

George J. Mitchell Oral History Project

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James L. Ladd
(Interviewer: Mike Hastings)

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Mike Hastings: [This is an interview for the George J. Mitchell Oral History Project at Bowdoin College. The date is June 19, 2009, and I'm interviewing James Ladd in Medford, Maine.] Good morning, could we begin by, please could you state your full name and spell your surname?

James Ladd: James Loring Ladd, L-A-D-D.

MH: And your date and place of birth?

JL: In Milo, February 18, 1933.

MH: Very good. And your father's full name and your mother's full name.

JL: My father was Vaughn Loring Ladd, and my mother was Marian Louise McKechnie.

MH: Could you spell McKechnie for me?

JL: Try to. M-c-capital K-E-C-H-N-I-E.

MH: I should also add that we're not in Milo but we're close to it. Today we're at 15 North Road in Medford.

JL: That's right.

MH: Which is to the northeast of Milo – is that right? – or north of Milo?

JL: I would say northeast. My boundary line is the town line –

MH: Okay.

JL: - of one of them, so we're the first place in Medford.

MH: And I'm Mike Hastings, and I'm the interviewer today. Mr. Ladd, could we start, could you tell me a little bit about your father and his background, his roots?

JL: Well, he was born in Sebec, graduated from Foxcroft Academy, and went to the University of Maine and graduated in mechanical engineering. And then right out of college he went to work for the Bangor & Aroostook Railroad and spent his entire life there, and at the end of it he was mechanical superintendent of the railroad.

MH: Based where, here in Brownville Junction?

JL: Based in Milo.

MH: In Milo?

JL: Derby actually.

MH: Okay, okay.

JL: That's where the repair shops were.

MH: Now, was he from a long line of Ladds in this area, or was he a newcomer?

JL: Well, we had a few, but not a lot of relatives.

MH: Now Foxcroft Academy, if my memory serves me correctly, had something to do with Harry Oaks, didn't it?

JL: Yes.

MH: Who had a Bowdoin connection.

JL: Yes, he donated a good sum of money to build the new academy up there.

MH: Can you explain who he was and how he came to get that money?

JL: Well, from what I understand, he was a prospector and he – this is a story that I've heard really – and he was riding on a train one time, and whether he got off, was hitchhiking or got off at a certain place, and then I believe he discovered a gold mine, that's the story I get.

MH: I remember, the first time I ever heard of Harry Oaks was in the library at the Zeta House at Bowdoin.

JL: Hmm-hmm.

MH: It was a plaque, and apparently he gave the money to build the Zeta Psi House, and I was, I had grown up in Orono and I remembered there was a plaque in the library at Orono to Louie Oaks, who was his brother I guess.

JL: Yes, and he donated money up to Greenville, and they tell me that either Harry or Louie would have built a new school here in Milo, but evidently the townspeople didn't want their names on the building so they turned it down. Whether there's any truth in that -

MH: I'm going to pause it.

(Taping paused)

MH: Tell me, Mr. Ladd, about your mother, was she a local person?

JL: She was from Dover-Foxcroft. She died a young woman, in her mid-fifties.

MH: Did she go to university as well, or?

JL: No, no.

MH: No.

JL: She graduated from Foxcroft Academy and that was it.

MH: And do you have brothers and sisters?

JL: I've got one sister.

MH: Still living?

JL: Yes.

MH: Nearby?

JL: Yes, here in Milo.

MH: Oh great, good. So you were born and brought up in Milo.

JL: Yes.

MH: Okay. How did you, tell me a little bit, what was it like growing up in Milo?

JL: Actually I -

MH: That would be in the '30s and '40s, right?

JL: Yes.

MH: I mean, you're -

JL: We lived in Derby, because the railroad had these company houses and they wanted the executives out there. The rent was eleven dollars a month back then, I do remember that.

MH: Pretty good deal.

JL: Yes, and the houses were nice. And my father really wanted to move out, up to Milo, and build his own place, but they didn't want him to. Later on they slacked off a little and then we moved to Milo [] [actually in September, 1953].

