing?

M: Well, I grew up and lived with that, and Roosevelt was like a god to my parents – being a teenager, you're more interested in chasing girls than you are worrying about the president. You _____, that kind of stuff.

B: How about Harry Truman and his work after the end of World War II? The so-called "Fair Deal" and –

M: Really, I don't think I paid any attention to politics at all.

B: Okay. No strong feelings about Dwight Eisenhower when he became president.

M: Well, only because of what he did with the interstate system. Yeah, he was admired, of course, and you knew all about him and everything, he was a well-liked person. Truman was pretty well-liked. What changed _____ was the Korean War. If the Korean War had not come about, I think we would have had a real

depression, especially in engineering. But it changed immediately. From being one of five candidates for a job, there were five jobs for every one candidate, after the war started, after a few months. The Korean War completely changed engineering.

B: Why?

M: Because of the demands that the war made on getting things ready and available, plus all the lethargy after the war – first, Second World War was over, nobody did anything. So you just – the Navy was very content to throw away a few ships a year and keep on going down, nothing much new. And it took something like the Korean War to make all the research and development and all kinds of associate engineering come forward again. And then, of course, followed a few years after that by the Interstate Highway Act and those kind of federal things, which put a great emphasis back in transportation and engineering.

B: So, and then, of course, to a certain extent, people in the employable age group were getting taken up by the armed forces for work to do with –

M: Right, a lot of acquaintances of course went back in the service in the Korean War days and stuff. I had a friend _____ in the Reserve as a cook. In the meantime he had graduated as an electrical engineer. So he got called into the service in the Korean War as a cook, because that's what he was in. And he got sent to, I think, Green Cove Springs, and my boss, Mr. Whitney, who was pretty well in the Naval service, rolled in and said, my God, this man is an engineer, make him an engineer. So they gave him an enlisted degree in electrical engineering or something like that, and guess what his job was: replace all the light bulbs and the lighter fluid at Green Cove Springs. That was his job as an engineer instead of a cook, believe it or not. But that's just a bit of a humorous story.

B: Was there ever any talk that you might possibly wind up going back in during the Korean Conflict?

M: Well, I stayed in the Reserve, certainly, but they never called anybody up for the Reserve in the Korean Conflict, nor in the Vietnam Conflict. But I was in the Navy Reserve from about 1950 on. For many years.

B: Did you do periodic –

M: Here, what you did in those days, you went one night a week and one weekend a month and then two weeks training duty. You had to have a quota of fifty days a year to keep your status up. And of course, you got paid for this. In most places, some you could do without getting paid, you just got credit.

B: How long did you stay in the Reserves?

M: Oh, stayed in until I was 21 years – well, 21 years of service, I suppose the Reserve about fifteen or sixteen years.

B: Sometime in the 1960s, anyway.

M: Yeah. I retired in '67.

B: Well, what was your next career move after you finished up –

M: After teaching two years at Yale, I looked around for a job, we were married and we spent the two years at Yale. And I added – I previously sort of turned down a job in San Francisco, a place called Contra Costa County, which would have been a darn good job. I was a registered engineer by this time.

B: _____ had the specialization.

M: Yeah, I had, I think, a pretty good background and can do a lot of things, but the real-live opportunities. I had a chance to be the traffic engineer of Springfield, Illinois, which had a heck of a problem because all of the rails came into the central business district, so you've got the same time of day, and you couldn't move when the railroads were moving, that kind of problem. And then there was the job I took in Florida, at the same salary. And we said, _____ said, well, we've saved Springfield, we're just an hour and half away, two hours away from our folks. If we go to Florida _____, what's going to happen? So we said we'd give it six months.

B: In Florida.

M: In Florida. _____.

B: What attracted you to Florida at the time?

M: Just being in Florida and the opportunities I see.

B: Had you ever been down here before?

M: Never been to Florida in my life. No.

B: How about your wife?

M: No. No. She'd never been hired out of Wisconsin. I've been around more, of course, but she –

B: And what was the job that they offered you in Florida?

M: The Florida Road Department, it was a road department in those days, was very political, run by a board of five people who used the department for their own ends, to be honest about it. Highway ends. And some of these were very kind, benevolent, good people, a couple were rather dastardly, to be honest about it. And the people that worked for them, well, there were several divisions. The division I joined as a deputy was called Tragic and Planning. Traffic Engineering and Highway Planning.

B: What year?

M: We came in the fall '55. And that's a year before the interstate.

B: LeRoy Collins [1955-1961] was the governor?

M: LeRoy Collins was governor. And his –

B: Do you remember names of anybody who was on the road board at the time?

M: Yeah, but I don't want to tell. [Laughter.] I can't associate them directly, but I'll give you some names later on, of influential people. ____ Jones, who he appointed, is really a good man. He is from Miami.

B: Who appointed him?

M: Collins, I think it was Collins. And he, Collins' primary highway thing, I ____ fairly well, later in life. He was a pretty good guy, I thought, good governor. His emphasis on highways was, we must four-lane you, _____. Come hell or high water. So everything was done on _____. Four lane US-1. And that was done, believe me. And in those days, you could get a highway done, if you made up your mind the first of January we're going to do this highway now, it was done by the end of the year, you could do it. Except in the city, maybe. But, see, it's ridiculous that they'd even talk that way, but you could do it.

B: As was Collins' mandate.

M: Well, mandate to get US-1 four-lane, yeah.

B: Did he have ____? Did he have the support of the road board with that?

M: Oh yeah, oh sure.

[both speaking.]

B: So if the governor and city wanted it, he got it.

M: He got it, yup.

- B: And other governors, you've probably heard of a governor called Charley Johns [1953-1955, acting].
- M: Oh yeah. He's a character. I didn't have any association with him. And every little city in Florida did an intersection improvement, a flow rating here and there. Oh, the State Department, especially the _____. This is back in the Pork Chop [Gang] days, if you remember that. Urban areas were neglected and avoided if possible, because they cause a heck of a lot of trouble. Why do I have to tear my hair out in Jacksonville or Miami when I could go to Starke, Florida and have no problems whatsoever.
- B: Well, let me ask you then, a little bit of illumination on why that turned out the way it did in 19 – in the state of Florida in the 1950s? Political scientists, people who make it their business to study the business of state government in Florida, and the cities, argue that the Florida legislature, all the way up through the end of the 1960s, really, was dominated and controlled by legislators from rural districts in the north Florida panhandle.
- M: I agree with that wholeheartedly.
- B: And that, because of that, even though there were an increasing number of voters voting in elections in urban districts in places like Jacksonville and Miami and Tampa and places like that, state government tended to function more for the benefit of less populated, rural counties, especially in north Florida. And that this turned out to apply particularly in the case of the capital projects and public works, like transportation projects.
- M: Absolutely a true statement.
- B: Now what I hear you say, though, also, is that there was some pretty practical fiscal and engineering issues that mitigated in favor of staying out of the cities with transportation projects as well.
- M: Well, to give you an example. When I was first with the department in the late, sometime in the 1950s, the department did 27 _____ in Miami, which is a very prominent highway, it has a US number on it – decided they would save money on it by not putting any drainage on it, if you can imagine such a thing. Because it is difficult to lay drainage pipes. You've got to trench it, you've got to cover it, a lot of things, you have consolidation problems of the earth over the pipe – things you don't have today because you know what to do, but those days you didn't know what to do. So, they said, we will leave out the drainage and do it. Well, two years later they had to come by and put the drainage in. But the _____ were reluctant to do that, because Miami's a long way from Tallahassee, see. Even though we had districts, most of the skills needed were in Tallahassee in those days. Now it's different, it's like seven or eight different districts that have equal

capability.

B: When you came, how many districts were there?

M: Five. Five districts. And again, I've made it very disproportionate, because, you know, they weren't equal to population at that time. They were at the time they were selected many years before.

