

**Edward C. Berube, Oral History Interview – 9/26/1967**  
Administrative Information

**Creator:** Edward C. Berube  
**Interviewer:** John F. Stewart  
**Date of Interview:** September 26, 1967  
**Location:** Fall River, M.A.  
**Length:** 45 pages

**Biographical Note**

Berube, head of John F. Kennedy's (JFK) 1952 Senate campaign in Fall River, Massachusetts, and later Postmaster of Fall River, discusses the 1952 campaign, Massachusetts politics, humorous and poignant anecdotes about Berube's friendship with JFK, and the story behind JFK's wedding cake, among other issues.

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**Suggested Citation**

Edward C. Berube, recorded interview by John F. Stewart, September 26, 1967, (page number), John F. Kennedy Library Oral History Program.

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with Edward C. Berube

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Edward C. Berube

Table of Contents

<u>Page</u>	<u>Topic</u>
1	Meeting John F. Kennedy (JFK) in 1951
4, 12, 19, 22	Running JFK's 1952 Senate campaign in Fall River, M.A.
11	Labor unions in Fall River
13	Fall River newspapers
14	Campaign tea
21	JFK's friendship with Leverett Saltonstall and feud with Foster Furcolo
23	JFK's wedding cake and wedding
27	Visiting JFK in Washington, D.C. in 1953
30	JFK's secretaries throughout Massachusetts
31	1958 Eastern Massachusetts bus strike
34	Massachusetts politics
35	1956 Stevenson for President campaign
37	Becoming postmaster of Fall River
41	Dinner with JFK in Boston several weeks before his assassination
44	JFK's assassination

Oral History Interview

With

Edward C. Berube

September 26, 1967  
Fall River, Massachusetts

By John F. Stewart

For the John F. Kennedy Library

STEWART: Okay, why don't we just start by my asking you when you first met John Kennedy [John F. Kennedy] and what were the circumstances of the meeting? Do you remember when you first met him?

BERUBE: Yes, John, in 1951 I had the occasion to meet him in Reading, Massachusetts. He was speaking at a church affair, and the meeting was arranged by mutual friend of mine and his. His father was the former U.S. Marshal in Boston, Maurice Cartier, and he asked me if I would help in his campaign. He was going to run for senator or governor, he didn't know which at the time. And...

STEWART: This was in '51?

BERUBE: In '51, right. So the meeting was arranged in Reading, Massachusetts, on a Sunday night. And I'll never forget it. It was raining so hard, you couldn't see five feet in front of you. Of course, in those days you didn't have Route 24; you had to go up 138, and it took you about three hours to get there. Well, through some misunderstanding, when Mr. Kennedy was through speaking, he went out the back door, and I went out the front door, and he took off in a car, so I never did get to meet him. So,

[ -1 - ]

of course, I was a little perturbed because of driving so far and not having the opportunity to meet him. Of course, was also embarrassing to Mr. Cartier who accompanied me on the trip.

So I came back to Fall River feeling kind of low, but the next day I received a phone call from Mr. Kennedy himself apologizing for what had happened, and he assumed the full responsibility, and he asked me if I would come to Boston on a Saturday to meet him, which I did. And I want to tell you that I was very much impressed with him, how sincere he was, a regular guy. In fact, the room was filled when I got there. There must have been thirty-five people in the room.

STEWART: This was at Bowdoin Street?

BERUBE: At Bowdoin Street. 122 Bowdoin Street. And immediately when I entered the room, the maid asked me who I was, and I told her. And he was in a bedroom. His apartment was like a three room affair. He was in the bedroom, and he had come out. There must have been twenty-five people ahead of me, and he took me into another room, and again he apologized for what he did, and he talked to me and asked me if I would help him. Of course, there was no doubt in my mind that I would. And this was the beginning of our friendship.

STEWART: What was your position as far as Fall River was...

BERUBE: At that time, I was a bus driver, had no idea of politics. I had never worked for anybody, and this I told him. I told him, I said, "Mr. Kennedy." He says, "Look, my name is Jack. You call me Jack." So I called him Jack. He says, "I don't want anybody that connected with politics." He said, "I've got a tough fight on my hands. I've got a tough opponent, and," he says, "I want a fellow that's not connected with politics at all." I said, "I wouldn't even know what to do." He says, "You just follow orders. I've checked on your background. I know of you. And," he said, "I'd like to have you with me."

[ -2 - ]

STEWART: This was through this other fellow?

BERUBE: This was through this other fellow's recommendation of myself. Mr. Cartier, he recommended me, and he must have sold him a pretty good bill of goods, because...

STEWART: But there was no indication at that time whether it was going to be the Senate or the governorship.

BERUBE: That is right. In fact, I had the honor of attending a meeting, John, of five people, including Kenny O'Donnell [Kenneth P. O' Donnell] and a fellow



named Mark Dalton [Mark J. Dalton] from Boston, who I met, was very impressed with, and we had a meeting in his office. And it wasn't decided, but it was talked about, and that was the first time that I had any inclination that he had thoughts of running for governor also. And each one was asked their opinion of what he should run for.

Well, the consensus of the opinion was that he should run for governor. Of course, like I say, being new in politics, I had no idea what was behind their mind because, evidently, some thought because of the patronage. So when I was asked, I said, "Well, he should run for Senate." And they asked why. And I said, "Well...." I did a little reading about this fellow from the time I met him; I said, "This fellow's done so much traveling, and the knowledge he has certainly belongs in Washington where the problems of the country are, in Washington, and not in the state, state level." So this is where I, if I could say, cast my vote for senator. And, of course, he did run for senator, but I think he had made up his mind. He just wanted to.... Evidently....

Incidentally, he wasn't there at that meeting, but Larry O'Brien [Lawrence F. O'Brien] was there, Kenny O'Donnell, and Mark Dalton. Those are the three I remember. There were about seven of us there altogether.

[ -3- ]

STEWART: Well, what kinds of things did they ask you to do before he actually made an announcement to run for the Senate? Do you remember? Were you taking any soundings or anything?

BERUBE: Well, no. He asked me the setup of the local party of the city of Fall River, which I told him. The French in those days were the highest voting, the highest percentage of voters. Of course, me being French, he was after the Franco-American. Now, let me also remind you, John, that the Franco-American in those days and even today are predominantly Republicans. They are all registered Republicans. And, of course, this is what he wanted to get at was the Republican vote because, of course, running against Lodge [Henry Cabot Lodge] was a tough enough fight as it was. And Lodge had always done very well in this city, and, of course, Kennedy wasn't too well known in this city at that time. In fact, when Mr. Cartier and ask if I would help him out, I didn't even know who Kennedy was. I'd never heard of him. And he was a congressman at the time. And this was true in a lot of places. And he told me of his thoughts on running, how he was going to run his campaign, but he wanted to get a consensus of the voting in the city of Fall River.

Of course, Fall River is a very heavy Democratic city. I think there's only probably twelve or fourteen thousand registered Republicans and about thirty thousand Democrats and about maybe ten thousand independents. so you can see that it was as good springboard, and, of course, he wanted to hit on Fall River. Of course, New Bedford is about the same, although not quite as heavily Democratic as Fall River. In fact, not to get ahead of the story any, but I think Kennedy has gone down in the history of Fall River as getting the highest percentages of vote ever in the history, 79 percent. And Ted [Edward Moore Kennedy] the closest. He got 78 in 1964 when he first ran.

STEWART: Did the area that you were concerned with just include Fall River?



[-4-]

BERUBE: Somerset, Fall River, and Westport. This included the....

STEWART: New Bedford was separate.

BERUBE: New Bedford was separate. The Mayor today, I believe, was the fellow who was in charge of New Bedford, Mayor Harrington, Eddie Harrington [Edward F. Harrington]. He was the one that was running his campaign over there.

STEWART: Yes. Okay. In April of 1952, he announced for the Senate. What types of things were you immediately concerned with as far as...

BERUBE: Well, he called a meeting. He called us all secretaries, incidentally. This wasn't a chairman or anything like that; it was the secretary. And he called us all to Boston, and we met at the Parker House Hotel on the top floor. I believe they call it the penthouse. And he gave the pitch on what he was running for and how he wanted his campaign run.

Of course, his theme was to hit the woman vote. Of course, he indicated this to me when when I met him at Bowdoin Street, that he was going to come out for the women, that he figured the woman was the one that was going to put him in. And he wanted coffee hours and tea hours and arranging coffee hours in homes. And this was the first time that this was ever done in Fall River by any candidate. I mean, there was also the handshaking up and down the streets and going to shops. But he ran these big teas, he called them, and this was the big thing. In fact, every city, I think, every big city, Springfield, New Bedford, Fall River, Lawrence, Lowell, every one of them during his campaign had one big tea.

And Fall River, we had a big tea, and like I showed you the picture here, he was on crutches, and he shook every hand in that place. It was a.... Well, I'll tell you, Dave Powers [David F. Powers] was standing at the door, and he had a clicker for everyone who was coming through the door, and he hit up to two thousand. He quit. He said, "That's enough for me." But you.... It was jammed. They were very, very impressed

[-5-]

with him, and he shook hands with every single one of them. And nobody left. Nobody left until they shook his hand. It was quite an affair.

STEWART: Could you say something about the organization or the setup as far as you were concerned and who you were to report to and what kind of instructions they gave you in Boston as far as operating the campaign down here?

