MARYLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Oral History Office

PETER MARUDAS

Chief Administrative Assistant
to
Mayor Theodore R. McKeldin

Interviewed by Paula Rome

The Governor Theodore McKeldin-Dr. Lillie May Jackson Project
An inquiry into the Civil Rights activities
of
two Maryland leaders
during
the mid-twentieth century

OH 8101

January, 1976

Baltimore, Maryland

[illegible]

Interviewee: Peter Marudas
Interviewer: Paula Rome
Date:
Place: Mr. Marudas' office in the Federal Building
Transcriber: Garnette Brant
Topic: Mayor McKeldin and His Relation to Civil Rights in the Late Sixties.
Cassette Number I:1

I: How did it come to be that you went to work for McKeldin?

A: In early 1967, which was really the last year of his term, Mr. McKeldin's Chief Administrative Assistant, Richard Andrews, who previously had been Deputy Director for the Baltimore Urban Renewal and Housing Agency, had decided to take a job in New Castle County, Delaware, to run the County Government up there. One day Mr. Andrews called me into his office and indicated to me if I had any interest in replacing him. It was totally unexpected. I was at that time working as a government and political reporter for the Baltimore Evening Sun and had been assigned to City Government from December 1963 until that period. So I'd been there over three years covering City Government. Of course, Mayor McKeldin was the Mayor for that entire period.

Dick Andrews indicated to me that the Mayor thought a lot about me and had a great deal of respect for me, and thought that I would be the person who could handle the job. I had no previous government experience except that I was familiar with the City Hall operation, having been assigned as a reporter for three years. So I then discussed it with--I recall discussing it with the Mayor briefly after a Board of Estimates meeting one day. I thought about it a little bit and then decided I would do it. I kind of figured that the Mayor wouldn't run again for reelection and that even if I just stayed for the next ten or eleven months that it would be valuable experience to me to have worked as a Chief Aide to the Mayor of the sixth largest city in the country.

As I found out later, Mr. McKeldin had discussed the matter with Mr. D'Alesandro whom he had envisioned as being his successor and had hoped that Mr. D'Alesandro when he became Mayor would keep me on. Which, indeed, he did. I was grateful to Mr. McKeldin for that time for worrying about my future. So that's how I came to go to work for him. I had never been involved with him politically in any way.

I'm not a native Baltimorean. I came here from Detroit to work for the Sun in early 1963 although I do have many ties to Baltimore. I have many, many relatives. In fact, outside of Detroit, my hometown, the city with most of my relatives is Baltimore. So I came here frequently as a child, every summer for ten years, practically. So I am not a stranger to the city, not in that sense, but a stranger in a public sense in terms of a public involvement. So that's how I came to work for him.

I: Was there something specific, do you think, that McKeldin was looking to you for?

A: No, I guess he thought one, that I knew the operation of the City Government and, two, he was comfortable, I think, or I was comfortable with his particular governmental philosophy. I think that everybody who'd held the job--he really professionalized the operation of the Mayor's office in his second term to a greater degree than it had ever been professionalized, and the predecessors to me had generally been people who all agreed with the Mayor's philosophy of government. Although I was a registered Democrat--everyone who held the job was a Democrat--that didn't really make any difference to the Mayor, however. So I think that he felt that I knew the job. My one fear was that I had no previous experience.

I just went right into an administrative position, the Chief Administrative Position without any previous experience. But he was good because he really gave you--good if you like to work that way. He was not a detail man. He just gave you very broad parameters of policy within which you would work and it was up to you to fill those in. So he was very, very removed in many ways from the day-to-day operations. He wanted the big policy issues and then you had to translate them into concrete tangible governmental actions. That's the way he operated.

A: And if he were not pleased with your solution to a problem you'd have to go back and work on it again or he took it as it came?