B: So the staff of the state road department at the time, they got guidance – political guidance – from the legislature and the governor as to where to put the priorities, but I guess the staff members also had their own sort of agenda as to what it made the most sense for them to do, given x number of dollars to work on transportation improvements. It sounds to me like you're saying engineering and planning staff would think to themselves, I can get a lot more bang for the buck by putting down a mile of road in the countryside rather than in the city. True?

M: Right.

B: True enough?

M: Sure. Because the political nature of these road board members, as I found out in 1970, I saw some pictures of the Corkney-Campbell Causeway in Tampa area, and the _____. It should have been done years before. So I asked my district agent why wasn't this done. Is it – _____, is it your call? No, Mr. Romero, _____. _____ he did not want anything reconstructed because he didn't get any credit for that. Well, if you go and _____ a new highway someplace, it's better than reconstructing a mile of old highway. But these are rotten priorities and it could be a very bad – it could be a safety problem. I immediately said, do something about it. It also happens with the political thing, you have to build new highways, you do not care very much about spending money on maintenance, if you can help it, or redoing things. And there weren't a lot of things maybe to redo, but the worst – you know, we all _____ still have bridge problems, because of the nature of bridges and time and all that stuff.

But this funny board member, I'll give you _____, he's deceased now, I'm sure, he would introduce himself, hi, I'm Al Romero. I sell insurance. Red light. Next time I need an insurance policy on my car rental, see Al. Al probably just tries nominal sums for the insurance, he didn't say, you've got to buy it and it's ten percent more, just whatever the price was. But he got it where someone else didn't get it, you see, the political connections. And this is what these guys did, they did things like that. And many of them helped the governor get elected, you know. Give extra-good financial contributions, and this is part of their reward. So, they wanted a highway built in their hometown, or near there, it got built. See, that's where the politics came in. Now, what we did in this Traffic and Planning division, we made studies of all the cities and towns and did little

reports, because, you might say they wanted us to spend a lot of money in towns, you'd use things like one-way streets, and better traffic signals, and _____ intersection improvement, that kind of stuff. Traffic engineering, which is sort of an application to the existing system rather than build a whole lot of new freeways. Of course, the interstate system came along and changed that. But until it really got going, maybe 1960, it was always these reports that showed what to do in these cities. And that's why _____ George Simons, because he would have some plans, and he would see what he had gotten out, not necessarily meet with him, but see his plans. Maybe it'd dovetail what you did, with what he was thinking. Now, I did not have a great deal of personal association with him at that time, but maybe later, you might say, but I realized what he was doing.

B: As a state planner, you would contact the local planning agencies and –

M: Oh yeah, we'd usually go and, we'd talk to the local planner in the area we were working in, or the local engineer, whoever it was, usually not at the mayoral level, we would pick the highest working level, like the public works engineer.

B: Professional staff.

M: Professional staff. Yeah. And we worked – well, I won't say very professional, but certainly man-to-man, about the only thing you ever did for each other, you might have found somebody to _____ with. It's about all you ever did. You probably would never even do that.

B: Did you find that these local professional engineers and planning staff people were congenial, I mean, or –

M: Oh, yeah. Sure, because you could do supper there, you wouldn't have gotten that otherwise. Plus, many of them didn't know what to do. They didn't know how to do – for example, traffic signals were a real problem because they were very obsolete, outdated, no-good equipment to start with, ill-maintained, that kind of stuff. So you tried to get all this stuff brought to a reasonable standard. Plus, at the time, nationwide we were trying to get uniformity in traffic-control devices. We had the red stop sign, which we never see anything else except red stop signs today. But there were yellow stop signs until forty or fifty years ago. And the problem we had was only one company had the kind of material that made good red stop signs. It was a 3M company in north Florida. And the government has to buy low-bid. Well, you only have one bidder, you get a real problem that you could be subject to a great deal of criticism, why did you buy it from only one person? Whereas if you have the yellow stop sign, you've got many people that could do that, see, because yellow, you can use paint in beads. Red you can't do because red is too dark a color. For example, you have always that problem

as a traffic engineer. We had that problem, because a lot of traffic signals are made by one very good company and a lot of them are made by one lesser company. The lesser company gets the low bid, but it wouldn't be the equipment that you needed to solve the problem. How do you get around this politically –

[End side A1a]

M: – ____ bids? It can be a real nightmare sometimes, you know.

B: But that was addressed by the move toward uniformity of the –

M: Yeah, the uniformity is what did that, and especially on signs, I had a lot of arguments, for example, with the city ____ in Miami, who's a very good man and a friend of mine, why should I change my sign, you're not going to pay for it, are you? No, no, it's on your street, not mine, you know. Oh, hell. I can't shake hands with, I couldn't change my sign. He had a different kind of yield sign, stop sign, that kind of stuff in Miami, and we used the state, which was, in effect, the national standard. Well, they finally did it, of course, almost had to, but resisted for years, and ____ money for them, no.

B: That was the professional traffic engineer?

M: Yeah. But a lot of people had that attitude, if you're gonna ____ pay me money, ____, just to get equality. I mean, I'm doing fine, why do you come around and screw it up?

B: Other than questions like that, though, you would say that the local officials welcomed a man from the state.

M: Yeah.

B: Because you were taking ____ bringing help.

M: Yeah, oh sure. The big urban areas maybe weren't as receptive as a lot of the smaller areas, but places like Tallahassee, the city engineer there just loved having help. For example, Miami had a very, even with the transportation authority, the executive director of that, who's a man I usually work with, a pretty good guy, and he will have a meeting with you and talk you over problems and where we could solve them and that kind of stuff. Yeah. Because there never was enough money, and there still isn't, to solve all the problems. Never.

B: Probably never will be.

M: Right.

B: You ran across the work of municipal planner George Simons at local cities. Do you remember the names of any other planners whose work you ran into when you came into local government jurisdictions?

M: Really, I don't, Alan, and most of the planners I'd see, like the planner in Orlando was a city employee, for example. I can't think of his name offhand, but he was a good friend at the time. Tampa, we worked very well with the police chief, who had the traffic responsibility, and so forth.

B: Do you remember his name?

M: ____.

B: Yeah.

M: _____. But I don't remember his first name.

B: All right. Remember having any dealings with Mayor Hixon in Tampa?

M: No.

B: Or Nick Nuccio?

M: No.

B: Julian Lane?

M: No.

B: Okay. You moved to Tallahassee in late 1955. How long did you and your family live in Tallahassee?

M: About eight years.

B: Eight years. What did you think of moving to a place like Tallahassee at that time in your life? You'd lived in the North or been in the military all the rest of your life.

M: Well, it was ____, nice weather. We came down, we didn't have much furniture or anything, we had a small trailer we towed behind a car. Came down the highway and saw all the live oaks with the moss hanging down and everything, beautiful. So I get to the job the first day, meet the guy, one of the guys I'm working for, who's an ardent Southerner, very – didn't speak much.

B: Who was that?

M: His name was McDylan, Robert McDylan. He was one of the principal assistants

I worked with. Good guy, later on, but. This is funny. I _____ notice these beautiful trees here. They must have been here since before the Civil War. Around here, Mr. Mueller, it's the "War Between the States." The very first five minutes I was ever in Tallahassee, at the department and a cup of coffee, I was told very emphatically, it's the "War Between the States." And I have never forgotten that.

B: Well, you moved to the South in 1955, the year after the *Brown v. the Board of Education* decision, which we are commemorating historically this very year, the fiftieth anniversary of the decision. Did it strike you as unusual to move to a place, I guess I'm wondering what kind of reaction you felt, if you did notice it, or how it came to be evident to you, that you were living in a place where relations between black and white people were different, I guess.