MH: Hmm-hmm, hmm-hmm. Did Derby have a high school?

JL: No, no, they had a grammar school.

MH: So where did you go to high school?

JL: Milo.

MH: Oh, so you came into Milo, even when you were living at Derby.

JL: Yes, that's only two miles down the road.

MH: I don't know my geography very well in this part of Maine.

JL: Well, I can understand that, Derby's kind of a small town.

MH: Yes.

JL: But there were trains running through there six times a day, and it was a railroad town. That's where they did the repair work for the Bangor & Aroostook.

MH: Why did the railroad want to keep him close, just so that he'd be available if there was a problem?

JL: Yeah, yes.

MH: Okay.

JL: And they had these old, in addition to the regular phones they had company phones that you could ring two shorts and a long or whatever and, but we weren't supposed to use them for personal use, just business use.

MH: I see. Now, was the railroad then, did it have passenger lines as well as freight?

JL: Oh yes, yes. Three times a day, they used to go down and back three times a day, to Bangor and points south and north.

MH: So would you as a family go to places on the railroad?

JL: Yes, we did. Of course my father, and we had a local pass where we could go anywhere, I guess within the state, anytime free, and you got one foreign pass a year.

MH: Hmm-hmm.

JL: So we could go to Boston. One of the big times for us was, we would take a Pullman out of Derby and get on there like seven o'clock at night and go to Boston, sleep in the, and we'd wake up and go to a ball game, spend a day or two and then come back.

MH: A Red Sox game?

JL: Yes. Well actually, the first game I ever saw was at Graves Field.

MH: Okay, but now, Boston University, or was Boston University.

JL: Yes.

MH: Yes. Down by the Charles River.

JL: Yes.

MH: So you're a baseball fan?

JL: Oh yes.

MH: So you share that with George Mitchell.

JL: Yes, and basketball, anything, any sports I like.

MH: Yeah, yeah. So how long would it take you to get from Derby, Maine, to Boston on the, you say it was an all night train?

JL: Well yes, I mean, I think maybe they got to the northern Maine junction and switched there.

MH: Okay.

JL: And of course I'd be asleep by then, as a kid. But I know we would wake up and we'd be coming into Boston. It was an all night deal.

MH: And would you go back the next night after the game, or would you stay overnight in Boston?

JL: Oh no, we had hotels, we stayed at the, I think the Terrain (*sounds like*) Hotel seems to strike a bell with me.

MH: Yeah. Hotel Terrain. Wouldn't it be great if we had those -

JL: Yep.

MH: - trains now? Boy, what I'd give to be able not to have to do that drive to Boston. High school, what was, you say high school in Milo.

JL: Yes.

MH: And what were your interests there?

JL: Girls and sports.

MH: Girls and sports, which sports? I won't ask which girls, just give me sports.

JL: Well, basketball and baseball, I ran cross-country because the basketball coach wanted us to, and those are the only, well, I played hockey one year, too.

MH: They had a hockey team?

JL: Yes, one and only one.

MH: Was it on an outdoor pond, or?

JL: We played on the river down here.

MH: Really? Really.

JL: And I used to have a, where the boards were there was just a makeshift rink, but then about ten feet out there was open water. I can't picture them letting them do that nowadays.

MH: Probably never even freezes over, does it?

JL: Well, they've got, they put a dam in down there now, and it's different. No, it doesn't freeze like it did, but we were within sight of ten feet of open water.

MH: And did you, how did, explain to me how you came to get to Bowdoin from Milo.

JL: Well, I really wanted to go to Springfield.

MH: Hmm-hmm.

JL: But this Roger Clapp – that was George’s roommate and he was a good athlete, and of course Bowdoin didn’t give athletic scholarships. He was also a good student, in high school I should say, and he got a scholarship down there, and he and I were close friends, and another Milo boy went down and so I said, “I guess I’d give it a try.” So that’s the main [reason], and my father, he thought that was a good move.

MH: Hmm-hmm, hmm-hmm.