A: He generally took it as it came. He gave his people really tremendous latitude to operate. That's the way he always did. If he was upset he'd tell you, but he felt, for instance, I came in there very fresh and new. I think I had a great deal of trepidation and, really, questions as to whether I could do the job. I think it would be natural. I had never been even near that kind of position and he just had a way of extracting from you what I think of as a high level of performance and dedication. He really had a way about that.

I: Which is in itself a strength.

A: Yes, it was. It was quite interesting. He was very much a person who--you know it is not always true, but he had very humble beginnings and he never forgot about where he came from, and I think he always gave the benefit of the doubt to the person working for him. I mean he could get mad but he gave you the benefit of the doubt. So if you made a mistake...

I: You could try again?

A: Yes.

I: Before we get going on the civil rights, let's talk a little bit about McKeldin's accomplishments in other areas. What other issues or projects were particularly important to him; what other new ground do you feel he broke during his second administration?

A: The Inner Harbor, of course, the completion of ~~the~~ c~~hanne~~l Charles Center, but the Inner Harbor which was his idea, undoubtedly, and we are seeing the fruition of it now.

I: Hopefully.

A: Hopefully, yes. McKeldin was a man who dealt in big visions as I said. He really had vision. He had an idea where the City ought to go and the way the State ought to go. In both, I guess, the physical areas, developmental areas, the Inner Harbor, and then in the non-physical in the human rights area which you know, civil rights, in housing which cuts both ways. But he really had--when he spoke, he spoke with vision. You could see him looking forward. It is kind of unique in a way for Mayors--it is no way to disparage any of the other Mayors--but they are more nuts and bolts. Generally, not always, but generally Mayors have got to be concerned with the day-to-day operation of government producing the services. McKeldin was not a governmental technician. He left that to other people. He wanted to look at the big picture. So the Inner Harbor, of course, was really his landmark, and I know he felt that it was. He felt that it was a natural growth of the Charles Center, that the City had to really redevelop its--he said, "After all, you know, that's where the City started and that's where its rebirth ought to continue."

And, of course, he put great emphasis on the areas of housing. You know he had Dick Steiner over at the Urban Renewal Agency as the National Director, and Marty Millspaugh. So he put a great emphasis on it. One thing about McKeldin, he would say it. He would always say, "I'm a high tax man."

I: His programs cost money.

A: He'd say they cost money. He used to talk about the University of Maryland. You know if he didn't spend the money when he was Governor it wouldn't be there. He always said, "If you listen to the people who said, 'Don't spend, don't spend,' if you follow that to its logical consequence, then nothing would happen at all. There'd be no University. It would just be like a business." He said you could never operate a business if you didn't spend money. You have to spend money in order to make money. In order to develop the people's capacities and talents, he always felt that you have to spend money.

The other thing that comes to my mind, too, is his perception of the City, of what the City's function was. Now Mr. McKeldin was not a scholar in the traditional sense and that he had great degrees, possessed a great formal education. He did not. But he was a scholar more in the truer sense. He really gleaned from history certain lessons or axioms or what have you. You know he was a great scholar of the Old and New Testaments. He viewed the City as--he used to give this famous speech (and the other people can tell you). He'd say, "Look, they talk about the poor and the minorities who would come to the city." He said, "We want them to come. This is where they can come into the mainstream of American life. This is where their options open up for them. Where they were their options were limited or there were no options."

So that he said the city was always historically to provide the role, bringing in those who (I can't remember his exact words) were at the bottom of the ladder or those who were the most impoverished. The city provided that vehicle for them to move upwards or really to develop themselves and enter the mainstream of society. He believed very strongly in that. He says, "They come from Appalachia. They come from the areas in the South." He welcomed that as a challenge. You know, he saw that as the historical~~ly~~ ~~the~~ role, ~~of~~ the city ought to provide not only in the physical sense, but in a spiritual sense. It would bring people together.

I: So then in terms of his civil rights policy this would be a natural.