BERUBE: Well, of course, as I told you before, John, I was affiliated with no.... Of

course, I was a Democrat all my life, but I didn't belong to the Democratic City Committee. I never bothered with politics. I put a fellow's sticker on my car who ran for Mayor or Council, like that, but I never was involved in politics.

But, of course, Bobby Kennedy [Robert F. Kennedy] was the fellow who was pushing the buttons in Boston, and of course, I met Bobby in the campaign, and I found him to be a very hard driving fellow. He called them as he saw them, and if he didn't like what was going on, he told you. And I had a few episodes with him where he'd call me a thick-headed Frenchman, and I'd come right back at him and call him a thick-headed Irishman, but this is as far as it went. But I was always impressed with the fellow, how sincere and devoted he was to his brother. All the orders came from him; he was the boss; you reported to him. Boy, I'm telling you, I wouldn't want to pay for that phone bill that happened during the campaign. You know, every time I called Boston, it was collect, and of course, they'd call us.

But we gave out the usual literature, hit the city with flyers. We went to every house. Every house in the city was covered. This fellow, Mr. Paquette [Bernie Paquette], owns a laundry business, and he's got ten trucks. We got in them trucks one Saturday and Sunday on a weekend, and we hired about twenty or twenty-five kids, and we phased out all over the city, every house, three-tenement, individual house we hit. And this is how Mr. Paquette assisted me. And, of course, there was the usual setting up of rallies if he came to town. If there was something going on, he'd attend it. The first time he came to Fall River, he said,

[ -6 - ]

"I want to get into Fall River, but I'll leave it up to you where I want to go."

Well, there was an affair going on at the Blessed Sacrament Church. It was a French church. And this was strictly a Republican stronghold. And actually the fellow that was the toastmaster was a very, very prominent Republican, and he was one of Lodge's managers or associated with him. So I got a hold of him, and I told him that the Congressman, at that time, would be in town, and he'd like to go up there and speak and say a few words. And he talked it over with the committee, and they could see no harm to it. So it was arranged, and he spoke up there. So I was to meet him and bring him there. Of course, I accompanied him on all his trips.

And there's a little funny story with it. Of course, being my first time of ever speaking in front of anybody, how nervous you are. There must have been five hundred people there. And, of course, there were a lot of hard-nose Republicans, if I can use the word hard-nose. Not to criticize them in any way, but you're running through the gamut when you're talking to them people. So he said to me on the way up, he said, "I want you to introduce me." I said, "Me? I've never introduced anybody in my life." I said, "I couldn't do it." He said, "Yes, you can do it." He said, "I'll tell you what to say." So he told me. And, of course, I was shaking like a leaf.

So when we got there, of course, I told this Mr. LaVoie, his name was, that I would introduce him. He said, "Fine." So he sat us up on the head platform. There was a fellow in the audience who was Congressman Martin [Joseph William Martin, Jr.], at that time, his administrative assistant is a fellow named Ladeira [Ernest C. Laderia]. They had an office in the post office here. So for some reason or other, when it came time—the thing went along beautiful; I made my pitch; and then, when I come to the time, I said, "And now it gives me a

great deal of pleasure to introduce to you at this time Congressman Joseph Martin.” Well, immediately, the crowd started to roar, but what made me think of Martin was I saw Ladeira out there, and right away it hit me as Martin. So I stopped immediately in my tracks, and I looked at him, and he was laughing like anything. So I didn’t know what to say. I sat down. And, of course, when the laughing subsided a little bit, I said, “I meant Congressman Joe.... John Kennedy.” So he got up...

[ -7- ]

STEWART:        You didn’t say Joe, did you?

BERUBE:        No. John Kennedy. So he got up, and, of course, like you used to see him on “Meet the Press” when he was on with the presidency, he said, “Well Ed,” he looked at me, and he says, “I think a hell of a lot of Joe Martin. He’s a good friend of mine, but,” he says, “I’m glad you’re with me.” Like that, so everybody started laughing again. So it took the whole spotlight away from me and right on him.

And, of course, he spoke French a little bit, and this is there he made a big hit. I didn’t know he was going to speak French, see. He said a few words in French, how nice it was for him to be there, and he was looking forward to meeting everybody before he left. It was just maybe two or three sentences, but it went over terrific. And I looked at him, you know, and the French was very good. Of course, I’m French, but my mother was English, and I don’t speak French too good. I understand very well, but I can make out. So I was very impressed with how he did, and this is how he won the people over. They were very impressed with him.

STEWART:        What about the clergy? Were they at all, or traditionally are they active in politics in this area?

BERUBE:        No, not too much, John. He was a great friend of Bishop Connolly, [James Louis Connolly] incidentally. The Bishop, he used to visit him every time he came to Fall River. He’d either visit him or make a call to him, and the Bishop thought the world of him. But actually no priests ever.... The clergy never did get involved.

STEWART:        What kind of relations did you have with the Democratic City Committee?

BERUBE:        Oh, I was in very good with them, John, very good. Of course, I was a bus driver at the time, and I knew most of the people. They knew I was a Democrat. Of course when I became associated with Mr. Kennedy, I asked him if I should join the Democratic City Committee. He said, “No, you don’t have to.” He said, “You’re getting along with them all right?” I said, “Yes, fine.” And there was no repercussion about me taking over or anything like that. Never.

[ -8- ]

STEWART: What about relationships with people who were running the Dever [Paul A. Dever] campaign and the Stevenson [Adlai E. Stevenson] campaign at that time? Or did you have any...

BERUBE: Well, of course, I had it mentioned to me a few times that they thought that Kennedy was playing the lone wolf in this thing, that he opened his own headquarters. In fact, we opened the headquarters right up here where the highway's going through now. There used to be a building there—a musicians' union—and this is where we had our headquarters. A nice place and the fellow donated it to us. I knew the fellow, and he donated it to us, and we used that for headquarters. And, of course, the Democratic City Headquarters were on Main Street, and they'd come over to see me and ask me how come that, you know, we weren't with them, and I explained this is the way the Congressman wanted it, that there was no ill feeling on his part whatsoever, but he felt as though he wanted to be on his own, but he would work with the Democratic City Committee. In fact, every time he'd come down, he'd go over there, Any function that they had while he was in the area, he attended. So it worked out all right.

STEWART: But there were no real problems or frictions or anything?

BERUBE: No real problems at all. No.

STEWART: Did the Stevenson people have a separate, another separate...

BERUBE: Yes. Well, the Stevenson people were with the Democratic City Committee. Yes. At that time I think the reps were running, representatives were running for the senate, local senate. I think the governor was running that year, too. 1952, I think it would be.... Dever was running that year.

STEWART: Against Christian Herter [Christian A. Herter].

[-9-]

BERUBE: Right. And he was defeated.

STEWART: Did Joe Martin ever have any real opposition in this area?

BERUBE: The only opposition he had was from a fellow that was the head of the Textile Workers' Union, Ed Doolan [Edward F. Doolan]. He ran against him, I think, four or five times. Never was able to tip him over. Even in Fall River here, he was a labor leader, and Joe used to get as many votes as he got. Joe was very well liked in Fall River. Very well liked.

STEWART: Of course, I guess the congressional delegation from Massachusetts was

predominantly Republican that time. I don't think it switched till about '56, '58.

BERUBE: Kennedy switched a lot of them. Incidentally, a lot of them were switched to Democrat when he ran, too, in '52 because a lot of people had met him. In fact, this Mr. Paquette was a Republican. His whole family is Republican, so in order to vote for him in the primaries—of course, he had no opposition—but they changed Democrat. That's how much impressed they were with him. And we checked with the records there, and we must have got about a thousand to change from Republican to Democrat. Of course, in the election year, Republicans vote for him anyway, but in the primaries a couple of times he had opposition. He had Celeste [Vincent J. Celeste] against him one year and—not Celeste. He had a Democrat against him one year.

STEWART: In the primary?

BERUBE: Yes... [Interruption]... You know, there's a funny story, John, about... [Interruption]... You know, as I look back now, when I came out of the service in 1946, I was on the buses. I got on in '41. And a friend of mine was Joe Martin's administrative assistant at that time, a fellow named Joe Phelan, who used to be a bus driver. But he was

[-10-]

appointed as Martin's administrative assistant in 1946. So when I came out of the service, he came up to the garage one day. We're all sitting down there. And he asked us if we'd sign an ad for Joe Martin as veterans. Of course, Joe had a very good record for veterans. A lot of them didn't like his labor record, but as a veteran, he was very good to the veterans. So we all decided sure, we'll sign it. So I signed my name to it.

Of course, when I was appointed Kennedy's secretary, I got a call from Boston one day. Bobby Kennedy. And so I got up there, and he said, "Sit down, Ed." So I sat down. He says, "You never bothered with politics before, did you?" I said, "No, never." "Ever work for anybody?" I said, "No, never worked for anybody. Put a sticker on my car." "You ever sign an ad for anybody?" I said "What do you mean an ad?" He said, "A political advertising ad." "Not that I can remember. Might have once," I said, "but I can't remember, you know." This is six or seven years later. He said, "Well, I've got a little something here I can show you." So he took it out, and there was a political ad signed by me. Edward C. Berube, 69 Grinnell Street. "Is that your writing?" I said, "Yes."

