

George J. Mitchell Oral History Project

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Thomas A. “Tom” Bertocci
(Interviewer: Michael Hastings)

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Michael Hastings: The following is a recorded interview of the George J. Mitchell Oral History Project, an activity of Bowdoin College. The date is November 8, 2008. I am at 11 Knox Street in Thomaston, Maine. The interviewee is Tom Bertocci, the interviewer is Michael Hastings. Good morning.

Tom Bertocci: Hi.

MH: Tom, we’d like to start by asking you to [] state your full name and then spell your surname for me.

TB: All right. Thomas A. Bertocci, B-E-R-T-O-C-C-I.

MH: And your date of birth and place of birth.

TB: Lewiston, Maine, February 17, 1945.

MH: Could you also give the full name for your mother, including her maiden name, and your father.

TB: My mother’s maiden name was Margaret True Allen -

MH: A-L-L-E-N?

TB: A-L-L-E-N. And my father’s name was, my father’s dead, his name was Salvatore Theodore Bertocci.

MH: Now you say your mother’s still living, is that right?

TB: Yes.

MH: Tell me first about your father. What’s his story, can you give me a brief introduction to Salvatore Bertocci.

TB: Well—called almost from birth “Ted,” I should add, and born, one of the first U.S. born children of an immigrant family in Somerville, Massachusetts.

MH: Big family?

TB: Big family. My father had two brothers and three sisters, and his oldest sister had to become the mother early on because of the death of my late grandmother, when she was taking a trip back to Italy as a matter of fact, sometime around 1920. He – the family story is miraculous, and it's been put down by one of my uncles, Angelo Bertocci, in a *Harper's* magazine article many years ago, as a matter of fact, and it's a story we're all very proud of.

The family relied heavily on a Presbyterian mission in Brickbottom, Somerville, for support, but [] the product of a lot of hard work by father and children was very successful and happy lives for all six of the siblings. [] Four of the six children were college graduates; my father's two brothers were both distinguished professors at Bates and B.U.; my Uncle Angelo later on was at Iowa, and their academic life figures very strongly in my life, and in my father's marriage and development of his family.

MH: Where were his father and mother from in Italy?

TB: From Gaeta, which is, Gaeta, Porto Salvo is a town on the coast just below Naples. Actually I'm not sure if it's below or just above. It's adjacent almost; I think you'd probably call it a suburb of Naples. The U.S. Navy has a shipyard there, or not a shipyard but [] an outpost there.

MH: Approximately when would they have come to the United States?

TB: About 1912. My father was born in 1915.

MH: And they lived, your father grew up in Somerville most of his life?

TB: Somerville, Massachusetts, graduated from Somerville High School, went to Tufts. And by that time his brothers were both professors at Bates, where incidentally they were acquainted with Ed Muskie. And Muskie had classes with my Uncle Angelo, who was in romance languages and literature.

MH: So was the first connection between the Bertocci family and Maine these brothers who were professors at Bates?

TB: Absolutely. Right. And what happened, so my father, after graduating from Tufts, his brothers, I think feeling—his brothers, were eight and ten years older I think—my father was one of the younger of the children and I think the brothers were used to being paternalistic, but also they were good, they were greatly respected by my father I think. And one or both of them suggested that Bath Iron Works was hiring people. My father had earned a degree in engineering at Tufts, and this was not the Tufts University that we know now, although it was located in that place and was a fine place then, but it was a Tufts University where more than half of the

students were commuters, including my father who – Tufts is located right on the line between Medford and Somerville—and my father walked to school. He walked to Somerville High School for four years and then he walked to Tufts University for four years.

MH: What was his father and mother doing when, I mean you say his mother died at a young age.

TB: Yeah, his mother died early.

MH: What about his father?

TB: His father worked for I think it was Swift's Incorporated, but a meat packer nearby in Brickbottom -

MH: Now what is Brickbottom?

TB: That's a neighborhood of Somerville, it's where, who's the guy that runs the soccer team, the major league soccer team, the New England -

MH: The Revolution. I don't know his name.

TB: Revolution. He plans, here we are in 2008, this guy plans to build a soccer stadium in Brickbottom. Anyway, it's an old neighborhood in Somerville. But anyway, my father felt fortunate certainly to get to go to college, and afterward his brothers suggested this, we're talking the 19- the late '30s, early '40s—and my father applied to the iron works, got a job as an assistant foreman in the — I think he spent his entire time in the sheet metal department at the iron works—the tin shop, he would say. Later he was the foreman.

MH: Let me ask you also about your mother.

TB: Yeah, well I was going to. It's an easy transition here, because when he came up to the iron works, he lived in Bath but his uncles would invite him up for weekends. My mother, who had been born in Auburn and grew up there, graduated from Edward Little High School and went off to Mt. Holyoke—Mt. Holyoke College—she graduated from Mount Holyoke in 1941 and came back, took a job as a reporter with the *Lewiston Sun Journal*. And that's where she was in 1940, '41 when my father came to Bath, and when on a visit to Lewiston to his brothers. He was introduced by one of the brothers to this comely lass, recent graduate of Mt. Holyoke, at a Sunday school class in the evening at the Baptist church in Lewiston. My uncle taught the Sunday school class, my father came along as a brother, my mother was there for some—you know, the family was a long time, long time members of the church and this was the way, this was for young adults apparently, this Sunday school class, this was a way for her to reenter into the community, I suppose. They met at that Sunday school class and they started to date, and they were married fairly soon after that, I think; within two years of that they were married, and lived in the Bath area.

My mother's family story is interesting but perhaps not as unique as my father's.

MH: What is that?

TB: But she's—you know, but as Italian as my paternal background is, the WASP background of my mother is just as strong, so it was an interesting union.

MH: The family sounds like it was probably Catholic in Italy, right?

TB: Ahh, good question.

MH: And then Presbyterian in Somerville, and then it ended up as Baptist in Lewiston.

TB: Yes, I've always, people have always said, "Bertocci and you're not Catholic?" And actually, now that I'm married to a Catholic, my family is Catholic again. But my father's family became very much Protestant, and when they moved to Bath they became members of the Congressional church in Bath, the Central Congregational Church, which is now the Chocolate Church. And so that's part of my childhood, we -

MH: So your mother and father then settled in Bath very early on, I mean your father was in Bath working for the iron works and they settled there after they married.

TB: That's right. I know of at least one winter when perhaps a rent ran out and they lived with my grandmother in Lewiston, right near the Bates campus. My grandmother had moved to Lewiston after her, when she was alone. And then I also know just before, when I was a preschooler, the family spent a year or two in Biddeford where my father took a job briefly with Saco-Lowell.

MH: What did Saco-Lowell do?

TB: I'm not sure. Saco-Lowell was an important industry in Biddeford, though, at that time.

MH: Manufacturing.

TB: Yeah, manufacturing industry.

MH: But he went back to BIW?

TB: But he, for some reason he—yeah, he very quickly went back to the iron works and we returned to Bath.

MH: So how many children?

TB: Three.

MH: Three, and where are you?

TB: I'm the oldest; I was born in 1945, as I said.

MH: And you have—tell me about your two siblings.

TB: We're four years apart. David is a civil engineer, he works as a superintendent on construction jobs, lives in Alexandria, Virginia. His last two construction jobs—he works for a big construction company in the D.C. area—and his last two jobs were kind of interesting. He worked on the dining, he was in charge of the construction of the new dining room at the Naval Academy, and then just now, just recently finished a job restoring Ford's Theater in Washington, D.C. So, you know, his jobs are not always that interesting but -

MH: So it sounds like he's kind of into historic -

TB: Well the company got these jobs -

MH: Institutional.

TB: I think that would be the wrong implication. I think he works with cement and duct work and so forth at whatever job he's involved with. But he's had these two interesting jobs and they both resulted in kind of, different kind of ceremonial perks.

