

Chuck Johnson and John Adams, 2021 September 23

John Adams [00:00:01] This is John Adams, and I'm here with Charles S. Johnson, a journalist who covered the 1972 Montana Constitutional Convention for The Associated Press. We're speaking on September 23rd, 2021 in Bozeman, Montana. Reforming the state government was the point of rewriting the Montana Constitution in 1972. As a student at the University of Montana, you were a political science intern at the state legislature in 1971. What was the Legislature like under the old 1889 Constitution?

Chuck Johnson [00:00:35] It was a rush job. It was called a 60 day...whirlwind or something like that, they met for 60 days, if they took a day off, it counted against the deadline, so they tend to often work seven days a week. It was... It was a lot more hairy than the Legislature is today.

John Adams [00:01:05] You talked about the secrecy that occurred prior to the '72 Constitution, can you elaborate on that?

Chuck Johnson [00:01:13] Yeah, there are several aspects of it. One was a committee hears a bill has the hearing, the public gets to testify, everyone can testify. Then, usually at a different, on a different day, the committee has what they call an executive session where the members, the legislators discuss the bill, propose amendments, vote on an up or down and then decide whether to recommend a do pass on the bill and send it to the floor of a debate or table it or kill it, that sort of thing. In those days, the executive sessions were closed to the public. It was just the legislators, their staff and an intern or two. And another change was, another thing was, second reading votes after debates on the floor of the House and Senate were not recorded. I've always felt covering the Legislature, those were the critical votes because they followed the debate right away. Third reading is the next day and no, there's no discussion. So the lobbyists had these little booklets and they, you know, someone might keep track of A through C. Someone else might keep track of D through F, that kind of thing so they could get their voting records. But the public couldn't find out in general how their legislator voted on those things. Those were two of the big changes.

John Adams [00:02:39] You covered the '72 Constitutional Convention for The Associated Press while you were still a student at U of M, University of Montana. How old were you and why did you want that job? And how did you get it?

Chuck Johnson [00:02:53] I'd worked the summer of 1971 as a summer intern for AP and enjoyed it, and toward the end of the summer, my boss, Paul Freeman, said 'We'd like you to cover the Constitutional Convention for us in January. Would you be willing to do it?' And I said, 'Yeah, that'd be great.' So I was in grad school at it. I probably took longer than most grad students to finish because I kept getting these journalism gigs and internships and stuff. But I grabbed out [sic], grabbed at the chance and it was a lot of fun.

John Adams [00:03:30] When you arrived at the Legislature, did you when you arrived at the Constitutional Convention, did you have any difficulty getting the delegates or other principals to talk to you, given your relative inexperience covering state government that at that stage in your career?

Chuck Johnson [00:03:44] No, because most of them were inexperienced at being in state government, too. So they were just glad to have the coverage, I think.

John Adams [00:03:52] The Montana Supreme Court had ruled that sitting elected officials couldn't run for the Constitutional Convention. What were the consequences of barring politicians from being delegates?

Chuck Johnson [00:04:03] It was one of the secrets of the of the convention's success. I think legislators previously said, 'Well, we're not doing anything in an even number year, we meet on odd-numbered years. So we'll just come over and do the Constitution when we're not meeting as a legislature.' I think we'd have had a very mediocre Constitution and very similar to the old one, had they done that. So this opened the door for people to run and people from all walks of life. Some of them had been legislators and some had been county commissioners and City Council members. I think a couple of them had been mayors, but by and large, most of these people had not served in government previously.

John Adams [00:04:42] What was opening day of the convention like?

Chuck Johnson [00:04:49] I don't remember. I know they took a big picture that you often see of everyone sitting at their desk.

John Adams [00:05:00] You were filing stories with the AP almost every day. Walk me through how that worked in 1972.

Chuck Johnson [00:05:06] So this is pre-computer days. So I would have to call in radio stories. And the way the AP worked, then maybe still does. But they had what they called radio splits between twenty-five after and twenty-five before the hour and five before and five after. So they wanted new stories or refreshed old stories with a new lead. So I would get on the phone and do that. And then for the print edition stories, I'd usually type them up at the Capitol and then bring them down to the AP. They had people called operators and they sat in on the teletype, so you'd you'd hand it to an editor, they'd edit it, pass it on to the operator and then it'd go out on the wire.

