Interview with George Leader

9/11/78

(at the home of Governor George Leader)

I'll read the questions first, if I may, and then I'll respond to them.

First question. Please tell about your general background in York County, your family, and its role in public affairs.

My ancestors on both the Leader side, and my maternal grandmother...my paternal grandmother's maiden name was Myers... and also my mother's parents...my mother's maiden name was Boyer and her mother was a Gladfelter...they all came from southern Germany or the German sector of Switzerland. And they came over here in the 1740s.

(WMP: Did they?)

Yes. They were mostly all Anabaptists. These were persons who were...who believed in baptism by immersion, and they were pacifists, and I think William Penn made at least three trips to that part of Germany and Switzerland to invite these people to come, because they shared with the Quakers the pacifism, which was quite a thing at that time. And coming on the heels of the religious wars, it was interesting to note that here were some people who not only professed Christianity, but practiced it...their pacifism...because in Europe, as you know, many Christians engage in the sport of killing each other...which in my opinion must be a little incongruous with the things that they said they believe.

But these were my ancestors. They came over here, and fact is, these Germans and German Swiss came over here in such numbers that the English-speaking people were very much concerned that Pennsylvania would become more German than English, and that German might indeed become the language of the...the common language, rather than English. So, it was quite a little problem. As a matter of fact, my own mother learned to speak Pennsylvania German before she learned to speak English. And that was not uncommon in her generation.

However, my generation was the turning point, and I know very few people of my generation, up there in the Dutch country, where I came from, who did not learn to speak English first. I was the transitional generation.
Now, one of my great-great-great-grandfathers, we're sitting here within almost a view of Valley Forge. One of my great-great-great-grandfathers on the Leader side, did indeed was engaged in the Revolutionary war. We have no record that he ever camped with Washington over here at Valley Forge; they're very poor records. But the York County history book, of which I have two sets over there in my bookshelf, show that, I believe there was a Frederick Leader, who was indeed involved in the Revolutionary war. And I would be in the direct line.

In more recent history, the Leaders have been farmers and country school teachers, and so were the Boyers. My only uncle...my mother had only one brother and no sisters... he was a country schoolteacher and secretary of the school board in his township. My grandfather Leader, for whom I was named, was a school director for many years in York Township, Pennsylvania, in York County. My own father was a school director and a country schoolteacher, and later on became a state senator, in 1943. And my oldest sister was a schoolteacher and taught school for a number of years.

So that by the time I came along, farming and schoolteaching and being involved in educational affairs was quite a common thing on both my mother's side and my father's side. And then, after my father had served the best part of two terms in the Senate, he decided not to run. I had been the Democratic county chairman in York County at that point, and for a period before that, I had been secretary of the county committee. And being the county chairman when my father decided not to run, I was more or less in sprinting position. And I ran for the state Senate in 1950...the year Dick Dilworth made his initial run. He did very well through most of the state, but there were some people in western Pennsylvania who thought the state would do better without him as governor and they ditched him. Some of the Democrats in western Pennsylvania....incidentally, some of the very same people who ditched me for the United States Senate in 1950....in 1958.

But I ran for the Senate in 1950 and won, and took office in 1951. And of course, I was there four years and then ran for the governorship.

I think I've answered the second question here already. How did you become a state senator and what role did you play in the legislature while you were there?

No one on the Democratic side played very much of a role in the state legislature while I was there, because there were only eighteen of us out of fifty, and we had a leadership that
had been there quite a good little while, and to some degree had learned how to live from the crumbs from the Republican table. I remember sitting there one day and Senator Reverend Ruth. Senator Ruth from Berks County was a friend of my father's and I sat next to him in the Senate. And he sort of looked upon me as a son, I think, because he was very kind to me and very helpful in many ways. And one day Senator Taylor was passing out envelopes in the Democratic side of the Senate. And I said... What's Senator Taylor passing out today?....and he'd already passed these envelopes out to several of the Democratic leaders.

He said... Oh, that's those insurance commissions.

I said......You mean that he passes out insurance commissions from the state insurance business to Democrats as well as to Republicans???

He said......Ach yes...they've been doing that for years!!

He had a heavy Pennsylvania German accent. So when I say that the Democrats had learned to live from the crumbs from the Republican table, it was literal as well as figurative. So we had no great influence there. I did support FEPC, which I had the good fortune to be able to sign into law after I was governor....Fair Employment Practice Commission, which, by the standards of that time, was quite a progressive idea. By today's standards it wouldn't be considered quite so progressive.

I fought very hard against the Peckin Loyalty Oath bill and wound up being one of a half dozen or a dozen to oppose it, because it seemed to be quite popular in those days of Senator Joe McCarthy to do everything one could to embarrass people in minority groups. I had not forgotten the fact that I was here....my people were here as a result of the fact that William Penn had invited us to come and I didn't think I wanted to make a game of punishing little old Quaker schoolteachers whose religion would not permit them to take an oath.

(WMP: George, I'm not quite clear how you happen to be a Democrat.)

Well, York County was a Democratic county by registration. It was more of a conservative Democratic county, but you must remember we were just north of the Mason-Dixon line. And York County had a long border with the state of Maryland. And the whole southern tier of counties in Pennsylvania, running across from York County through Franklin, Fulton, out through Washington, Fayette, and Green Counties...were all Democratic counties, to a degree...Franklin not so much so, but Fulton was. And the others that I've mentioned were Democratic counties. Now they
were a little more conservative, as Democrats go, and maybe I guess some were philosophically mid-way between the typical northern liberal and the southern conservative, although my father was a New Deal Democrat, and we talked politics and government as table conversation in our family. And so I grew up feeling very comfortable with the idea of being active in politics...and with a very distinct political philosophy...one that I'd learned from the table conversation in our family.

(WMP: You were a chicken farmer for a while, weren't you?)

Well, my father's health failed him as a country schoolteacher, and he could no longer teach the eight months out of the year for $35 a month, and my father was very close to his mother. And in those days, the mother cared for the chickens on the farm....not the husband....it was considered, I suppose, not heavy enough work for a real man, who was supposed to have all the braun. So my father was an only child and his mother and he took care of the chickens. So my father began reading on the subject...the genetics of poultry was just being understood, and the nutritional end of the poultry business was just starting to be understood. So my father said......my mother said when my father came to see her on dates, he would generally have a poultry magazine or a poultry book, which he would read as he drove the horse and buggy the three or four miles from his house to my mother's house.

(WMP: That's a great story.)

And there was a great professor from the University of California by the name of James C. Dryden, who had just learned the basic principles of breeding poultry when my father was a young man. And the basic principle is fairly simple once they'd found it. And that was that unique and outstanding individuals will not necessarily reproduce unique and outstanding progeny. But if you have a dozen sisters who are unique and outstanding, in the same characteristics, the likelihood is that they will reproduce. So all the poultry breeding, up until hybridization came, as a result of some of Henry Wallace's work, 20, 30, 40 years ago, all breeding of poultry was based on family records. And as a result of that, productivity in my lifetime probably went from a typical chicken of maybe 75 or 100 eggs a year, up to maybe 250 eggs per year. But it was all based on family breeding.

And then, of course, beyond that, they took those family lines and they hybridized them. But that's a whole other story that I don't want to get into here today. But I might add, nutrition in poultry has always been about 25 to 50 years in advance of what we're doing in human nutrition. And also health care pro-
grams...we were using egg-propagated vaccines in poultry at least 25 years before egg-propagated vaccines were being used in people. And you might be interested to know that my brother is running the family hatchery now, but their baby chicks are already ......

(WMP: That's Henry.)

No, Guy, Jr. ....and baby chicks presently are getting a little shot in the head to prevent one type of cancer during the lifetime of that baby chick, which is going into meat production. So when I tell you that medicine and nutrition, in terms of poultry, are 25 years to 50 years in advance of what we do in the human species, I am not kidding; I'm quite serious.

(WMP: That's very interesting.)

So my father was very much steeped in this and was considered really a national expert. And he was invited to make speeches at the national association meetings on a regular basis. And my mother would generally go to Chicago or someplace with my father to those national meetings at least once a year. We children were not so honored in those days, because it was an expensive trip and somebody had to stay home and mind the flock.

(WMP: Well, you had a strong family background; I can see that.)

My father's a very unique man. I had a great mother. She reared seven of us, and..... But my father is a very unique man. He was self-educated; he had about one year beyond the eighth grade, but he was the equal of any college professor I ever met along the way, intellectually.

(WMP: Great. You are very fortunate ... to find that you have the same characteristics.)

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Well, I'm not much of a student; I'm not as self-educated as my father was....I read a great deal....but my father was well-read. In those days, of course, magazines weren't the big thing they are now, but as a boy, I'm sure we had twenty or twenty-five magazines coming into our home, starting with the National Geographic, and going down through all the farm magazines and poultry magazines, and all the magazines of general interest, and of course, I'm sure my father was one of the original subscribers to Time magazine and any other news magazines that came along. Until two years ago, my father went through all those news magazines weekly.
(WMP: Would you say that that was one reason that you got into politics?)