JL: He didn’t want me to go to Springfield for some reason, I wanted to be a coach but he said, “Look, if you go to Bowdoin you’ll get a good rounded education and you can still coach,” he said, “You go out there in Springfield and major in phys ed, then what have you got to fall back on?” So that was probably the main reason.

MH: So did all three of, you say Roger Clapp, and who was the other person?

JL: Billy Brown.

MH: Bill Brown, okay. Are either of them, are they still in the area?

JL: No, Roger’s in Skowhegan. He only lasted a semester down there; he just didn’t care about it and didn’t study.

MH: Yeah.

JL: But Billy, he was, I think, the third highest-ranking student in the graduating class. He was a math whiz, he taught physics and math at the college level after he got done.

MH: I see. What colleges?

JL: I think University of Southern Maine.

MH: Okay, Bill Brown, okay. Now was Bill Brown a roommate of the Senator’s as well, or just Roger Clapp?

JL: Say that again?

MH: Who was the Senator’s roommate?

JL: Roger.

MH: Roger, okay. And when you got to Bowdoin, where did you, what was your dorm the first year?

JL: I stayed at Moore Hall.

MH: Moore Hall, okay.

JL: Moore Hall, right next to the poolroom. We were right in that corner room, right on the lower floor.

MH: I see, it looked out toward the quad?

JL: Looked out towards Moulton Union.

MH: Moulton Union, okay, in that corner, yeah, right, okay.

JL: What we used to do, of course my folks didn't want me in the poolroom when I was in high school and, well Roger's folks were about the same, Roger Clapp, and we used to go to the Moulton Union about ten thirty, when they'd close, we'd pull the curtains down and unlock the window and then we'd just sneak right across there and we'd play pool at night.

MH: Was the poolroom in the Moulton Union the one down in the basement?

JL: Yes.

MH: Okay, right, on the Hyde Cage side, yes.

JL: You'd go down -

MH: The stairs -

JL: - and then take a left, yes. About the end of our freshman year I could play pool with the best of them.

MH: So was the Senator in Moore Hall, too?

JL: No. Looking out, going out of the Moulton Union, on the other side, there were four dorms, Androscoggin may be the first -

MH: No, the first one was Hyde.

JL: Hyde.

MH: Was next to Moore, and then there was Appleton.

JL: Appleton, all right, I think George and Roger -

MH: Maine and Winthrop, or Winthrop and Maine, Winthrop and Maine, on the other side of the chapel.

JL: Okay, Hyde, Appleton, Winthrop and Maine. Okay, I think Roger and George were in Appleton.

MH: So you first met George Mitchell through Roger Clapp then, because he was probably -

JL: Yes.

MH: I'm wondering if you could recall when you first -

JL: Yes, that would, yeah.

MH: Classes were pretty small then. I mean they're not, they're considerably larger now. I mean I -

JL: You mean at the college?

MH: Yes.

JL: I think we probably started out with two-fifty maybe, that sound right?

MH: Hmm-hmm, hmm-hmm. Yeah.

JL: I think they grad-

MH: That's about right I think.

JL: I think total enrollment my senior year was probably a little over seven hundred, and a few dropped by the wayside. I don't know about graduating, how many we had, I think a little less than two hundred probably.

MH: Did you continue your interest in athletics at Bowdoin?

JL: I did, but I wasn't really good enough. At least the coach didn't think so. I played, I started out, basketball was really, and baseball were my sports, but I got hurt playing freshman football and then they started basketball practice and I had a bum leg and I really wasn't ready to

try out. He cut me the first night, and I always thought I got a raw deal. We were state champions in high school.

MH: Really?

JL: I wasn't any great athlete, although we had a good fraternity team.

MH: And which fraternity were you in?

JL: I was a DKE [Delta Kappa Epsilon].

MH: DKE, okay.

JL: One of the 'Drunken Dekes' they called it.

MH: I can't remember, was he a, the Senator was a -

JL: He was Sigma Nu.

MH: Sigma Nu, okay, Sigma Nu.

JL: Because my roommate freshman year was a Sigma Nu.

MH: And virtually everybody was in a fraternity, right, at that point?