So there was a letter accompanying it. It was from the Democratic state committeeman who was from Fall River, a fellow named Eddie Grace—he's now the City Councilor—saying that I signed a Republican ad. So Bobby just looked at me; he tears it up in front of me like that, and he threw it in the basket, and says, "This I what I think of that." But this is the first time that I saw Bobby Kennedy, if I can use the term, had the guts. I mean, he didn't care. He said, "Look, I just want you to know we received the letter, but," he said, "it means nothing to us." He says "You might hear something from the individual on

it.” But he says, “It means nothing to us. I’m throwing the whole thing in the wastebasket.” So that was the end of that episode.

STEWART: Very good. What kind of relation did you have with the labor unions, and what again traditionally had been their role n Fall River politics?

[-11-]

BERUBE: Well, I was active in the labor movement myself because, of course, we were unionized, Eastern Massachusetts, at that time, Eastern Massachusetts Street Railway. And I ran for executive board, and I made it in 1947. I ran for vice president in 1951, I believe—yes, ’51, the year I met Mr. Kennedy. I was elected to two consecutive terms.

STEWART: What union was this? This the streetcar...

BERUBE: Streetcar, yes. Local 174. But they also had representatives in the central labor union which, of course, the amalgamated union, the textile, the dock workers, teamsters. They all had a representative in that. Of course, I was a delegate for two years to that labor, and I got along very well with them. This in how I met Ed Doolan. I was very friendly with all of them. And they were all a hundred percent Kennedy. They all endorsed him, every one of them.

STEWART: Do they normally supply a lot of workers and financial assistance and all the rest during the campaign?

BERUBE: Oh, yes. Yes. Yes. They gave money.

STEWART: Then there was no problem in the ‘52?

BERUBE: No. No problem at all.

STEWART: Did Lodge have.... What were Lodge’s biggest assets as fear as this area was concerned?

BERUBE: Well, of course, Lodge was in at the time and, of course, everybody, you know, thought that Kennedy never had a chance, that Lodge was popular; he was popular. I mean, you go around to the people, they say, “Gee, we like Kennedy, but what’s wrong with Lodge?” You know, and it was a hard seller. It was strictly personality that sold him. I mean, nobody knew anything about him, what he could do.

[-12-]

Of course, Lodge was very close to the French people. He could speak French. And they liked him very much. Of course, he was a nice looking man, too. He had a fellow in Fall River, incidentally, that was brother-in-law to Bernie Paquette, who was his administrative assistant in Washington. Of course, he campaigned with him in Fall River.

But Jack got a heck of a vote in Fall River the first time he ran. When the precincts started coming in.... Of course, I was piping right into Bobby in Boston, had an open line. You see, Fall River is always one of the first ones of the results that come in, and Bobby told me, "Every precinct that comes in, call in." So they were coming in, three hundred for Kennedy, fifty for Lodge, and even in Ward Six, which is a very heavy French district, they were coming in.... Well, one precinct, if I can remember correctly, which we were afraid of, there was eight hundred and some votes cast. Kennedy got 390 and the other fellow got 385, so you can see that the trend was going Kennedy very good, so he did come out with a heck of a vote in Fall River. And this was the pattern that they established that what they got in Fall River would be true all over the state. So by 12 o'clock, they knew he was in.

STEWART: What the newspaper situation here?

BERUBE: The newspapers endorsed him. Fall River endorsed him; the *Herald News* endorsed against Lodge.

STEWART: Had they traditionally been a Democratic paper?

BERUBE: No, traditionally Republican.

STEWART: Really.

BERUBE: In fact, he was the only Democrat they endorsed that year.

STEWART: Is that right? Were you involved in talking to these people...

[-13-]

BERUBE: Well, yes, I knew Mr. Sevigny [Charles E. Sevigny] at the time and Mr. Delaney [Edward J. Delaney]. Of course, Mr. Sevigny is now retired. He was the managing editor. Mr. Delaney was the next in line, the second in line. He's a heck of a fellow, incidentally. And when Kennedy came here, of course, he wanted to meet the radio stations and the newspaper, and that was the first place went. We were all kind of wondering who they were going to endorse. And they did come out—I think the election was on a Tuesday, and I think they came out on a Friday before, endorsing Kennedy.

STEWART: Why?

BERUBE: On the editorial page. Well, they liked him; they just go along with the trend. They just figured he was going to win.



STEWART: The New Bedford paper doesn't have much influence in this area, does it?

BERUBE: Well, they do. They sell a few New Bedford papers. Of course, Lewin [Charles J. Lewin] was high on Kennedy. I mean he was the one that really started him in this area. I think he was a Republican, Lewin was.

STEWART: Well, Basil Brewer was...

BERUBE: I mean, not Lewin, Basil Brewer. That's the fellow that started. Yes.

STEWART: Could you tell us some of the details as far as setting up these teas? Did you have one big tea?

BERUBE: One big tea. Well, we had a lot of small affairs, and the candidate would not come down. But he wanted this one big tea, and he named the date and where it was to be held. So we picked the City Hall, not the City Hall. It's now the City Hall, the Mellen Hotel, which is the only hotel we have in the city. And he said what he wanted. He wanted every nationality there was. We even had Chinese people, which goes to show. He was very

[-14-]

amazed with this. Of course, we have a high Portuguese element in the city, and we also have Italian. We hit every.... Well, we had a list. We went right through. It took us about three or four weeks to get the list together. And we had working nights at the house. Women coming in offering their services, even men. And we sent out beautiful invitations. Of course, he supplied them. And they went out. We must have sent out, oh, I guess about three thousand, thirty-five hundred invitations.

STEWART: Really?

BERUBE: So we figured if we got at least, 20 percent, we'd do pretty good. It was over two thousand people that showed up.

STEWART: How did you make up the list of people?

BERUBE: We got it from the voting list, and we picked out like the clubs—in other words, the service clubs—and we picked out the women voters. We picked out the people that we thought would be most helpful to him. And, of course, we told them if they could interest somebody in going. What we wanted to do was fill that hall. And this was the thing that he wanted to do, and, of course, if you get a thing like that and you only have about a couple of hundred people there, it looks lost.

In fact, I'd like to go back on my story a little bit, John. When we first started in 1951, he said to me, "I'd like to come down to Fall River sometime and meet a few women."

And I said, "Well, fine." I said, "What day do you want to come?" And he says, "Well, I'm going to be in Fall River on such and such a date." And the date was a Monday. And you know what Monday is. It's wash day. It's ironing day for women. So I thought it was a kind of a tough day, but I said, "Well, we'll go along with it. We'll get as many as we can."

[-15-]

So I had arranged a tour for him that day, and I got a hold of this woman, Mrs. Leclair, and she was quite active with the Franco-Americans in Fall River; in fact, she still is. She's about seventy-six years old now, and she's still active. She's quite a woman. And she was very high on Kennedy. And I put her in charge of that. And I says, "I'll help you get the people in. We'll send out invitations." I said, "As many as we can get there." So, of course, we had to serve coffee; we had to serve, you know, a little lunch, so we charged fifty cents a ticket, which was nothing.

So we're at the Kerr Thread Mill. At that time the Kerr Thread was running, and we're up there on a tour. The tea was arranged for 2 o'clock in the afternoon. So you know how time, you lose track of time. A fellow came running up to us when we were on the third floor. In fact, the Senator, or the President rather, was on a ladder talking to somebody that was fixing something on the ceiling, and he went up about four or five steps on the ladder, and this fellow came up and said, "They're waiting for you down at the City Hall, at the Mellen Hotel. You supposed to be there?" And I looked at my watch; It was ten minutes past two. I said, "Holy mackerel." "Oh," he said, "we'd better go." So he thanked everybody, and we walked down.

We got down to the hotel and when we got down, there was about two hundred women. And he was amazed. So he went in there, and he sat down at the table, and she was there. And there was little cards the tickets; there were about this big. And he looked at the ticket while he was sitting there before he talked, and he says to me, he says, "What's this?" "Well," I said, "that's the ticket." "You mean they paid to see me?" I said, "Where do you think the money's going to come from for the coffee and the cupcakes? I don't have any." He said, "Well, you shouldn't have done that." He says, "We have a fund that we can take care of that."

Well, this is how green I was, you know. So anyway he got up, and he apologized for this or thanked them for being there on a Monday when it was a wash day and ironing day, and also apologized for the fact that they paid fifty cents to come in and hear him speak. It was then that he promised that he would have another big tea, and they would be his

[-16-]

guests later on in July. And this is where he invited everybody that was there. Of course, there's a couple hundred already to start, so this is why I say it was quite a thing.

And I was really embarrassed a little bit because.... But nobody objected to paying the fifty cents. In fact, some of them said they would pay five dollars to see him. So, of course, it made me feel pretty good. But he was surprised that the fee was charged, fifty cents, to go in and see him talk.

STEWART: So what of any other arrangements for this one big tea that you held? You said you sent out invitations to two or three thousand people.

BERUBE: Oh yes, we sent out invitations, and of course, we didn't have any R.S.V.P. We just assumed, you know, that they would come. And Larry came down. Of course, the hall was decorated beautifully. Larry came down, O'Brien. And we got a hold of a florist, and they donated the flowers. It was a beautiful arrangement. You can see some of these pictures. See the flowers all over the place. It was a well run affair. And they have this advance team. They came down and looked the situation over. And of course, his mother [Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy] was with him that day. His mother and Patricia [Patricia Kennedy Lawford] and Eunice [Eunice Kennedy Shriver] were with him that day, the three of them.