That was the principal reason, because my father was an idol of mine....I guess everyone has a hero and my father was my hero, and he was interested and so I had to be.

(BF: I think we had gotten almost to the point where you were going to run for governor....question number three...) Okay, fine. Well, I may say...when I was about to run for governor, my father met me along the highway...he was coming to my house and I was driving down this country road... and he stopped me and he said....George, you know if you run for governorship....he said...if you run for the state senate again.....and I was the state senator....you probably can go there for the rest of your life, as long as you do a good job....he said...I think you would. But, he said, if you run for the governorship, you're likely to lose and that'll be the end of your political career.

And I said...Dad, I've already sat four years in the senate and accomplished very little, and the opportunities to accomplish anything in the senate in the minority are almost nonexistent. I said...now, I'm either going to be something or nothing, as far as politics is concerned, because I'm not going to mark time in the senate any longer.

(WMP: And so you ...) I bit the bullet.

(WMP: That's right. Who offered you the bullet?) Well, it was never offered in quite that way. Dick Dilworth should have been the candidate. He had run in 1950 and had made a wonderful run of it. And there was every evidence that he had a very good chance to win in 1954. And had he been a candidate, he would have had my wholehearted support, because I was a great admirer of Dick Dilworth. But unfortunately, because of the controversy in Philadelphia between Dick Dilworth and Joe Clark on the one hand....and Bill Green and the City Committee on the other hand....Dick was not in a good position to run. As a matter of fact, I believe there was a meeting at that time in Albert Greenfield's office. Perhaps you were there, Walter.

(WMP: Not in Greenfield's office.)
And Mr. Greenfield was a great peace-maker, as you know, and he seemed to be succeeding. And as the meeting was breaking up, Joe Clark is reputed to have said to Bill Green, who was the city chairman ....he said....well, Bill, I'm going along with you this time, but I want you to know the next time your term is up for city chairman, I'm going to have somebody out against you.

And that blew up the whole meeting, and I understand that's was the turning point of Dick's decision not to run for the governorship. When Dick decided not to run, or found it wasn't advisable for him to run, possibly because of the lack of harmony in the Philadelphia democratic party, three or four of us made a bid for it. I was one of the persons, obviously; Dr. McClelland, I believe Senator Lane was interested....It seems to me there was a fourth candidate. Three or four of us made a bid for it, and the first test came with the state policy committee. The state committee had established a policy committee of forty or fifty people who were really the top leaders of the Democratic party in the state.

The reason they had done that....the Democratic party had had a fiasco in 1950 in the primary because, the people who made the decision to slate the ticket, which included Dick Dilworth, were not strong enough to nominate the people they had slated. So they expanded the policy committee to get enough people in the policy committee so that if they slated a ticket, at least they could nominate that ticket.......even if the situation didn't permit them in Pennsylvania very often, to elect the ticket...at least they could nominate. So, a number of us went before the policy committee, and I was lucky enough to come out ahead.

(WMP: Wasn't the Pittsburgh end of the party very strong in those days?)

It was very strong up until 1950, when they established this expanded policy committee, but I believe.....was there a Judge Gardiner or someone...that had been appointed a judge by Duff, and a Democrat? Well, anyhow, the Pittsburgh group discovered, along about that time...about 1950..that they alone couldn't nominate. And they had expanded the committee considerably, and picked up quite a few people in the central part of the state, and in the Philadelphia area. So the policy committee, by the time I was in the situation, was pretty representative.

(WMP: Well, when did Dave Lawrence fall into your camp?)

Well, when I went....when I decided to make a bid for the
endorsement of the policy committee, I got a list from the state committee of all the members. And Andy Bradley, who was an old friend of mine, and one or two other people helped me. But basically, I didn't have Dave Lawrence's... ...Dave Lawrence was the type of leader who never got too far out in front.

(WMP: That's right.)

And one of the last...on the whole policy committee.... one of the last people to give me a "yes" was Dave Lawrence who gave it to me on 10 o'clock of the morning of the policy committee meeting, when the meeting was being held at 1 o'clock that day. He endorsed me about three hours before the committee meeting....and only then after I reviewed my standing with him, of my position with all the other members of the policy committee. And when he said....well, if that's the case, then we should support you...and he did. Dave Lawrence never took very big risks as a leader and that's why he lasted so long.

(WMP: Who in Philadelphia were the first to get on your bandwagon?)

Well, I'm always amused...when Joe Clark heard that I'd had an endorsement of the policy committee ...he said...he's a nice young fellow....he said...I hate to see him be the sacrificial lamb. So it wasn't Joe.

(WMP: That sounds like Joe.)

It wasn't Joe. Frankly, Johnnie Byrne, who was in the senate, was always a close friend of mine, because we came into the senate together. And Johnnie was one of my early supporters in Philadelphia and he had a lot of influence with Bill Green. But I don't think I had Bill Green's formal endorsement until maybe even the night before, I think, that I got Dave Lawrence's endorsement. Both of them were waiting to see how much support I could go out and get on my own. Although I feel that I had Bill Green's endorsement somewhat earlier than I had Lawrence's, but not....in a way, I had a kind of an implied endorsement from Lawrence. You sort of felt that...well, if everything goes all right, you know, he'll be with you. If you don't get the balloon off the ground far enough, he might find somebody else. I think Bill Green and Dave Lawrence were both the type that...they wanted to win...first of all....and, since it couldn't be Dilworth, they were looking for somebody to emerge. And luckily, I emerged.

But I had a lot of support through the central part of the state. I had made a campaign in 1952 for state treasurer.
I was really drafted for that.

(WMP: So you knew the state well, then.)

If I hadn't made the campaign in '52, I wouldn't have been in any position to make the campaign of '54. And I couldn't have gotten the endorsement of the policy committee, because those people would not have known me, except for the fact that I'd made the campaign in '52.

So that was a very unhappy situation for the Leader family, that I made that campaign. My wife was very unhappy; in fact, she lay on the bed and sobbed for a couple of hours after that decision was made, which didn't please me at all. But I had....first Dick Dilworth called me up and asked me to run for state treasurer. And I said....no, Dick, I just can't do it. I just can't devote the time to it this year.

And then, Jim Finnegan and Joe Barr...a few weeks later....both twisted my arm.

(WMP: Joe Barr then was the chairman, was he?)

No, Joe wasn't the chairman that time. He was just one of the leading senators from the western part of the state, and he was the chairman of Allegheny County. So Joe Barr and Jim Finnegan really pressured me into running for state treasurer and then I called Dick Dilworth up and I said....Dick, I've changed my mind. I wanted you to be the first to know it, because you were the first one to ask me.

But we knew it was a tough year, because Eisenhower was running and he was the national...he was the military hero at that time, and he was bound to sweep Pennsylvania. But that's why I made the campaign in 1952, and I tried to explain to Mary Jane that sometimes you've got to...in politics, you've got to accommodate other people, if you hope that somewhere down the line they might accommodate you...it's a two-way street. And if we hadn't made the sacrifice...and it was a substantial sacrifice for both Mary Jane and myself, in '52, I'm sure I would not have had the chance to make the run in '54. There's just no way I could have gotten the endorsement, or even had any preparation...because Pennsylvania's a hard state to get to know. It's a very complex state. And what I really knew of the state intimately, I learned in the '52 campaign.

(WMP: Well, you learned a lot, I guess, and in a hurry.)

Well, it was a tough campaign. But Adlai Stevenson always
said that when you run a good campaign, it should be an educational experience in itself. And he was thinking of an educational experience for the general public. And the way Adlai ran his campaigns, I think it was. But, I certainly wouldn't want to sell the whole idea short that it's also a tremendous educational experience for the candidate. It's a grueling thing...it's a grueling experience...it's tiring...it's exhausting...it's demanding....but, I think it's necessary.

(WMP: But did you enjoy it?)

I can't say I enjoyed it on a day-to-day basis, because you worked until 12 o'clock at night and got yourself out of bed the next morning and tried to get started with a breakfast meeting, or traveling somewhere, and it's very tiring. I think if you like a challenge, and I do......nothing stirs me up and gets me going like someone telling me it can't be done.

(WMP: But you like people, don't you, and....)

I enjoy people.

(WMP: ...and that's one of the rewards of that.)

And I met a lot of interesting people...stimulating people. And I like ideas. And I got a lot of ideas. That's one thing about politics...everybody gives you advice. Some of it good!

(WMP: Some isn't!)

You ask here about....what were the most significant forces in the state.

I think the Lawrence and Barr and Black group from Pittsburgh would have been in the ascendancy, because they controlled the state committee in those days. They would have been predominant.

The second group ...or groups, I should say...would have been the Philadelphia area because you had Jim Finnegnan, and Matt McCloskey and their friends....Jim was a dear friend of mine.