JL: They almost all were, yes.

MH: That was the real heyday for fraternities.

JL: Yes it was, yes.

MH: I understand the college really depended on the fraternities during that period because it had no independent, or it had no real dining facilities, they were all in the houses.

JL: That's right. I really enjoyed fraternity life, and I wasn't a drinker either, but I just enjoyed [it]. That was the best part of the school, far as I was concerned.

MH: Did the Dekes tend to be, did they have an interest that a lot of them, I mean I remember when I was, I was there from '68 to '72 -

JL: And you were a Zeta?

MH: I was a Zeta, well I was a Zeta briefly and then, that was when the fraternities were beginning to have problems with, but I remember when I joined Zate it was largely a track

fraternity.

JL: Yes.

MH: Was Deke, have a focus?

JL: If we did I would say it would be, no, we were well rounded, of course we had a lot of the Meddiebempsters too.

MH: Oh, did you?

JL: Yes, we did. We had a lot of swimmers and football players.

MH: Hmm-hmm.

JL: And a few baseball, but, not many students.

MH: And Deke was in, on the corner there.

JL: Yes, yes.

MH: Right, right. Now it's the admissions office I think.

JL: Yeah, I know it is, yes.

MH: They fixed the building up, it's a beautiful building.

JL: I thought it was back then.

MH: Well I'm sure it was, but I mean when the fraternities kind of went downhill they let them, they got rundown for a while, and then they got better. Boy it's a gorgeous building now; it's a wonderful place to have prospective students come.

JL: I haven't been back to look it over for years and years.

MH: Tell me about your professors, did you have any particular that stood out, that you can recall? If not by name but just by courses you particularly remember?

JL: I liked Dr. Norman Munn, he was a psychology; I was a psychology major.

MH: Okay.

JL: I liked him.

MH: M-A-N-N?

JL: M-U-N-N.

MH: M-U-N-N, Munn.

JL: He wrote his own book and it was, back then as I recall it was one of the most widely used psychology books.

MH: Did- You said briefly, I mean I can't remember if I had the recorder turned on, but you said you were in the real estate business. Did you find that the study of psychology helped you in -?

JL: No, but I taught school for a couple of years when I got out of college, and then I had a chance to work for an insurance agency, so I thought I'd give that a whirl. And I was there for a year, and then the fellow wanted to sell out to me, so I bought his agency and then I broadened it to include real estate and I did that for twenty-five years, and another outfit come up and wanted to buy me out, and they were going to open up another agency anyway and I was afraid of the competition. We had two agencies in Milo, but three would be too many.

MH: I saw several signs on the way into Milo; I came up of course Route 16.

JL: Hmm-hmm.

MH: And it seemed like there was, all the signs were the same color, they were red signs, one agency seems to predominate now.

JL: DeWitt, yes. And none of my kids seemed to have any interest in it, so when they approached me, I wasn't trying to sell, but if they wanted to buy it I thought that was the time to get out.

MH: Let's cycle back. You say, when you were at Bowdoin, what was it like being there, did you go away a lot on weekends, or stuck around?

JL: No, actually I might just as well have been at the University of Michigan. I got home on Thanksgiving, Christmas, and when they had vacation, but no, I didn't come up weekends at all.

MH: Did you come up on the train?

JL: Yes, most of the time. But when I did, I'd have to go into Bangor -

MH: Hmm-hmm.

JL: - and then wait, and I used to grab the train some and get off at Newport and then

hitchhike home.

MH: Right, okay, got off at Newport.

JL: I think I could hitchhike home quicker than I could go by train.

MH: One of the stories that I heard about the Senator, even though there was train service between Waterville and Brunswick, he didn't have enough money to go down to Bowdoin for his interview and he ended up hitchhiking, I think, from Waterville to Brunswick. But, you know, by the '70s of course, or late '60s, the trains were gone when I was there, so you had to go by car. It must have been -

JL: Well, I had a pass, a card pass, I could -

MH: But you were just as happy to stay at Bowdoin.