A: That's right. Exactly. That's right. In other words, his perception of what a city ought to be would include a strong commitment to civil rights in order to give people opportunity--- in order to release their energies and talents for their own good, and for the good of the community, and for the good of politically, you know, as I recall, he never disparaged his political opponents because he felt he kind of needed them in a practical sense. So he always generally had his majorities in the Council. I think he would try, at the beginning of the session, try to make sure that he had his majorities and that he had a working majority in order to get his programs through. That was Mr. Adelson's job--talking and lobbying and working with the various political factions whose representatives were in the City Council at the time. So he enjoyed generally good relationships.

I: He had to have.

A: Several with whom he didn't get along too well personally.

I: Do you want to elaborate on that?

A: No, but he generally was quite successful in getting his programs.

I: Do you think to any extent his courtship of minorities had to do with his knowing that he was a member of a minority party and needed all the votes he could get or is that a...

A: No, I don't think so. I think his courtship of minorities stemmed from a couple of reasons. One was his basic commitment, and two, I think that politically that was an area he could go to that was open to him, and he put together coalitions of people. But I don't think it stemmed from that. I think he put together the coalitions. He was very strong in the black community, of course, which had a traditionally Republican orientation until Roosevelt. The Jewish community with the anti-machine Republicans, and then he had his own vote, too, in East Baltimore as well. He would go to all the ethnic affairs.

He had a sensitivity for that. He had a sensitivity to the various ethnic and religious minorities. He knew how to strike the responsive chords.

I: Without seeming...

A: Patronizing.

I: Right. Exactly. You mentioned Bill Adelson. How about some of his other advisors? Who were they and to what extent did they influence him?

A: I came at the tail-end of his career, so I can't speak with great knowledge. But I would say that you'd put Bill Adelson as the chief one, the late Joseph Allen, you know, who was during his last four years his most important day-to-day advisor. Most important advisor on policy in general.

I: He was City Solicitor?

A: That's right. And he was right next to him at the Board of Estimates meetings every Wednesday which were where the important policy making decisions were made publicly. And the Judge was really the important advisor in the last four years on a day-to-day basis. Of course, then he had people like Simon Sobeloff, who was his long-time friend and associate. He was extremely important. Gene Feinblatt, Attorney Eugene Feinblatt, Chairman of the Urban Renewal Commission during the McKeldin administration; Al Shugar who is now retired in Florida.

I: What did he advise on?

A: Al was close to him politically. It's interesting--he's now retired in Florida--a very close friend. Victor Frenkil. Mr. McKeldin was close to Victor Frenkil. They didn't advise him as much, I guess, as they were helpful to him politically.

But Sobeloff and Al and Abel ~~Waldman~~ OLMAN over at the Hopkins--Gerald Johnson used to write speeches for McKeldin when he really needed a good speech. I'm sure there are others--Al Quinn, the late Al Quinn who was his chief press person. Adelson was a legal as well as a political advisor, also. He had in Sobeloff, Allen, Adelson, just tremendous legal and political talent. Feinblatt. Leon Sachs. Leon Sachs is a very important person to talk to, I think. Leon Sachs was one of those people who was one of those bridges, he spans--very active in labor as a mediator and in the Jewish community. Leon Sachs was one McKeldin would always call in to troubleshoot the labor problems.

I: He had a talent for drawing really great persons.

A: ~~You~~ I can say that ~~it was~~ as a self-serving failure--;-but he had that talent. He just could spot people. So those people were kind of his--the ones that I mentioned--Adelson, Sobeloff, Allen, Waldman, Sachs, Feinblatt were kind of a continuing cadre of advisors in the background, and then other persons would come in. Steiner in Housing and his Administrative Assistants were in and out.

I: What about McKeldin's relationship with Agnew? Was it a source of great frustration? I know their approaches were so different in civil rights matters, for example.

A: Still They got to be different./ Agnew's approach was not much different, in many ways, than McKeldin's. Really. I mean, you'vefgot to look at Agnew's record in Baltimore County. It was not a bad record.