Bill Green was Philadelphia City Chairman and had people like John Byrne and Jim Tate on his team.

(WMP: Jim Clark?)

And Jim Clark was with that group. You had the Clark-Dilworth forces, which were a powerful group at that time, because they were in office. You had other people like Mr. Greenfield and people of that calibre. You had such a diversity of political leadership in the Democratic
party in Philadelphia....all of it stimulating....and all of it productive....and all of it necessary.

(WMP: There was even a good independent group in Philadelph ia.)

...People like Lou Stevens.

(WMP: Lou Stevens, and ADA people, and so on.)

I don't know who was the most prominent in the ADA in those days, but I think Dilworth and Clark were pretty important and they had an executive director whose name escapes me now, who was the on-going person who kept the....minded the store. He went to Washington later....

(WMP: Leon Shaw.)

Leon Shaw. Yea. I always managed to maintain a fairly decent relationship with all the various elements, but it wasn't easy.

(WMP: I wouldn't think so, because....)

I always said of Jim Finnegan....Jim could bridge the gap between the practical politicians and the idealists.

(WMP: He was a great guy.)

And, well, I think if Jim had lived, my political career would have been a good deal different, because some of the Democrats who cut my throat in '58, probably would not have done it if Jim had been there to watch them. And I don't think Jim would have permitted it. But Jim was a great fellow, and Jim....well, he just had all the good juices. He could bridge the gap between the practical politicians and the idealists...he could bridge the gap between politics and government. He was just a real genuine man with great credibility...great believability, and great character. The good Lord doesn't make too many like that.

(MBP* In 1954, who was the Republican that you beat? I can't remember.)

Mr. Wood. Lloyd Wood, right here from Montgomery County. He had been the lieutenant governor. And there was no personal joy in beating Lloyd Wood because Lloyd Wood was a fine man. He....I served in the senate when he was lieutenant governor, and of course, he was the presiding officer.

* MBP = Mary B. Phillips, wife of WMP.
And he was one of the most fair-minded, decent people as a presiding officer you could have asked for. I really liked the man and there was no personal joy on my part, in beating Lloyd Wood. I think he would have been, as Republican governors go, I think he would have been an average good governor, who would have followed in the tradition of Martin, Duff and Fine...moderate political philosophy... ...and he would have conducted the government much as they did in those days where you picked out all the good politicians that helped you get elected and put 'em in the cabinet. And if they wanted to work from Tuesday to Thursday, that was fine. If they came in a few times a month, that was good.

I like to believe that....and one of the questions here is how did I pick the members of my cabinet. I like to believe that at least 80 or 90% of the cases we picked them because they were qualified. We made two or three bad mistakes. I remember Jack Robin, who was my secretary of commerce for three months, saying one time....George, when you pick them on geography and religion, you make mistakes. And I think, too, that two of my major mistakes were picked on geography and religion, and they were recommended to me by Dave Lawrence. He said....George, you're light in the western part of the state, and you're light...you've got too many Catholics and too many Jews in your cabinet......He could say that because Dave Lawrence was a Catholic. And we picked two people from the western part of the state who didn't turn out and I later had to replace them.

But we started picking professionals. I had Dr. Parryn of the University of Pennsylvania, and Dr. Crabtree....Dr. Topping from the University of Pennsylvania and Dr. Crabtree and Dr. Parryn of the University of Pittsburgh's School of Public Health. Select Dr. Mattison as my secretary of health. I had some political help, but I like to believe that I helped to pick Harry Shapiro, to become secretary of welfare, and I think he was the best one anyone ever had. Harry as a Republican state senator, wrote the act in 1934, and was appointed by me in 1954, as a Democrat to come back and administer the act. And I like to believe Harry did more to improve our institutional programs in Pennsylvania than anybody else.

I brought in Maurice Goddard as secretary of forest and waters of the University of Pennsylvania. (WMP: And he's still going, he's a great guy...)

...still going. I brought in Dr. William Henning from Penn State, as secretary of agriculture. Some of these positions
like forests and waters and agriculture, had never had a true professional in them, in history! Health had had one true professional before Mattison...but a lot of these jobs never had a professional in them. I brought in a chap from United Mine Workers to be secretary of mines and mining, and a really top-notch guy. His name was Joe Kennedy, interestingly enough, and he did a fine job for me...he had two deputies under him, who were outstandingly honest men in a department that had not been outstandingly honest for a long time.

We implemented the department of public administration for the first time that any governor really had a professional staff around him. Brought in Dr. James C. Charlesworth from Penn, and Dr. John Ferguson from Penn State and Dr. Harold Alderfer from Penn State, and Andy Bradley a CPA as budget secretary. We had some real pros.

(WMP: And how about Jack Robin? He was a tremendous guy.)

Jack was a great guy. He stayed three months. He fired everybody! There's one amusing story. Because the department wasn't doing anything. He was right in firing them. But when he wrote all the newspapers and asked them to discontinue mailing us their newspapers in the state, and said would they please refund the subscription payment, they were all offended because we were getting complimentary copies from everybody.

But Jack was bored after three months with state government, and went on to bigger and better things. In fact, he's on the faculty of University of Pittsburgh right now, and partially on the sponsorship of the Ford Foundation, I think.

But Jack had brought in a couple of professionals and one of them was Bill Devlin, and we appointed Bill secretary of commerce...again a professional. But I like to believe that we did more to professionalize state government than anybody before or since.

(WMP: Has it deteriorated very much since then?)

Well, we had put all of the policy jobs under executive board Civil Service. And then Bill Scranton some years later, put it under legislative Civil Service, but he had to

---changing of the tape---

(MBP: Who did you have on transportation? That's always been the problem.)

That's an interesting story. I'll be glad to say that for the tape. That's a good question. It was then, of course,
secretary of highways, we didn't have PennDot at that time, and... oh, I wanted to finish that point about Civil Service.

I'd put about 13,000 jobs under Civil Service by executive board action, because we had the power. It was a constitutional board. But then, when Bill Scranton came along, he put about twice that many jobs under, I think, by legislative action, but he took out about 500 or 600 jobs that I'd put in. Bill had taken 500 or 600 of those jobs and dropped them, because he needed to do that apparently to get his legislation through the legislature, making the legislative civil service.

And I think he probably did the right thing, although those people went to court, and those jobs were later reinstated, but by that time, five or six hundred top-notch professionals had left Pennsylvania government... many of them.

But I would say that we did start to develop a core in Pennsylvania state government at that time, which... most of which is still there. Pennsylvania was very backward of the industrial states in developing professional people. We did a thing too, and Harry Shapiro, Secretary of Welfare, spearheaded some of this; Maurice Goddard, Forests and Waters, also was prominent in it. We did a thing called "Operation Opportunity", where we went into all the professional magazines that we could, all over the United States, encouraging people... professionals... to apply for positions in Pennsylvania. And although we had the patronage system, Dave Randall, who was my executive secretary and really should have been called Deputy Governor, sponsored 1,100 of those people, himself, that we planted in prominent positions in the state government.

So we brought a lot of professionals in, and let's face it... no one's any better than the people around him. And it was those professionals, I think, that made it possible for us to give Pennsylvania a pretty good government... far better than I like to believe they had before.

(BF: Talk about that a little. What were the conditions of the state government when you came into office?)

Well, actually, anyone who had the right sponsorship could get almost any kind of a job. The governor had a personnel secretary. And everything was processed through the personnel secretary... it came from the county chairmen, to the state Republican chairmen in those days, to the governor's personnel secretary. Now they had abused the job classifi-
cation system so badly that we had at that time 69,000 jobs, and like 22 or 2300 classifications. They made a classification to suit every job, almost. So we hadn't re-classified since the Pinchot years. So we hired a... ...there was a consulting firm called Personnel Administration something or other, and we hired a professional firm to come in and re-classify...to eliminate all these bad classifications. Then we hired one of their people to come in to my administration in the Department of Public Administration, as a personnel administrator. So that while the jobs continued to come to the Governor's personnel secretary, through political channels, they had to go to the personnel administrator, who took the person's qualifications and matched them up to the job description. And if they didn't meet the standards, the application was returned, and the person couldn't be placed.

So we put in a qualification system for state jobs, which had not existed before. And that, naturally, had to make some considerable difference. We got a lot of squawks from the political leaders, but we said...send us qualified people and we'll be glad to place them.

(WMP: Who operated this for you, George?)

It was all under the personnel administrator.

(WMP: Who was that?)

...Was under the secretary for administration, which was Dr. James C. Charlesworth, for the first year, and Dr. John Ferguson for the remaining three years. John was retired...semi-retired...as the head of the Political Science Department from Penn State. And Dr. Charlesworth was on leave of absence as president of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, at that time. The reason he didn't stay longer, Dr. Charlesworth felt that he had to get back to his duties at the American Academy of Political and Social Science, where he had heavy responsibilities. Hated to lose him; he'd been my teacher at the University of Pennsylvania, and probably one of the most brilliant men whom I'd ever met.