JL: I wouldn't say that, I just didn't make it home.

MH: Yes.

JL: You'd get home and then, see, the trains didn't run on Sunday and so there was no way of getting back actually.

MH: To classes, I see. Were there, what was the social life like on campus?

JL: We were known as the Drunken Dekes, but I think there were only, there were two or three of us that were teetotalers, but the rest were, we consumed our amount of alcohol. They always wanted me to tend bar because they knew I wouldn't take any of the booze.

MH: I gotcha.

JL: We were put on probation a few times; I think we probably had the reputation of being the worst down there. And actually, I don't know how come I, there was another Milo boy that was down there and he'd been in the service and come back, he was a lot older, and he kind of got me into that fraternity. He was married at the time, lived off campus.

MH: So you graduated then in 1954, was your class, is that right?

JL: Hmm-hmm.

MH: Did you consider going into the service, or -?

JL: Yes. As a matter of fact, I was in the first ROTC class they ever had down there.

MH: Really?

JL: And -

MH: Was the Senator in that class too, do you recall? I mean, I know he went into the army; I have no idea whether he was an ROTC.

JL: I don't recall. I would say no. The colonel that started the program went to Maine with my father, and he was just starting the program and he saw this name and he, I guess he called my father and wanted to know if, and he said, "Yes." Well anyway, he'd come up and said, "Do you want to get in the program?" and so I signed up. And I would have stayed in the service if it hadn't been for my wife, but I left her pregnant and went to Korea and she didn't -

MH: So you were in for a couple of years?

JL: Yes.

MH: I see, right out of Bowdoin?

JL: No. I was supposed to get in right out of Bowdoin, but everyone, there were about six of us that didn't get called right in, and I started teaching school over to Mattawamkeag and then they called me. And I wanted to get in and get it over with, but the superintendent over there said, "Look," he said, "I'll get you deferred until this year and then you go." So I said, "Okay." So I taught school for a year and then went in.

MH: What did you teach?

JL: Math and, well math, biology, and general science.

MH: In the high school level?

JL: Over to Mattawamkeag I was at eighth grade level, and then I, when I came out I went over to Newport at the high school level, and coached over there.

MH: I see, what did you coach?

JL: Basketball, baseball, that's all the sports they [had].

MH: Was that Nokomis then, or was it -

JL: Newport High School.

MH: Newport High School, okay. And so when did you get married?

JL: I got married between my junior and senior year.

MH: At Bowdoin, okay.

JL: Well, I got married here, yes, but I -

MH: I mean while you were at Bowdoin.

JL: I'd gone to summer camp down to Fort Eustis, and a couple of my friends had gotten married and I said, "Gee, I never gave it any thought." And they said, "James, why don't you get married?" So actually I come back, and this was a rush-rush deal, and so I got married before I went, I got married in September and, it seems late, but our anniversary was September 12, and I know we went down and got an apartment before we were married, and my senior year I was married.

MH: I see.

JL: And my grades went up.

MH: I'm going to pause it.

(Taping paused.)

MH: ... pick up again. So after, you teach in Mattawamkeag, and then you said -?

JL: Then I went in the service, and then I went over to Newport.

MH: Newport, right. So how long were you in the service, two years?

JL: Hmm-hmm.

MH: Army?

JL: Hmm-hmm.

MH: Doing what?

JL: Well of course our basic course down there was transportation, but when I got assigned, they put me in the infantry and I went down to Fort Benning, and we were in with a bunch of West Point people, so they were going to jump school and they said, "Jim, you ought to go to jump school," so I tried that.

MH: Even with your bad knee, eh?

JL: Well I didn't have a bad knee, I said I just hurt my ankle.

MH: Oh, okay, okay.

JL: No, I was all right afterwards, it was a temporary thing.

MH: Okay.

JL: And then I got, I'd signed up for flight school but in the meantime they'd assigned me to go to Korea, and I never did get to go to flight school. I would have stayed in the service, but my wife, and I could understand why she didn't like it. She had two kids and -

MH: Well did she stay behind at Benning, or where did she go?