I: There were no blacks in Baltimore County.

A: No. But I mean he pushed for certain things that were construed...

the country. He really believed in that, and that this was the place that the city traditionally provided that function, the vehicle for people to come in and move on. He cited the immigrants, the great immigrations from Europe in the 1800's or the early 1900's. Where did the immigration come? Most of it came to the cities. So that the city absorbed and did that job and now it was the white and black immigrants from Appalachia and the South.

I: We will get on to the civil rights later. I have a couple other questions for you first. What was McKeldin's relationship to the Democratic Party? How did he get his legislation through?

A: Unfortunately, a person who could best answer that is deceased, and that's Bill Adelson (M. William Adelson) who was his closest and really, I think, only political confidant who really handled all of the Mayor's politics. The Mayor handled very little politics. I had absolutely no political responsibility. None, as his Chief Administrative Assistant. Maybe some of the others before me did, but I don't think they did either, or if they were, they were minimal. But Bill Adelson was the person who handled all of the Mayor's (and as Governor) political responsibilities. I guess you could go back and talk to people like Louis Goldstein. I think he was President of the Senate when McKeldin was Governor and he might be able--people like that.

I: What the machinations were?

A: Right. Mr. McKeldin had friendly relations generally with the Democratic political leaders and if you were against him

I: Open housing?

A: No. Urban Renewal. You recall that Agnew lost tremendously. That's when the John Birch Society came and poured money and people when Agnew sought to develop an Urban Renewal program in the county. Mr. Val Hable, who is now presently Secretary of the State Department of Planning, was the Urban Renewal Director then. And Agnew lost that referendum three to one. Then he tried to strengthen the Human Relations Commission in the county. So at least observedly he was starting for the more moderate, I guess, wing of the Republican Party.

I: I think I had forgotten all that.

A: Yes. Well, really, I think in fairness that people ought to look at the total--look at Agnew--most people look at him beginning in '68 when he dressed down the black leaders during the riots. I think that he felt that Agnew was lacking in ability. But his approach to Mr. Agnew was as to all others. He was the Governor. He was important to the City and that you should try to generate a response from Mr. Agnew that was positive.

One thing that McKeldin always did and it was interesting, is that he always believed that everybody was a creature of God. He believed very strongly in the Brotherhood of Man and the Fatherhood of God. It was one of his favorite expressions and he translated that into his daily dealings. So that if a person who was critical or abusive or insulting to him or his policy, he always tried to find a way to elicit a more positive response from the person. The people would come and shout believed that that which distinguished the Republican Party and that which gave it a lot of its philosophical base was its commitment to black rights, that it was a party of Lincoln.

The third factor, I think, was his association in particular with Simon Sobeloff who had a great influence upon him. McKeldin was Secretary under Mayor Broening, and Mr. Sobeloff, I think, was a young Assistant City Solicitor. That's when they first came together in '27-'28. I think those factors as best as I can isolate them were the three factors that accounted for his unusual commitment and advocacy, and vigorous advocacy, of the rights of minorities. He kept it right to the end. I remember (it's tangential but it's connected) when a group tried to close down the left-wing bookstore over on Park Avenue (not Sherman's but the next one over--I think Lee owns it, Robert Lee is his name). I was a reporter then.

I: In '66?

A: That's right. The landlord was entering tremendous pressure. McKeldin called the landlord in and he said, "If this is ~~a~~ the freedom ~~feeling~~ of expression, I would agree with the man. But, my goodness, we can't permit groups to intimidate others regardless of what they believe."

I recall that the New York Times stringer who worked at the Evening Sun was away so I had to take his place that week, and I wrote the story for the New York Times. They ran it on page eleven or twelve, just exactly as I had written it. I really felt flattered. You know it was a major story of a Mayor really taking the side of an unpopular group. As I said, he didn't sometime in the City Hall and I would say, "We can't see these people coming down here yelling and screaming." He'd say, "The fact that they are here yelling and screaming indicates that they're interested, that they have a commitment to something. Now we've got to see how we can channel that commitment into something constructive and positive." So, you know it was that he recognized that each person and each kind of group had their own particular dignity and integrity. That's what I learned from him.