Incidentally, that day he came down, we.... There was an election in the city at that time. Grant [William P. Grant] was Mayor, and a City Councilor named John Kane [John F. Kane] ran against him, and it came out that Grant beat him by seven votes. So there was a recount. So on a Saturday before the tea, on a Saturday night, I'm home taking a shower, he calls me from Philadelphia. He was in Philadelphia, and he knew about the situation. So he said to me, "Do you think, you know, we ought to see these people?" "Yes," I said, "I think we ought to. In fact, you've got to see both of because they're both involved in this." I said, "Kane asked for a recount." He said, "Well, you set up the meeting." I said "All right." I says, "Mr. Grant's got a summer place at Portsmouth Park. We'll go down there and see him." And I said, "Incidentally, Kane is having a little party at his house, and, if you like, we'll go over to his house." He says, "Fine. All right."

[-17-]

He told me what time he was coming. "I'll be there." So when he got to Fall River, we went down to Portsmouth. It was funny. On the way down we got stopped by a State trooper. Bob Morey [Robert F. Morey] was his chauffeur at the time. He's now a U.S. marshal. And we got stopped for speeding. And finally we got down there anyway.

When we got there, Grant wasn't there. And, of course, I was a little embarrassed. I had called him up and told him he was going to be here. And he got out, and he went up to the house, and he wrote something on a piece of paper and left it on the door. I never knew what it was, but I think he was a little perturbed that Mr. Grant wasn't there, that the arrangement was made. And, of course, I told him, I said, "Gee, Congressman," I says, "I did make the arrangements. He said he would be here." So he didn't want to stay. He said, "Well, we can't stay. We've got another appointment" So we went to Kane's house from there. He had a party there. And then we went to another house party, and then the big party was that night.

STEWART: On a Sunday night?

BERUBE: Right.

STEWART: And there were how many people there?

BERUBE: Oh, it was two thousand people there. It was so big that they had to give us the whole third floor. I think the room holds about eleven hundred people, and then they had two other rooms on the side that held about three or four hundred apiece, and they were standing up in the lounge beside that.

STEWART: They had a receiving line?

BERUBE: Receiving line after it was all over, and he stayed.... I think when we got out of there, it was about half past 1 in the morning.

STEWART: Really?

BERUBE: Yes.

[-18-]

STEWART: Then he gave a speech to all the people?

BERUBE: He gave a talk, yes. Right. Told them why they should vote for him. Boy, what a hand he got when he got through.

STEWART: Really?

BERUBE: And he stood on them crutches all the time. In fact, I got him a stool like Jack Paar [Jack Harold Paar] used to have. He'd come out, he'd sit on that stool. I said to the fellow that runs the hotel, "Have you got one of them around?" He said, "Yes." So I got it for him, and he kind of just leaned back a little bit and took the weight off his feet, but he wouldn't give in. Boy, he was a tough cookie.

STEWART: Do you remember any of the kinds of things, the issues he was talking about at that time?

BERUBE: No, just about.... One thing about Kennedy, which they were very impressed by, he didn't run a dirty campaign. He always ended with how friendly he was with Lodge, and he was a good friend of his, but he could do more for Massachusetts. This was his theme, and this is what he sold himself on.

STEWART: Was Fall River in fairly good or fairly bad economic shape at that time?

BERUBE: No, bad shape. It was in bad shape. Bad shape. Most of our textiles were moving out, and nothing was replacing it. The garment industry was just starting up then. Of course, now it's predominantly garment industry in Fall River.

STEWART: Oh, is it?

BERUBE: It was a bad, a bad situation at that time, and of course, the theme was doing more for Massachusetts, it meant Fall River, also. So I think it was a good theme he picked out.

STEWART: Did Lodge come here at all?

[-19-]

BERUBE: Once. He only came once. This is what surprised me. Like he'd given up on Fall River or something. Of course, like I say, Fall River didn't have too many Republicans, but still he used to get a pretty good vote here. If you'd ask me who Lodge ran against before he ran against Kennedy. I couldn't even tell you. But I don't even remember the name.

STEWART: Let's see, he ran in 19...

BERUBE: He must have ran in '48, cause this election was '52.

STEWART: No, wait a minute. No, '46.

BERUBE: '46?

STEWART: Yes, he beat David I. Walsh [David Ignatius Walsh]?

BERUBE: That's the one, David I. Walsh. Yes.

STEWART: Yes, in '46. Lodge had been in the service, and then when he got out, he ran against Walsh; who was the incumbent and beat him, beat him quite handily, I guess. So that is amazing because Lodge had a lot of support.

BERUBE: Oh, he strong.

STEWART: From a lot of minority groups especially. Was there any discussion of Senator McCarthy [Joseph R. McCarthy]? McCarthy was quite an issue at the time.

BERUBE: No.

STEWART: Or maybe not, particularly among Irish people.

BERUBE: Well, wasn't after he got in that that happened?

STEWART: No, it had started around 1950.

[-20-]

BERUBE: Was it? There wasn't too much brought out on that. In fact, I don't remember it.

STEWART: Yes.

BERUBE: This was, of course, you're talking now in '52, right?

STEWART: Yes.

BERUBE: No.

STEWART: Yes, yes.

BERUBE: The only issue that was brought out, of course, which is later—I don't know if this means anything to you, but that feud he had with Furcolo [Foster Furcolo].

STEWART: Yes, that was in '54.

BERUBE: In '54. In fact, Bobby Kennedy called me one Sunday, asked me to go down to the Cape. This was the first time I saw the compound, incidentally. And I brought the family down there, and he took a walk on the beach with me, and the reason why he brought me down was to get the effect that the Furcolo episode had on his brother. And, of course, when he explained to me what happened, I could see that, you know, he certainly had....

Of course, the story I got was that he appeared on this television station, and, of course, he was running Saltonstall [Leverett Saltonstall], which was a very good friend of his. And this is what, I think, made this man, how close he was to the Republican. I mean, even Lodge, who he ran against, was close to him. Saltonstall was close to him. He admired the man. And I understand that Furcolo had the speech all ready for him. "Now you say this." And Kennedy wouldn't say it because it was personal, and he said, "Either you say this, or you don't say nothing." So he didn't say anything. And this is when the feud came in. Of course, we didn't know this, but I found out that day from Bobby, and, of course, he said, "if anybody's talking to you, you pass that along to them. But," he says, "you're going to get

[-21-]

a lot of questions on it."

STEWART: Did this relationship with Saltonstall causes a lot of grumbling among local Democrats?

BERUBE: No, no. never heard it once.

STEWART: Yes. Because, in fact, Ted Sorenson [Theodore C. Sorensen] says in his book that Kennedy really preferred to have a Republican colleague in the Senate and liked Saltonstall.

BERUBE: There was no repercussion here, John.

STEWART: No.

BERUBE: Nope. Because Saltonstall was a pretty well liked fellow, too. He had been governor, you know, for a few years, and he'd made a pretty good record, and he went on to the Senate.

STEWART: Look at, I have to make a... [Interruption] Is there anything else about the '52 campaign that you can think of?

BERUBE: No, that's about all, John, I can think of. Of course, after the big tea, we still had coffee hours, and his sister would come down, in individual homes. And we picked out one section of the city where they went door to door, Patricia and Eunice. And they spent all of, I think, two days in the city of Fall River knocking on doors, asking them to vote for their brother. And then, of course, that was about all until the flyers, getting out the flyers to the individual homes, the usual advertising et cetera. [Interruption]

STEWART: Did you have a telephone campaign at all?

[-22-]

BERUBE: Yes, we did. We did have a telephone campaign. We had girls at the house. In fact, the night we were sending out the invitations to the tea, we had a telephone campaign then, and we had another one in, oh, the first part of September, about two weeks before the election. And, of course, we had a lot of workers election day. Drivers, cars, all free of charge. They were all so willing to help.

STEWART: Did you have any problem getting volunteers at all?

BERUBE: Nope. Never did with that. I had the same gang all the time, too. About twenty-five cars. No problem at all. And we operated from my home, incidentally, and the.... In fact, you know it's always funny on election day. You always get some calls, you know darn well they're not yours; the Democratic City Committee wouldn't have enough cars around, so they'd call that number and say pick up such and such at way at the other end of the city. But what I did, I had one fellow at the north end, one fellow at the east end, one fellow at the south end, and he was always staying near



to the phone, and if we had to get it that way, he'd go out and get it. We concentrated on the heavy—one, two, and three is the big wards in this city.

STEWART: Okay, right after the election, when do you recall was your next contact with President Kennedy? Didn't they have a meeting of all the secretaries?

BERUBE: Yes, he threw a party at the Parker House, again, at the penthouse, and he invited all the secretaries and had a nice roast beef dinner and all the drinks. He thanked everybody that was there. And, incidentally, this was in 1953. So when we got through that dinner, he says to me, "Are you going back home?" And I says, "Yes." And he says, "Well," he says, "I'm going down to Newport." He started going out with his wife at that time, Jacqueline Bouvier.

STEWART: Well, I think he was engaged, wasn't he?