MH: So he was born in 1949, and then the third?

TB: Third brother Andy, 1953, has like his older brother remained a Mainer, and he right now lives in Yarmouth with his wife and daughter, who is a Chinese-American named Maggie, and he works for Raven Technology in Brunswick, which has a really interesting product that involves tech powering vehicles. And so that's the Bertocci group.

MH: Tell me about growing up in Bath. Did you live right in town, or on the outskirts?

TB: Yeah, we lived on High Street, one of the – I couldn't believe it when I was about five years old, we moved out of an apartment house (the two apartments side-by-side, sort of a townhouse) and into a big white house on High Street that had been vacated by one of the iron works vice presidents. I really felt pretty special about that, and no doubt my—especially my father, the immigrant (well, the son of immigrants from Somerville), felt pretty good about it too. It was a wonderful house, and I had a wonderful childhood. Things seemed to happen very easily, not much thought about planning.

MH: What interested you as a kid, in Bath? I mean were you a -?

TB: Sports.

MH: Sports? What sports?

TB: All sports.

MH: All sports, yeah.

TB: And friends. I mean I have the same story that many people my age have of being part of a gang of kids who picked each other up with bicycles every morning and decided what to do, whether it was - It was often a baseball game, or sometimes we'd rent a - In the winter, if we were thinking ahead, we would get our quarters together, sometimes bum a couple of dollars from our parents and rent the Bath Armory so that we could go inside and play a real basketball game. Football – the thing about football was, the thing I most remember about playing football was, as a kid, was playing in the snow. Obviously we played a lot of football.

MH: But I'm thinking, now that I know your date of birth, and now I know the Bath connection, I'm thinking Bath had some very good high school basketball teams when you were in high school, including -

TB: Good for you, good for you.

MH: Including Joe Harrington.

TB: Joe Harrington.

MH: Right, so were you a contemporary of his?

TB: Joe and I were classmates at Morse High.

MH: Okay, tell me about being around for that. The basketball tradition was very, very strong in Morse High in that period.

TB: You're right. That was a pretty important part of my high school years. I played football at Morse, but was not anywhere near -

MH: What position?

TB: I played guard and linebacker in football, and was nowhere near a strong enough player to make the basketball team. But we had really three years in a row when my classmates Joe Harrington and Rick Woods were sophomores, juniors and seniors, and were joined by other classmates like Kenny Smith or Jack Hart, who later became the recreation director in Bath. And an older group, a year ahead of us, Bruce MacKinnon, who later was in politics in Maine, and Bob Buzzy, and I'm probably leaving some people out but, and then some younger, some people

from the class behind us, Dale McNelly comes to mind, and people in my class, Kenny Smith, Dave Dodge. I guess I mentioned Jack Hart. This was a group of guys who all of a sudden were – couldn't be beat. I mean I could - You know, the tangents that are possible here. I was a fairly close observer of this team, and I could give you the names of the star players on all the Class A high school teams during that time [], and we just beat them all. And there was, probably the high point, or the most famous point in their tenure was in my senior year, when we had these two face-offs with Stearns High School in the state championship where Morse won -

(Telephone interruption)

TB: Talking about Stearns.

MH: You said, you were mentioning the two match-offs with Stearns High of Millinocket.

TB: Oh yeah, it was very interesting. We beat Stearns at the Bangor Auditorium for the state championship. Stearns was coached by George Wentworth; our team was coached by Clyde Hayden, both of whom were famous coaches. What was the fellow's name, Carr, was the star for Stearns. Why can't I remember his first name? And another guy named John Vasness. Terry Carr I think was the name of the star for Stearns.

Anyway, that was great, we were the state champions for the second year in a row, but then we went down to New England, and of course going to the New England tournament was the whole high school -

MH: Where was that held?

TB: In Boston, Boston Garden. This was the first year that the tournament didn't include Connecticut schools, which is significant because, and understandable, because the Connecticut schools had just simply won every time, so there was just Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Vermont, New Hampshire and Maine. And we got past - Both Stearns and Morse got past the first round. I forget who we beat; I think it might have been a school called Bishop Bradley, which I think is from New Hampshire. So Stearns and Morse met I believe in the semi-finals of the New England tournament, or it could have been the finals, it may have been the finals, and we lost. Close game at the end. Stearns won that game, which bothered even the guys on the team perhaps for twenty-four hours. You know, it had been a great run.

MH: I remember it well actually, one of the kind of side events was that Governor McKernan's father died that night walking, because he'd announced the game for the Maine stations, and he was walking across the lobby of (I believe this is correct) the lobby of the Madison Hotel which abutted the Garden, it was really part of the same building, and that's the night that Jock McKernan's father, he had a heart attack I believe.

TB: Oh, so Jock himself was walking across the room.

MH: No, no, the father, yeah, he died in the Madison Hotel the night, immediately after announcing to the, you know, for the Maine radio stations the Stearns-Morse High game.

TB: Isn't that something. I didn't know that. And I think I was staying at the Madison Hotel.

MH: And so it was a, I can remember, you know, I'll be brief because this is your oral history, not mine, but I can remember standing out on Route 2 in Orono, watching the Stearns – it was such a big deal, going to the New England championship, that we all went out and waved to the Stearns team when they were headed to Boston. The whole state was watching that night. Tell me other things about high school and growing up in, any other interests particularly when you were in high school?

TB: We were pretty much captivated by our own lives in high school, and I merely, I remember all the events, the participating in planning dances and talent shows and this and that.

MH: Were you an actor in high school?

TB: Oh, the guys would do - No, I wasn't an actor, but I was a—I was always—I had a little bit of musical talent. But the guys always would get together whether or not they had any musical talent and sing "Thank Heaven for Little Girls" or something on stage, and catapult themselves, ourselves, into being stars. Because sports was such a central part of the high school image and the people that played sports—and of course it was only boys at that time that played interscholastic sports—you know, there was so much attention focused on these boys that played football and basketball and baseball that, all we had to do was put ourselves up on a stage singing some silly song, and that would be the headline of the talent show review. It's very silly, but telling about those times.

MH: What did you do during the summers when you weren't going to school, did you travel a lot, or did you go to summer camp, or?

TB: Summer camp is the answer to that, and camp counseling.

MH: Whereabouts?

TB: The state YMCA camp was the major place, on Cobbosseecontee in Winthrop.

MH: How many years did you do that?

TB: Oh, three or four, three or four.

MH: Had you been a camper there yourself?

TB: Uh-huh, and there was a—actually there was a church camp on the other side of the lake, Pilgrim Lodge, that I attended. But yeah, [] summer camp was a really important part of my

life, and later became important during college when I became associated with the Chewonki Foundation.

MH: Tell me about that.

TB: Well, I went off to college at Wesleyan, and things continued to be in my mind sort of planned for me. This is [] something that I have, as I've compared my kids' lives to my life and to the life of my contemporaries—one of the things that I see is a very sharp difference is the extent to which planning is called for these days. And during the '50s and '60s, for me it was the '60s, late '50s and '60s when we were doing things—there was a certain group of us whose parents had been to college (especially whose parents had been to college) who knew exactly what they were going to do from the moment they started attending school and went into high school. And we tended to that job of preparing for college and so forth. We didn't take it very seriously but we did what we were supposed to do and things sort of materialized for us. And when we arrived at college, then we sort of chose different paths and some of us became fixed and began to plan careers and so forth. Others of us, and I would count myself among this group, continued to sort of float along and take what came and assumed that things were going to work out fine.

Now there's a bit of that in this generation that we're, that you and I are watching over now as fathers, but there's a whole lot more sense of differences. [] There's a lot greater competition for every place of distinction and authority than there once were, and I think that's understood. I mean, I sort of felt like I was going to end up in some kind of position that I could be proud of and I just sort of let it happen.