JL: No. Let me see -

MH: My brother was in the service for twenty years, and he was at Fort Eustis in southern Virginia, and then he was, for a while he was at Benning, I remember. Similar pattern, and I, it was always a big question, where does the wife go with the children?

JL: Well let me get this straight. My oldest son was just, oh, he was two weeks old when I went down to Fort Benning, so I went down ahead of time, and then my father had to go to Macon, Georgia, on business and he drove my wife and the boy down, maybe, I don't know, I was probably down there two or three months alone, then she came down. And then when I got ready to go overseas, she was pregnant, and so I had a daughter that, while I was over there. I think she was probably about eight or nine months old when I got home, maybe a year.

MH: What did you do in Korea, and where were you stationed?

JL: Well our job was on the 38th Parallel, the DMZ between North and South Korea; we were manning those positions on the DMZ.

MH: Were you there when Truman had his set-to with MacArthur?

JL: I don't, not that I recall.

MH: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

JL: But a while, when they put me in charge of a motor pool, of course where I was transportation, I was motor pool officer for four or five months while I was over there, too.

MH: It's amazing that conflict is still with us.

JL: Yes.

MH: With this North Korea thing now. Before you know it, they'll send, try to send George Mitchell over there to solve that.

JL: Probably.

MH: Which, when you were in school with George Mitchell, did you, did he ever give any hints of the kind of things he'd end up being, doing in the future?

JL: No, I don't think so.

MH: He always said that he was, you know, he worked, I guess, a good deal of the time he was in college, he was working to make money to keep going.

JL: I wouldn't question that, but I don't know what and where.

MH: Well, I'm not sure what he did, but he had a lot of interesting jobs. I can't remember what it was that he did when he was in college, but he did jobs on the campus but I think he did something in Brunswick too, just to keep in school.

JL: Possibly. I used to work in the kitchen down there, but they, I think this was based on need a little bit, who got the jobs.

(Telephone interruption.)

MH: I'll pause this so you can take the telephone call.

(Taping paused)

MH: Your wife, is she -

JL: Is she what?

MH: Where does she work?

JL: Well, she's working for Worcester's Blueberries.

MH: Oh, okay, Merrill Worcester.

JL: No, Everett.

MH: Okay.

JL: He used to work for me in the real estate business, and then, anyway, I started delivering

blueberries for him a couple years ago, and then of course my wife was secretary over here at the high school and she and Everett's wife were, she was over at the high school. Well after he hired me to deliver, he says, "Why don't you get Shirlene and Deb to go down there and help cook and make jams and jellies for them." She thought she'd try it and she did last year, but then the other cook quit so she's more or less in charge and this is going to be her last year.

MH: I see.

JL: We don't need to work.

MH: I don't know many people from Milo. The only person I know is, I went to, my wife is a teacher in the Hampden schools and she's an enthusiast about China, and so we went and visited China with Paul Bradeen.

JL: Oh.

MH: In 2005. So I got to know him, he's a very nice man. But I guess, I understand from Paul, I mean this, the economy up here is pretty challenged I guess.

JL: Yeah, yes.

MH: And Paul would talk about the economics of the railroad industry -

JL: Hmm-hmm.

MH: - among other things, that as that's kind of gone downhill, a lot of the jobs in this area -

JL: Yes, that was the big employer back when I was a -

MH: Hmm-hmm. What other employers are there in Milo?

JL: Well - what's the name of the place? - JSI, they make -

MH: Right, where Paul works.

JL: Yes, they make shelving for stores. That's been a big, and actually I think that's about it.

MH: Really? Yeah.

JL: We've had some come and go. Ox-Yoke was a big employer here a few years ago, but -

MH: What'd you call them?

JL: Ox-Yoke, they made gun cleaning parts and rods and for [] muzzle loading guns.

MH: Oh, right, black powder kind of things.

JL: Black powder, that's what I –

MH: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

JL: - they were into that big, and they employed probably seventy or eighty people and had two shifts going, but I don't know what happened.