I: Which is not to say that he never yelled and screamed?

A: No. But in public he never yelled. He might have, but in public he rarely ever did. What happened, he'd get somebody else to do the yelling--like Judge Joseph Allen.

I: I was going to ask you pointedly about his motivation, his source of civil rights views and concerns, but I would think that between the notion of what you were just speaking about, a sense of the dignity of man and his ideas about cities...

A: Other people could tell you, but I think it was primarily based on his religious commitment. Mr. McKeldin was generally a religious man. I mean he wasn't a person who practiced that public kind of religion. He really believed, and I believe that from what I can,(and others may be able to speak--obviously I was not a contemporary) but I think that that religious belief, then combined--It was translated into a sense of social conscience. You know he believed in the Republican Party as well as that it was the party of Lincoln which was committed toward the emancipation and the freeing of the blacks. So that he had the religious belief. He was a Republican, secondly, who have this great formal academic background. He was what you'd call a "guts libertarian." A good man. He didn't have to be taught that.

Interviewee: Peter Marudas
Interviewer: Paula Rome
Date:
Place: Mr. Marudas' office in the Federal Building
Transcriber: Garnette Brant
Topic: Mayor McKeldin and His Relation to Civil Rights in the Late Sixties.
Cassette Number II:15

A: It was that contemporary. For instance, he came at it so frequently from a religious non-secular standpoint that, whereas, I think a lot of the more contemporary arguments were that the Constitution says this, and it's right. Well, McKeldin would even go deeper. He would say that God had ordained that people would be equal. That brings a more emotional content to it, that you just don't sit down. It's not an intellectual analysis. He didn't start from an intellectual premise that we've got to protect everyone's rights because our own are involved. That's one argument. Right? Or that the Constitution is a legal document and people need to have their legal rights. Or a more humanistic non-religious, you know, that a lot of modern humanism is based on, that the individual has the right to self-fulfillment. He may have tended to agree with those, but his basic and fundamental premise was really a theological basis which then had translated itself into tangible expression.

I: How widely known was this basis?

A: Well, he spoke about it, I think. He talked to people when he spoke in the black churches. That was where he really spoke with fervor. I heard him speak. I'll never forget when President Johnson came here in '64 and Mr. McKeldin was the first important Republican to endorse him for President over Goldwater. Goldwater represented everything that was the opposite of what

Mr. McKeldin perceived the Republican Party to stand for. He gave a speech and it's in the Sun where he got up and he said: He listed a list of things ~~that~~ about President Johnson, "You believe in the rights of the aged, so do we." Every time he would say that the crowd would respond at the National Guard Armory. Then he got to the one about the Brotherhood of Man and the Fatherhood of God. He couldn't let that go. He always used religious analogy, he used the Old Testament and the New Testament in order to make a point. So that's what I meant in terms of style and his speaking style.

He was the last of the really declamatory old-style orators. It was a very open and voluble style. So I think that's one reason he was not fully appreciated. Plus people don't read history and they don't read. They don't bother. I mean he was for these issues before it became fashionable. He used to tell me that when he would attend the Southern Governors' Conference that not only was he the only Republican but that they wouldn't talk to him because of his positions on civil rights. You know he ran in the state before Brown vs. Topeka in '54.

I: He was a Southern Governor.

A: Yes. Maryland was in the Southern Governors' Conference.

I: So it was particularly painful when (would it have been in '63-4 ?) when Martin Luther King was here and labeled Maryland the most segregated state in the North (he was wrong) and Baltimore the largest segregated city in the country. Do you have any recollection of that?

A: I don't recall that.

I: It must have been crushing.