MH: How did you happen to pick Wesleyan?

TB: It's another in the places of influence by my extended family, my father's brothers. Throughout my childhood these two professor brothers held a special place -

MH: You said one was a romance languages [professor], what was the other?

TB: Philosopher. Peter, the older, actually was the more prominent scholar, although they both were highly respected teachers. Peter was quite an important man in his field. But it was the other brother, Angelo, who had interviewed at Wesleyan for a job, loved the place, decided not to go there, but his son, who is four years older, four or five years older than I, had gone there and had really enjoyed it. And so when we touched base, why, there was this, not pressure but this, "Oh yeah, there's this very special place that Phil goes," talking about his son, "that ought to be considered," and I just decided to apply there early decision. I think my father probably said, "Well, that sounds like something to do." But again, it's something that I really don't remember how it happened, it just happened. And I had done well in school and got good college boards, and so the guys at Wesleyan accepted me early decision because—I think—partly because I'd established some kind of record, partly because of my cousin (who had been a strong student there), and partly because here I was, from the coast of Maine, they didn't get

many people from -

MH: What was it like at Wesleyan?

TB: Oh well, it was a great new world. I enjoyed it very much. I especially enjoyed suddenly meeting people from all over the country and hearing their stories and -

MH: Was Wesleyan coed at that time?

TB: Wesleyan was not coed. Toward the end of my time there I participated in some committee meetings—administrators started to call in students and say, “What would you think if, if we had women here.” And four or five years after I graduated in 1967, it became coed.

But the, but what –

MH: I interrupted you; we were beginning to talk about Chewonki.

TB: Yeah, that’s true.

MH: And I’m interested to get there.

TB: So, yeah, yeah - Chewonki’s important to my - It was at Chewonki where I first met George Mitchell so we have to get to Chewonki. But anyway, this is quite a while sooner that, this is 1965, when I was midway, or a couple of years into college. And I think it was the summer, maybe it was the summer after my freshman year, I think maybe it was just [] – no, it was the summer after my sophomore year. And I had taken a job with Reed & Reed, a Portland, Maine, company that builds, now it builds a lot of different things, at that time it built only bridges.

MH: Based near Bath.

TB: Yeah, yeah, in Woolwich, Bud Reed, Carlton Day Reed, later the Republican speaker of the Maine House, was the president of the company. But I didn’t have anything to do with them. My going there, I, that was a place to have a job for the summer -

MH: Did you have an engineering background?

TB: No engineering background, and I went to work for this company when I came home – and Mike, I’m surprised you asked that question. At that time, there was not this—the internship business for college, that’s one of the big differences between then and now. During our summers we weren’t prepared for careers. We were making money or having fun, or in some cases participating in social action; the Civil Rights movement was underway but it passed me, I wasn’t involved. Some of my friends at Wesleyan were very much engaged in planning trips to the South during the summers -

MH: So you weren't part of that.

TB: Not me, I wasn't part of that. And very few people were in 1965. You know, it was unusual to find somebody who was really engaged in politics and -

MH: But the Vietnam War was, was - ?

TB: The Vietnam War was heating up, that's for sure. Well, it was moving there, but I can testify that in 1965 at Wesleyan, which is always considered a very politically active place, there was not much happening in terms of protest to the Vietnam War at that time. In fact, that was not as important an issue as civil rights. Anyway, but I wasn't—I came back to Maine and got myself a job to make some money and planned to go to the beach, go down to Sebasco as much as possible, or to the Merry Barn.

MH: I don't know the Merry Barn. I know Sebasco Estates, but I don't know Merry Barn.

TB: Well, if you lived in Bath or Boothbay or Wiscasset, you'd have known the Merry Barn.

MH: Nice place to go on Friday night, I assume.

TB: Yeah. But I'm telling you, the job they had me doing—building bridges—we were working on the new Route 1 between Bath and Brunswick, and they had me painting tar down inside the bridge abutments that were being constructed. And there's all these metal connecting points, and you're climbing in amongst these metal connecting points and painting tar on the surfaces. Apparently the tar, whatever this substance was I was painting on the surfaces, was an assist when the next cement was poured and had to adhere to the previous surface—to the other surface. But much as I hoped, I never got a different job. Every day they would send me down inside these abutments with my tar pail, and I would come home not only very tired, extremely tired and not, certainly not used to construction work of any sort, but also dirty enough so that I had to spend the whole evening in the bathtub.

So on one of these evenings a call comes through from a man named Clarence Allen—a great man it turns out, but I didn't know him from Adam. But he [] was the director of Camp Chewonki, and he had a man on his board who was a vice president at the iron works and who knew I had done camp counseling and that I had some experience as a wilderness, out in the wilderness leading camping trips. And he'd gotten—as I may have said, this guy was on the board of Chewonki—his name is Bill Niss, and he had told Clarence Allen that this was maybe a guy who could be a good counselor at Chewonki. The season was already just underway, or just about to get started, and Mr. Allen had either—he had lost a counselor, somebody had decided not to come, or had come and had been dismissed or I forget why there was an opening, but he needed somebody pronto.

MH: Where is Chewonki located?

TB: Well it's in Wiscasset, really close to, very close, on the way down to Maine Yankee, on Montsweag Bay, really closer to Woolwich than Wiscasset.

MH: So is it located on salt water?

TB: Yeah. Well, the reason the Reed & Reed job is significant is, you can't believe how quickly I accepted that job. He no longer, he said, "Well, do you suppose, would you be interested in very suddenly changing your plans and becoming a counselor at Chewonki?" And I didn't know what Chewonki was, but I trusted this Bill Niss person, and so I said, "Sure." And that really changed my life dramatically, because it eventually -

MH: And this would have been the summer, you were in college?

TB: Yeah.

MH: Between what years, I mean -

TB: Between freshman and sophomore years—between sophomore and junior years.

MH: So you were roughly nineteen or twenty when this happened.

TB: Yeah, yeah. And so for the next several summers I worked at Chewonki and led trips and had various responsibilities there, and really started to become a little bit of an educator, and it influenced my choice of work right out of college, which was to be a school teacher at the Hotchkiss School in Connecticut.

MH: Let me cycle back to Wesleyan. What were you, you picked a major in your junior year, or -?

TB: Yeah.

MH: What was that?

TB: European history.

MH: European history, okay, but you gravitated toward education because of the Chewonki experience.

TB: Well, there were no education courses at Wesleyan, and I wasn't in any kind of career training. It was thoroughly part of the liberal arts tradition, taking courses all over the lot.

MH: Is Hotchkiss far from Wesleyan?

TB: It's pretty far, it's up in the northwest corner of the state and so it's not, it wasn't geographic proximity that led me there but, you know, but sort of the availability of a job and the reputation of the place as a –

MH: So did you go to Hotchkiss right out of Wesleyan, or did you have a summer? You were back at Chewonki for the senior summer and then go off to Hotchkiss?

TB: Yeah, as I recall I was at Chewonki pretty regularly.

MH: Still as a counselor, or?

TB: I think I might have missed a summer a little later, but certainly that summer before I went off to Hotchkiss I think was, yeah, I think I was, I was at Chewonki. By that time—we did a lot of—Chewonki was in transition. Mr. Allen, when he called me, was a man moving into his seventies, and shortly thereafter he retired as camp director.

MH: What were they transitioning from, and what were they transitioning to?

TB: Chewonki was a blue-blooded boys' camp, real good place, but very focused on, you know - Although Mr. Allen would bring in some people from Thailand or from Venezuela, from the wealthy classes of these, of these exotic lands, who could pay the full freight at Chewonki. That was the only diversity that was there, and it was focused on providing a great summer of fellowship and nature study for the well-to-do of the eastern urban areas. You know, not only eastern urban, they developed a clientele in Chicago and so on and so forth but Washington, Chicago, Philadelphia, Boston families.