John Adams [00:05:53] In your notes, you had correspondence with your AP editor commanding you to stop being so conscientious about witnessing the convention and just file your story sooner. I want to read that letter. 'CSJ. Charles S. Johnson. Your copy is being denied the display it deserves of late because of the length of the ConCon sessions, pushing your schedule too far into the evening. Break from the sessions when possible and call in copy. You can call it in, say, a four-hundred-word lead on an item in the late afternoon

and then write in and add when you come in. But try not to, but try to tear yourself away from those titillating, great debates periodically and get some ConCon copy moving on the wires earlier in the a.m. cycle. We must protect telegraph editors from their predisposition towards laziness. PCF March four.' Who's PCF?

Chuck Johnson [00:06:50] Paul Freeman, the bureau chief. The guy who hired me.

John Adams [00:06:55] And talk about the tension between not wanting to miss anything at the Constitutional Convention and needing to get those stories written and filed with your AP editors.

Chuck Johnson [00:07:04] Well, that was the problem not having a laptop where you could do both. So I had to go back to the office, type stuff up and then call it in. So that took time and that was something I learned to do better than I did before that. So I tried to try to meet those earlier deadlines.

John Adams [00:07:23] Did you ever feel like you missed anything that you wish you would have been there for when...

[00:07:28] No.

[00:07:29] ...filing copy, which ConCon participants were the most compelling characters to write about?

Chuck Johnson [00:07:38] Well, the president was Leo Graybill of Great Falls, and he was an attorney. He'd he'd run for Congress a couple of times from the Eastern District. His father had been speaker of the House a couple of times. He was kind of old school Montana politics. He was a little on the gruff side, but very sharp, and he ran the convention kind of with an iron hand. They finished, they finished their job, you know, four or five days early and under, under time and under budget. So he was an interesting one to cover. One of the most interesting ones to me was a woman who had been a classmate of mine in political science courses Mae Nan Ellingson, then Mae Nan Robinson. She was the youngest delegate. I think she was 23 or 24 and had a very compelling story. She was a widow in Missoula. Her husband had died in a helicopter crash in Alaska. I think he was a Forest Service pilot, maybe a military pilot, and she decided to run at that age, and she worked door to door and she actually finished second among everybody that ran in Missoula. And she she lived in Missoula a few years while she'd gone to school, and she right away emerged as one of the sharpest. And loved to debate. And she took on some of the lawyers and kind of made mincemeat out of them at times. She was, she was very compelling.

John Adams [00:09:05] In your view, why wasn't a single Indian elected as a delegate and how did the delegates address that gap?

Chuck Johnson [00:09:13] So they used the legislative districts from the previous year. In those days, Montana legislators were elected countywide. There weren't individual single member districts. So my guess is that the counties where you had a significant Native American population, they were not a not a majority of the citizens there. It was an embarrassment that they didn't. Not a one. And I think they felt they felt that and, you know, they did pass what amounted to the the native what Indian Indian Education For All, Native American Education For All, which took decades to get it implemented. But it was definitely an oversight. And you know, nowadays the percentage of Native Americans in the legislature roughly mirrors their percentage population statewide. I think it's about seven or eight percent.

John Adams [00:10:15] Were you there when the two high school girls from the Fort Peck Reservation testified about the importance of their culture to the state of Montana?

Chuck Johnson [00:10:23] I don't remember it, John. I mighta....was that a committee meeting? Probably was. I don't think I covered that.

John Adams [00:10:33] OK. A big part of the purpose of writing the new constitution was to loosen the grip of corporations over state government. What kind of pressure did special interest apply to the delegates and how?

Chuck Johnson [00:10:44] Well, it's interesting that the delegates took steps to try to avoid that. They did not allow lobbyists on the floor at any time. That's a switch from the Legislature, where after the floor session ends, there's there's like an hour cooling off period and then they can come or before weren't allowed on there at all. The other thing they did, and it was the first time it ever been done in Montana history, they required lobbyists to file reports disclosing how much they had spent to influence the delegates. So they were very conscious of this, too. Yeah. And you know, the gossip was and lobbyists wouldn't really talk much on the record, but they did... They were very critical of the whole procedure. They thought it was a lot of guff. And I think they they they were used to being having a lot of access, access to the Legislature. And you know, there were a lot of the time they didn't have it here. They sort of sat up in the the gallery and a lot of I remember seeing pictures and they all had sort of scowls on their face.

John Adams [00:11:49] Were those measures done during a rules process? Were these rules that the delegates themselves agreed to ahead of time before the convention got started?

Chuck Johnson [00:11:58] They did.