A: It must have bothered him, yes. I never heard him remark on that, but someone else probably could. And I think, with all due respect to the late Reverend King, I don't think he fully appreciated who McKeldin was at the time. It may have been.

I: I don't think anybody did. I know I didn't.

A: Well, that's interesting. You see again the perception that people had of what his commitment was and how that commitment...of course, in '63 he had just come in. He had returned after twenty years. I don't think that he would have agreed with that and, of course, he did everything he could within the following four years.

I: But the particular agony was he had just drafted that comprehensive Civil Rights Bill and then to have this statement made nationally must have been very painful. You kind of touched on this earlier. Did he have a plan as Mayor or was his orientation more toward finding particular solutions to problems as they arose?

A: Dave Glenn and Stanley Maz~~or~~er could speak much more knowledgeably about that, because they were really the architects, I think, the prime staff people and others involved in those legislative proposals. I think by the time I had come most of the important legislative efforts had been completed. Then we were operating on a kind of problem-solving basis. I think he came in with a detailed strategy of what to do. He did come in with a definite commitment to do that and it translated itself into this various kind of legislation.

I: You came exactly when? In '67, February or March?

A: I think in March.

I: Well, in '66 when Baltimore was made a target city have you any sense of exactly what happened?

A: I was a reporter then so I was on the scene. That didn't make the Mayor very happy, but as I've told you, he responded to it. You know two cities were designated by CORE at the time, as I recall. You'll have to check the facts. Cleveland. And Mayor Lockhart there reacted very violently. As I understand, very heatedly. I think he said that he would lock agitators up and everything like that, which immediately, you see, set a confrontation status from which Cleveland has not really recovered, I don't think, even though they had Stokes, a black Mayor. I don't think the frictions of the divisions existing in Cleveland between the communities have healed.

Mr. McKeldin instead was conciliatory. And I think, as I told you (and I'm trying to think where it was) I think it was Knox Memorial where they were having that meeting. I think it was CORE or whoever it was. They were having the meeting and they were really denouncing the city and Mr. McKeldin went to the meeting uninvited and welcomed them to Baltimore.

He said, "I need your help to work on these problems. We agree." Well, that did two things. He gave it a more pragmatic interpretation. He took the wind out of their sails, so to speak. Secondly, they were coming into a city where the Mayor had a strong identification and relationship with the black community. By attacking the city which had a Mayor that was close to the black, they were in effect attacking the wrong people, because they had put McKeldin there. So in a political sense he was isolating those groups. So people would say, "My goodness, we agree with CORE, maybe with what CORE is saying, but they can't knock our friend McKeldin."

I: Why would CORE have selected Baltimore?

A: I don't know.

I: That was poor judgment. They certainly could have found a lot of other cities.

A: Well, as you know, McKeldin and Gelston then handled the CORE thing and they tried to integrate the black.

I: That was the thing with the civic interest group? Tim Conway and Dave Prettyman?

A: Right. And they never really got--I remember one CORE organizer told me, "We just never really got off the ground in Baltimore and the main reason was Mr. McKeldin." They did do some things. I'm not saying they didn't. It was part of the general change in the black community. And I want to get these points: Going back to Cleveland, I think that the general lack in Baltimore of polarity between the communities in large part is due to Mr. McKeldin's initial reaction to the new militancy (what do you want to call it?) new aggressiveness, or the new activism in the black community that emerged in the sixties that kind of went to the streets. Kind of left the courts and went to the streets and that its nature changed. It just wasn't open accommodations, but it was jobs and housing and kind of more difficult problems. He absorbed that in the city. First of all, I think he understood it and that having him there was very important. We see that now, you see, the fact that there's never been a real breakdown in communications between the communities in Baltimore. There really hasn't, and we've never had that kind of severe confrontation. I think that was very important. I think McKeldin and then D'Alesandro who followed along, who came later.

I: No one seems to have had the sensitivity that he did. He was just prepared.

A: So he was the right person for our city at the right time and we've been spared, I think, the tremendous animosities and bitterness and polarization that's marked other cities. I just wanted to make that point.