MH: Was it an old camp that had been there -

TB: An old camp. They had been there since 1920, or 1912 perhaps.

MH: And he'd been associated with it for a long time.

TB: Yeah, yeah, he really was. But he was getting on and the new fellow who was taking over, Tim Ellis had a lot of ideas. He was also interested in education, also of – well, as was Clarence Allen. Clarence Allen had been the headmaster of the Rivers School and later worked with Dean [Francis B.] Sayre at St. Albans in Washington.

MH: Francis Sayre.

TB: Yeah. So Tim Ellis had some strong ideas about using Chewonki as an educational institution. It would broaden its clientele, and broaden its focus a little bit, and in particular - And that was at a time when many summer camps were finding it necessary to look for a year-round use for their land and, a year round mission. So that was what was going on in his mind. I wasn't really involved with that at the time, but one of the things that had happened was that,

even in the summer program, that we had developed a lot of special programs, especially involving the wilderness—special programs that didn't—not the old nature study, archery, tennis kind of program, but actually putting people out into the wilds for four or five weeks. And I led a couple of summer-long wilderness trips.

MH: Where?

TB: Well, there was an outpost camp that we had become affiliated with on Lake Umbagog. Umbagog is on the border between New Hampshire and Maine, and actually this outpost was on the New Hampshire side, at the very mouth [*sic*: source] of the Androscoggin River. And what I did with kids was take them up there, myself and another counselor—this, in real wilderness conditions—we'd have to canoe in to the outpost camp from Errol, New Hampshire, about a three, three or four mile paddle, and we would train in wilderness skills. And then we'd go across Umbagog and down the Rapid River to Upper Richardson Lake, and then to Lower Richardson Lake, into Mooselookmeguntic Lake, and these lakes are all connected by rivers and passage ways. And on Mooselookmeguntic was where the Junior Maine Guide Program was run every August. So by the time we got to JMG camp on Mooselookmeguntic we knew how to start a fire and how to use an axe and how to find our way around in the woods, and something about nature and so on, and our kids were competitive as they -

MH: How old were these kids?

TB: The kids were thirteen, fourteen.

MH: How many of them would you have on a trip like that?

TB: About eight, eight or ten, eight or nine, with a couple of counselors.

MH: What a wonderful experience.

TB: Yeah, yeah, and I think it was for them, too. One of the, a great opportunity to teach.

MH: So how long were you at Hotchkiss?

TB: Just two years.

MH: Two years, and you were teaching history?

TB: Yeah, and current affairs.

MH: That was kind of a twenty-four hour experience, wasn't it?

TB: Yeah, yeah, coaching and so on. It's pretty significant. You know, one thing is worthy of mention, one of the great things about it is that I was teaching this current events course, and I

went there in the fall of 1967. And this was, this was a place where you had kids who were fairly well, fairly highly motivated, you could get fairly deeply into things. I was teaching freshmen, these are kids that are also thirteen or fourteen, but there we were after the 1967 war in the Middle East, and we spent most of the fall in 1967 reviewing what had happened, during the fall, and talking about, talking about what the consequences were and gauging people's reactions. And that experience of being fully immersed in that war has always made me feel like I had a special, had some special insights. I mean I could repeat them to you now, but - So when Condoleezza Rice says, "Well, we're sorry, we're not really able to make any pro-, we're not going to, we're going to set our sights a little lower than finding a two-state solution to the Middle East situation before the end of this administration, but we'll" – what did she say? – "We feel that when the political situation - "

MH: Stabilizes.

TB: Yeah, that's right. "When we have the proper political situation, we feel there'll be a solution in place." I mean, if you think back, it's been forty years that we've been looking for the solution here, and you can't blame her in particular—every administration has failed to achieve a solution. But that's something about my Hotchkiss years that's—

MH: Hotchkiss must have been very different than Bath high school.

TB: Than Morse High School.

MH: Morse High School, excuse me, Morse High School.

TB: Yeah, yeah, oh yeah. It was, and it was an experience which was lukewarm for me. It was a successful experience, but I was looking ahead as soon as I got there to graduate school, and was going to be graduate school in history. I had had some great courses at the end of my Wesleyan years with Nathanael Greene and Edward Gargan on, in the history department, and Gargan had moved to Wisconsin, and I had a great seminar with him on the French Revolution and he was heavily into studying history through original documents and studying, going back and finding the records of the town clerks in France, and from those records determining, developing new insights into the way of life, the social history especially.

End of Track One
Track Two

TB: And it was all very exciting, although I don't know exactly at what level I appreciated it, but I was caught up in it a little bit and eventually applied to be his student -

MH: At Wisconsin?

TB: At Wisconsin, and was accepted. And so after two years at Hotchkiss, during which – I remember that one summer, the summer before I went to Wisconsin I didn't work at Chewonki, I

felt I had a number of other things to do, and I planned a, I took a couple of Katahdin trips with former students at Hotchkiss during that summer. Those were fun. Lengthy trips through Baxter State Park. But then went out to Wisconsin -

MH: That would be in Madison, University of Wisconsin at Madison.

TB: Right, right. And had -

MH: Department of history.

TB: Was in the department of history, was a resident advisor. I'd been a dorm counselor at Wesleyan, I knew how to do that.

MH: Did you live in the dorms at Hotchkiss as well?

TB: Yeah.

MH: Yeah, so you had dormitory experience.

TB: I was -

MH: Which is not, I mean living, being a responsible person in a dormitory is not easy.

TB: I should say, I should say. And I had a lot of that kind of experience, although it was different when you were a teacher at Hotchkiss than it was at this – and the interesting thing at Wisconsin was, I was in a graduate dorm and so this was my introduction to the international community. A lot of the graduate students who live in the dorms were foreign students, and from everywhere under the sun, you know.

MH: You made a point of saying that you weren't particularly activist oriented, but you were, at Wesleyan, that you were really preoccupied with other things.

TB: Right.

MH: Did that change as you got to, you know, through Hotchkiss and Wisconsin?

TB: Good, good. My – you have to start with, my parents were, my parents I would say probably were registered Republicans. I know that my mother was from a Republican family. They weren't conservative Republicans, and they weren't partisan in any way, or politically active. My father—there's something a lot of Italian-Americans have Republican tendencies, interestingly enough, even the poor ones. But in any case I, for whatever reason, even though I remember— I mean the biggest event of my college years really, in the fall of my freshman year, when Kennedy was shot, in '63, and it was as if everybody was a Democrat. However, I would have voted for Goldwater in '64, and I wonder about that to this day. I mean this is an

example of how I was just sort of letting things happen to me. I mean, I don't know how much I thought about it.

I think the reason I was going for Goldwater, besides the fact that I might have had this sort of Republican background that I don't really remember but might have influenced things, was the fact that Goldwater had written a book. He'd written several books actually, small books, including one called *Conscience of a Conservative*, which I had read in high school, and the idea that this person – again, I had this academic influence – the idea that this person who was going to be the president had also written a book which had a certain philosophical content, impressed me so much that I would have voted – at that time you had to be twenty-one to vote, and so I wasn't one of the minority who voted for Goldwater, but I'm sure I would have.

That changed very quickly just about the time I was going to Hotchkiss, between '67 and '68, [] and I think maybe it had to do with finally going to have my draft physical and beginning to see there really is a war in Vietnam, and maybe I'd better pay some attention to it, think about it a little bit. I was, by the way, had a football injury that left me with a leg length differential, so I was 4-F with that physical. But for whatever reason when I—I don't remember—after graduating from Wesleyan I don't remember being a Republican again really.