(WMP: I got to know him quite well too; I was on his Board of Directors.)

That was a great school. I'm sorry that the University of Pennsylvania has seen fit to alter its purpose and its philosophy. We had a lot of people in our administration who were graduates of the Fels Institute of Local and State Government at the University of Pennsylvania. Dr. Stephen B. Sweeney, who was the head of that school, was also one of my advisors. He never got paid for it, but he stopped in
to see me at least once a month and sometimes oftener. And he would help me find good people and he would help me make decisions on administrative questions, where I needed the help of a really top-notch professional. And that was in addition, of course, to what Dr. Charlesworth was doing for me on an ongoing basis.

(BF: When you campaigned, was it on a platform of reform that sort of reflected what was happening?)

We did what everybody does....we did a survey....I've forgotten who did that survey for us. We did a survey on issues in Pennsylvania. And I can remember very distinctly the two most important issues in the public mind were; number one...sales tax...and I was anti-sales tax...

(BF: Was there a sales tax then?)

Yes, there was a sales tax. And the second issue was jobs, industrial growth, and that sort of thing. And during that campaign, we devised the idea of the Pennsylvania Industrial Development Authority, which we did pass, and it's now known as PIDA, Pennsylvania Industrial Development Authority, and it's been very successful. And all of my successors have continued to support it, and it's probably...many thousands of jobs have been developed in Pennsylvania as a result of that.

And we did talk reform...we talked all those issues, but you can only really hammer home two or three issues in a campaign. And, in addition to the two I just mentioned, we did hit the mental health problem quite hard, because Pennsylvania was still in the dark ages, as far as the mental health programs were concerned.

(MBP: What did you do about mental health?)

I brought in Harry Shapiro, who was a very strong man.

(WMP: Yes.)

And we really did a job in terms of ....well, first of all, we were able to get through the legislature a piece of legislation known as House Bill 480. House Bill 480 had been sponsored for a number of years by the Pennsylvania Mental Health Association. And what it did was simply this: it created a Commissioner of Mental Health, who was the real boss of the program, and took the power away from the lo-
cal boards of trustees, who were running each of these mental health institutions as a local patronage mill. And that's why they were so bad. And when we brought in a commissioner of mental health, I might say, at a salary equal to the governor, and even then, we had to get a supplementary job for him at Jeff Medical School for 6 or #7,000. So he was actually making about 6 or #7,000 a year more than I was, salary-wise. But we brought him back from Texas...he had been a Pennsylvania top-notch man, and we gave him the real authority to develop the professional staff in these mental hospitals. And we took away the patronage...we made the local boards of trustees purely advisory...we really took their power away from them and we took the patronage out of those mental hospitals, and we brought in professionals. When I took over as governor, we actually had mental hospitals with not one single psychiatrist on their staff. And anyone who stayed in a mental hospital in Pennsylvania for more than three years, we found, stayed for an average of twenty-six years...which meant that that was their life expectancy. And talk about equal rights for women...I would say about 70% of these were women who came in during a rough menopause and who died there...who were abandoned by their husbands, their friends, their family....frequently the husbands divorced and then re-married...and they died in mental hospitals, simply because they had a rough menopause. Any two doctors could commit you for life, even though those two doctors, neither one of them, possibly, had ever had one single minute of psychiatric training when they were in medical school.

As a matter of fact, when our Commissioner of Mental Health went on the Board and became the....sort of an advisory head of Jeff Medical School, their total budget twenty years ago at Jefferson Medical School, in the Psychiatric Department, was $26,000 a year!

(MBP: Couldn't do much with that in this day and age.)

Couldn't do much with it twenty years ago.

(MBP: I guess not.)

But I'm trying to say that most doctors were getting very little preparation, and yet, in the mental health field, and yet, they had the authority to put you away for life! And this happened not once; it happened tens of thousands of times.

(WMP: Would you consider that one of your most important achievements?)
I surely do, and one of Harry's too; he should rest easy in his grave. Because we turned it around. My only regret was that some of my successors thought we had done the whole job. We had only made a good strong beginning. And some of my successors, instead of picking up the ball and running with it, said.....well, George Leader solved the mental health problem......and did very little. I think we're doing a good job now, but in some of the intervening years, the productivity and performance, I think, was very mediocre.......mediocre to poor....because they thought we had done the job, whereas we'd only made a good beginning. You can't do it all in four years. Far from it. But we made a great start.

But I think, perhaps the equivalent to that, in terms of human concern, I'm just as proud, or even more proud of what we did for handicapped, crippled and retarded children.... when we put in the compulsory education for handicapped, crippled and retarded. And what happened there was my brother, Henry, who was my legislative secretary, and I were meeting with the man who headed that facet of education, for the state, in my office, one day. And I said to my brother ......Henry, ......after some discussion.... what would happen if we simply said, if the school districts won't provide education for the handicapped, crippled and retarded, if the state did it, and then sent them a bill for their proportionate share? Actually I asked that of Dr. Gross, I think, the man who was in charge of the program. He said....well, that would be great.

And then I turned to my brother Henry, and I said....what would happen....I said...would that be hard to draft into law?

He said...no, that would be a very simple amendment to the school code.

(WMP: Henry was a lawyer, wasn't he?)

Henry was a lawyer, yeah. Yale law graduate...honor graduate... ..good mind. And a great help to me because it helped to carry out a good chunck of the legislative responsibilities, and didn't confine all my time to the legislature when they were in session.....gave me some time for some other things.

Anyhow, we drafted that bill, submitted it; in a few months I signed it into law. As a result of that, I'm told, that the time we did, there were about 50,000 of those children in school. By the end of my term, there were 150,000 in school, and by the end of Governor Lawrence's term, which was my immediate successor, there were about 250,000 of those children in school. All of them had been denied their
constitutional rights to education in this state prior to that. But that, I think, was the single most important bill I ever signed into law. And it passed the legislature almost without controversy, which makes a point, by the way. It isn't the bills that get the most notoriety in the newspapers, in the media, that are necessarily the most important bills in terms of history.

(BF: What were the issues from Philadelphia, when you were governor?)

Frankly, I think reform, probably, would have been the issue. You know, we're going to bring the kind of reform to Harrisburg that Dilworth and Clark were bringing to the city of Philadelphia. That would have been its simplest terms. After it was in office, the things I remember were rather minor. Harry Shapiro did a great job, by the way, in working with the ....was it Randy Wise? ....I guess Randy Wise was Commissioner of Health at that time, and there was a Dr. .....commissioner of Mental Health, .....Dr. Apple...B... Dixon....Dixon was here....he worked with Dixon....and there was another chap whose name.....Appleby?....or something like... ...Apple? I think it was a Dr. Apple here.

(WMP: Ingraham?)

(BF: Norman Ingraham.)

No, I can't remember Ingraham, I'm sorry. But any event, Harry worked very closely with the people here in the Mental Health and the Welfare programs. We did, for the first time, help to subsidize the Philadelphia General Hospital, which unlike all other hospitals in the state, was not being subsidized by the state. I remember your highway people coming in to see me, and urging us to finish the Schuylkill Expressway because the bridge was being finished down there, and the highway wasn't going to be finished to connect to the bridge. So I called in my secretary of highways and put some pressure on that, to get the Schuylkill Expressway open.

I remember the opposition of the Philadelphia people to the Keystone Shortway, which is now Route 80, but we supported it anyhow, and I think I was right. I said, by the time we get Route 80 open, you'll be glad not to have all that truck traffic on the turnpike of Pennsylvania, and we were and are. If we hadn't built Route 80 the turnpike would be in awful shape by now, for passenger cars, because it would just be wall-to-wall trucks.

I don't remember having a lot of problems; we had a very amicable relationship, I think, with the city administration
of Philadelphia. I think we had a very good working relationship in the main, with the legislative delegation from Philadelphia. And I must say, we didn't make some of the kinds of deals with them that some of my successors have found ... seemed to have found necessary to make with them. We really had, I think, a good relationship, in the main, with the Philadelphia delegation, in the House and the Senate, and they never backed us up to the wall, and made us make some concessions of the type that I am told some of my successors had to make.

(WMP: What about the Pittsburgh delegation. Were they...)

Well, Joe Barr, as you alluded a while ago....Joe Barr became state chairman. And while Joe and I had two or three major differences along the way, we had a pretty good working relationship, and Joe had a nice personality, and was not a difficult person to live with, in terms of personality. And I would say, by and large, we had a pretty good relationship with that group, although they did not control their legislative membership the way Philadelphia group did and some of their people out there, from time to time, would give us some real headaches.

(WMP: What about the headaches that were given to you in Philadelphia?)