[-23-]

BERUBE: He engaged, that's right. And Red Fay [Paul B. Fay, Jr.] was with him, Paul Fay, who later turned out to be his Secretary of the Navy, Assistant Secretary of the Navy, and he said, "Well, look," he says "is it all right if I ride down with you?" He says "Bob won't have to bring me down, all the way back." I said, "Fine. Sure." So he left there, and he went to 122 Bowdoin Street and changed up, and he came out. We left there about 1 o'clock in the morning.

When we got down to Newport, it was about 3 o'clock, and I was driving the car at the time. I'll never forget it. He had his feet up on the dashboard, and he was really loose and singing. of course, he couldn't carry a tune for peanuts, but he used to love to sing and always, "My Wild Irish Rose." And we told stories on the way down, you know, the usual five fellows in the car. So just as we're getting into Newport at Hammersmith Farm, we didn't realize, you know, how late it was. Of course, the windows were open, you know, and he said, "Let's go cut it down." He says, "I'm not too solid with the family, and they might throw me out."

So on the way in he says to me, "Incidentally," he says, "I want you to come to the wedding. You'll have an invitation." I says, "Oh, fine." Of course, that was going to be the wedding of the year, and everybody was looking forward to it. So, of course, when I got home—of course, it was late the next morning, I went to work, and I came back, and I said to my wife, "We're invited to the wedding." And she said, "Oh, wonderful," So, of course, he invited Bernie also and the fellow that made the cake. And, incidentally, there's another story I want to tell you about. So, anyway, the girls all called each other up and wanted to know what they were going to wear to the wedding.

So it came time for the wedding, I think it was in September, the wedding. Yes it was in September. A week before the wedding, it was starting to appear in the paper that it was going to be the biggest wedding ever held in Newport, and all these people were coming down and lords from London and all over the place and Senators and Congressmen and the high echelon, and that nobody would be allowed in the place without an invitation.

[Interruption]

STEWART: You mentioned the invitation.

[-24-]

BERUBE: So, like say, it was appearing in the paper that nobody would be allowed in there without an invitation. So I came home one day, and my wife says to me, "We're not going to that wedding." And I said, "What do you mean we're not going to the wedding?" She said, "We have no invitation." And I says, "You bet you we have." I said, "He told me himself." She says, "Look at this." So I looked at the paper. I said, "That don't mean nothing." She said "Oh yes, it does. I'm not going down there and get insulted." You know how the women are. I said, "Well, I don't know about you. You're not going. But," I said, "I'm going."

Well, he got married on a Saturday. Thursday morning, two days before that, I get a phone call, Mr. Edward Berube, person to person. I said, "Yes, speaking." "Just a minute please." So, it's the Senator. He's in Hyannis Port. And he had gone through the list of invitations, just to show you what a memory this fellow had, and he didn't see my name on there, so he called me up to apologize that my name was left off, and the other two follows also, and he says, "I'm sending one out right now, special delivery. You'll get it tomorrow." And I got the invitation the day after. Of course, we went to the wedding which, of course, was a beautiful affair.

But getting back to the wedding cake. In 1952, I think, early '52 we were campaigning up Main Street here one day. And, of course, this Mr. Plourde [Babe Plourde] runs the baker shop right across from the Fall River Public Library. So we're going through there, and I says to him, "Gee, I'd like you to meet a friend of mine." I says—I knew that Mr. Kennedy loved sweets; he loved to nibble on a cupcake or a cookie or something like that—I says, "Would you like to go in and meet my friend, Mr. Plourde?" I says, "Maybe you can get a cupcake off him." I'm kidding him. So he says, "Fine, let's go. We've got a few minutes." So we went in. We walked right in the back shop where the baker shop was and talked to the bakers and the waiters, you know, the counter people, and there were a few people in the store at the time. So, of course, Mr. Plourde was very happy to see him. So in the conversation—he's got pictures all over the wall of cakes that he made, you know, for different kind of people—so kidding, I said to Jack, "When you get married, he can make your

[-25-]

wedding cake." He says, "He certainly can. He's got good stuff here." Well, that was the end of the conversation. Nobody thought of nothing.

In 1953, I'm home one morning and I get a phone call from Newport, and it's Jackie, and she says to me, "Mr. Berube?" I says, "Yes." She says, "This is Jackie Bouvier." So it didn't ring a bell with me, you know. I'd never met her. And she says, "Senator Kennedy's fiancé." "Oh," I says, "yes." She says, "I understand you have a baker in Fall River that's going to make our wedding cake." Well, he's in Europe. He's in Europe on a trip, so I says, "Oh, yes. Oh yes," I says, "that's right, too." I said, "I did mention it to him, but I thought

he'd forget." "Oh no," she says, "Do you have the baker available? Could you come down?" she says, "I want to pick out something I like." So I says, "Yes, fine." So she says, "Could you come down this afternoon?" I says, "Sure."

So I got a hold of Mr. Plourde and we went down there, and she was in shorts, you know, she was just the typical, excited girl about to be married. So the conversation was about Jack. Of courser, she was deeply in love. You could tell by looking at her. She asks us about our family, and the conversation went something like this: "Are you married, Ed?" And I says, "Yes, I'm married." And she said, "Have you any children?" I says, "Yes, I've got three boys." "Oh," she says, "that's wonderful. Jack wants ten children," she says, I said, "Well, he certainly can afford them. I have to be a little careful," I says, "to have both ends meet."

So anyway, in the course of the conversation, I said, "Incidentally, you're marrying quite a guy." And as I look now, John, and think about what happened and her remarks—and I've got it right in the back of my head exactly how she said it, and every time I say it, it give me goose pimples—she says, "Yes, I'm the luckiest girl in the world." But you look at her today, you don't think she is. But she told me at the time, and I said, "Well, how do you know about it?" She says, "Well, he's in Europe, and I got a cablegram from him to get a hold of Ed Berube, that he knows a fellow that's going to make our wedding cake." So this to me was above anything, how a man could make a promise.

[-26-]

Now he must have known a lot of bakers in Boston or Washington who would have been tickled to death to make his cake. And, incidentally, be paid for the cake. There are a lot of rumors around that the cake was donated, but he gave the check. It was a check of two hundred and fifty dollars. The man got the check.

STEWART: Does the fellow still have the bake shop?

BERUBE: Oh, yes. He's still got the bake shop.

[BEGIN SIDE II TAPE I]

That's his picture you saw in one of the pictures there.

STEWART: Yes, very good.

BERUBE: So in 19.... When he was first elected.... Let's see, he took over in 1953, wasn't it?

STEWART: Yes, January.

BERUBE: I got a phone call in March from him, and he says to me, "Eddie," he says, "how about coming down to Washington and spending a few days with

me?" Which I thought was a wonderful thing. And I said, "Gee I don't know if I can get off, you know. We have a problem on vacations, you know." So I said, "I'll let you know." So I talked to the manager, and he says, "Yes, all right. You can have that week off." So I took off for three days. We left on a Sunday, and he asked me to bring the other two fellows with me.

So we assumed that, you know, he'd put us up in a hotel somewhere. We get to Washington. He says, "When you come, come right to the office." So we get to the office. We get there about 4 o'clock in the afternoon, so he had some work to do, so about 5:30, we picked up, and we left. So he says, "Where's your car?" I said, "It's in the parking lot." It wasn't my car, it was Mr. Plourde's, so he said, "Well, you ride with me, and they can follow me." So I said, "Well, you got us a hotel somewhere?" He says, "You're not staying at a hotel, You're staying with me. My home." I said, "Beautiful."

[-27-]

We go to go to get his car. I assumed he'd have a nice, big, good-looking, clean, new car. He walks right by all these cars, and in the corner in the parking lot, the last one, there's an old beat up Oldsmobile, about ten years old. So we get in, you know, and I can't open the door from the outside. You have to open it from the inside, and I'm laughing. So he sits in the car, he says, "What're you laughing at?" I said, "Boy, can't you do any better than this?" "Yes," he says, "you know I'm thinking of getting another car." He says, "What kind of a car have you got?" I looked at him, I said, "I got a Chevrolet, a poor man's car." He said, "I like that little car. It's a nice car." So I looked at him. I started to laugh again. I said, "With your dough, you're talking about a Chevrolet?" I said, "I'd be riding around in a Cadillac." He said, "Oh, no. I don't." He said, "Maybe an Oldsmobile." He was the world's worst driver.

STEWART:        Yeah, I know it.

BERUBE:         Oh, he was awful, I'm telling you. He was all over the road, He's on the Right. He'd pass on the right. Beating red lights to go through. I was hanging on. No seat belts in them days, you know. So we finally got to the house anyway, and we had a nice three days there. It was terrific. And it was funny, we had all our clothes stolen while we were there,

STEWART:        Really?

BERUBE:         When we got to the house...

STEWART:        From his house?

BERUBE:         When we got to the house, he had arranged with Ted Reardon [Timothy J. Reardon, Jr.] to take us out that night. Ted was his administrative assistant. So he said, "Look you go out to dinner with the boys. I've got somewhere to go tonight, but," he says, "I'll meet you back at the house about 11 o'clock."

[-28-]

So Ted, in the meantime, said to me, “Gee,” he says, “I’m always stuck with people like that. I’ve got a house full of company tonight.” He says, “Look, can you give me a break? I’ll bring you somewhere and...” “Look, don’t worry. We’ll make out.” But he said, “I’ve got to take you because the boss watches me like a hawk, but, I’ll take you somewhere, and I’ll leave you there. All right?” I said, “Sure. Fine, Ted.” I said, “Look, I’m married. I know what the problems are, too.” He said, “I’ve been out every night last week.” He said, “Gee, if I don’t attend this one, my wife will be on cloud nine.” So he took us to the Lotus Club in Washington.