And in 1968, during my first year at Hotchkiss, I was the lacrosse coach or the assistant lacrosse coach in that first year. But I, except for that—that kept me at Hotchkiss for many weekends—but all the other weekends I was in New Hampshire working for Gene McCarthy and so on and so forth. It wasn't anything that I broadcast, you know, at Hotchkiss. I mean it was something that I did on my—

MH: Your own time.

TB: My own time. And I had friends from Wesleyan who were coming from Boston to New Hampshire and would meet them up there. But I think about four or five weekends I spent up in New Hampshire. And so I was a full-fledged, by the time I went out to Wisconsin—

MH: And that would have been when?

TB: Went to Wisconsin in the fall of '69.

MH: Okay, so after the '68 election.

TB: Yeah, yeah.

MH: And were you, where were you on election night in 1968? Were you up in New Hampshire working, or were you at Hotchkiss?

TB: Well, you know, in election night 1968 I was at Hotchkiss, and I don't really remember exactly where I was. I remember -

MH: Must have been a disappointment to you, though, if you'd been working for McCarthy.

TB: Sure. Well, a lot of things had happened, you know, things had very quickly changed, and the nominee of the Democrats was not - You know, Senator Humphrey was not exactly our hero in the same way that Humphrey and Kennedy had been. But that was -

MH: It was a busy year, 1968.

TB: I mean everyone can talk about that, I mean I better remember the morning Robert Kennedy was shot, in ...

MH: June, yeah, June 6, June of 1968.

TB: I was on my way—my cousin was getting married in Boston—and so I got up early in the morning and drove from Lakeville, Connecticut, to Boston and heard the news while I was driving there. They were married in Harvard Square, and so obviously it was a day that was tinged with -

MH: Was this your cousin Phil?

TB: No, a sister of my cousin Phil.

MH: So you were in Wisconsin for how long?

TB: Oh, a long time, a long time.

MH: And you ended up getting a master's degree?

TB: I ended up getting a master's degree, but not in history. I moved over to the department of education and that was really the beginning of my associating politics and education. I was very concerned with political participation, and with teaching social studies, and I, during that first year, partly because I don't think I had understood exactly the rigor of academic history and the isolation that's necessary to really get—how much, how strong your interest has to be to do a good job in understanding 18th century France from this perspective—and the distractions of the political situation in Wisconsin, I moved over to the School of Education.

I was involved in a special doctoral program there that was really going to change the world in terms of teaching civic education, and became involved in a couple of new schools in Madison.

MH: What were their names?

TB: Malcolm Shabazz High School, and the other one, the second one was called City School.

MH: Malcolm Shabazz, as in Malcolm X?

TB: Yeah.

MH: Okay, and the City School.

TB: And I was involved just as a teacher at Malcolm Shabazz while I was being a graduate student, but then I was involved in the planning of this other, this second public alternative school called City School in Madison and -

MH: Do they exist today?

TB: Yes—Shabazz doesn't, but City School does. Well I, actually I'm not sure that it does. But they moved on for a while, and I think they changed rather dramatically. But I don't want to—I want to move along in my story here. We want to get to spend a little time talking about Senator Mitchell.

MH: Oh, absolutely, more than a little, I hope. When did you get back to Maine, was it from Madison back to Maine?

TB: It was from Madison back to Maine. The Chewonki tie was strong, and here I was involved in starting a new school, and here was Tim Ellis back in Wiscasset thinking about having a year-round program at Chewonki and we began to talk. And I told him about my program at City School, which was a sort of a school without walls, learning in the community, I was taking kids out into the community and getting involved in social action – social action activities, and in politics and doing internships and so on.

And we began to come up with—and Tim had some very strong ideas—but the Chewonki Foundation, which had purchased Chewonki from Clarence Allen and confirmed its hiring of Tim as the executive director—Tim Ellis as the executive director—had given Tim the go ahead to start a year-round school on Chewonki Neck, a year-round program. And after some conversations and some discussions about what I wanted to bring to it, I was asked to be the first director of the school. And I was halfway—I'd gotten a master's but I was sort of not too excited about any particular doctoral project, and I was involved in a lot of schooling, a lot of clinical activity, as opposed to academic activity at Wisconsin. So I was quick to say yes, and we started that school in the fall of 1973 at Chewonki, with twelve students.

MH: How many faculty?

TB: And four faculty, and it was called Maine Reach, it lasted for I think twelve years, and then became a program which is very strong right now, a program called the Maine Coast Semester. I think there were a couple of years when Maine Reach didn't exist, and then the Maine Coast Semester started. I won't bother to talk about that, but things -

MH: Were you with it for the whole twelve years?

TB: Oh no. No, no, no.

MH: No. How long were you with it?

TB: I was just with it for two years.

MH: Two years. Now there was a woman named Shatanya York, was she involved then?

TB: No.

MH: Okay, it must have been later with the Maine Coast Semester. I remember getting a letter from the Chewonki Foundation, I think she was applying for grants, when I was working in Congress, and I was fascinated by her first name.

TB: Uh huh. But this program focused on building of community—community—this community of four faculty and twelve students living on Chewonki Neck, for one, but also the community of Maine and the various communities that were contained therein, and we dedicated ourselves to studying these communities. The fourth kind of community that was important was the natural communities. We just tried to work with the concept of community in developing our curriculum, but more important than the sort of philosophical unity was the idea of going out, learning about, listening, recording, reporting, becoming involved to a certain extent.

Things pointed, for each academic year in Maine Reach, to a citizen action project. There was to be a citizen action project in the spring of each year, and so the four faculty members divided up the kids as the fall moved along and the kids—these little groups of one faculty and three students began to talk about, ‘Well what kind of citizen action project will we do?’ And actually we probably started out when Bertocci said, “I’m interested in doing something in politics,” somebody else said, “I’m interested in going into the woods,” or, “Learning about the lumber industry,” and the kids eventually ended up, I hope, where they wanted to be with the faculty members.

So we looked ahead to working on the gubernatorial campaign of 1974 -

MH: Your group.

TB: My group. And so we started interviewing the candidates. Now, where were you then, Mike, if I can bring you into the interview, in ‘74? Do you remember?

MH: Well, in 1974 I was working in the House of Representatives, for another politician who will remain nameless at this point.

TB: All right, but you were then, but you will remember who the players were.

MH: Right, Mr. Erwin was the Republican candidate, it ended up.

TB: Mr. Erwin and Mr. Richardson were competitors for the Republican nomination and -

MH: And Mr. Richardson lost to Mr. Erwin.

TB: Right, and then Mr. Brennan and Mr. Mitchell -

MH: Were the chief contenders. There were others on the Democratic side.

TB: Yeah, Pete Kelley, was he - ?

MH: Yeah, Peter Kelley from Caribou as well. And then of course there was Jim Longley who ran as an Independent.

TB: Right, and I was trying to think about that -

MH: So which did you interview?

TB: We interviewed, well, I don't think Longley was really involved -

MH: Not early.

TB: Early, no, because we didn't interview Longley. But we interviewed most of them. We interviewed Kelley, we interviewed Richardson, we interviewed Erwin, Brennan and Mitchell. And I don't remember how many of them came to Chewonki. Richardson did, and Mitchell did, and that was when I first met Mitchell.

MH: Harry Richardson, his name was, Portland attorney.

TB: Harrison Richardson.

MH: Harrison Richardson, right, Harrison Richardson, and he was, he lived in Falmouth and was a very prominent Portland attorney.

TB: But the Democratic contenders were Joe Brennan and, the big contenders were Brennan, Mitchell and this guy Kelley from Caribou. We—and I remember—I remember George Mitchell coming to Chewonki, I mean and this has got to be— We both know a lot about what happens with politicians in their going around to these various places. Well, he'd gotten a letter from me or from - Probably saying, "Here's what we're up to; we want to participate in one of the campaigns; we'd like to meet you, can you come and visit?"