Well, I had a few headaches; my major headache I brought on myself in Philadelphia. Right after I was elected, I got closeted up with Congressman Bill Green, who was the city chairman. I said....Bill, I'm not going to appoint any judges from Philadelphia, who aren't approved by the Philadelphia by the Judiciary Committee of the Philadelphia Bar Association. And after about two or three hour argument, I prevailed. And then, a year or two later, the Judiciary Committee of the Philadelphia Bar Association started passing every bum that came through! And....which surprised me very much. And then, I deeply regretted that I had worked so hard to achieve that, because I think we had a tougher time getting quality judges in Philadelphia than any place else in the state. I don't think any place else in the state ever sent us anybody that you wouldn't have been reasonably proud of. Because being a judge out there, in the rural areas, attracted some of the best legal minds in the state. Allegheny County had a sort of a discipline that they didn't send anybody in for a judgeship unless they were pretty good. And the only trouble was...the only place I ever got any judges that I thought were poor, were the ones that came through the Judiciary Committee of the Philadelphia Bar Association, and I deeply regretted that I ever let that get out of hand. I would never make that mistake again.
So I can't blame Bill Green or the Democratic City Committee, but one of my biggest headaches with Jim Clark, later on, was over judgeships. And Jim Clark and Bill Green...I met with them, and Jim could be very rough. And I'll say one thing; Congressman Bill Green was always a gentleman. And when I had differences with him....I one time fired 20 committee people in one shot, because they weren't working. And I didn't even get a phone call from Bill Green.

(WMP: From Philadelphia?)

From Philadelphia. And I didn't even get a phone call from Bill Green. And Bill Green said to me at one point....he said....Look, I tell 'em, I can help them get a job, but they've got to keep it themselves. And they knew that if we found that they weren't working and weren't producing, they got fired. And we did fire them.

(WMP: These were committeemen?)

Committeemen.

(WMP: I thought they were elected. How can you fire them?)

I didn't fire them as committeemen. I fired them off the state payroll.

(WMP: Oh, I see. That's the important thing.)

So that Bill Green, as far as I'm concerned, was a reasonable man to work with. You know....I sat up with him one whole night, I think, convincing him not to put opposition in against Joe Clark, when Joe Clark ran for the United States Senate. And I have two remembrances of that. One was, after Bill Green virtually endorsed Joe Clark, Joe kept on going out across the state and pounding Bill Green, running against Bill Green. So I sent for Joe, and Joe was too busy to see me. And I said....Dammit! If he's too busy to see me, I should have been too busy to stay up all night to keep Bill Green from getting an opponent for him! But anyway, he finally came to see me one Monday morning for breakfast....he condescended to come to see me....

(WMP: Joe did.)

Joe did.....and I said....Joe,....I said, Bill Green's going to be for you, now....I want you to stop going all over the state damning him.

And he never said he would or he wouldn't, but he did pull back. And the second thing I remember from that was that Dave Randall said to me....he said.....Governor, I hope you
know that you're really damaging yourself politically, in the strong support that you're giving to Joe Clark. He said.....now, I think you ought to know that Joe Clark will never reciprocate. And I must say, he didn't. Dave was absolutely right. When I needed help from Joe, it was not really forthcoming.

And I said.....Well, Dave, I'm going to be for Joe Clark because I think he's going to be a great senator....not because I ever hope to get anything back from him. And I think I did the right thing supporting Joe. But I must say Dave was quite right; Joe never did anything for me.

(WMP: Did you ask him some things and he didn't do them?)

Yeah. When I was running for the United States Senate in 1958, Joe was as much for Hugh Scott as he was for me. He equivocated all the way down the line.

(WMP: I didn't realize that.)

Yes. So between Joe's lack of enthusiastic support in the East, and the .....being traded off in some of the western counties, for Hugh Scott.......particularly those Democrats out there who were very close to the Mellon forces....and the Mellon people always did go all out for Hugh Scott, in every way. It was no surprise to me when I found out he was taking money from the Gulf Oil Company, because he had been the darling of the entire Mellon group out there for all the years he was in politics... So between those two, I lost the United States Senate in 1958.

(BF: What did you do after that?)

Starved to death! No, I didn't do very much productive for the first four, five, six months. But then I went into mortgage banking. And I was in mortgage banking for about five years and it was from that position that I got into the nursing home field. And Mary Jane and I have been in the nursing home business now for about eighteen years. Actually, Mary Jane was in it two or three years before I was.

(BF: Have you been completely uninvolved in politics since you ran for the Senate?)

Oh, I've been involved in a lot of campaigns in a minor way, more or less an honorary way. I was honorary chairman of Milt Shapp's last campaign. I was honorary chairman of Bob Casey's two disastrous primary campaigns, prior to that, against Milt Shapp. I'd been active....I'd been very active in Hubert Humphrey's campaigns when he was still running.
But I haven't really given a lot of time to it, because I don't have a lot of time to politics. But I guess I've been more active than the typical citizen....in campaigns.

(WMP: You have a lot of experience there to offer.)

Well, I think I know the state fairly well, but the personalities are changing. Some of the old-timers are still there, but in twenty years, there's been a tremendous change in leadership. And during the Shapp years now, there's been a more drastic change in leadership.

(BF: How would you describe that change?)

Well, I don't think we really have a solid Democratic organization in the state any longer. And I don't think there's a solid Democratic organization in either Philadelphia or Pittsburgh today. We're in the era now of the independent candidate who goes out...like a Rizzo...like a Pete Flaherty....

...like a Shapp...who tends to go out and do his own thing, and the......you know...I always thought it would be great when we had the independent voter and the independent politician. Now I find we're getting the type of man who's loyal to nothing but himself. And maybe it wasn't so bad to have a higher loyalty in politics. It's making the old-time politician......or making the old-time politicians look good, because at least they had a loyalty to something. And they generally tended to have a philosophy. Now we're getting the totally pragmatic individual. If law and order is great today....if it's something else tomorrow...fine. They're just looking, à la Richard Nixon, they're looking to see which way the political winds are blowing....they wet their finger, and when they discover, that's the direction they go. You didn't need to read the polls when Richard Nixon ran; you automatically knew by what he was saying what the polls were on issues.

(WMP: That's a good comment.)

(BF: What sort of involvement in national politics did you have when you were governor?)

Well, Jim Finnegan was Adlai Stevenson's national campaign manager....he was on a leave of absence from my cabinet. And Matt McCloskey was finance chairman. When I attended the governors' conference in Chicago a year before, I was down to Libertyville, to Adlai Stevenson's home. And he said... How would you feel if I asked Jim Finnegan to be my campaign manager and Matt McCloskey to be my finance chairman...in light of the fact that they've been key people in your operation.
I said....I'd be honored. They're great people, and you couldn't find two better people in the whole United States.

So he appointed them. When I went to Chicago in 1956, I met Jim Finnegan out there on Friday night...just finished covering the whole country. And Jim said.....I think I can get the vice-presidency for you.

And I said....oh, what makes you say that?

He said....Well, you've got some support in California and New York. Obviously you've got support in Pennsylvania. I think I can get you the solid South.

I said....How in the world are you going to get me the solid South? I'm a liberal Democrat!

He said....They're looking for somebody to beat Kefauver. They're bitter about Kefauver...feel like he's sort of a traitor to the Southern cause.

So I said....Well, Jim, I've just got my first clean test on hepatitis, and I didn't know what was wrong with me for about the last three months....I know I wasn't in very good physical health...I can tell you that. And I'm so glad to be alive, that I just wouldn't want to take on anything like a national campaign. And that was the year, of course, when Jack Kennedy didn't get the nomination, but made his first national appearance. So, had I not had hepatitis in 1956, I well might have been Adlai Stevenson's vice-presidential nominee...running mate. But, not that we would have won. Obviously, it wouldn't have made any difference. I couldn't have brought that much to the ticket. But it would have given me a different status in Pennsylvania, that would have made me a little more difficult to cope with on the part of those who might not have been happy......might have traded me off when I ran for the Senate. So that was really a turning point...that hepatitis I had in 1956. I had a lot of tests before we turned up the hepatitis, because I'd been having a lot of health problems there for about three months...really serious health problems.

(BF: You were still governor then?)

UmmmHmmm. I had three major problems at one time. I didn't have a budget; the legislature was still in session...we had biannual sessions. They had a big strike in western Pennsylvania...the Westinghouse strike, when I was getting my brains knocked out by the press out there. And what was our third problem. We had another big problem about that time. I know I was just overwhelmed.
And the hepatitis. I didn't know....you know, I went through it on my feet...I had no idea. It's a very debilitating disease. I thought I was just tired. But believe me....it's hard to understand just how tired you can be... ...with hepatitis....if you don't know you have it. It was undiagnosed.

(WMP: Mary had it.)

(MBP: I know. I had it. And you don't know what's wrong with you.)

No. They didn't diagnose it until I was almost over it. But I'd just had my first good test, before that 1956 convention, and I was glad to be alive....believe me.