I: To what extent do you think the time he spent in the streets, particularly in the summer of '67 going from neighborhood to neighborhood, was that helpful?

A: Extremely helpful. Those things might be cosmetic, but you know, I remember Lindsay was doing some of that but John Lindsay in no way had...

I: That does not ring as true.

A: Well, no. Because Lindsay was--several things. Lindsay was a real patrician. I don't mean if you're patrician you can't have these feelings. But he was a patrician; he had never been really identified in any way with those concerns. So that when McKeldin went into the communities, it wasn't a show. He had always been there. It wasn't a question that he was coming, as he'd always been there. He had visited, I think, every black church in town and had preached and talked so that I think it was helpful to the extent that that kind of thing could have been helpful. I think had not Reverend King been assassinated, I don't believe that Baltimore would have had...

I: Any riot at all.

A: I really don't. But once that started, it set off the chain reaction of disturbances through the whole country.

I: That was the same summer that he came up with all those jobs that you mentioned, overnight?

A: Oh, yes. That's right--when that group came down and said they wanted jobs.

I: Who was the group?

A: I can't remember. I think it was an ad hoc group. I think it was just a group of mostly young blacks who said they needed jobs. I remember Judge Joseph Allen said, "You want jobs?" They said, "Yes." "How many?" I can't now even remember the figures, but I think it was 1,500. So then it was my job to come up with the money, and I remember that night immediately...

I: It probably seemed like ten thousand jobs.

A: We had gone to see Agnew, incidentally, in connection with that and he was extremely helpful at the time. I don't know if Parren Mitchell was there then, now the Congressman who is head of the Anti-Poverty Program. Agnew made available $800,000 from his Contingency Fund. The Mayor explained to him the importance of it and we put it all together. But, you know, he responded that way and put a lot of people--also, he put them on the spot to produce people. I remember when Judge Allen said, "We're going to have the jobs, but you've got to have the people."

I: But you'd better bring us? And they did?

A: They did. But we went to other sources as well so that again, that was a good response. But, also, politically McKeldin put an onus on the groups to produce, to kind of put their money where their mouth was.

I: There was very much a two-way relationship right along, it seems.

A: Oh, yes.

I: One more question, and then I'll let you go, because we haven't touched on this at all. What was his relationship to or how did he respond to those who exploited blacks, the numbers people, the drugs, the prostitution people?

A: I can't ever speak ~~for~~ to that. You know one thing about McKeldin. He was very much opposed to liquor. You know?

I: Yes.

A: I guess for a couple of reasons, and maybe people more closely connected with him personally could verify it. You know his father was a heavy drinker. I think his father was a policeman. I think his father was an alcoholic, and perhaps one of his brothers, but he was very, very opposed to it.

I: He didn't drink at all?

A: No, and he didn't permit it to be served in the Statehouse. The eight years he was in the Statehouse he didn't permit it. He called it, he'd use some antiquated term like "demon rum" or something like that, I recall. I think if he'd had his way he would eliminate it. I think he was a prohibitionist down deep. I think he really was. And drink, particularly as it ravaged the poor communities.

I: Well, any of these things.

A: I can't remember him particularly speaking to prostitution or to numbers and things of that type, but I would think, given his philosophy and given, of course, his religious orientation that he would find these things, obviously, distasteful. I can't speak particularly of that, but I say that he was puritannical in that way. I think he had an understanding that people were sinners and had failings, so he understood that, and sort ~~of~~ saw and expected it. If you're in politics you have to because you're dealing with people in various states of imperfection. So he understood that, but by the same token, you know, he felt strongly about, particularly, liquor. He knew what it was doing to people, but people in better circumstances can absorb the blows that alcoholism or drink give either through their family resources and others. But if the man blew his paycheck at the bar, that was it for the family.

I: Did he take any action to control it in any way in terms of distribution?