So help me with the name of this, I've forgotten momentarily the name of the guy who would have been driving Mitchell [Barry Valentine] who later was the, later ran the airport in Portland. Jeez, how am I forgetting that?

MH: It was a guy in York County, right? I can't think of his name. He became head of, he became a member of the Federal Aviation -

TB: Yeah, that's right, that's right.

MH: I can't think of his name now, but the name has been mentioned in another interview but I can't recall it right now.

TB: I'm sorry, he probably should be interviewed for this, for this thing. But he was the driver, he came with the Senator at that time, who was then not the senator at all but the assistant prosecuting attorney, was the U.S. attorney in - no, no, he was assistant Cumberland County attorney. Well no, actually he had been, he had been, but he was probably in private practice.

MH: Yeah, but he was right up until like, well, I can't lead you too - he had been, I know. Because it was actually Joe Brennan who'd hired him as the assistant, and then he ended up running against Joe in the primary.

TB: Right, and it was Joe who stayed on the job, and the Senator went back into private practice, I believe. But in any case - well, I'm going to come up with this driver's name before we're finished here - but here you show up at this way out, way out in the countryside, and it's not a lot of people, there's sixteen people sitting down at a table, and it was probably brown rice and vegetables or something that we had for dinner. But he was a marvelous guest, and before the meal we—the four of us—sat down with him, and he told us about his candidacy and so on and so forth.

But I have often wondered exactly what must have been going through his mind. But he was clearly interested in the concept of Maine Reach, and he had a lot of questions about what we did and, what our goals were and so on and so forth. That's what I remember. I don't remember as much what he told us about his objectives, as what we told him about ours.

MH: What was the result of this meeting?

TB: We decided to work for Mitchell. In other words we, after we had met all these guys, there was a consensus in the group of—it was mostly the kids that got to decide—was a consensus that they wanted to work for this guy Mitchell. So (and we didn't do anything right away), but when the six week period came up for our citizen action project (and that would have been in April and May of '74), we spent every day in Portland. We would get up early in the morning and head for Portland. Actually the boys, there were two boys in - The three people that were doing this were Paul Davis and Will Burden, and Betsy Calvert -

MH: Paul Davis? Will Burden?

TB: None of these people have figured later in -

MH: What was the last name?

TB: And Betsy Calvert. And as I recall, some of the boys, Will and Paul would occasionally spend the night. There was a campaign headquarters on Congress Street, and Tony Buxton and Jay McCloskey held court at the back of this storefront, Jay working on issues and Tony the campaign manager. And we did what campaigns do: we made phone calls and kept track of volunteers and ran errands, and did whatever, whatever we were asked to do. And there were, there were, is that, let's see, Tony – the campaign headquarters was right next to Tony [*sic*: Joe] Angelone -

MH: Joe Angelone.

TB: Joe Angelone...

MH: One of the pizza shops?

TB: Yeah, one of his pizza shops, and Joe, I think he had some rooms upstairs, and I think Will and Paul occasionally would spend the night, would work late and so forth, but I don't think I ever did, I would come home. So we commuted to Portland, essentially.

MH: For how long a period?

TB: I was also the director of the school, so I couldn't, so I didn't work every day, but I was there most of the time.

MH: So you were able to use some of the skills that you'd developed on the McCarthy campaign in New Hampshire?

TB: Well, there were some similarities. We'd certainly gone, knocked on a lot of doors for McCarthy and knew something about doing that. I don't remember personally doing a lot of canvassing during that primary campaign. We did a lot of clerical work in the office. I mean they had, you can imagine how valuable it was to have these kids to, that were there every day.

MH: How long a period were you there for?

TB: Six weeks.

MH: Six weeks, and it would have been in the spring of '74.

TB: Yeah. And occasionally the candidate would show up and the kids would get to meet

him and go to a couple of events and so forth, but for the most part it was pretty –

MH: Do you have any contact with Paul Davis, Will Burden and Betsy Calvert now?

TB: No, no, I don't, although I've been in touch with, I hear about them secondhand, and I think I had a phone conversation with Paul a while back, and I don't know how they've -

MH: Just wondered if they became interested in politics later on in their lives.

TB: Oh, well I'm sure that it, it's maintained.

MH: What was the atmosphere in the campaign office in Portland?

TB: You know the atmosphere in campaign offices, to a certain extent, never changes. There's a lot of sort of, the insiders versus the outsiders, and going across for coffee with the insiders, and going back and greeting the outsiders. And I remember that kind of sense, I remember a few of the characters who either I can't remember or will remain nameless that we met during that time. Long hours. Sometimes projects had to go late into the evening.

It was a confident campaign, and ultimately a successful campaign. Although we, we were there sort of in the early part of the primary, the June—we didn't—we weren't—we had to leave before the primary actually occurred, school ended at the end of May. So, I don't remember how we greeted Senator Mitchell's victory. And we weren't involved at all after that, and I was back engaged in the second year, planning the second year of Maine Reach by the time the general election came up and there was the shocking victory by Jim Longley, which wasn't anticipated until just a few weeks before the general election in 1974.

So that was my first contact with Senator Mitchell -

MH: So you do a second year at Chewonki.

TB: Yeah, a second year at Chewonki -

MH: And then you leave.

TB: And then returned, yeah, then returned to Wisconsin full time where I worked on a, my first project there was to work on a book with my major professor, called *Skills in Citizen Action*, and we used some examples -

MH: What was his name, the professor?

TB: Fred [M.] Newmann, and another graduate student who had an expertise in English worked with us. This *Skills in Citizen Action* was a proposal for an English-social studies program for secondary schools, a way to, over a year, learn English and social studies skills, or

practice English and social studies skills as you worked on a particular competency, a competency to influence public affairs.

There was an elaborate philosophy and a lot of programs, but a couple of the important components were: the internship, getting the kid into the community, and the citizen action project. Which I had participated in both in Madison and at Chewonki. So we worked on that book and eventually it was published, mostly due to Fred Newmann's acumen and industry, but with some help from his graduate student associates, and we were awarded with co-author status.

And I was back working on, working with kids on citizen action. And I, frankly, I was getting a little bit frustrated with the idea of—the problem—I really didn't feel that a lot of the kids were taking things. That they had enough at stake in the world to really get engaged. They were not—there were too few teachable moments, if you put it that way (to use that phrase that's become perhaps a little too popular). They weren't ready to be taught about exerting influence in public affairs. That was my general feeling; I was getting a little tired of it. I was getting a little tired of kind of urging kids to, "This is important," and, "We can make a difference," and so on.

And I began to work more with older people. I got involved in some other kind of political action activities that involved my peers and so forth in Madison, and began to think about [p/o]. I still wasn't getting the urge, the academic urge, the desire to get, to settle down and write my dissertation. So I began to think about the possibility of getting a job in politics. And really, as I thought about it and talked with a few other people about it, I worked in a couple of campaigns out there. Pat Lucy was running for governor and, at one point, that might have been '76, and Paul Soglin was running for mayor.

MH: How do you spell Soglin?

TB: S-O-G-L-I-N. Both of them were successful, and both of them were fairly -

MH: Pat Lucy was running for governor.

TB: Yeah. And Soglin was a very interesting mayor because he, you know, he came right out of the radical left. He had been part of the anti-war organizing, he'd been a leader in anti-war activity in Madison, and eventually became the mayor and so forth. So those were interesting experiences, but I really was interested in coming, in working in politics, working with grownups, and eventually decided to come back to Maine.

MH: Were you married by this time?