MH: Hunting and fishing must still be very important at the local, when I was driving to your house this morning I had an interview with a deer on the road. I came around a corner and this deer just stood there and looked at me and we, I stopped the car and she looked at me and I looked at her for -

JL: Down below, yes.

MH: Just down below here, I mean just as tame as could be. And then finally I think she lost interest and went into the woods.

JL: We see them occasionally, yes.

MH: And I guess you have, must have hunting and guide services and things of that sort.

JL: Yes, yeah, if you, I don't know how far you went down, there's -

MH: Yeah, I saw one down there. Yeah. A beautiful part of Maine. How did, where have your life here in Milo intersected with George Mitchell over the years?

JL: Well, he used to come up to the high school and, occasionally, probably three or four times, and speak to the students. And of course my wife being a secretary, and George knew Shirlene, and they'd say, "Give Jim a call and have him come over," so. Other than that, that would be, and I would go over.

MH: Yeah. I guess –

JL: Used to tickle me, though, there was one fellow that was a staunch politician and he always liked to get in and talk to George, not knowing that I, well anyway, the first time I went over he was talking to George and the principal. And I went over and George said, "Hi Jim." This Murrel Harris, when he found out that George, George just left him and come over and started talking to me, and he never got over that. It kind of tickled me no end. I said, "Well, you're not the only one that knows these politicians."

MH: No, I guess, when I was working for him after he was appointed to be senator, he started

this activity of trying to visit every high school in Maine.

JL: Hmm-hmm.

MH: And he was really, *I think* that that's one of the reasons he decided to do that scholarship fund, because he realized that was a very good way to connect with local people.

JL: Well that's the only time, I can't recall that I'd run into him out -

MH: Were you active in politics at all yourself?

JL: No.

MH: No. I suspect most people up in Milo are probably Republicans. Is it strongly Republican or is it mixed?

JL: I think it was strongly Republican, but I think it's switching a little bit, I'd say fifty-fifty.

MH: Did you, I assume you followed with interest his negotiations in Northern Ireland.

JL: Hmm-hmm.

MH: And being majority leader. He seems to, every time he seems to get retired he seems to come out of it very quickly.

JL: Of course I had more interest when I found out he was a part owner of the Red Sox.

MH: Yeah, what'd you think of that steroid study? As a former coach, I mean.

JL: I think he probably did a good job on the deal, and I think it's a damn shame, personally, that these fellows do that.

MH: I wonder if they'll ever get it under control.

JL: I don't know. I think it's better than it was. I'm sure there's still some cheating, but if they keep testing them, they're going to catch them.

MH: Hmm-hmm. Now your children grew up here in the local area, were they interested in sports too?

JL: Oh yes. Well three of them, one wasn't.

MH: And you have what, three -?

JL: I've got two boys and two girls.

MH: Two boys and two girls. Have they remained in the local area, or are they gone away?

JL: Well, my oldest son, he was a golf pro and the course superintendent over at Sugarloaf.

MH: Oh, okay, on the course over there.

JL: Yes.

MH: Oh, that's a nice course.

JL: And up until last year he did that, and was in charge of grooming the trails in the winter time. He had a nice job over there, but that was sold last year and they started cleaning house and he lost his job.

MH: Hmm-hmm.

JL: But he's got another job [as] superintendent of the course down in Rangeley, I don't know the name, it's got an odd... And my daughter, my oldest daughter, she married Doug Cummings who was headmaster at MCI for twenty-odd years, so, and they've got a summer place up on Sebec Lake that they, and my other daughter, she's down on Sebago Lake in North Windham.

MH: Hmm-hmm.

JL: She's a nurse and her husband's an electrician. And my youngest boy's got a generator business; he's here in town.

MH: Residential generators?

JL: Well, more commercial.

MH: Like Caterpillars and those type things.

JL: Yes, big stuff. And he sells residential, but, and solar systems.

MH: And where's that based?

JL: Right here in town.

MH: Right in Milo.

JL: He's done well.

MH: Well, that's kind of a, if he's doing solar systems, it's going to, it's a green business.

JL: Yes.