M: Well, the thing that influenced us was, I think, that people got colored nannies, if you want to use that term, to take care of their children. And almost to educate them in many cases, certainly look after them. These people were almost loved, but they had to sit in the back seat of the car. And I never could understand that. I didn't think too much about school because at the time I thought as long as you had a good school, it shouldn't make any difference what the proportion of people were in the class, _____ have good schools, and they should be equal schools. I didn't give a darn what the composition of the class was, this was _____ school. And at that time, you thought all teachers were good, you didn't – you just thought that. And practically all teachers were white, of course, and had a fairly good background, I would guess, by today's standards. I don't know, I really don't know. Our children weren't, we sent them to the public schools in Tallahassee, one in '56 and one in '59.

B: Who are your children, by the way?

M: One was, the boy's named Linn, he lives in Sorrento, Florida, which is near Safford, he's an engineer. Very good job with a contracting company. And my daughter is a nurse, she lives in Gainesville, works for a hospital, got a very good job.

B: Work for Shands?

M: No, it's North Florida Regional [Medical Center].

B: Oh yeah.

M: But she took some training at Shands. That's probably why she doesn't work there [laughter]. I won't get into that, but you know, these large municipal hospitals that have to do all the indigents, just problem and problem. And financial problems. It's just a very difficult situation for hospital people. And I

guess, sometimes _____ big enough, that much better as far what they do, but maybe it's a little better, I don't know. It's private, so it's easier to handle.

B: _____. Well, let's see. You moved to Tallahassee, you're working for the state in transportation planning for the state, you're traveling along to different parts of the state, getting to know people in local government in the various cities, some people in the private sector, I guess. How long did you stay at planning with the state road corps?

M: Well, planning and engineering for eight years, and then I got an opportunity to take a job with a genteel, private organization that dealt with the public called the Highway Research Board. Very prestigious in Washington, D.C. So I took that job. I was very unhappy in Florida, because the political situation, my boss set himself up in business and, due to political connections –

B: What was his name?

M: Mel Conner. He was ten years older than me. He's the guy who hired me. He was ten years older than I was, and he resigned about '62 and led a private practice. And in effect, the work we had been doing as a government agency, he wanted to get as a private person. And he was set up by one of the governor's favorites, who was helping the governor get elected –

B: Can you tell me the name of that person?

M: Well, his name was Sy Deeb, he lives in Tallahassee, a very influential developer.

B: Sy, S-Y?

M: S-Y, as far as I know.

B: And the last name is?

M: D-E-E-B.

B: D-E-E-B. Where was he from?

M: I suppose Syria or someplace.

B: Seriously.

M: You mean what part of Florida. Tallahassee.

B: Oh, okay.

M: Yeah, he was a developer in Tallahassee. Very influential with the government in power at the time.

B: ____.

M: Yeah. Yeah.

B: Okay. But he supported Mel Conner in going into private practice.

M: Yeah. And then a very acrimonious, not very good situation that I discussed. Even though I was promoted to take Mel's place after he left. The fact that this opportunity came along – which was a unique one – and the fact that I had these political prompts, I could see really no way out of it for the next several years. I did not want to, you might say, go public and make it a real issue or something like that. I thought that would ruin everything, you know. So I got the heck out.

B: The governor at that time was –

M: Oh, let's see.

B: No longer LeRoy Collins.

M: No, it was Bryant, I believe.

B: Farris Bryant [governor, 1961-1965].

M: Farris Bryant.

B: From Jacksonville.

M: Well, from Ocala, really.

B: From Ocala?

M: Yeah, well, he was in Jacksonville later. But we looked upon him being from Ocala.

B: I got you. And Sy Deeb had been a political supporter of that governor.

M: Right.

B: Mel Conner's job with the state road department up until then had been in –

M: Chief of the Traffic and Planning Division.

B: Gotcha.

M: And I was the deputy of that.

B: He took over from Conner when he left.

M: I did.

B: You did. Oh really.

M: Yeah.

B: And how long did you stay in that job?

M: I stayed about a year, then I left.

B: Okay. When Mel Connor started trying to grow his business, on the strength of doing work that, I guess, that your department had been doing up until then, did he get help from others in the administration, say –

M: Well, the chief engineer, who was a guy I sort of reported to, his name was Al Church, a very fine man, he said, Ed, we've got a really bad situation here, can you give this guy some work. I said, well, I can give work here or there, but he wants to do this or that. He says, let the guy do something, he says, a lot of pressure. Then he asks me, he says, is he really an alcoholic? And I said, I don't know. And at this point, I didn't really know what an alcoholic was. I certainly didn't have any idea how you dealt with one. And I realized, many years afterwards, that Mel was a bad alcoholic. And that's part of the problem. Because when he went into business for himself, he was even more of an alcoholic because he did not have the money, and I've run into some very bad situations with him before. I was kind of ____ no, I must admit, I'm very conservative, I just don't tolerate that. And most days, it was not a disease, it was about habit, if you understand my meaning. So you didn't know how – I mean, personally, I, myself, had never been exposed to anything like that, didn't know how to treat it. If I had, then I would have done things ____ different. But I still would have had the acrimonious situation, I just wouldn't have dealt with it, probably. And you can see, your boss leaves, and says to you, well, I'm gonna push you hard for work, well, ____, why do you have to do what I'm doing. Because I'd been doing it – well, we'd been doing it very cheaply, and I thought pretty well.

B: And what kind of work was this?

M: Well, this was traffic and planning work, he was doing the same thing. One job he got right away was to figure out where to put interstate ____ in Tallahassee, which was a heck of a political problem, where do you locate it.

B: Interstate 10.

M: Interstate 10, yeah. You ____ develop the town where it is, through town, south of town, etc., etc., and that kind of stuff. That was one job he had. And he did a lot of the planning for a lot of the other cities in Florida, too. After I left, there was nobody there that would face up to him much. So to give you an example of how these things worked, the guy that took my place was a man named Paul Bunker, a district engineer from, district traffic engineer from Lake City area.

B: B-U-N-

M: B-U-N-K-E-R. Nice guy. Good guy. Good at working with people, but not that well-educated professionally. He probably wasn't even a graduate, as far as I can remember. Well, he needed a house in Tallahassee. Who builds the house for him? Sy Deeb. Gives him a good price under very reasonable mortgage. Paul Bunker is indebted to Sy Deeb for the rest of his life. See? That's the kind of thing that happens. It's not that – you know, you've got to have someone build your house, the house is good – but the mortgage was at a very good interest rate, you know, ____ a couple of points under _____. I don't know, all that I know was that it was a very good bargain for Paul. Paul had almost no money of his own and he needed a house. He had a family and so forth. And that was the kind of thing that happened. And that's what these guys did, these political people, they did favors for you and, of course, would expect some favor later on. You've got a job to do and you've got to select _____.

B: Well, stuff like that.

[both speaking]

M: _____. Rather than the guy you don't know who might – because the money's about the same, see. It's the selection. One thing I found out too, later. When people running for office, they need money for the political campaigns, civil servants do not give a lot of money to people running for office, but consulting engineers do. So the politicians finally figured out, well, if we can give some word to consulting engineers, we can get contributions for our political party. The way we do this is we just don't let them increase their staffs, they have to get the work done, nobody argues about that, so we'll hire consultants, i.e., the consultants probably can be influenced to give us political contributions. And, although that's never been said anyplace I can remember, that is a part of what happened in Florida, and all around the country, perhaps. Because the rise of all the private consultants occurred with the demise of the more government officials, which is probably good in the long run, but I wasn't happy at the time with it.

B: When do you suppose that trend really started to gain _____?