TB: No. I was married, I had been married between 1975 and 1978, but not to Cindy. And you know, it was a marriage that lasted for a while and—but not—and it's - The breakup of that marriage did have something to do with my restlessness and my thoughts about coming back to Maine. I came back in the summer of 1979 and interviewed for a job – that's actually, it must have been closer to the spring of '79 – interviewed for a job with the Maine Audubon Society

and the Natural Resources Council. They were fighting against repeal of the Bottle Bill. In 1976 Maine had been one of the early states to pass a returnable container bill requiring people to pay a deposit, and then enabling them to recover that deposit at the local store or at the recycling center, and the beverage distributors, especially the beer distributors in Maine, had organized a petition drive and brought repeal of the Bottle Bill back on the ballot.

And so I thought it was a good cause, and I interviewed to be the campaign manager for this job and was given, for, on this referendum campaign, and was hired -

MH: Bill Ginn was running Maine Audubon at that time?

TB: Bill Ginn hired me, along with Rob Gardiner, who was the Natural Resources Council executive at the time, so I worked closest with Bill, I worked out of Audubon. John Diamond was also involved in the campaign, and lots of old favorites. I think I did a good job of organizing, but it wasn't a particularly difficult job to persuade people that the Bottle Bill was a good thing to keep.

We allowed them, and we had the, the election was in November of '79, and -

MH: Well, let's pause for a second.

(Pause in taping)

MH: ... some of the people on the *(unintelligible)*.

TB: Yeah, I think we, yeah, I think we can get to Mitchell fairly quickly here.

MH: Go ahead. We were talking about the campaign to prevent the repeal of the Bottle Bill.

TB: Well, this was an opportunity for me to travel around the state again, and I've always loved that. From—in Maine Reach I got to do it, and on this campaign I got to do it. And as I said, it was a successful campaign and so on. But in the meanwhile, here I was, I'd come back to try this out and I enjoyed [it]; I met a lot of people and enjoyed that. One of the things I made sure to do as soon as I came back, because of my interest in being involved in politics, was to go and see George Mitchell, who by that time had become the U.S. attorney for Maine.

And I remember meeting with him in his office at the federal building in Portland, and being impressed with his graciousness – I mean it was the second time really that I'd been in a situation where the focus wasn't on—the second time I'd been in an interview situation with him, and I've always been interested— And I think probably almost the last, although I did interview with him again later when my, when I got the job working for him, but that wasn't – each time – and these first two interviews were informal. Where—

MH: You had not much at stake.

TB: Where, yeah, I didn't have a whole lot at stake. But at this point I was looking for, eventually looking for work and sort of saying, "Look, this is where I am, this is what I'd like to do." I mean, he pointed me toward Augusta and gave me some suggestions of people to talk with, but he wasn't, he was in the, he was in another branch of government.

MH: He shortly was to become a judge in '79.

TB: That's right, that's right. But he was still U.S. attorney and, yeah, he was moving into the judicial branch and so there wasn't any—I certainly wasn't asking *him* for a job at that point. But I spent quite a bit of time with him, because of his generosity, and he was—I was surprised, as I had been previously—on how interested he was in me, or he seemed to be. And this caused me to like him very much.

MH: So the Bottle Bill, or the voters vote not to repeal the bottle law.

TB: Yeah, I don't know if I said this before, but only twelve percent of Maine's voters decided to repeal the bottle law, and the other eighty-eight percent thought we should keep it. So that was a, that was a pretty good victory.

And by that time Senator Mitchell *had* become a judge, and during the winter, I had decided to stay in Maine, and I remember some interviews in Augusta. By this time Joe Brennan had become governor, and I remember interviewing with his office, and sort of being on the edge, talking with other state agencies and so forth about becoming involved in some kind of position which put me in touch with the public. And I remember describing my hopes as to be an educator, somebody who was helping the citizen understand government, and I had already thought about the possibility of working as a congressional field representative. You know, I knew about that kind of position, and I had written to Muskie—I believe when I first came back to Maine, to give it a try, I'd written to Muskie and gotten a, sort of a standard response, "My staff is full, I'll keep your letter on file," that kind of thing.

And it may be that I even went and visited Larry Benoit, whom I knew [] was Muskie's man in Portland, even before the big event, which was of course, Cyrus Vance's resignation as secretary of state, followed by Senator Muskie's appointment, followed by Senator Mitchell's app-, then Judge Mitchell's appointment to be the senator. And of course when that happened, things cleared up in my head. I was extremely fond of Mitchell, not only because I'd worked for him before, but I think, now that I think about it, especially because I was always so impressed with how he treated me when we were in these interview situations—his attention to my past, present and future.

And my understanding of the field representative's position, which to me presented an opportunity for me to be a teacher—

MH: Now, when were you hired, Tom, by the Senator? Roughly, I mean.

TB: December of, let's see, December of—no, no, it was in the spring of 1980.

MH: In the spring, so right after he was appointed, right after.

TB: Yeah, yeah. You know, I could have been -

MH: Because he was appointed in May, in mid-May and then -

TB: I have no doubt that I was the first Maine staff person that he appointed. He wanted, and I was - As soon as I began to talk with other people about his occupancy of the office I heard that he wanted to open an office in Rockland, that he wanted a presence in the midcoast.

MH: How did you go about this, now, did you contact Larry Benoit, or did you contact the Senator directly, or?

TB: I wrote to the Senator directly, and I was there when he was sworn in. Not in Washington but, let's see, I wasn't, I couldn't have been there when, I couldn't have already written to him - there was some - when it was announced, when his, when Brennan announced that he was going to appoint him senator.

MH: Yeah, it was a very short period of time between the announcement and the swearing in.

TB: Yeah, yeah. I think I might have even been there when Brennan announced the appointment, but at that point I didn't have a letter ready. But I got the letter to him very soon afterwards. And I think I, I can remember walking with him down some corridor when he was trying to get to a car and sort of saying, "I'd really be interested in working for you," or something of that sort, and then I was careful to get a letter to him very quickly after that.

MH: How many years in all did you work for George Mitchell?

TB: Fifteen.

MH: Fifteen. And you worked in two places?

TB: Yeah, yeah. I became his field representative in Rockland, being responsible for four counties: Sagadahoc, Lincoln, Knox, and Waldo Counties—what I called the midcoast region. I sometimes feel like I invented the term, because both the Bath-Brunswick people and the Rockland-Belfast people consider *themselves* the midcoast, but because I had this four county responsibility -

MH: Bath is the seat of Sagadahoc, right?

TB: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

MH: A perfect area for you, given your growing up and your Chewonki experience, and then the -

TB: Sure, sure. I didn't know very much about Rockland and Belfast, but I at least had that, that thing, that in mind.

MH: Were you already living here in Thomaston?

TB: No, oh no, oh no, I was living with my, I was living in a small cabin near my parents' place in Arrowsic. And I had met my wife-to-be during the Bottle Bill campaign, and we weren't living together or anything like that but I was going with Cindy, and -

MH: She's a Maine native?

TB: Yeah.

MH: Okay.

TB: Yeah, Cindy's from Portland. And I pointed toward this all of a sudden. I'd been going anywhere anybody suggested an interview, but now I just gave up all those other things and I pointed for this one job. In fact, I guess I must have done this all—I don't know if this helped me or not but I - There were three people in the state who had the job that I wanted—

MH: Who were they?

TB: And they were Larry Benoit in Portland, Charlie Jacobs in Lewiston, and Clyde MacDonald in Bangor. And there was, I was, the person that was going to be hired was going to be the fourth such person, who would have a new territory in, out of Rockland. And so I don't remember exactly what I did. But I know one thing: I went and visited with each of those three guys, and enjoyed my visits with all of them. And I remember meeting with Charlie down at the Bath City Hall before he was having some kind of a—he was a featured speaker at the local Democrats meeting.