John Adams [00:12:00] And do you think the fact that they that they weren't elected officials, that most of them had not held public office, do you think that that played a role in their setting rules to ban special interest from participating?

Chuck Johnson [00:12:16] I think so. I never heard that state, so stated, but I think that was definitely a big factor in it. You had a lot of people that came from communities that had not held office and they, they thought everyone's equal at the convention, you know, whether it's the the farmer who comes over from Fort Benton or the the woman, the nurse who comes over from Missoula, they all have the right same right to testify as the Montana Power lobbyist or the Anaconda Company lobbyist. So that was, I think, a definite decision they made to try to equalize things.

John Adams [00:12:53] As a Capital Beat reporter, you covered the post '72 constitution version of the Montana State Legislature for more than four decades. How is the Legislature different before and after the new constitution?

Chuck Johnson [00:13:06] Well, it is sort of a complicated story. The, uh, big part of the drive for a constitution was to reform the Legislature. It was this 60 day every two years, so they set up annual sessions. And we had them for two years, '73, '74. Now, the Legislature had not met to implement that, so they came in in January of '73. So what happened a lot of time if you had a bill that looked like it was going down in '73, you'd, 'Mr. Chair, I'd like to move that we postpone action on this bill to '74.' So a lot of the workload got sloughed off to '74, and there was there was kind of an outrage about it and people introduced the same bill the next year. They didn't have rules in place to stop that kind of thing. The Constitution also provided for the first time the right for citizens to pass to initiate constitutional initiatives by petition. So the very first constitutional initiative came in the in the summer and fall of 1974, and that was to go back to biennial sessions, although longer ones. So we didn't get to see how annual sessions would have worked had they had time to implement rules to prevent the delay of bills. But certainly the openness was a good thing down the road. Nowadays, the public can and does sit in on executive sessions of committees where the votes and amendments are made, they're big crowds and those the second reading votes are all recorded and now online. So the public, wherever the public may be, can follow the action. Now we have, um, the equivalent of C-SPAN, where you can watch all the committees, all the floor sessions, the votes and everything, and you can even look up the votes on what they call Montana LAWS, L-A-W-S in all caps. So it's way more accessible to the general public and we still have problems. You know, the Legislature is in January through the end of April. It's really hard for a family to come down from Glasgow, Montana through the icy roads. It's really hard to come down from the Flathead or over from eastern Montana. I've always thought that the Legislature maybe should be starting March or something like that, but I don't know if farmers and ranchers would like that, but it makes it difficult for the public to get down here to testify and contact their legislator.

John Adams [00:15:52] Tell me about the ratification effort. What kind of political fights occurred between the conclusion of the convention and the election, where the voters of the state ratified it? And who are the players?

Chuck Johnson [00:16:03] So as I mentioned, they finished under, you know, they didn't take as much time as they were allotted and they they had money left over and they had decided I think it was \$40,000 or \$50,000--they were going to use that for a quote, 'Public Education' unquote, campaign. Immediately, the Montana taxpayers and another group or two filed a case directly with the Montana Supreme Court challenging that use of public money, and the Montana Supreme Court said, 'Yeah, you can't do that.' That's and sort of a side issue: There was Leo Graybill was speaking to an audience at the University of Montana, and he was highly critical of the Supreme Court decision, blasted it. The next day, they they called him in and threatened to discipline him. So he backtracked. But it was kind of outrageous that they would deny the president of the Constitutional Convention the right to comment on what they what their opinion was. So the delegates had no money. One of the heroes in all of this was Betty Babcock, former first lady, the wife of Governor Tim Babcock, former governor Tim Babcock. They own the Colonial Inn, a nice motel in Helena. She said, 'Well, we've got offices, we've got typewriters, we've got phones, we've got copy machines. Come on out here.' So it's kind of organized on the fly and and they got the message out. There were there were some call in TV shows the TV stations did. There was great coverage in the papers, sort of summarizing things. Lots of letters to the editor. Lots of editorials. I think the people that wanted to be informed could be informed. Copies of the Constitution were sent to all voters, but the opponents were largely the taxpayers. The Montana Farmers Union can't prove that the Anaconda Company and Montana Power were against it. They don't show up, but it was largely thought that they were probably against it too. And, uh, you know, there were ads pro and con in the newspaper, some delegates even took out ads in their weekly saying, 'Here's why you should vote for it.' There are 100 delegates and I think all of them signed the Constitution, but I think 10 or 12 later came out against it. So it was pretty controversial. And the big issues were....property taxes. The Constitution took away from local authorities, local county officials, the right to assess the value of property, and there were a lot of allegations that, you know, the assessor's brother in law would get a deal on how his property was assessed or friends and family, that sort of thing. It, that all returned to the state. Or maybe not return... Came to the state for the first time. There was also concern about school funding. The Constitution provided for an equal educational opportunity for everyone. There have been a series of lawsuits filed in other states that had ensured that that happened to the most famous was called the Serrano Case in California, which equalized educational opportunity, i.e. money. And the critics were saying 'Oh, this is going to cost the state a ton of money.' I have not seen the figures. It did cost more money, but it also provided a kid in Glasgow or Glendive with the same opportunity the kid might get in Billings for schools. Those were kind of the two big issues and, uh, I covered election night and it barely scraped scraped by, I think twenty, twenty-five to three thousand, one hundred to three thousand votes. And as we're watching the returns come in, we noticed something kind of interesting. The delegates put three side issues on the ballot. One was to go with a unicameral legislature or stick with a two house legis-, unicameral's a one house legislature, only one state has one, Nebraska. Another issue was to legalize, allow the Legislature to