- M: After we had some more money involved, like the interstate. So I'd say the sixties. Early sixties. Forty years ago.
- B: You think the fact that the federal government made all that money available in the pipeline for road-building helped influence that?
- M: Oh sure, because there's no way that the proper, even if it had, you probably couldn't have found the interest to do the work for the salaries they could offer. So we would have had to hire a consultant. It's just accelerated the process, because a lot of the designs, especially urban areas, were all done by consultants. And this is pretty good money. You know, you get a lot more money doing a mile in an urban area than you do getting a mile in a rural area.
- B: For example?
- M: Plus, the technology got far more sophisticated than a government person could really cope with. Even the very best highway departments in the country, like California, could just not cope with the technology aspects that were demanded in doing the new work. And _____ a more sophisticated technology, your data acquisition, that kind of stuff, then you ever thought of doing before. I mean –
- B: Well, a department of the State Department could deal with it if they hired people who had the expertise, I guess.
- M: Yeah, but they're not allowed, because you don't have any vacancies, you can't get them first through the governor and then to the legislature. For example, you have a – well, what's happened, not _____ but the last twenty or thirty years, is maintenance always used to be done by state forces. People with state jobs. A lot of it is done now by contract, which nobody argues about. But the first ones that were done, who got the contracts? Well, a guy who's affiliated with the governor, maybe. See? Because none of the state people are _____ for the governor, unless they _____ a guy or something. But an outsider coming in and say, we can do – we have good arguments each, but we could do a good maintenance style for you, give us some work, for a price. Fine, what's wrong with that? Plus, it makes sense that the guy got the job, because he's a friend. You know, usually you don't bid on those things, or bid very strongly on them, you see what I mean?
- B: Yeah.
- M: So that has happened a lot. And no one objects _____, I don't either _____. I'm doing a lot of contract maintenance, in fact, I might do even more. But it's how you do the selection. See, it's not like bidding, where you have ten people build a house, we've got plans. Things like that, you're just selecting on qualifications, looking at resumes, that kind of stuff. And there's a lot of ways you get a full

- _____.
- B: The technology of road-building, you said, was changing during this period of time. The late fifties, the early sixties.
- M: Yeah.
- B: _____ the interstate highway?
- M: Yeah, because as you _____ more bridges, you tried to build them better, cheaper, more uniform. This led to things like precast concrete. You might _____ how all the bridges you see in Florida are made of concrete. They're what's called precast concrete, they're usually made in big sections and put into place, whereas before they were all formed in place with _____, wooden _____ and stuff like that. Still concrete, but a little different kind. And the interstate just forced people to think of better ways to do things. Now why the other states don't use concrete like we do, they use steel, which is fine, we use steel too when we can't use concrete. Certain shapes and certain conditions you can't use concrete, you much use steel. But steel costs more, and it especially costs more in Florida, because there aren't that many iron mines around here.
- B: You've got to transport it further.
- M: Right. Move it someplace, yeah.
- B: You said that it was hard for a state road department or a state agency to hire the technology, the expertise that it needed. How come? Because you need it –
- M: For example, out of there, I was about the only guy with a semi-graduate degree. I actually managed to hire a graduate, master's degree guy from Purdue. That's the only one I've ever hired. Some of these, the chief engineer of the state road department before I came, bragged that he'd never been to school a day in his life. He was just a real good cracker, redneck kind of guy that got along with people in the political situation.
- B: Who was that?
- M: Oh, his name is – he had a brother work for me – he ran the turnpike for a while. I may think of his name. I'd remember if I hear it, but I can't remember it offhand, I'm sorry. I'm not trying to hide it, I just can't remember it.
- B: Let me know if it pops up.
- M: Yeah. Yeah. But Al Church, for example, was a graduate, but he was considered a Yankee because he was born in Chicago and moved to Florida

when he was a kid. He was a Yankee.

B: Al Church –

M: He was our chief engineer under the Bryant administration.

B: All right. Gotcha. He succeeded Mel Conner.

M: No-no-no. This is chief engineer for the highway department.

B: Oh, the road department. Okay.

M: ____ is from the ____.

B: All right. So you hired this man from Purdue.

M: Yeah, I hired this man from Purdue, who was a little bit of a character, but he moved down, and he knew what he was doing, and so forth, and so on. Yeah, for example. He was one of the very few people you ever could hire, and probably was hired as much because he's a character ____ other jobs, come to think of it.

B: If it was hard, you've got all this highway money coming into the state to build interstate highway systems. It's coming out of the federal government through the gas tax structure of the Interstate Highway bill. The state uses the money to put down concrete and steel and build bridges and grade highways. But you can't use that money to hire the expertise?

M: Oh, sure, sure, yeah, you do.

B: Okay.

M: Yeah, you do. You use either state money, funds that aren't matched by federal, and sometimes that's used because it's another less layer of review. But many times you used the federal money, sure.

B: Though it was easier, apparently, to use that money to hire outside consultants to do some of this.

M: Oh, it was easy to do, sure. Because the work's got to get done. You know about the work that has to be done, i.e., how do we do it? Local forces, outside sources, a combination, what. See? And if you did this in like, a more objective way, you'd say, well, we've got thirty man-hours, and we need eighty man-hours, we've got to hire fifty man-hours, see? But they said, let's get the fifty man-hours and then worry about what you're going to do. Because we want to get

somebody to take care of that, some buddy of ours or something.

B: Okay, yeah.

M: So this is not a great evil, but it is an evil.

B: And apparently this suited the political parties.

M: Oh yeah, sure, sure. And if you're going to ask somebody to work for you, you're not going to select an enemy, right?

B: Sure.

M: You're going to select a friend. Well, who's a friend? A man who gave me money for my campaign, a man who got some orders from me. A man that helped me when I was a kid. You know, that's – everybody does that, you know.

B: All right. So, if by 1962 or so, you have advanced in the road department, you've got a clear-eyed view of how all of this works, and apparently it's starting to make you a little bit less than comfortable the situation.

M: That's right.

B: Maybe you had this opportunity, now you say, to move to Washington, D.C. What was that outfit?

M: It was called the Transportation Research Board, but at that time was the Highway Research Board. Been in business for many years, and they provide research and advice to highway departments in the federal government. They have a team of people in various fields of highways, like myself, I was in traffic, and they go around the country. Actually, you go around the country and talk to highway departments, spend a couple of days and figure out what their problems are and go back, maybe advise them, here's a publication that might help you, I saw this as a problem, will this be of any – very genteel. You have a whole bunch of publications, _____. And then you have a big annual meeting once a year. It's a very nice job, in a way. You do a lot of travel, if you love to travel, it was fine, but with a growing family, I wasn't too enamored of this all the time, it was fine once in a while, I made it on about five or six good trips a year.

B: Where did you live?

M: Well, I lived in Fairfax, Fairfax County, Virginia, the outskirts, near the Shirley Highway.

B: And was this a for-profit corporation, or –

M: Well, it's a division of the National Science Foundation, which – it exists only to give advice to government. That's one thing these people existed to do. It's private in that sense, but it's financed strictly by mostly public agencies, and the only – very well-respected at the time, well, still is. Very genteel. It never said, you guys get rid of this way you're doing the thing, we'll maybe show you some research to do it better, you know. But they did nothing as far as they were trying to ____ anybody's thoughts or anything. And they operated by subscription. For \$5000, this is how we ____, but we'll provide you the services for \$10,000, to the ____ we give you these services. They negotiate a contract every three years for this kind of service, nominal at first, then they got pretty expensive as time went on and the powers became greater. It was a nice job, in a way.

B: How long were you there?

M: Eight – almost eight years.

B: Did you miss Florida?

M: Yeah, quite a bit. Traffic in Washington was lousy, and nobody really tried to correct it. In my opinion there was lots you could do, but because of the attitudes, political attitudes in Washington, I don't think anybody tried very hard. That always irked me. But I don't know, maybe it's just me. And I got tired of commuting after a while, and then a job came around in Florida.

B: Were there friends, people, associates that you missed in Florida, relationships you had formed down here?