STEWART: To the what?

BERUBE: Lotus Club, I think it was called. It was on the second floor. It was a Chinese place. There was entertainment there. So instead of taking our clothes out of the car, I said, “Well, look...” He said, “Don’t you want to come to wash up?” I said, “No, we washed before we left the office.” I figured, you know, we wanted get Ted out, so I said, “We’ll go. We’ll put them in when we come back.” “Well,” he says, “all right.” He says, “I’ll meet you back here at 11 o’clock.” So we go

We parked right on the corner. Pennsylvania Avenue and some big street there, right on the main street. Lights all over the place, activity going by. So our clothes were hung up in the car, but we had our bags in the trunk. But my suit and coat was hung up there, and it was a brand new suit I had bought before I left. Never wore it. It was just a special suit for this occasion. So we go up there, and when we came out, we go to get in the car, the clothes are gone.

STEWART: Oh, gee.

BERUBE: All stolen. Somebody had jimmed the lock and took all our clothes. So, of course, when we got back to the house, the Senator felt sorry. In fact, he said, “Look I got a place that I go to. You just go down and get what you want,” he said, “and charge it to me.” But we didn’t do it because the fellow said he insured, so we’d get our money when we came back. Well,

[-29-]

to get ahead of my story, when we got back, the fellow found out he wasn’t insured for the clothes, so we lost all the clothes.

But it was a very nice trip, and we thought it was nice of him to have us down like that, Ted Reardon mentioned to us many a time, he says, “Boy, you must be in with this fellow. We never see anybody stay at his house like this.”

STEWART: Really?

BERUBE: Never. We each had our own room. In fact, it was the home, I think, she

moved into after he was assassinated, M Street in Georgetown. Wasn't that the one she moved...

STEWART: No, she moved to another. It was on the same...

BERUBE: Same block.

STEWART: Same street, but it wasn't the same address.

BERUBE: It was an old-fashioned home, a big, beautiful home. And he had the butler there named George, a fellow named George, the butler.

STEWART: Was there ever any doubt that he'd keep all of these secretaries, this organization throughout the state?

BERUBE: Well, he let a lot of them go. There was a lot of them that didn't...

STEWART: Oh, was there?

BERUBE: Yes, because I lost.... Every meeting I'd go to, I could see new faces, either through themselves, or he didn't like them, or what it was—I never asked him, but I knew there was a lot of changes made.

[-30-]

STEWART: Did they have periodic meetings in Boston or...

BERUBE: Yes, every year. Every year we'd meet.

STEWART: Once a year?

BERUBE: Yes. Every year we'd meet.

STEWART: What kind of contacts, if any, did you have with Frank Morrissey [Francis X. Morrissey] and people in his Boston office?

BERUBE: Well, of course, any favors that I wanted, I would contact Frank. The first time I met Frank I was very impressed with him. He gives you quite a handshake when he sees you, you know. A very capable fellow. And, of course, he did a lot of traveling with the Senator, but the only connection I had was him, and the Senator mentioned if I ever needed anything to contact Frank in Boston, that he was his representative.

STEWART: I've heard a certain amount of criticism of the operations of the Boston office. Frank Morrissey promising things...

BERUBE: Well, I heard that, too, but he was always very nice to me. I mean, Kennedy kept him, so he couldn't have been that bad. You know, the Kennedy's don't keep anybody if they're not an asset to them, you know. In fact, there's a funny story about Frank Morrissey. I almost replaced him one day.

STEWART: Oh really?

BERUBE: When he was appointed judge. I was working for the buses at the time. And this, incidentally, is quite an emotional story. I had just bought a home in 1956. In 1958 we went on strike. The Eastern Mass. had a terrible strike. It was seven months. And I was vice president of the union at the time, and I knew it was going to be a long strike because we were going out for a contributory pension which the company was in no condition or position to give us because they were on the downgrade, and it was going to take a million or two million dollars to get this thing activated. But we had to go along

[-31-]

with the majority.

So being vice president of the union, they asked me if I'd get Kennedy to intercede with the company to see if they couldn't come up with some agreement. We didn't.... We voted to go on strike, but we didn't want to go on strike. It was one of those situations. Well, Kennedy tried, and, of course, he couldn't talk to these people.

STEWART: Did he get involved in it personally or was it just someone...

BERUBE: I don't think he did too much. I think he just gave them the old, you know, call, usual call, anything you can do. But there wasn't nothing he could do, and I knew that, but the union was satisfied at least that he made a call and he tried.

Well, the Sunday we went on strike, he had a meeting of his secretaries in Boston. So he said to me, "What are you going to do during the strike?" I says, "Walk the picket line like the rest of them." He says, "Gee, Eddie, I'd like to do something for you." And I said, "Well, there isn't much you can do." I said, "You know, nobody likes to hire anybody when they're on strike." "Well," he says, "look, Frank Morrissey has just been appointed judge of the Boston Municipal court." He said, "I don't have anybody in my Boston office. Why don't you came up there a couple of days a week?" I says, "Oh," I said, "I'm not, you know, I don't have too much of an education." I said, "You've got some tough problems coming in there, and I don't think I could handle them." He said, "Well," he says, "I need somebody that talks French." He said, "I've got to have a Frenchman in that office." I said, "You know my limitation on French." I said, "I wouldn't be an asset to you on that either."

Well, he got kind of perturbed when I said that. He said, "Look, how much do you make a week?" So I told him. He says, "All right. I'm going to take care of you." I said, "Look, I don't want it." He said, "Come on." He said, "I've got to go to the airport. You take



a ride with me.” So I took a ride to the airport. He’s asking me all kind of questions about the strike, and what’ve I got in mind. He says, “You don’t want to be a bus driver all your life.” Of course, I had no education. High school education. And he always told me that if I had the education, he could

[-32-]

do something for me, but there’s certain limitations you can do without an education. So anyway, I says, “Well, all right.” He says, “I’ll be in touch with you.”

Well, that following Thursday—we used to get paid on Thursdays, the buses, you know—the following Thursday, I got a check from Washington, a personal check, John F. Kennedy. Eighty-five dollars. I got that check every Thursday for seven months.

STEWART: Really? Till the strike was over.

BERUBE: Till the strike was over. In fact, one I Thursday never got it. About three months.... Mrs. Lincoln [Evelyn N. Lincoln] used to take care of it. And I came home one day, and my wife’s got her face down to here. I said, “What’s the matter with you?” She said, “We didn’t get our check today. I guess it’s all over.” I said, “Well, it was good while it lasted.” She said, “Well, what’re we going to do now?” You know how the women are. They worry. I said, “Don’t worry, something will turn up.”

About 5 o’clock at night we’re sitting down having supper, I got a phone call from Washington. Mrs. Lincoln telling me how sorry they were they forgot to send the check. Would it be all right if they sent two next week, or do you want me to send this one out now? What do you say to a thing like that, you know? I said, “Look, you do what you want. I’m very happy the way it is.” So they sent the two the next week, and it kept right on. The Senator was very concerned. She says, “I forgot all about it. Believe me. But he says to me this morning, ‘Did you send the check to Eddie?’” Now, I mean, how could a fellow think, of all the things he had, to think of something like this? I mean, to me this was terrific.

STEWART: Well, was this...

BERUBE: It certainly saved me from.... I would have lost my home. It was a personal check. It wasn’t a payroll. It was his own check.

[-33-]

STEWART: Was this during the time of the ‘58 campaign?

BERUBE: Well, we went on strike in ‘58, November of ‘58.

STEWART: Oh, that would have been after.

BERUBE: After the campaign.

STEWART: Yes.

BERUBE: He had been elected.

STEWART: Yes.

BERUBE: Because we'd had the meeting in Boston right after the elections. See, it was November.

STEWART: Were you at the '56 Convention at all?

BERUBE: No, I never did go to a Convention. Incidentally, he submitted my name as a presidential elector in 1956. It was only the first, second one from Fall River that ever was a presidential election.

STEWART: Oh, really?

BERUBE: Of course, I never had the opportunity to do it because Eisenhower [Dwight D. Eisenhower] got elected, but he did submit my name, which was quite an honor.

STEWART: Yes. What about involvement in Massachusetts politics? Or did you get involved with any of the local people?

BERUBE: No, I never did.

STEWART: Furcolo?

BERUBE: Nope.

STEWART: McCormack [Edward J. McCormack, Jr.]? Or Peabody [Endicott Peabody] or any of those people?

[-34-]

BERUBE: Never. That was the only one I ever worked for.

STEWART: Yes. As far as, were you at all involved in the big squabble they had in '56 over the state Democratic chairman?

BERUBE: No. No, I wasn't involved in that. In fact, the local group was with him on that. They were with him.

STEWART: Oh, really?

BERUBE: Yes.

STEWART: That was a...

BERUBE: Yes, Eddie.... In fact, he came down here and saw Eddie Grace who was the Democratic state committeeman. And at that time there was a Monica Murphy. She was a Democratic woman, you know, state chairman and he went to her house, she was laid up, and spoke to her there. Than he went to Eddie Grace's, and he told me after that they both received him very well, and they with him a hundred percent. So he was very happy about it.