(MBP: Did you want to ask about programs that were especially designed for helping urban areas with their problems?)

We went to Washington and I believe there was a Mr. Cole, who was secretary of what'd they call the agency at that time, for public housing?....Housing and Finance?

(WMP: Housing and Redevelopment....would it be?)

No, it wasn't redevelopment. It was public housing. I remember Jack Robin and several of us went to Washington and went to see Mr. Cole, who was running the housing program ....the federal program. At that time, there was like a $16,000 a unit limit, I think, on what they could spend for public housing....which at the time, when looking back, was a pretty good limit. It probably should have stayed there. We went down and made a pitch to permit them to get them to increase that ceiling, so we could get more public housing. I think we had some good effect. I don't remember what happened from it. But we pushed hard for housing. We thought housing......Redevelopment was at its zenith in those days. We thought if you tore down enough old housing and built enough new housing, all our problems would be over. And, of course, we were all disillusioned about that. And unfortunately public housing wasn't the solution to the urban blight that we thought it would be. It certainly has not been a total disaster. And some of it has been successful. But we pushed hard for public housing. We pushed pretty hard to improve parking. We redesigned all the parking, for example, down there around Independence Mall....put a big block of that parking in there. Did the same thing in Harrisburg, by the way. We redesigned some of our projects there and put a lot of parking there. We pushed hard on parking. We pushed hard on public housing. We pushed hard, of course, on our
state park program, and that is a state park within 25 miles of every Pennsylvanian, which would be a complete state park, including lakes, so that you could have fishing, swimming. And that program which we began when I was governor, is certainly pretty well completed today.

We pushed awfully hard in the education field, and beefed up our contributions to the medical schools and to the universities tremendously. As I said a little while ago, we started contributing money to the Philadelphia General Hospital, which had been let out all that period.

I'd like to believe that we were good enough in what we did for cities that I was one of the people considered for Deputy Secretary of Interior under Kennedy, because they wanted somebody from the East who had a knowledge of problems. Joe Clark did do that for me. He did arrange an appointment which I never kept, because I wasn't interested in the post. But I was invited down for an interview on that through ....thanks to Joe, and the Secretary of the Interior wanted to see me and wanted to consider me for Deputy Secretary of Interior. And as I say, I did not keep the appointment because I was interested in another post at that time, which I later accepted.

But we had a good enough record in what we did for cities to, as I say, be considered for that post. So, at least Joe Clark must have thought we were pretty good. And I think our relationships with the mayors of the cities, and the four major cities of Pennsylvania had Democratic governors during that period...Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Scranton, and Erie. And a lot of the third-class cities had Democratic governors. Mayors, I also had their confidence and support.

(WMP: I think one of the great contributions you made was to appoint Maurice Goddard to the job he's carried on for a long ....)

Well, he's had staying power.

(WMP: He certainly has, and he's done a lot of good.)

Well, I'll tell you that story. When I decided....I was talking to Genevieve Blatt. And I had held open that position to the bitter end. There were some of the politicians, including Hy Andrews, who wanted to put a political appointment in....Hy Andrews was the minority leader of the House....majority leader of the House, actually, when I was there....the first two years. And he wanted to put his political leader, Johnny Torquato, into Forests and Waters. And I held
out as long as I could. And Forests and Waters was one of the last positions to fill, because I wanted to put a professional in. And I didn't know where to find a professional, and I was talking to Genevieve Blatt about it. And she said... Well, my brother went to the Forestry School at Penn State and he always thought the Dean of the Forestry School was such a fine man. I said....Who is he? She said...Maurice Goddard. I said...Will you get him down here; we'll have lunch with him.

So we got him down to Harrisburg and we had lunch with him. I was impressed with Maurice Goddard. I asked him all the hard questions I could think of and I liked his answers. So I said to him...we probably finished lunch at 1:30, and I said....Where will you be around 4 o'clock? He said....I'll be at the Forestry School unit over at Caledonia, in Franklin County. So I said....Fine.

I called up Dr. Milton Eisenhower, who was the president of Penn State, and I said.....Dr. Eisenhower, I'd like to ask you for another person. And he said....Well, who is it this time? I'd just gotten a few days before, Bill Henning released for Agriculture.

So I said ....Maurice Goddard. He said....Well, you sure know how to pick 'em!

And I said....Will you ask for a leave of absence for him?

He said....Yes, I'll be glad to do that for you.

He did. And I called Maurice Goddard about 4 o'clock and asked him to take the position, which he did. And Goddard was a really top-notch man...a man of deep conviction. He knew the programs, he pushed hard for them, and he could work as hard as any other two men....a real hard driver.

(WMP: He had a chauffeur take him all over the state. He was always traveling around.)

Always traveling....always knew what was going on...tireless worker....great philosophy....by the way, one of my best supporters for our Civil Service program, for the simple reason that Pennsylvania, with its Forestry School at Penn State, had only one forester in our whole state system that graduated from Penn State. We were paying so little attention to professional standards that we had only attracted one graduate from Penn's great Forestry School. After we put in our executive board Civil Service, we got them by the dozens. And we
professionalized that department on the strength of that. And Goddard was one of my best supporters for Civil Service, because we had his foresters, among others. We had the accountants, and the engineers, and the foresters. We really put those professionals and sub-professionals into government and that's what really made the difference, in my opinion.

(WMP: Would you want to say a few things about the character of the state government when you came in? You probably did say some things like that, but it was in pretty sad state...condition...wasn't it?)

Well the attitude of the state government was, in terms of personnel, that anybody who had the right sponsorship could get almost any job. It didn't matter what your qualifications were.

(WMP: And as a result, the services were terrible.)

The services were terrible. And you had to have political connections to get anything accomplished, which was good for the politicians. If you had the right political connections, you know, you could get a liquor license, you could get a ...if you lost your driver's license, you could get a restricted license to drive your car to work, which you used any way you saw fit. If you knew the right people, it was a great system for the old ward healer system, because you had to know somebody to get anything...to accomplish anything.

(WMP: That's the way it had been in City Hall in Philadelphia, before the Clark-Dilworth reform.)

Same thing. Well, we had exactly the same thing in Harrisburg.

(MBP: You were going to say something about the transportation....highway...)

Oddly enough, filling that job is one of the toughest...I've often said, if someone had offered me a position of Secretary of Highways, or today, the position ....head of PennDot, I would be very reluctant to take it. I think it's one of the most impossible jobs in state government. Anyhow, I needed someone.....first of all, the Department of Highways was politically charged, completely politically charged... ...so you had to get someone who understood politics, and yet you had to get someone who was basically honest, or you'd get in real trouble.

Well, under Truman administration, in 1948 when Harry Truman
ran for the presidency, nobody thought he could win. But there was one man from Pennsylvania on his team, who really went to work for him, and his name was Joe Lawlor. His brother, Mike Lawlor, was the county chairman of Lackawanna County. Well, Joe Lawlor came back and did some work for me. Well, anyway, he was a...Harry Truman loved him. And I know this because I was in Harry Truman's company when Joe Lawlor was present, and I know how much he admired Joe Lawlor, because Joe Lawlor went out and raised a lot of money, did a lot of work for Harry Truman in 1948...when nobody much cared or thought Harry Truman had a chance.

(WMP: He came from up in the coal regions, didn't he?)

Yup...Lackawanna County...Scranton. Anyhow, when Harry Truman came to name a Postmaster General, it should have been Joe Lawlor. But Harry Truman decided, for the first time in modern history, to make a professional Postmaster General. And he made Donaldson Postmaster General and he made Joe Lawlor Deputy Postmaster General. It might well have been the other way around, in any other administration. But Harry Truman, the politician, was more of a statesman than many people gave him credit for being.

Anyhow, Joe Lawlor was available to me, and I made him Secretary of Highways. Joe was absolutely honest; he dealt fairly with the politicians, but he didn't let 'em pull the wool over his eyes. And he ran a good department. Now I'm not saying the Department of Highways has ever been very well run. And of all the departments we had, it was the toughest to run. Joe's health, however, after a couple of years, began to suffer from this heavy burden, and he wanted out. And I made him chairman of the Turnpike Commission because I completely trusted him; he was completely honest, and I got Lou Stevens to become Secretary of Highways, and he brought Henry Harral as Deputy Secretary of Highways, and Henry Harral became the Secretary of Highways under Bill Scranton.

(WMP: That's right.)

And Henry Harral was on the staff of the Fels Institute of Local and State Government at Penn, and Lou Stevens was one of the directors, along with you, Walter.

(WMP: That's right.)

(MBP: Well, Henry Harral was a real professional, then, wasn't he?)
Yeah, Henry Harral was an engineer. And Henry Harral is still alive, and still active; I don't know what he's doing... he's semi-retired. But anyhow...

(MBP: Was he able to do anything with the Department of Highways?)