M: No, a few, yeah, a few, but not very many. They were pretty casual relationships, they were not very brotherly-type. They were just people I had known and would look up if I was around, and that kind of stuff. But not that I – I mean, occasionally a few Christmas cards, but that's about it, yeah.

B: People that you worked with –

M: Part of this is because I'm with my family, my attention has grown, concentrate on my family at this time, and so forth.

B: All right.

M: My wife is working part-time some of the time, and so forth.

B: What did she do?

M: She's nursing. Dermatologist in the Washington area for a bit.

B: So your kids were all moved into schools up in the Washington, D.C. area –

M: Yeah.

B: You worked there and lived there for eight years, until what year?

M: Until 1970. In 1969, all around the country the state highway departments became departments of transportation, federal government said, this is good, go ahead and do it.

B: Why?

M: Because of transit. Other opportunities besides highways. The Urban Mass Transit Administration was formed a few years before, and they –

B: This is a function of the federal government and the Johnson's Great Society.

M: Well, I didn't look at it that way. Yes, the _____. But anyway, the department of transit _____, they're all going broke, like in Jacksonville and other places, they could not get the equipment needed. Transit always has to be subsidizing. It cannot start by itself no matter where you live in the country, every system is subsidized by government. And that's the way it is. And usually if you're a conservative person, you don't want to get in a situation where you have to subsidize something, that's not good. All this money going out, and what's coming in, see? Whereas if you build something like a highway, that's money going out and we're getting something from our dollar, see what I mean? So you put the two together, you've got a little dichotomy, _____, a little irritating maybe to some people. Well, in Florida in '69, we created a Department of Transportation under Governor [Claude] Kirk [Jr., 1967-1971]. Governor Kirk appointed the _____ head of the Road Board, which was abolished, because it was supposed to be a professional engineer running this, no board or anything, and appointed a man from Miami, who the legislature refused to confirm in December of '69.

B: Who was it?

M: I think it was an Irish name, his first name was Michael or Mike. Can't think of his last name, might have been O'Larivey, but I don't think that's it.

B: Why would the legislature torpedo him?

M: Because they didn't like Governor Kirk being a Republican, and they were all Democratic, and it's supposed to be a professional engineer, and this guy just _____. He was a nice guy, I met him a couple of times, and he was not objectionable. He did not spend full time on the job, which was what they thought _____. The fact that the guy wasn't a professional engineer and he was

not going to spend that much time on it, we won't confirm him. Well, here the governor's got a problem. It's the last year of his tenure, he's got to run for reelection, what's he going to do? Well, the inside story is this: I had a neighbor named, in Tallahassee named Don, I can't think of his last name but I will pretty soon, and we were neighbors, very good friends, and he was a reporter for one of the newspapers _____. He knew a lot of the ins and outs of government. Well, Kirk appointed him to be his principle assistant in some areas, and he also ran the department that gave out the liquor licenses, I can't think who the name is. Now this is highly, could be highly political and very lucrative, because a guy wants a liquor license and the permit is \$6000 or something like that, it'll cost you \$10,000 to get it for a thousand under the table. This guy was very honest, that's what he did, and he cleaned it up. The governor asked him to find a candidate to head the Department of Transportation.

B: Now this is somebody that you had known –

M: It's my neighbor.

B: – back when you used to.

M: Many years. Yeah. Ten years, eight, ten years. And we exchanged Christmas cards and casual – he was a good friend. Still is, although I haven't seen him in a very long time. And their two kids played with our two kids, that kind of stuff. We lived next door to each other in Tallahassee. Anyway, he asked me to help him. So I said, well, I sent him half a dozen resumes, and after a month or two of doing this, he says, Ed, would you like to _____, I said, well, I don't know, Don. I've heard a lot of things about Governor Kirk I don't like. I said, my main thing is, is he enriching himself by his office, Governor Kirk. Because I've heard about the problems he had with consultants and stuff, that's a nightmare. So. _____. Yeah, so I don't know. Well, come down for a meeting, he'd like to talk to you. So I did, I went down there to Lakeland, he had just been recovering from an operation. It wasn't bad, he was a little subdued, as I found out later. But after fifteen minutes he offered me the job, and I took it. And we didn't tell much about it, I mean, I didn't, he didn't say, I've got to do it this way or that way, he just kind of _____ me out a little bit, my background. Now previously, he had talked to the guy in Maryland who worked for Governor [Spiro] Agnew, a very political guy and not a very good situation. If that guy had been hired, my God, the scandals in Florida _____. But fortunately, that did not happen, but he did talk to other people before he talked to me, and of the people I said were all good people I had known, I don't think they followed up on any or many of them. I gave them people I knew who I knew could do the job, see, because I knew a lot of people around the country. When I got the job, I came in April, and –

B: This might be a good place to pause for a moment.

M: Sure.

[pause in tape]

M: This man's name was Don Meiklejohn. M-E-I-K-L-E-J-O-H-N.

B: He had been Kirk's proposed candidate.

M: No, he was an advisor to Kirk. And Kirk asked him to find a transportation secretary. That was the title of the job at that time.

B: And you said he had been a newsman as well?

M: Yeah, he worked for the Perry chain, and he was, he loved to dig into things, he was a good writer. He, I think he worked for the *Tallahassee Democrat*, too. But he was a good reporter, he did that all his life as far as I know. And I think afterwards he moved to Washington, but I lost track.

B: Why do you think Kirk settled on you?

M: Well, just 'cause he didn't have anybody else. ____ hadn't worked for the department before, I think he thought I could do a better job quicker because I knew the department, I didn't have to go through the learning process that way. Because most of the guys were still there that had been there seven, eight years before. They maybe advanced a little bit, but – also, when you have someone who's working with you who leaves and then comes back, it's all ____, what is this guy going to do to me? Does he remember when I snuck in, does he remember when I did this? What does he remember, when I was good to him and maybe promote – you know, that kind of stuff. He had a little bit of that attitude. But I think the main reason was because I had been there before. It certainly wasn't because of my looks, because at that time I weighed thirty or forty pounds more than I do now. I was pretty chubby. And had more hair. But I didn't get it on my looks, I assure you that. Yeah.

B: And Kirk offered you the position?

M: Yeah.

B: With no particular strings attached?

M: No, I worried directly about what to do about ____, but as I explain in a minute that was very easily solved. I got here, the first thing was getting confirmed, that was the great problem, of, we thought, nothing to it. I just talked to the legislature in an interview, and the main thing –

B: Who did you talk to in the legislature?

M: Probably the Transportation Committee. A group of committees. ____ practically all Democrats, right. And they just interviewed you, and there was really no problem, I had to make a statement where they asked me if I was a Communist. I asked if I said something that might have leaned somebody that way, I said, no, no, we, you know, something like that. ____, oh, detrimental.

B: That's a funny one.

M: And then I just – well, I'm not going to brag, but in a week or ten days ____ problem. The department had problems, the main problem was, I think, the top guys did not like the governor and the way he operated or tried to operate. They didn't, when there was a road board member mechanism before, they didn't have quite the political aspects that they had before, but it was still political, subject to a road board. But it took so long to get five or six guys in the federal requirements, so you didn't have too much of that influence, these guys were mostly, I say pretty good guys, as far as I could tell. I didn't know any of them personally, but it was a lot different, it was ____ so far. And the problem with the governor's club was this: there's so much work you had to get done, the gentlemen were going to do the work, were going to get the work done, there was no question about that. Now you, as a district engineer, we had five districts – you've got to decide if you can do the work or you can't do the work during the time ____ we have. If you can't do the work, you have to use a consultant. So that's the first thing. You do not decide not to do the work. You must do the work because we've got to get it done, keep concentrating because the department is very ____ criticism for being _____. So what we would do, see, before, when you had a job come up, the governor might recommend one or two people, maybe. For one job.

B: Contractors.