legalize gambling. The 1889 Constitution said the Legislature can't even consider legalizing it. Now what we had was essentially legal gambling in some places, locally regulated like Butte was pretty wide open. The third issue was whether to outlaw or keep the death penalty. So as I'm watching this with another person, we're noticing that more people have voted on the side issues than on the Constitution itself. Kind of interesting. Butte was the only urban area to reject the Constitution, but overwhelmingly supported gambling, not realizing that you couldn't have gambling without the Constitution. So the question became, well, did a majority of the people that grab ballots vote for it? And the groups that were against that immediately filed a lawsuit challenging it. It went to the Montana Supreme Court immediately. The, um, I was working with a guy, or later worked with a guy named Frank Adams at the Tribune, and Frank got a big scoop that the court had taken a preliminary vote and voted three to two against ratification of the Constitution. That caused a stir. And then they later voted three to two to allow it, the ratification. And it went to the federal court in Billings, and they upheld the ratification. So it was quite a controversy that dragged on really through the fall to see whether it really passed or not. But Montanans were very divided over it.

John Adams [00:22:01] You mentioned that the Constitution passed by a very slim margin, around 2,500 votes or so statewide. Most of the counties, especially rural areas, voted against it and were more.... And it was more popular--except for Butte--in urban districts. What did you make of that divide?

Chuck Johnson [00:22:18] I think a lot of it was rural areas were concerned about the property, the statewide assumption of the property tax system, although the local governments would set the local mill levy. The other side of the property tax coin is that the values of the property that are taxed by the mills. I think the schools was another one. Schools were another one. Sorry, sorry about that. And I think with Montana Farm Bureau and the Montana taxpayers kind of stirring up opposition in those areas, they were, they were they were less supportive and some of the rural delegates came out against it too.

John Adams [00:23:03] In one of your articles, you wrote, quote "Judicial appointments, occasionally, succulent political plums may be plucked permanently from the spoils system orchard under the proposed Montana Constitution." First of all, what a lede. Fifty years later, those judicial appointments are back in the news, with a new law giving appointment power to the governor. What have been the most lasting contentious aspects of the '72 Constitution in the 50 years since its passage?

Chuck Johnson [00:23:31] Well, certainly those. Although they weren't really an issue until that the 2021 session when Governor Gianforte and the Republican legislators eliminated the Judicial Nomination Commission, which screened applicants for judges. Although the Constitution doesn't directly put it in, it sort of hints at it. Certainly, the property tax one has

remained a controversy over the years as taxes have risen in a lot of places. The school funding has been a controversy. We've had at least two lawsuits challenging Montana's system of funding public education, and you hear rumors a lot that a third one may be coming down the road. And in both cases, the state lost the lawsuit, so they had to try to reform school funding. The Bill of Rights has been interesting, the right of privacy has been used in court cases that have struck down attempts to restrict abortion in Montana. The right to a clean health and healthful environment has been a controversial issue, and there have been efforts over the years to try to weaken that. The Montana Supreme Court in, I think, in 1997 held that that provision was self-executing, but it took effect, didn't take a lawsuit to do it. And that remains controversial as some, although it's pretty much established in Montana now and efforts to weaken that have fallen by the wayside so far.