I think they did the best they could, under the circumstances. I don't think the Department of Highways has ever been efficient. I don't think PennDot has ever been efficient. And I doubt that I shall live to see the day when PennDot shall be efficient. There is nobody can run it... it's like the Department of HEW in Washington.... nobody can run it. Nobody can run HEW.... and least of all, Ovita Culp Hobby, when the Department was organized in 1952. I think Califano comes close to running it, but with 900 plus agencies, if he gave one day a year to each one in the department, and he worked 300 days a year, it would take him over 3 years to get around.

(WMP: That's right.)

So, there's nobody can run it. The same thing is true of PennDot; it's regionalized. When we regionalized the Department of Highways into the twelve regions or whatever we have, we fragmented the decision-making process to such a point, that nobody can run it. And when they made PennDot, they only multiplied the problems. And I don't know anybody that can run it, and I don't think it's being well-run now, and I don't know that anybody can. They're talking now about possibly creating a highway commission, which would take it out of politics. And if they took the PennDot and the Department of Highways out of politics, that would have to be beneficial. But whether we can indeed, run anything well by committee, I don't know. I've very rarely seen anything well-run by committee.

(WMP: That's right.)

The only thing I know was well-run was Lincoln University when Walter was chairman of the board, and then it wasn't run by committee; he did it all! He carried a heavy load, and you did a good job, and you brought Marvin Wachman in, and he did a good job, and you turned the school around!

(WMP: How do you know so much?)

'Cause I was with you, at the time.

(WMP: That's right... you were. That's right... you were a trustee.)

(MBP: There's one question here that hasn't been answered.
You certainly talked about your accomplishments, which are considerable, I must say. Were there major disappointments when you were governor?... things you'd hoped to.)

Yes. One that comes to mind very quickly is the fact that I was very... I've always been a great believer in education... particularly educational opportunities for those who perhaps haven't had the chance. I was 8th generation Pennsylvania Dutch, and I was the first Leader in the direct line... I was the first Leader, the first one on my mother's side, also, to get a college degree. Now, here we were, land-owning farmers for seven generations before me, people of some substance... I think they would have been considered middle-class, by any reasonable standard.

(WMP: Were they always on the same farm?)

No... no, but always within twenty miles... fifteen or twenty miles... the whole... in a ten-mile radius, you could have covered, probably, all of my mother's people, and all of my father's people. When I was a boy... now I did my father's grandmother, did come from the Shenandoa Valley... she was a Mennonite... came up here, riding side-saddle on a horse with a $50 dower in her saddlebag... silver. But, mostly, they were right around that area there.

But I was the first one to get an education. So I was very concerned about education... and educational opportunities... especially for the masses. And I came up with a three-prong program for community colleges. It provided that the state would pay a third, the local school district would pay a third, and the student would pay a third. And I tried to mobilize the state universities to help to sponsor them. They could have sponsored. They could have had that sponsorship. Temple could have sponsored some; Penn could have sponsored some. Penn State could have sponsored some. University of Pittsburgh could have. And so forth. Put the whole thing together... about three or four pieces of legislation, and we lost it.

But I like to believe, however, though you do have to plant those legislative seeds and by 1962, that whole program was adopted. But that I lost completely. And that was a really big disappointment, because I was really interested in education.

Now we did revamp the whole state teachers' college thing. Dr. Beth, who was a Republican, and who was a professional appointee to the Department of Public Instruction, which is now called Department of Education, ... Dr. Beth came in, and he said... Governor, I don't think the state teachers' colleges should be 70% method, and 30% liberal arts. I think
it ought to be at least 50 - 50.

I said....I agree with you completely...let's change it.

So he changed the whole curriculum of the state teachers' colleges to 50% liberal arts and 50% methods...education courses. And as a result of that, Lawrence, who was my successor, was able to come in and introduce the liberal arts courses in the state teachers' colleges, because we had set up the faculty. And we had also set up a good size building program, because there hadn't been much building in the state colleges since the Depression...

...between the 30s and the 50s.

But my real biggest disappointment was my community college program...I thought was so essential. At that time, I remember, 60% of the boys and girls in Massachusetts who finished high school were going to college. In California it was 50%...and in Pennsylvania, it was about 30%. We were educating beyond high school just about half as many people, proportionately, as the state of Massachusetts. And I was really upset about that, and I worked hard to get the people to understand it...did a lot of promotional work...and I was really heartbroken when that program failed.

(MBP: Why did it fail?)

Well, I wanted to show my good faith, and I tied a tax program to it. And I just got too honest for the public, I guess. And one of the taxes was a penny soft-drink tax. And it was the penny soft-drink tax, number one, that helped to kill it, most of all.

(MBP: The soft-drink people put on a big lobby?)

Yeah. Yeah. And I said....Look, if it isn't worth a penny, for kids to get a college education, then maybe they don't deserve it. Maybe we don't deserve it. And I think Pennsylvania wasn't ready, but by 1962 they were, and we have it now, and I'm very thankful for that. So I like to believe I planted the seeds, but at the time, I thought I'd had a crop failure.

(WMP: Well you were in there in a turning period, weren't you.....when things were.....)

It was a transitional period.

(WMP: ......coming in after all those years of Republican rule.)

(MBP: How did you win this election, then, when the state
was Republican....so very Republican in those days?)

Well, one of the things that helped me was the fact that I didn't come from Philadelphia or Pittsburgh. I had a credibility in the rural areas, that a big city candidate would not have had. And the state was Republican by 907,000 and I won the election by 250, or 60 or 70,000. So that I feel that I had to get....I must have gotten 5,6,7,800,000 Republican votes....many of them in the central part of the state. And that was the difference between succeeding or failing. But I think I had credibility out there.

There is a feeling, I think, in the rural areas, that city people are less reliable, perhaps, and that they might be more oriented toward doing things for the city, rather than recognizing the needs of the rural areas. I think I did... ...I did very well....I carried a lot of Republican counties that no Democrat had carried for years...for many years.

(BF: Did Dilworth's campaign for governor, before you, did that help you, do you think?)

I think it helped, yes. I think Dilworth helped to show Democrats that there was a chance that we could win. I think .....I spent the first six months, I think, campaigning to convince the Democratic leaders that we might have a chance to win. And then, Jim Finnegan got Matt McCloskey back into politics for us. And Matt McCloskey ran a tremendous dinner in Harrisburg, at $100 a plate ....at the Zembo Mosque, and we put up a big tent on the outside because the Zembo Mosque wouldn't hold the people. We postponed the dinner twice; we were going to have it in April, and Matt McCloskey wasn't in it at that point. And we sold so few tickets, we postponed till June. We had Adlai Stevenson lined up to make the principal speech. We postponed till June; we still only had a few hundred tickets sold, and then Matt McCloskey got into the thing, and we had the dinner in September, around Labor Day. And I think we sold about 6,000 tickets. And when the Democratic leadership of Pennsylvania saw that we'd sold those tickets, that really turned them on. They thought... ...My God, you, know, what this fellow's been saying all along...that we can win....must be true. And then they really went to work.

(WMP: I think there were a couple of trainloads of people that came up from Philadelphia.)

Yes. Definitely.

(MBP: How did McCloskey do that?)

Matt McCloskey was just a remarkable leader. And Matt could
stir up enthusiasm. He had a confidence in what he did. He had a conviction about what he did. He was the kind of fellow that if somebody said...yeah, I'll send you $100...He'd say.....look, this is going to be a great dinner. Send $200 and bring your wife.

You know, he was that kind of a guy, and he had a couple of good people on his staff. He had a fellow by the name of Teefy from down here...

(WMP: Bill Teefy.)

Bill Teefy, and Joe Wolf. He had a couple of key people that were real promoters that worked with him. And Matt really turned around the financing on that. There's another factor that was very important in the election, too, and I don't want to leave that out. And that is....right after we were nominated, Mayor Lawrence said to myself...to me...to Roy Furman, the nominee for Lieutenant Governor, to Genevieve Blatt who was the nominee for internal affairs, secretary for internal affairs,......said....why don't you go over and see Governor Meyner. Governor Meyner won last year in New Jersey...that's a Republican state. Maybe he can give you some pointers on how you can win in Pennsylvania, which is also a Republican state.

So we made an appointment to go over and see Governor Meyner, the three of us. And we arrived over there and were ushered into the Governor's office. And Governor Meyner has sort of a dry sense of humor. We sat down and we said ....well, we're here to see what you can tell us about ...see how you can advise us about winning an election in a Republican state.

And he looked at us and he said.....there's nothing I can do...nothing I can tell you.

And my spirits fell. And I thought....oh, we've made this trip, and we're getting nothing but discouragement. And he said....well, I'll tell you....he said....there is a chap over in New York City that won my election for me. And he said....I can refer you to him. He might be able to help you.