M: Contractors. And consultants, design consultants. Because the contract is all done by bids. And if the governor didn't like that, he'd get mad, and the people who sent it over, the people who sent it over got mad because the governor didn't take the recommendation. So I solved that by sending over – we got ten jobs and twenty design consultants. Take your choice, governor, I don't care. And nine times out of ten he'd always take the first choice. See, you just – I just found out that, and part of this was ____ or whatever, I don't know, they just irritated the governor at that facility, and they could have done it so easily. They still have, the governor would still have, you might say the governor's the problem. But you could not criticize the way that the department, because all it did was send – I had never made the decisions, the district engineers made the decisions. I would tell them, now, if you've got a \$10,000 job, don't take a \$5,000

man, you know. If you've got a lesser guy that you really think you want to help, take a small job you know you can do, don't handle something you can't do. Just play _____. So we'd send over a whole batch of them at a time. The governor never turned down anybody, all, all, with one exception, never changed a thing, out of forty or fifty different jobs. And that was the secret to solving the problem. It doesn't sound like much, but that's what did it.

B: What was the exception?

M: Well, one guy, this guy in Lake City, I had one job, and the governor referred him onto another job. _____ that I can remember.

B: Any idea why?

M: Oh, I suppose the guy got to it and said, governor, I'd rather do this job than that job. I guess, but I don't _____. The guy later offered me a job.

B: What?

M: He also offered me a job before. I didn't take it. But, I mean, it was, I thought it'd be the most difficult problem, I never knew how I was going to get out of that problem, because I just – you have no idea how I dreaded it, because of what I had before, with my old boss. It was no problem at all. So the other problem is we've got to get the work done, we've got to get the jobs out, then you have the problems, you build I-10, or I-95, or I-4, or wet areas, so how do you do that. Well, the press always _____, you're going to build I-4, you're going to build I-10, what're you going to do? And you know, whatever you say, you're wrong. But I found out that getting the contracts ready, the design contracts ready to build the _____ procured and that kind of stuff, was such a daunting, exhausting task, that we were lucky that we could have had any jobs at all on I-10 or I-95 or wherever it was. We were lucky that, well, we're going to do I-10 this week and next month we're going to do I-4, because that's the place we've got contracts with. But we never said this to the press, but that's what it turned out to be. And during the rest of Governor Kirk's term, we got a lot of jobs ready, a lot of the roads opened, he came to a couple dedications I set up, nobody showed up much for them, but he came and gave a little talk, I gave a little talk, and so forth. It worked out really well. He was not hard to work with, he was, he had a staff meeting every Monday and, for a half-hour or so, with his aides, and we just talked for, very generally, nothing, nothing really politically, just how's it going and that kind of stuff.

One time I managed to, and this is about the exception, one time I managed to have problems getting a decision from the Coast Guard on a bridge someplace, the Bridge Highway or something? Who's the guy that does this? Well, it's Admiral such-and-such. And he called his secretary and says, get Admiral Such

on the phone with me, I want to talk to him. We never got through to him, but was going to do was tell him, get the hell out of there. _____, get this damn permit from this man, we've got to get this bridge built, see. That's what his way of doing things was. My way was never like that, I would find out who the guy is, who's his principal assistant, call them, maybe visit him, talk to him nice, see what happened – I would never do anything like that. That's confrontational, that's the way Kirk did things. Well, I'm not a confrontational person, and I don't think it works pretty good for highways, anyway. Maybe it does for politics, but not for highways. And then the other problem we had, and that was the attorney general, was named Faircroft. And you could never get a decent legal opinion, because he was anti-Kirk. You know, if you needed a legal opinion to do something, concerning highways or something, you've got to keep it out of his department rather than go in it. Plus, the legislature, mainly the guys who worked for the lawyers who worked for the transportation committee had previously worked for the department, and they were quite anti-department, which distressed me greatly, because some of these guys were new, had been sort of friends before. Here they were fighting the department. You used to work for the department, you know. Florida has laws –

B: They had that attitude because they wanted to put a spoke in Kirk's wheel, is that it?

M: Kirk, right, and of course, were out for themselves, to get a name for themselves and influence the legislature and so forth.

B: Were you among the –

M: The one dastardly problem of Florida is, you pay people to sue you when you cadet their land.

B: Yeah.

M: Only two states sued us, at the time it was only one state. Very bad lot, because you want a bad piece of property and you get a fair appraisal for it. Say it's a \$10,000 piece of property, and you've hopefully got a \$10,000 – well, I don't want to take that, I want more. Fine, we'll give you \$11,000. You get ten percent more almost by asking. No, that's not good enough, I'm going to hire a lawyer. So _____ whoever gets to \$15,000. Fine. But the lawyer gets paid on the basis of \$15,000. All he got for you was \$4,000. The difference? The judge _____ because he supported the judge in getting elected. Ahhh, a ten percent fee _____. Well, this is what happens, and these guys are getting rich. Rich!

B: And you all are paying.

M: And they get like sixty or a hundred, two hundred dollars _____ when they should

have gotten ten dollars _____, that kind of a thing. And to me, it's exorbitant, criminal. And do you suppose I could ever get anybody interested in that problem? Solving it? No. Governor [Reubin] Askew [1971-1979], a very virtuous man for a governor, probably wouldn't even hear of it. Because he's a private lawyer and wants to get fees. But that is the worst one, the worst problem we've got in Florida, and there are so many rich people in this town, lawyers, from representing you in condemning land. I had this with the transportation authority too, later on. But that is one of the worst problems ever, I tried to quietly solve it, because you can't do it publicly, nobody understands it and thinks you're kidding them or something, I don't know. Terrible problem. Still is. I think. Why do you pay someone to sue you? Why would you do that?

B: How much of an impact would –

[End side A1b]

M: Well, it's probably a, I would say it's a third to, I would say it's –

B: Would you say it's had on road-building costs overall?

M: Oh, it's probably, I would say it's a third to doubly the _____ cost.

B: The _____ cost.

M: Yeah, it has nothing to do with the construction. Oh, absolutely. I'll give you an example later on, when I worked with _____. Take off any government, agency in Florida, they will do their best to negotiate. They do not want to go to court, because if they go to court the fee is always more, always more. Plus the attorney, the judge looks on the attorney and says, well, you get twenty percent. And you get twenty percent of the whole amount rather than the difference that you got for the guy. Because you didn't fight to get, you know, the state offered you a certain amount, all you ever got for him was the amount between that and the amount you got, see. But the judge would give the lawyers a fee, arbitrarily, just like that. Yeah, and then you'd have to pay it. Plus, they provide all kinds of expert witnesses, some of these guys we _____, these appraisers. Yeah, what kind of appraiser works for you, a pretty honest appraiser. We had another guy that worked with the lawyers, and they were not as good, as honest as you felt your appraisers were.

B: Hired guns.

M: Well, certainly, yeah.

B: Governor Kirk was up for election during the same year that you came on board.

- M: Yeah. They thought he'd be reelected. ____ [laughter].
- B: And he was defeated by Reubin Askew, whom you just mentioned, and apparently you continued on in the Askew administration.
- M: Yeah, what happened is, right after he was elected, end of the year, start of next year, he had wanted someone who turned him down. Took a job in a college, or something. So, he was kind of stuck. I interviewed with him, and so I'm not taking any part in an election, except that he gave a couple speeches that were technical speeches that I would have given anyway, but at the governor's request to this group or that group. Otherwise, I did appear at one public thing in Tallahassee with him once with a friend of mine. That's all I did. Because I had a lot to do with this ____ department, really, and so I went to see him in January, we had a talk, and he said, well, I want to get somebody else set up, but in effect, will you continue on? I said, yes governor, ____ [laughter], and there's no problem with chicanery, things will be the same. Now I didn't know what he would do for selection for consultants, you know? So I did the same thing I did with Kirk: he would have ten jobs, give him a list of consultants, he took every one, and after a few months he said, never – don't bother about that. You select them. So he got out of it entirely. Whereas before, Governor Kirk had reserved that privilege for himself.
- B: Where you a member of the governor's cabinet?
- M: I guess you'd call it that, yeah.
- B: Did you vote on cabinet decisions to do –
- M: Oh, no-no-no, no-no-no. All we ever did was have staff meetings.
- B: Oh, okay.
- M: That is under both governors.
- B: Right.
- M: Governor Askew had a staff meeting, he had an actual breakfast meeting in the mansion. Governor Askew is hard to know, and probably being a – see, the only reason he kept me is, I was a Democrat, see, a registered Democrat, even though it didn't make much difference. I just want to put a person, as I told you, but he had a very, the lieutenant governor was a real thorn in his side. Guy ____.
- B: Tom Adams.