John Adams [00:25:09] The press lauds the Constitution's right to know provisions, but based on your reporting, it appears that it was a fairly significant fight at the ConCon. Why was the public's right to know such a sticking point and how have those laws held up over the years?

Chuck Johnson [00:25:23] Yeah, it really was a sticking point with the Billings Gazette writing an editorial on the front page of the paper, saying if that stayed in, they would they would oppose the ratification. The, um, the provision largely came from a Bozeman delegate named Dorothy Eck. The press was kind of asleep at the switch, getting involved very late. They they said it would be terrible and bad and stuff like that. The key provision it says all mee-, all meetings and all, uh, all documents shall be public unless the right to privacy, individual privacy exceeds the public's right to know. There have been dozens and dozens of lawsuits over that, that provision and early on the the lawsuits almost universally ruled in favor of the press or the public. It's really the public's right to know, not the press's right to know. In recent years, they've kind of gone the other way. But I felt the press was a little late to the party, and it has been kind of a hassle to have it, but it wasn't there before, so it has given reporters, news organizations, the public, public groups that lobby and participate in in events, the ability to sue. And there have been, I don't know, dozens of lawsuits. And I still think it's it's a provision that has worked mostly with some with some difficulty in more recent years. The Legislature passed a provision that said if if a group or the public succeeds in winning a right to know lawsuit, the judge may order the government agency that that was withholding the information to pay the attorney's fees for the press or the public. Good, good provision. In recent years, school boards in particular, have done this this trick where they--and they have a lawyer in Missoula that has spearheaded this thing--if they know the press is going to sue, they file suit first and the whole point of that is to block them from paying attorney fees. So it's been a mixed bag, but I still think it's an important aspirational statement and I think agencies that don't make records and documents public can be held accountable by the press through editorials, through news stories, by print, broadcast media, and I do think it's a it's a great goal. It hasn't worked as well as I think, but the advocates have hoped and there is a group. I was on the board of directors for a number of years, the Montana Freedom of

Information Hotline that kind of specializes in defending that or are going after it, and we've had a lawyer on retainer for decades. So the public, the press, TV station and radio stations can call and get representation.

John Adams [00:28:39] When Texas considered calling a Constitutional Convention, you and some other reporters who had covered their state's conventions were invited to speak in Austin about what you had witnessed. What did you tell the Texans?

Chuck Johnson [00:28:51] Well, I made a big pitch for openness. I said one reason the Montana convention was successful was the openness, the openness of delegates. You didn't have to go through a press secretary to each delegate. You could just go grab them on the floor. And Texas ultimately failed in its efforts to draft a new constitution. There were a lot of complex reasons, but I think corporations were a big part of it. One of the delegates from Montana was a guy named Jack Schiltz, an attorney from Billings. He then moved to Austin, Texas his practice there, and he was at the same conference and he spoke to the, directly to the delegates. But I do think the openness of Montana's, especially with the closed nature of our Legislature and government prior to that, made a big difference. I think the public could see this might be an improvement.

John Adams [00:29:48] Montanans could call for a new Constitutional Convention in 2030. If they do, what advice would you give journalists who cover that process?

Chuck Johnson [00:29:57] Well, I covered a couple of those votes and oh, I think one of them, the law school put on a conference in Missoula and had experts speak. Another one, I interviewed people. I think it's, it's, there's probably no bigger issue that comes before the voters. Like, 'Well, shall we call a new one, what shall we do?' And to date, the votes against calling a new Constitutional Convention have been pretty overwhelming not to do so, although I've heard it, kind of by the grapevine, that there may be an organized effort to vote to call one. It's interesting that timing is kind of everything. The time they called that convention was sort of at the start of a real progressive era in Montana. You had kind of Earth Day was the year before, two years before started it. You had the League of Women Voters and feminism really, really, really an important factor. You had a more aggressive Capitol press corps in the '60s. You had seniors getting organized. So it was a time of change, a real era of change. You know, if you called a Constitutional Convention in 2021, it'd be a far different one than was passed in 1972.

John Adams [00:31:25] You had the opportunity to cover suffragist and anti-war Congresswoman Jeannette Rankin, Montana's first and only woman elected to Congress. In March of 1972 at the age of 91, Miss Rankin addressed the convention advocating for ranked choice voting and advocating for more women in elected office, saying women have the psychological quality so they

work for the future. How do you think Rankin speech was received by the delegates? And do you think she had any impact on the final outcome?