MH: And probably, I think, we'll see more and more of that. I know at the university they're doing a lot of interesting – solar and tidal power and wind energy and all those things.

JL: I got a little camp on an island here that he's hooked me up with a solar system. Gee, excellent.

MH: Right near where you live, yeah?

JL: Yes.

MH: Island in the middle of the river?

JL: Hmm-hmm.

MH: I was surprised at how wide the Piscataquis is in places.

JL: Oh yes, that's a big river. But this is, my place is on the Sebec River.

MH: Oh, okay, different, okay, so.

JL: We got three rivers that come into, that join here in Milo. They used to call it the town of three rivers.

MH: It's nice that you have all of them relatively nearby.

JL: Hmm-hmm.

MH: All of your kids. Grandchildren?

JL: Yeah, grandchildren. We got four great-grandchildren, and well grandchildren, we got – two and three is five, and one is six, eight grandchildren.

MH: No Bowdoinites in there.

JL: No.

MH: The cost of a Bowdoin education now is so expensive; it's amazing to me that anybody can go there.

JL: Yes.

MH: But I guess they have a significant scholarship program that allows, it's not as expensive as it appears.

JL: If I'm not mistaken, I think my total cost down there, room and board, tuition, everything, was fifty-seven hundred.

MH: For a whole year.

JL: For the four years.

MH: For the four, the whole, for the four years, wow, fifty-seven hundred. Isn't that remarkable?

JL: Yes.

MH: Of course, fifty-seven hundred dollars went a lot further in those days, generally.

JL: Yes, it did, yes.

MH: Yes, I think that by the '68 to '72 it seems to me it was something like that much, it was roughly that much for a year.

JL: Hmm-hmm.

MH: I think it was.

JL: Now, I might be wrong, but I -

MH: No-no, I suspect you're right, I think that's probably about what it is. I mean right now at Maine I think it costs twelve, thirteen thousand dollars for an undergraduate from Maine to go to the university, and significantly more if you're an out-of-state student.

JL: And I could have gone to Maine a lot cheaper, and I kept telling my father that.

MH: The Senator has said that he expected to go to the University of Maine, it was kind of a fluke that he ended up at Bowdoin. And I guess two of the Senator's brothers went there and were actually good athletes at the university, and baseball players mainly, Robbie and Paul.

JL: I remember Johnny Mitchell, he went to Rhode Island, he was a basketball player.

MH: Yes, right, he was a good basketball player.

JL: Crackerjack. I didn't know George had a couple brothers that went to Maine.

MH: Yeah, yeah, and Paul actually, Paul Mitchell, who owns the insurance agency in Waterville.

JL: Oh.

MH: GHM, GHM Insurance, was a, he was a baseball standout at Maine, and is now on the board of trustees, he's one of the, for the whole system, is a very active trustee.

JL: I didn't know that. I go to a lot of University of Maine baseball games, and I have for years, but I didn't realize that.

MH: That's a nice field they have now, and they have a nice clubhouse at Orono. Mr. Mahaney was very kind to help endow that.

JL: You know Al Hackett?

MH: No.

JL: He used to broadcast the games and, he and George Hale, he's an old Milo boy.

MH: Oh is he?

JL: He was a great baseball player for Maine, has a lot of records down there.

MH: Well this has been very interesting. You know, we're trying to interview people who have known the Senator at various times during his life and his career, and this has been very nice, and I particularly appreciate your comments about Bowdoin and fraternity life and -

JL: I'm glad I went, but still, I didn't like college. Did enough to get by, never flunked a course, but still, I was just on the verge. Although my senior year, I did well. And I could have if I'd [wanted to]; I went just to please my father. Is that an awful thing to say? That's the truth of it.

MH: A lot of us do that, I think, to please our parents. I mean I think sometimes we think initially that it's what we really wanted to do, but as we reflect on it and get older we realize that there's a little bit of what we wanted to do and a little bit of people around us wanted us to do.

JL: Yeah, yes.

MH: So thank you very much, Jim Ladd.

JL: Well, enjoyed your company.

End of Interview