M: Tom Adams, yeah, God. And the governor, I knew enough about people by this time that I could just tell the governor was just biting his tongue not to chew him out in public or, ____ with eight or ten department heads.

B: Yeah.

M: And the governor was a rather virtuous man, ____ said grace every meal, never any bad words, I never heard him say a bad word I can _____. Kirk never said anything too bad, he said "hell" and "damn" a lot, but I mean, you know.

B: What did you think of Kirk as a governor?

M: Well, I only knew him about the last year, I didn't know, hardly, didn't think about him. He certainly was a character. The thing he should have done in life is be George Jessel. He's the best after-dinner humor speaker in the world. [Laughter.] Absolutely, the man is tops at that. Absolutely tops. Absolutely tops. As a governor, he's probably not one of the best. He used the wrong technique. I don't know how you governor, about that confrontation, I think you have to work, get it ____, all that stuff. But he decided to do it by ____, and maybe ____ because we're all Democrats, I don't know. I don't know. Now, we had to work a lot in the department with the representatives and legislature, some were Democratic, some were Republican, I never asked. I asked, what's your problem? In fact, one guy, he was a Democrat, I thought he was a Republican. And we talked about things, and it, but I mean, these guys would come in with their problems. Well, I just tried to solve it on a problem basis. Yeah, we can build that road on the ____ coming up in January, and all that stuff. Or, we can't do that, we need, you know, I found out enough about it, I'd just do it on a technical basis, and that was it. And a lot of them had problems, a lot of them were happy with what I said, a lot of them weren't. I'm sure of that. But that's the way I decided to handle it. Now you see, I was, when I worked for this job in Washington, I had been to forty-four different highway departments, and I knew what was wrong with the way you ran highway departments. They're just two things: politics, two kinds of politics. One is the politics like the consultant section, the external politics, if you want to look at it another – the other is internal politics, how you advance people. Usually, sometimes it's done by cronyism, sometimes it's done on merit. Florida was mostly cronyism, I mean _____. I mean, people put in a resume, what they did, for the selection committee and that kind of stuff. We said that from cronyism you couldn't keep up. Well, it had been ____ before, well, Bill should take the job because he's my buddy, see. But those are the two problems I found out looking at all these highway departments, the good ones and the bad ones, were these two kinds of politics. The politics at the head, with the outside world, and the politics inside because of the way you advance people in the departments. Simple. It just, when you get to forty-four departments, you get an idea what's wrong. Or right, for that matter.

- B: Well, you came into the state DOT, the FDOT at a time when it was sort of responding to this mandate to do other things besides just road-building.
- M: Including transit and aviation and stuff.
- B: And aviation.
- M: Oh, yeah.
- B: Ports.
- M: No, ports weren't even considered at that time.
- B: How about the Cross-Florida Barge Canal project?
- M: It was all gone by the time I got there.
- B: It had been deauthorized?
- M: It had been deauthorized, yeah. It was a dead issue.
- B: Okay, so you never really had any –
- M: I had personal thoughts on it, but not as, no thoughts when I was in office.
- B: Was it a novelty for you to get involved in this business on public transit, mass transit, as we call it?
- M: Well, we had one guy, we had a little transit set up there before, a guy named Jim Hunter, ran the, and he got no attention from anybody. He was –
- B: When you say, we had before, you mean –
- M: Well, before I got there. There was a transit function.
- B: The Road Department.
- M: The Road Department. Well, see, at that time it was the DOT.
- B: Okay.
- M: And he, he just had an office on the floor, but he was entirely ignored. He did whatever he did, he did a few things to _____, nobody treated him very seriously. Well, I treated him seriously. And at this time, there was public money coming down for transit, we needed a policy, what could we do. So I talked to Jim, I said, well, we just talked, we agreed the policy is this: we will not spend any money on

operating transit systems around the state. No money. But most of the money coming down is eighty-twenty. We will put in ten percent, in other words, make up half of the difference. So the local government and ourselves are partners, matching the federal funds. And most of this goes for transit equipment or buildings. Something tangible. Which is _____ like highway-building. And that scared everybody, because operating costs, Miami, for example, could easily have absorbed everything else in the state, for example. And _____ operating costs, because you get unions, you get all kinds of tough, things that are tough. So that was the policy we had, which is still around today. Except there are some projects now like Jacksonville, for example, wants to try to move from here to there, it's going to cost \$80,000 this year to try it. The state may fund part of that, part or all of that.

B: What does eighty-twenty mean? Oh, eighty-twenty.

M: Yes, eighty percent federal, twenty percent state or local.

B: Gotcha.

M: And the state, now the state can put it all on twenty and do it, but we thought it was best to get the local participation, which usually came out of city funds, in this case, because we're all cities, we're not counties in transit. So transit and aviation, nothing to do about airports and all that stuff that we thought at the time. I don't think they still do much. But we can do a lot about airport safety for private aircraft. That's what we try to do on the small scale, and we did _____ preaching safety to small airports, and checking on private planes. Of course, some of the guys who did that had their own private pilot's licenses and that kind of stuff. But that was just a _____ thing, and wanted to do something in the aviation, no sense trying to do anything with the big airports, because they, they've got their own ideas and their competition with each other, and all that stuff. Plus, they know what to do, they've got all the – it's just different, the way they get the money, you don't get it through the federal Department of Transportation, a very bad one.

B: So most of what you did as DOT Secretary in Florida really still continued to revolve around roads?

M: Oh, God, ninety percent, probably. And it still will, always will be, as long as we have the kind of things we have, because you have no idea the pressure that's put on _____, maybe it's not so much today, to get something done. Got to have this road done. Why does it take eight years? Why do you have to do this? And you just spend, detail after detail trying to explain and get something done. It's almost a very disheartening process trying to get anything done, especially today. It was bad enough when I was working at it years ago, but – I don't know

if I could even stand it today if I didn't have _____, or something.

B: Was the Turnpike Authority something that related to your department when you came?

M: Yeah, that came in just before, and they made the wrong decisions there, they, the turnpike was _____ by a guy named Thomas Manuel.

B: Emanuel or Manuel?

M: Manuel. M-A-N-U-E-L. Very fine job. Very fine. And we took it over, and decided –

B: You took it over.

M: Well, it was before I got there. The state took it over. The districts absorbed the various parts that the turnpike was in.

B: All right.

M: And they balanced the command structure of the turnpike. One of the guys came to Tallahassee as a representative, but that was about it. All the maintenance, everything was done, they tried to do it on a routine basis, with the state maintenance forces and the turnpike workers combined. It didn't work very good. They should have always kept it separate, separate agencies in the department, _____. But they didn't. It was already done by the time I got there. I would have left it just exactly as it was and let it operate that way, but I don't think that was the intent of the legislature, they wanted to combine or something. But see, they're toll roads, DOT never built any toll roads, and the _____, you know, they're _____, and the turnpike, had that _____, plus they _____ run very well, I thought, very well, very well. And they're pretty real criticisms, and this man was a fine man, think it broke his heart, too, to be deprived of that.