STEWART: I've heard that they tried to activate all the secretaries for, see, Robert Murphy [Robert F. Murphy]. He was running for governor in '54. Do you remember at all?

BERUBE: No.

STEWART: Was there ever any effort made, say in '56, to get you people to do any work for Stevenson?

BERUBE: Oh, yes. In '56, yes.

STEWART: Did this work out at all? That was a pretty disorganized campaign.

[-35-]

BERUBE: Yes, it was. It wasn't like a Kennedy campaign, that's for sure. In fact, I forgot who was running it from Boston. I think they worked more or less with the local committee, but they wanted me in when I started going around the Democratic.... In fact, they made me an associate member of the ward, ward one, which I am in.

STEWART: The Democratic...

BERUBE: City Committee, yes.

STEWART: Really?

BERUBE: Yes.

STEWART: An associate member.

BERUBE: Yes, because there was no openings at the time, but they made an associate member.

STEWART: During the time he was in the Senate, were you normally the person who people contacted for further contact with...

BERUBE: In fact, I'm still getting them today for Ted.

STEWART: Really?

BERUBE: Oh, yes. Yes, once you're with a Kennedy, you're with him all the time. I mean this is amazing, believe me. I mean, when Ted assumed office, immediately he contacted me. Of course, I was postmaster at the time, and, of course, I had a limitation because of the Hatch Act, but I steered him to the right people who could help him. And, of course, anything that comes up in Fall River, he'll always call me.

STEWART: Well, during that whole period, most of the federal patronage, however much there was, was handled a lot of it, by Martin with a Republican in the White House.

[-36-]

BERUBE: That's right. In fact, when this job came open.... Incidentally, there's a little story about this, too. I don't know if you that.

STEWART: Yes, go ahead. Yes.

BERUBE: In 1960, when he was getting ready to go to the Convention—well, a little before that. I'm standing on the corner here one day waiting to get on the bus to go to work, and of course, I knew most of the fellows that worked here from riding the buses. They'd ride with me, you know, and I knew most of them. A letter carrier came up to me, and he says, "We're having a meeting tonight. We'd like you to come." He said, "would you be there?" So I thought it was something pertaining to—because they were in the labor union, too. So I says, "Yes, all right." I thought it was something that they wanted Kennedy to help them with, you know.

So I get to the meeting, and they brought up the fact this fellow, the postmaster at the time who was in here, was retiring in December of 1960. December the thirtieth. That was his birthday. He was seventy years old, and he had to get out. And they hit me with it, right cold turkey, that they wanted me to be the postmaster. So, of course, I thought that was the furthest thing that could be done. I said, "Well, how do you think I'm going to be postmaster?" He said, "Well...." They had it all figured out. He said that Kennedy was going to be the Senator or he might be President, and he would have the appointing. I said, "Yes, but if it goes Republican, it would be a Republican again." And they said, "Well, we'll take our chances, but we want you. We're going to submit your name to Senator Kennedy." So when he called me up to go to Hyannis Port, at that time the Clerk of Courts was open in Fall River. Furcolo was.... Was Furcolo the governor in 1960?

STEWART: Yes.

[-37-]

BERUBE: Yes. And I was interested in the Clerk of Courts, and he was trying to get it for me. So he called me down to Hyannis Port and he said, "Look, Ed, I've got a little problem. Furcolo wants me to endorse him in this certain way, and," he says, "I know if I do it, if I ask for you for a job, I'm going to have to do it because I'm committed to him." In other words, he was on the hook. He was also trying to get something for Bob Morey in Boston.

So I said, "Look, in that case, forget it." He said, "No, I'm going to talk to him, but," he says, "I've got another thing that maybe you might be interested in." He says, "The postmastership in Fall River is going to be available." So I said to him, I says, "Well, that all depends on who's going to win the nomination." So he looked at me, and he kind of laughed, and he says, "Why, don't you have any confidence in me?" "Oh, I've got a lot of confidence in you," I said, "But," I says, "it's a long haul. You know, I'm like the optimist," I says, "I want it in my hands." I says, "You know, my family's getting older now, and if I can get that Clerk of Courts job, I'm going to get it." He says, "Look, I'll try to get it for you." But he says, "This job is yours." He says, "Look, I'm going to tell you something. I'm going to California, and I'm going to win the nomination."

STEWART: When was this now?

BERUBE: In 1960 in Hyannis Port. Just getting ready to go.... He left in August, I think, and this was the end of July. He said, "I'm going down to California. I'm going to win the nomination." He said, "I'm going to be the next president of the United States, and you're going to be the first postmaster I appoint." So I looked at the fellow. Bernie Paquette was with me. And looked at him, and I says, "How amazing can you be?" He says, "Ed, believe me," I said, "If you say it, that's good enough me."

[-38-]

So we talked, and the little kid came up. She was just starting to walk at that time, Caroline [Caroline Bouvier Kennedy]. And he picked her up and threw her up in the air just like the regular daddy, you know. Introduced me to her. So he walked out to the gate with us, said good-bye, and I wished him a lot of luck, and he said, "I'll be in touch with you." Well, to make a long story short, I was invited to the Inauguration. We went down there. I was appointed here February the fifth, the first appointment that he sent into the Senate for confirmation. The form is right over there.

STEWART: Well, how came the Republicans didn't get someone in...

BERUBE: Well, in the interim they did a big newspaper article on it, and, of course,

it said that Berube was a favorite for postmastership because his connection with Kennedy, that the Republicans wouldn't appoint anybody because it wouldn't get the confirmation of the Senate because of Kennedy coming in. It would only be a, what they call it, it would only be an interim appointment, and this is the way it worked out.

Of course, it was mentioned here that Ladeira was after it if Eisenhower, not Eisenhower, but if Nixon [Richard Milhous Nixon] would have made it, he would have been the.... Or the chairman of the Republican City Committee, they mentioned him, a fellow named Waterman [John Waterman]. Of course, everybody thought, you know, that there would be problems from the Democratic City Committee also, that they would have a say but I never got one opposition from anyone.

There was only one fellow that took the exam when I took it, and it was a fellow named Whitehead who works in Newport. He takes every exam there is, and of course, he's a Republican. And we were the only two that.... Of course, it's not an exam; it's an interview like I'm talking with you. You give.... They ask you all kinds of questions, but that was the only fellow I had against me. I never had no.... Because everybody knew that it was going to be me. That's the way he wanted it. So I was appointed February the fifth, two weeks after he took over.

STEWART: Did you see him after that?

[-39-]

BERUBE: Yes, I met him in Boston, well, when he came to Boston in October, four or five weeks before he was assassinated, '63.

STEWART: You went to that dinner?

BERUBE: I went to the dinner. There's another story about him. What a sweet memory I have left of him. But there's something I'd like to tell you before that, John.

STEWART: Yes, go ahead.

BERUBE: I used to get a lot of requests for pictures of the President, you know, and of course, I used to call Mrs. Lincoln. So I called her one day, and it was the day he went on TV at night to give the Russians the ultimatum to get their missiles out of Cuba, so help me God. So in the afternoon I called him, called her, National 8-1414, that was the number. Right to her, I told her about the pictures. She said, "Ed, I'll send them to you right now. We got some here, and I'll send them right out to you." She "Wait a minute, a friend of yours wants to talk to you." So I didn't give it a thought that it would be him.

Their office is right outside of his, and he happened to be walking by, and he heard her mention my name. He said, "Who's that, Eddie?" She says "Yes." "Let me talk to him." So he grabs the phone. He says; "How're you, pal?" or no, "How are you, Mr. Postmaster?"

So right away I got the voice, and I was so excited I said, “Oh.... uh.... uh.... Mr. Senator.... Mr. Congr....” You know, I hesitated like that. Three times. Finally, I said, “Mr. President.” So he asked me how my office was, what kind of an office, do I like it, is it as big as his, because I’d been down there, have I got a nice big rocking chair there, anything he could do for me, and all that stuff. And I said, “No, you’ve done enough for me now, Mr. President.” I said, “We’re all so proud of you. You’re doing a wonderful job.” He said, “Well, you keep up the good work. I hear some good reports about you.” And this stuff.

[-40-]

So I called my wife right away, I was so excited, you know. I get home at night, and there he is giving the ultimatum. What all he had on his mind that day.

STEWART:       Amazing.

BERUBE:        But he had time to pick up the phone and talk to a little guy in Fall River for five minutes. Five minutes I talked to him.

So the episode in Boston was—of course, I went to the dinner. We had a table there. Of course, Ted gave us a pretty nice spot. It was right in front of the head table but to the left—in other words, to the right of the head table. And, of course, they had another room where they were watching it on TV, it was so big. So, of course, when he came in, I’m waving a handkerchief, but, you know, there was so many people there that he couldn’t just pick you out. So I said to the fellow sitting at the table, I said, “I’m going to get up and see that fellow before he leaves here tonight. I said, “I’ve got to see him.” But Secret Service men were around. You couldn’t even get near him.

So Ed Moss [Edward Moss] was on the committee. That’s the fellow that got killed in the plane crash with Ted, and of course, I knew him very well. So he had a committee button on. And all the committee members were allowed to walk anywhere as long as they had the button on. So I said, “I’m going to go down and see Ed, and if I can get that button off him, I can walk around.”