So he sent us over to see....he put us in touch with Lloyd Whitebrook, who had run Governor Meyner's campaign...television campaign and publicity campaign. And we looked at what he had developed for Governor Meyner, and it had some application to Pennsylvania, but Governor Meyner had run his campaign totally on corruption in New Jersey and he had some real cases....real cases in point.
But Lloyd Whitebrook did a television campaign for us, and thanks to Matt McCloskey raising the money, we spent about a quarter of a million dollars on television, which by today's standards would be peanuts. And what we did, by today's standards would be very poor quality, but it is...I think the...we at one time estimated that in that eight months of campaign, or ten months of campaigning, the most people I could have gotten in front of maybe would have been about a quarter of a million. And when we went on television, of course, everybody was watching. And that quarter million dollars that we spent on television, I think, made the real difference. And Lloyd Whitebrook, God rest him, I think, really showed us how to do it.

(BF: Did your opponent have a television campaign?)

Yeah, he saw what we were doing, and he joined in. And he was a nice chap, but unfortunately, he was very obese. And he looked like the caricature of a politician. So all the bad things we were saying about Republican politicians, he seemed to personify. And unfortunately, the more they put him on...as Dilworth said in a speech once, and Dilworth had an odd sense of humor...he could really be cutting, sometimes. He said...the trouble with Lloyd is...when they put him on television under those bright lights he sweats too much. And you'd see the beads of perspiration rolling off Lloyd...I guess he couldn't get the mopping fast enough, and he looked just like a big politician, unfortunately...just the very caricature of a politician that you might see in a cartoon. And that didn't help them. I was a young all-American boy at the time, so I didn't have all this weight. I was thirty-six at the time.

(WMP: You're still pretty trim.)

Not too trim; my wife is scolding me.

(MBP: But Lloyd Wood....Wood or Woods, is it?)


(MBP: ...of course, then, was connected with Philadelphia... ...as you say....)

He was one of the political leaders in Montgomery County. He and Mr. Peters were the real powers....

(WMP: That's right, Peters; I remember the name.)

....in Montgomery County. And they were part of the so-called...Mr. Peters was part of the so-called Blue Bell Group, that used to meet up here at the restaurant in Blue
Bell....Blue Bell Inn. There was Mr. Peters, there was Mr. McClure from Delaware County, there was Graybill Diehm from Lancaster County, Sam Lewis from York County, Harvey Taylor from Dauphin County....that was called the Blue Bell Group. And that was the group that frequently....they had enough power collectively, to nominate Republican candidates.

(MBP: Just that group?)

They were called the Blue Bell Group....they'd meet at the Blue Bell Inn up here....a very nice place to eat.

(WMP: Wasn't .......You spoke of what's his name at the Blue Bell Inn....)

(MBP: Harvey Taylor.)

(WMP: Harvey Taylor....wasn't he very much of a power in the state?)

Harvey Taylor was very much a power because Harvey Taylor for years controlled the insurance commissions of the state business. And Harvey might have had four or five hundred thousand dollars a year to play with. There was still ninety thousand dollars left there when I got there that we gave to the Democratic politicians. But then I brought in Clayton from my home county to handle the insurance, and we brought in Dr. Teef from Haverford University through some of my University of Pennsylvania friends. Dr. Teef came in and we gave Clayton....I said to Clayton I'll pay you no more than I pay a cabinet officer. So instead of having....He could have made lots and lots of money, if we'd have handled it the way Republicans did. He came in for $15,000 a year, set up an office in Harrisburg, had Dr. Teef as an advisor, and we went over the entire state insurance program and took....well, we cut the commissions to the bone, and we also bought the insurance for many, many hundreds of thousands of dollars less. When I came in, they had 400,000 automobiles on individual policies paying a 35% commission. It was unbelievable the way that insurance was handled. But Harvey Taylor had that money and he used that to help politicians all over the state. So that by the time a man came to the senate or the house, and Harvey had contributed substantially from these commissions to that man's campaign, Harvey had them under his thumb. He controlled the legislature. He could stop any bill. And during the Republican days, he could get any bill through...
Because he controlled the funds that went to the legislative candidates, he thereby controlled the legislature. Much of the time he controlled both houses.

(MBP: George, you were dealing with a Republican legislature?)

We had a Democratic House the first two years, a Republican House the second two years, and we had a Republican Senate all four years. The remarkable thing was that I got about 80% of my legislative program through, and I still.....I thought I was doing terribly at the time, but looking back, I did very well.

(WMP: How did you do it?)

I don't know. I think I can tell this now. Duke Kiminski was representing the Bulletin in Harrisburg, and Duke was a good friend of mine. And I remember one day, I had Duke out to the summer white house and I said.....Duke, I'm having a heck of a time getting legislation through...what's your advice? You've been here on the hill a long time. And I didn't often go to newspapermen for advice; it just happened that this one day I did ask Duke. And I trusted...Duke was a tough guy to deal with, in many ways. He'd ask the tough questions but he'd always write an honest story. And I liked him, in spite of his toughness...I really admired him. And I think he liked me. And Duke said to me....Governor, you just keep right on throwing that legislation at them....in the Republican Senate....that was when we still had the Democratic House. And he said...they're going to have to pass some of it, because the pressure's going to get too great on them.

And we just came in and just kept throwing that legislation at them.

(WMP: What sort of an example of legislation?)

Pennsylvania Industrial Development Authority.....FEPC.....all kinds of internal governmental reforms.....reorganizations.....the PIDA.....the community college program.....we just kept throwing good programs at.....every department.....I had my brother Henry working with every department head, developing their programs. And then kept throwing these programs at them...and gave them all the publicity we could....got my department heads to talk about them. And you know, if you throw enough good stuff at them, they buckle under the pressure. All of these bills had some public support, some organized public support. And we got a lot of
them, just by throwing good programs at them, and giving them as much support as we could with the media people.

(WMP: Did you have much trouble getting through any of those programs, or did they all go through because they were so badly needed?)

No, they get bottled up in committee. And those committee chairmen can be very tyrannical in how they control legislation coming through. And frequently, your key committee chairman tends to be controlled by some vested interest that has cause to be interested in what that key committee might be doing, or passing.

But a lot of these things were purely for the good of the general public, and it was very hard for them to be against it. And then you have organized groups—the Mental Health Association, the Association for Retarded Children...there are all kinds of...Pennsylvania Economy League. There're all kinds of good organizations out there that...some of the stuff had the support of the Chamber of Commerce....There're good people out there...Pennsylvania Education Association supported some of our educational stuff...not all of it. There're good people out there who are helping you, too.

(WMP: Would you actually go to them and say...will you help me on this?...or how did you do it?)

We did in some cases, yeah. When they bottled up FEPC I sent out a hundred telegrams, invited key Republicans, and Democrats from all sectors, to come to the governors mansion. Sixty-five of them came, but between the time that I sent the invitations to the luncheon out, and the time of the luncheon, they had brought it out of committee. I'd shaken them so much...just by that action. And they passed it. If I had sat by when they put it back in committee and not done anything, we would never have had FEPC.

But we tried everything. We tried all kinds of public relations things...we tried everything we could think of. We did a thing called...a series of television things...called "Commonwealth Close-ups" where we tried to promote the forests and waters, I remember was the subject of one of them....PIDA was the subject of another. We tried to do everything educationally, but in those days, television wasn't ready. We got a very bad play on it. Today, if we did those things, it would get a big play, because now they're under pressure...from the FCC to do these public service things, but they weren't in those days. We got some, but
we didn't get as much as we'd like. But then, every time I went before one of those vested interest groups, if I went before the Catholic educators in Philadelphia, or the Pennsylvania State Education Association or a graduation, I'd hit my education stuff. If I went before the Chamber of Commerce, I'd hit the PIDA. I'd always hit something; I picked out the things that needed that support. And I was doing 150 to 200 speeches a year, so you get some exposure that way, too.

(WMP: George, you really turned the state around. It's incredible. It's a wonderful story.)

Well, you're very nice. Well, I know that I could have played the political scene a lot smarter, but my attorney general who was my political mentor, Herb Cohen, came to me about the fourth day that I was governor....He said... George, now you've got to pick out which two issues you're going to ride...just the way Pinchot took conservation and rural roads, you've got to find yourself two issues because otherwise the public will be confused about your programs.

And I said....Herb, I've only been here four days, and already I feel like time's running out on me, and I brought a lot of good professional people into government. And all of them believe that I think their programs are important. I said....Pennsylvania is 25 years behind the times in state government, I'm going to do my best in the next four years to catch up on those 25 years, and I'm going to conduct myself in a way that if I never hold another political office, I won't have any regrets.

He said.....okay, George, if that's the way you really feel, that's fine. But I just wanted to tell you....if you want to succeed, you've got to pick two issues.

And he was quite right. I rode all the horses, and I think we did move the government ahead on all fronts to some degree, and I do think the public was confused on who I was and what I was at the end of the four years.

(WMP: Well, you certainly did a job, by gosh!)