B: Did you make changes in the way that operated then during your tenure?

M: I really didn't have enough time to do that.

B: You took it the way it was –

M: The way it was being handled, and – the one thing we did do, we got some more projects added to the turnpike. Are you familiar with Orlando at all?

B: Somewhat.

M: Well, you know where SeaWorld is.

B: Yes.

M: Well, there's a road connection there when you get on the turnpike system to get the finance, and we did a few adjuncts to the turnpike system around the state, little adjuncts here and there, that we could reasonably say are turnpike projects to, because there was no way to fund it otherwise. And most of the stuff we did on our own, I don't think the legislature exactly liked it later on, because they found some control over it, but that's what we did a little bit. Kirk was pretty good at thinking of things like that, I think he thought of these ways to do it, you know, try to get a project here, a project there, on turnpike funds. See, even though the turnpike was _____ into the DOT, _____ and revenues and all that stuff was like it was a complete entity by itself. It just was the way they did the maintenance. They would still charge it to turnpike funds, but they would do it with state forces instead of the routine maintenance forces that the turnpike had. Those people were employed by the DOT if you wanted to _____, so you've got _____. And the toll-takers and stuff, that was just a separate division that did that stuff.

B: Were there road board members who still tried to exert influence in highway decisions?

M: I never had anybody try to influence me that was a road board member. I did meet one or two of them here or there, but I don't think anybody ever really tried to influence me.

B: And how long did you stay on that?

M: I stayed on twenty-six months until I left in August '72, excuse me, I left in – no, I left in April '73 to join the Jacksonville Transportation Authority. In the meantime, Governor Askew tapped his own man. So I said, governor, I've got just a few months to go to get my ten years' pension or whatever it was, fine, then stay on, and if you want to leave, fine, just don't bother the new guy. So I did, I just had an office and a safety project that I started that I finished in a couple months, and I got a job offer from the Transportation Authority.

B: Who did Reubin Askew appoint to succeed?

M: Danny Walter Rebels.

B: All right. That name rings a bell, where was he from?

M: Well, he was from a consulting firm, he was, I knew him a little bit, I _____ wanted that job, he's not a professional engineer. To me, that was – see, that job was the best government professional engineering job in the state. And it had, for those days, a pretty good salary. It just was something that you loved to _____ in doing that. It was just that kind of a job and that's the way I treated it. Well, this

guy's got to be, he was kind of looking out for himself, I thought, very aggressive, very, pretty good. And, for example, he got appointed – I left in April, but, let's see. I gave that job up in August the year before, and he came in August or September. And I stayed down in this staff job for a few months getting this safety project done, and just keeping out of his way, and doing a few things to keep busy until I got this job with the Transportation Authority. And before, see, the legislature didn't meet until April, and he was worried about being confirmed. He called or visited every one of the legislators to make sure he'd get confirmed.

B: Wow.

M: Which I would have never done.

B: Yeah.

M: I would say, well, you don't want me, the heck with it. But he actively, aggressively did that. He – I never expect him – I know after a while the governor got very tired of him, but he couldn't get rid of a Republican, because ____, acted politically somewhat. Not too much, probably, getting the governor elected, I think. Afterwards he ____ a consulting firm in Miami, which is now one of the largest in the state.

B: Well, how did you wind up coming to Jacksonville, then?

M: Well, I just had an offer. The chairman of the Transportation Authority, who'd been there before ____, I'd been to the Transportation Authority once or twice and said, look, there's no way that DOT can build your bridges and all the things you want to do. You're going to have to do it yourself through tolls just like you've done for years. I can help you a little, but you know, a little marginal supplement, but you've got to do it yourself. Just as, you know, ____, you know, people are ____, couple of times, and ____ was in the seventies, ____ –

B: What was that last name?

M: Sollee, S-O-L-L-E-E.

B: All right.

M: He would venture all around the state and was working with the Transportation Authority. But for the last year or two they had been in a, I say, a stand-put status. They had just gotten authority to take over the transit but they hadn't done anything with it. So they decided, you know, they wanted to do something, so they asked for Arthur to retire and hired me.

B: They had consolidated government here by then.

M: Yeah, by then. They had. And that was a very great advantage, believe me. And the authority was good businessmen, somewhat political, but a pretty good bunch of people that are all, we're all friends, although we didn't always see eye-to-eye when I was working there, but the chairman and I had a very good relationship. His name was Wes Paxson. P-A-X-S-O-N.

B: All right.

M: He was a Republican.

B: What was his business?

M: He in electrical business, electrical engineering business. He later owned Auchter Company, A-U-C-T, A-U-C-H-T-E-R. He doesn't own it anymore. In fact, he rigged a bid and got sent to jail. [Laughter.] Long after I left. But that's –

B: A bid to do with the –

M: Electrical, with his own business.

B: Oh.

M: He was off the Authority by that time.

B: I see. But, I mean, a bid for work from the Authority, or from another government –

M: I wasn't around, I'm not sure it was even, I don't think it was even a state, but I don't remember.

B: Gotcha.

M: Yeah.

B: Anyway, he was the head of the board when you were hired and he lost –

M: Yeah, yeah.

B: And how long did you stay here in that job?

M: Oh, I stayed here about eight years. And the main thing we did was trying to get the Dames Point Bridge built. But all the time getting the studies, the designs. We did it once, and the DOT would not back us up, they were worried about finances, running over and all that stuff.

B: The state or ____?

M: The state, yeah. You've got the tollbooths, so no federal money involved.

B: Okay.

M: There's a story behind that, but I won't tell you that. So after waiting a few years, they redesigned and bid it and came in at enough to get the bid. But I find the traffic projections were –

[End side A1c]

B: All right, we're resuming with the interview with Ed Mueller. And at this point in the interview, he's talking about his experience with the Jacksonville Expressway Authority. Did I name that correctly?

M: Transportation Authority.

B: Jacksonville Transportation Authority, sorry.

M: Used to be Expressway Authority, but when it took over the transit they made us the Transportation Authority. The transit, initially ____ private ____, I mean, we're public ____, we took over the transit system, they couldn't make the goal list, so we're going to make the goal list. To their astonishment they could not make the goal but they had to still subsidize it, ____ you might even have to think to raising fares, you had to get your matching money from the city council, because ____ any way to do it ____, oh my God. So they were resigned –

B: Did that surprise you, or was this a –

M: Well, I just, I didn't say much about it, but it just, sort of something gradually, it didn't sink in over one day, it took months for them to finally realize this.

B: Why couldn't they get the subsidy from the ____?

M: Well, it's not permitted. You had to do it by the highways you build, like, vehicles that operated on them, for example.

B: And that was the only money that the Authority had.

M: Only money it had, and it had to take that, a little bit from that from the, see, ____ tolls, that was the source of funds. In the tolls, the only – it was backed by the gas tax, but we never used it, it was just backed.

B: Gotcha.

M: So you get a better bond rating. And better, lower interest rates.

B: So they thought they would run transit as strictly an enterprise fund.

M: Right. And they _____. Well, it just _____. We could be making money on this. So every year we work out a budget, and ask for money from the city council, which for years was done. After Zurrey came in and they took off the tolls and stuff, then they used _____ and gas tax for _____.

B: Referring to Mayor Tommy –

M: Tommy Hazouri. Yeah. _____.

B: I see.

M: They just used that money to _____, they didn't have to ask the city council for it, _____ administrative funding based on the half-cent sales tax, which was one that you collected by tolls. One _____ we had right away in this, and I had known about it from the beginning, we charged a fifteen-cent toll, and the cost of operating and maintenance were gradually eating up the difference between what the fifteen-cent toll brought in and what we had _____. So eventually we would be operating _____, which just can't happen.

[End of Interview.]