A: I can't remember when he was Governor whether he did certain things. He may well have. Others would have to testify to that. But he never was favorable. I know that. I think wherever he may have had a say in something, he would. Gambling, I think, fell in the same way.

I: What about slum landlords? Of course he was concerned about urban renewal and rebuilding these houses, so I guess he'd have to work with those people.

A: He had pretty strong legislation, I think, go in on all these things. He was a strong supporter on housing courts and stuff like that. You've got to remember that McKeldin probably came out of an environment that was not too much different than were a lot of the people who were . He was from South Baltimore. His mother took in wash and she was a German immigrant. It was on Stockholm Street which is now Ostend ~~Austin~~. So that he had a--I don't mean to say that people who live that way necessarily--in fact, sometimes people come out of circumstances like that want to forget it. Well, he was not the type who did. He had a very concrete understanding of what --I remember one time we went to a group in Southwest Baltimore.

He hadn't been out there for a long time. It was a neighborhood group, integrated. For some reason he had missed a previous engagement to meet with them and they had problems down there, housing and others. He got down and they were booing him and yelling at him, "Boy, you no good bum Ted." He was late ~~leggy~~ (to meet them). So he walked out. I was then a reporter and he said, "Hello, hello, hello." Dave Feinblatt was up there from the Housing Authority, and they were really giving it to him. And McKeldin gets up and he says, "I'm very happy to be with you today." You know how he used to talk. "Aw, you no good," they were yelling. It was the basement of a church, you know. Somebody yelled in the back, "Talk louder, you bum."

He says, "That reminds me of the first time I was Mayor when I was in East Baltimore before a similar group of fine citizens like yourself." Someone in the back yelled out for me to talk louder whereupon someone in the front row said, 'If you could hear what he was saying you would not want him to talk louder!"

He broke the ice that way and then he went into his, "Come let us reason together" (Isaiah) and then he said, "I understand what your problems are. You know I lived eight blocks from here. We were nine children. We were six in a room, three in a bed." And then he just began to relate his family condition.

I: He could do that.

A: And he turned that audience right around. Well, some of it was oratory, but it was believable because he'd been there.

I: He felt it.

A: That's right--and he felt it. So that he immediately turned the group right around. They went on a walking tour of the street, and so that, in a very practical way, gave him an understanding and a concern that, I think, combined as I said with those other points, his religious commitment, that he felt that equality had a theological basis to it. So that gave it an emotional content. Then I think that people like Sobeloff and others gave it an intellectual content. And all those things things came together. I think that was a very important point. I think I might have helped you.

I: Yes, this has been good, very helpful. Thank you.

INDEX

Adelson, William M. 7, 8, 9, 10
Agnew, Spiro 10-11, 21
Alcohol 22-23
Allen, Judge Joseph 9, 10, 12, 21
Andrews, Richard 1

Charles Center 4, 5
Civil Rights Bill 17
Conway, Tim 19
CORE 18, 19

D"Alesandro, Tommy, Jr., 2, 20

Feinblatt, Eugene 9, 10, 24
Frenkil, Victor 9

Glenn, David 17
Goldstein, Louis 7
Goldwater, Barry 15

Housing 5, 23, 24

Inner Harbor 4, 5

Johnson, Gerald 10
Johnson, President Lyndon 15-16

King, Martin Luther 16, 17, 20

Lindsay, Mayor John 20

Mazer, Stanley 17
Millspaugh, Marty 5
Mitchell, Parren 21

New York Times 13

Philosophy 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 15, 23
Prettyman, Dino 19

Quinn, Al 10

Republican Party 12, 13, 16

Sachs, Leon 10
Shugar, Al 9, 10
Sobeloff, Simon 9, 10, 13, 25
South Baltimore 24-25
Southern Governors' Conference 16
Steiner, Dick 5

INDEX

University of Maryland 5
Urban Renewal Agency 5, 23

Wabbe, Val 11
Waldman, Abel 10