Chuck Johnson [00:31:54] That's a good question. I wish I had gone and asked a bunch of the the delegates. But you know, I think by and large, most delegates were delighted to see her. I mean, she was a legend in In America. The first woman elected to Congress voted against World War One vote with a number of... The only person to vote in Congress against World War II. She was diminutive. She was powerful. She gave a kind of a complex speech about this ranked voting voting system that still is talked about in some states. I think New York's mayor's race was a ranked voting system put in in earlier in 2021. If I'm not mistaken, I don't know if it was the same one she was advocating. I would have liked to heard her talk about her, her efforts as a suffragist. But that was the speech she gave, and she got a very warm reception. And then I think she was off to the Jeannette Rankin Peace Brigade and parades in New York and Washington. She was living near Atlanta at the time, but I got to talk to her a little bit afterwards, and that was really a thrill.

John Adams [00:33:05] The Convention and Constitution were your first big story as a professional journalist, and the results helped define the beat you covered for the next 40 years. How influential was the Constitution on your life?

Chuck Johnson [00:33:20] Well, I took a lot of pride in having covered it, and I could, you know, if someone if you're at a gathering and someone says, 'Well, you know,' and I said, 'No, that isn't really how it went.' But I think it was an important. You know, reporters in those days were welcomed at the body and people were very good to us at the thing, we had full access. There was one incident that we didn't and I could talk about that a little bit. John Kuglin was a reporter at the Tribune, then Great Falls Tribune. And pretty aggressive. His son, Tom, is a reporter now. And, uh, they bragged about how every meeting was open, and I think they were for the most part, but they had a morning leaders meeting at like 7:00 or 7:30, so John thought he'd go see if that was open too. And Graybill ordered him out, and John had put his coffee cup on Graybill's desk and 'Take your damn coffee cup out of here, too!' So Kuglin was known as Coffee Cup Kuglin for a couple of days, and there was bad tension between Graybill and him, at least for a while. And I was the AP reporter, and the Tribune carried some of my stories, too, and the Graybill's, Leo and his wife Shirley, who owned a radio station, would always say, 'Well, we sure liked your coverage. We don't like that John Kuglin.' And I said, 'Oh, he's a good reporter.' But there were a lot of reporters there. There were, you know, a reporter from San Francisco. The San Francisco Bureau of Time magazine came and spent a week there and wrote a story that ran after they finished and called it a people's crusade. And I think Voice of America came and did a documentary, so it got quite a bit of attention. And one reason was because Montana was pretty well known as a state under the thumb of the major corporations. And this was definitely an attempt to to remove Montana from that, and I think they did a pretty darn good job of doing that.

John Adams [00:35:18] Do you think your, your life, your career would have gone in a different direction had it not had your career not started covering this momentous piece of Montana history?

Chuck Johnson [00:35:31] That's a good question. That could have been I could have decided to, you know, go to law school or become a public information officer or do something like that or go to another state, I always took great pride that I got to cover this event. I always wondered how the newspaper people covered the 1787 Constitutional Convention. Of course, they didn't get in, so they largely relied on diaries by the delegates.

John Adams [00:35:58] And what was your most today is your most lasting memory of the '72 Constitutional Convention?

Chuck Johnson [00:36:07] Well, there was there was always drama, there were characters in there that, you know, kind of grew.... There was there was a guy named Robert Kelleher who.... advocated parliamentary form of government. He'd say we wouldn't have poverty if we had a parliamentary system, we wouldn't have environmental devastation, blah blah blah. He later ran for office, at least two or three dozen times. And it was always his theme. I got to know a lot of these people. Bob Campbell was a was a very capable lawyer from Missoula, who was kind of a reformer. He and Mae Nan Ellingson or then Mae Nan Robinson largely wrote the preamble, which is a beautiful piece of writing. I got to know some of them. Some of them later ran for office. Some of them never ran again. But it was, it was fun to do, and it was fun to sort of witness reform being happening, reform happening. You know, covering the Legislature, reform doesn't happen too often. It's it's kind of fixing the thing that never gets fixed, that kind of thing. So it was it was really interesting and I was interested in, you know, our federal Constitution or Declaration of Independence and just seeing what Montana did. And to me, it was kind of a removing the shackles that had been on Montana, the 1889 Constitution, the president of that, William Clark, one of the three copper kings from Butte, and it largely protected the large corporations.

John Adams [00:37:41] Thank you, Chuck.

Chuck Johnson [00:37:42] You're welcome.