So just before the dessert, when the dessert was being served and it was quiet, I looked up, and there was nobody around. No Secret Service men, nobody. So I walked over to the table. Ed Moss was sitting right in front of him. Two rows.... [Interruption] ...So I said to Ed, I said, “Ed, I got to get up and see the President tonight” I said, “How about taking your committee button so I can get up there.” So he was going to take it off and give it to me and just then he looked up, and he said, “He’s looking up,” and he said, “He’s looking at you.” So I looked up, and he saw me.

[-41-]

Well, I hadn’t seen him personally for two years. I’ve talked to him on the phone, but I didn’t see him personally for two years. Now, in two years, being on this job, on the banquet circuit, I put a little weight on and I had to wear glasses, “Well,” I says, “don’t tell me he doesn’t know me. Forgot me.” And he’s looking, you know, and I could see he’s

trying to say something. So immediately I did this. I took the glasses off, and when I did that, right away he says “Ed Berube.” So he says, “Come here,” like that, he motioned me up.

Well, I made one step. That’s all I took was one step, and I got hit by four fellows broadside. Where they come from, I’ll never know. Secret Service men. Now they can talk all they want about how well he was protected anytime, or the episode in Dallas, Texas, but brother, they come out of nowhere. And they were watching me. They kept their eyes right on me. And they grabbed me and gave me a old barroom heave. “Now, where are you seated young fellow?” I said, “I’m seated over there, but the President’s calling me.” “Now you get back down. Everything’s nice and quiet. We don’t want no stampede up there. You get back to you table like a nice little fellow. We don’t want any trouble.”

So Ed Moss pulled one of the fellow’s coat, and he said, “The President’s calling this fellow.” So they looked up, and the President’s going—in other words, let him come up. So, immediately they let me go. So I walk up to the head table, and it was kind of on a high rise, and it was all flowers in front of it. So he put his hand out to shake my hand, and it was about that much short, so I said to him “You want me to go around the back?” He said, “No, step right up there,” you know. So I stepped on the flower pot, and when I did, I went down to my ankle, and it was real flowers and had been watered and the dirt was in there. It elevated me enough that I was able to shake his hand. He says, “Ed, how are you? It’s good to see you.” “It’s good to see you, Mr. President.” He introduced me to a fellow sitting on his right. I think it was a fellow named White that was running the affair.

[-42-]

STEWART: Tom White.

BERUBE: Tom White, and I forget who else was there, but anyway, “How’s everybody? How’s everybody?” Now, the irony of this thing is, John, Bernie Paquette’s wife, her name was Evangeline. Now this is a... It’s a French name. And he met her once in 1954, this is nine years later, and he says, “How’s Evangeline?” Now this amazed me how he could think of that name. So he said, “Who are you with?” I said, “I’m with the gang from Fall River. Gee,” I said, “they’d love to say hello to you, but I realize it impossible.” He says, “Where are they?” I said, “Sitting over there.” He says, “Bring them over.”

So immediately I looked over, you know, and I called them over to come, you know, so two of them got up. Bernie and Joe Harrify [Joseph E. Harrify, Jr.] was the other one. So they brought their programs up, you know, and of course, the... When we got up there, the Secret Service men formed a line right there. Nobody else was going to get to him. Of course, everybody was looking at you. Of course, I was a little embarrassed, you know, not only for myself but for him. I said, “Maybe I started something. I should have kept quiet.” But he was in no effort to snap off the interview or anything. So I said, “Gee, it’d be nice if you could sign the thing.” And he signed it, you know, for the boys and he signed mine. So I shook his hand, and he was awful nice to me.

So as I’m going to go away, he said, “Ed, come here.” I came back, and he said, “When are you going to come to see me in Washington?” I said, “I’ve been there twice, but, you know, you’re tied up with, you know, different people every time I go there.” He said,



“Why don’t you come some time in March? That’s a nice time to come down.” He said, “Get a hold of Mrs. Lincoln, and she’ll make an appointment. We can get together.” I said, “Fine.” So I came away from there. Little did I realize it was going to be the last time I ever saw him.

[-43-]

Of course, you know, I don’t need to tell you how you felt and I felt after the assassination. So in January, I couldn’t stand it any longer. I had to talk to somebody down there. I hadn’t spoken to Ted. And I said, “Gee, Mrs. Lincoln.” I saw her number in the paper where she was receiving, you know, mail for Mrs. Kennedy. I said, “Maybe I can talk to her.” So I called her up to see if there’s any more pictures around, you know, because everybody who’d come in wanted more pictures. So I finally got a hold of her, you know, told her how sorry I was. She said “I know.” She says, “It was an awful thing.” And she says, “Don’t feel bad for me. Feel bad for Jackie.” She says, “Instead of us keeping her up, she kept us up, you know, which is true about all the stories you read.”

I said, “Gee, you know,” I says, “I saw him in Boston.” She says, “I know all about it.” I said “What do you mean” She said, “Well, when he comes back to the office after every trip like that, the next morning I’d say, ‘Good morning, Mr. President.’” She told me the whole story. He came in that Monday morning, and she said, “How’d you make out?” “Oh” he said, “I had a wonderful time.” He said, “I saw all, a lot of my old friends. I met an old friend of yours. And he mentioned my name. And he said, “Incidentally, I’ve invited him to come down in March. So he’s going to get a hold of you, and,” he said, “we’re going to arrange for him to come down” Now, he even....

Of course, that made me feel worse when I heard that. But this was the type of a guy he was, John. I mean I’m telling you. When I went on the air over at New Bedford.... They called me up when he was assassinated. They wanted people that were close to him, so they asked me to go over and say something, a few words, you know. What could you say? I mean, everybody was saying it. The only thing I added was that “The country lost a great leader, and I lost a good friend.” That’s all. This is the way, exactly, it was. Nothing else. I mean, it’s hard to say that a President of the United States was your friend, but actually you had to say that because of the things he did for me. I mean, I consider myself a small guy, I mean, a little fellow in a little town. But he never forgot the little guy. And this is what made him. The fellow that helped him out when he needed it. And he always brought this out. “You helped me when I needed it.” For instance, when he took care of me on

[-44-]

the money. He said “You helped me when I needed it.” He says, “Now you need help. I’m going to help you.” This was his attitude.

So that was the story, John. I can’t think of anything too much more that did happen. I hope I have been helpful to you.

STEWART: Yes. I can’t think of any more questions. You’ve covered it fairly well.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

[-45-]

Edward C. Berube Oral History Transcript  
Name Index

**B**

Berube, Mrs., 24, 25, 33, 41  
Brewer, Basil, 14

**C**

Cartier, Maurice, 1, 2, 3, 4  
Celeste, Vincent J., 10  
Connolly, James Louis, 8

**D**

Dalton, Mark J., 3  
Delaney, Edward J., 14  
Dever, Paul A., 9  
Doolan, Edward F., 10, 12

**E**

Eisenhower, Dwight D., 34, 39

**F**

Fay, Paul B., Jr., 24  
Furcolo, Foster, 21, 34, 37, 38

**G**

George, 30  
Grace, Eddie, 11, 35  
Grant, William P., 17, 18

**H**

Harrify, Joseph E., Jr., 43  
Harrington, Edward F., 5  
Herter, Christian A., 9

**K**

Kane, John F., 17, 18  
Kennedy, Caroline Bouvier, 39  
Kennedy, Edward Moore, 4, 36, 41  
Kennedy, Jacqueline Bouvier, 23, 26, 44  
Kennedy, John F., 1, 2, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13,  
16, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 25, 26, 29, 31, 32,  
33, 36, 37, 39, 42, 44  
Kennedy, Robert F., 6, 11, 13, 21

Kennedy, Rose Fitzgerald, 17

**L**

Ladeira, Ernest C., 7, 39  
LaVoie, Mr., 7  
Lawford, Patricia Kennedy, 17, 22  
Leclair, Mrs., 16  
Lewin, Charles J., 14  
Lincoln, Evelyn N., 33, 40, 43, 44  
Lodge, Henry Cabot, 4, 7, 12, 13, 19, 20, 21

**M**

Martin, Joseph William, Jr., 7, 8, 10, 11, 36  
McCarthy, Joseph R., 20  
McCormack, Edward J., Jr., 34  
Morey, Robert F., 18, 38  
Morrissey, Francis X., 31, 32  
Moss, Edward, 41, 42  
Murphy, Monica, 35  
Murphy, Robert F., 35

**N**

Nixon, Richard Milhous, 39

**O**

O'Brien, Lawrence F., 3, 17  
O'Donnell, Kenneth P., 3

**P**

Paar, Jack Harold, 19  
Paquette, Bernie, 6, 10, 13, 24, 38, 43  
Paquette, Evangeline, 43  
Peabody, Endicott, 34  
Phelan, Joe, 10  
Plourde, Babe, 25, 26, 27  
Powers, David F., 5

**R**

Reardon, Timothy J., Jr., 28, 29, 30, 41

**S**

Saltonstall, Leverett, 21, 22

Sevigny, Charles E., 14  
Shriver, Eunice Kennedy, 17, 22  
Sorensen, Theodore C., 22  
Stevenson, Adlai E., 9, 35

## W

Walsh, David Ignatius, 20  
Waterman, John, 39  
White, Tom, 42, 43  
Whitehead, 39