MH: Now, all three of those people that you mentioned were working for Senator Muskie, right?

TB: Right, right.

MH: So you appeared (*unintelligible*) -

TB: (*Unintelligible*).

MH: No-no, so what I'm trying to establish here is that you really were the, you may have

been one of the very first 'Mitchell-only' hires, because you didn't work for Senator Muskie. So he inherited those three people from the Muskie operation, yeah, okay.

TB: Yeah, I was trying to figure out whether I was the first person hired. I'm sure I wasn't, because there are all these people in Washington.

MH: Well you were, and John Diamond probably. Okay, let me ask you this. How do you think that your, these four counties for which you were responsible, how did they differ from, let's say, those other people's areas? I mean what's different about those four counties that you spent so much time working for the Senator?

TB: Well, I think the outstanding quality is the lack of a central city from which activity emanates, and each of these areas consider themselves very independent of the next. You know, not a lot of interaction -

MH: So do you see them divided up in the way you said, Belfast, I mean Waldo and Knox, and Sagadahoc and Lincoln, are they?

TB: No.

MH: No? You think, there's actually four separate groups, you're thinking.

TB: Right, you know, they were very -

MH: County government is stronger here.

TB: Well, I don't know about county government, but the identification -

MH: County identification, okay.

TB: - I think is pretty strong. And their identification with their county seats, although in Lincoln County, Wiscasset, Damariscotta, and Boothbay, sort of compete for the central, I mean they're such a small county that it's, that it's silly to talk about this. But that's different than Belfast and Rockland and Bath, which really dominate their counties.

MH: How did they, initially, how did they break down in terms of support for George Mitchell?

TB: Well, I think that [] all four of them are very Republican counties. Bath a little less so, especially because of Local 6 -

MH: The union at Bath Iron Works.

TB: The union at Bath Iron Works, and because of proximity to Portland. But that proximity

to Portland was nothing like it is today. I mean Bath—Sagadahoc County—was still pretty independent. There was a lot of talk about Bath and Brunswick perhaps becoming more closely affiliated, maybe Brunswick joining Sagadahoc County, but really no tightness with Portland—a tightness with Portland which exists very strongly today, and Bath is sort of part of the Portland suburbs, but it certainly wasn't at that time.

The obvious, everybody suspected (although maybe there's only one person, that being then Representative Olympia Snowe, who would have us think otherwise), but most everybody thought that Dave Emery was going to be the opponent for Senator Mitchell in 1982. And Mitchell certainly thought that would be the case, or else he wouldn't have focused so strongly, I don't think, on establishing an office in Rockland. That was largely what it was about. I mean Emery was very strong here, and naturally in the adjacent counties there was a certain strength and a pride of ownership that was bound to influence people very strongly, unless Mitchell found a way to make an impact in the midcoast. And I knew that that was what was happening, and -

MH: Where did you establish the office and who did you work with?

TB: I didn't work with anybody. That's the first thing I remember, was that I was very alone in the office at the outset. But [] the old Thorndike Hotel was being renovated. The first floor of it, it was losing its profitability as a hotel and it had a great history, a great cultural history, which also was sort of fading. It no longer had a restaurant. And it was the place to be and to go in Rockland for, I don't know how many years, but for decades and decades. But it had lost that strength and was being renovated by a guy named Chick Carroll who had some federal urban redevelopment money, but also some – and he had created some store spaces in the first floor of the Thorndike, and he was a Democrat. I don't know exactly how it happened, but I think probably he heard—he and Mitchell somehow, or he and a Mitchell associate somehow began to talk about space in the Thorndike, probably before I was hired. And I don't remember there being—I remember that space having, being established, when I was hired.

MH: Was it on the first floor?

TB: Yeah, and -

MH: Facing Main Street?

TB: Well, no, it was at the back of the building from Main Street. The only, the best place for a sign was on the—there was a parking lot at the rear, and another fellow had established a little deli on the deck to the parking lot—and we had a little sign out there, and we had a little sign in front, and a two-room office. Which was nicely built, just big enough to—in the inner room—to have a desk and a couch, one chair and a bookcase, sort of the standard U.S. Senate furniture, and it was great to see that standard furniture which I'd – I spent the summer of 1980 in Augusta. No, in Waterville; we didn't have an office in Augusta.

Bev Bustin, who was in charge – and I should mention, Beverly was also, I don't know exactly,

she had become a field representative in Waterville, too, so, and I had spoken with her as well. And the Waterville office was, of course had been Senator Muskie's major office, and it was, that's where I underwent my training. Bev was up there with Janet Dennis and Sue Gurney, case workers, who had worked for Senator Muskie for a long time, and the three of them sort of taught me what case and project work was about.

End of Track Two
Track Three

TB: And I later worked with Sue and Janet again when we opened, after we had opened the office in Augusta.

MH: Did they close the office in Waterville?

TB: No.

MH: No, they kept an office in Waterville.

TB: They kept an office in Waterville 'til the end but by—but it was no—it was just a shadow of its former self. The Augusta office became the center of the Senator's Cumberland, Kennebec County activities, and Janet Dennis became a—inhabited—a smaller office in the federal building. The office that Senator Muskie had maintained was on the main street in Waterville, upstairs on the second floor. I forget, it was over an insurance agency or a bank or something like that. But Janet moved into, Janet Dennis moved into a smaller office. At a certain point, I think about 198-, I think it was after the Senator's victory in '82, he opened the office in Augusta. And Sue Gurney went down from Waterville – it's too bad Sue has died and can't give her oral history, because it would be a valuable one – but she had worked for the Senator for a long time, she began to work in Augusta. And there were a couple of people who held the position of field representative at the time, between '83 and '86, when I became a field representative in Augusta as well as Rockland.

MH: Are there several issues that particularly come to mind that affected the midcoast area that you were most actively involved in, that took up a lot of your time and a lot of the Senator's attention?

TB: Sure. You'd have to start off with Bath Iron Works, and I wasn't as involved with the Bath Iron Works as I would have been had it not been so important. But the contracts for the iron works were critical, and contact between, contact with the iron works, *and* with the union, for that matter, centered on the Washington staff. So, so critical was it and so day-to-day was the activity. So I made sure that I kept up my contacts with the people at the iron works and at the union, but they were in touch with other staff people in Washington about -

MH: Ship contracts.

TB: Well, ship contracts and labor relations and so on. And the second would be the fishing industry, and you know plenty about our relations with the people in the fishing industry, who were fiercely independent -

MH: And mostly Republican.

TB: That's right, mostly Republican. But did not mind coming to us to suggest what the Congress could do to help them, and what the Congress could keep its hands *off* to help them. So I spent, I learned a good deal, although not as much as I could have about the fishing industry.

And this was also a time when we were beginning to experience great losses, manufacturing losses on, you know. Right away, when I think about those early years, I think about Belfast, the closing of the poultry – Maplewood and Penobscot were the two big poultry processing plants there, which were closing and narrowing and the jobs were rapidly being reduced. And Senator Mitchell didn't serve to see the day when MBNA would show up to rescue Belfast. But between 1980 and 1995, which is roughly Mitchell's tenure in the Senate, Belfast was struggling. And so I spent a lot of my time learning about the Economic Development Administration, learning about trying, helping with applications for industrial money, working on a variety of projects with a variety of small plants in that area.

MH: Do you feel that you fulfilled your plan to be an educator in the political realm? You mentioned this as, when you were leaving Wisconsin.

TB: Yeah. In fact the one area where I was—didn't feel like an educator—was in this area of economic development. I felt like I was learning a lot about economic development and basically doing—using my wits and my contacts to make sure that I was—that the Senator was doing the best he could to assist in these new projects. I mean, I wasn't teaching anybody anything about that.

But when it came to talking with people with concerns about issues, when it came to talking with people with problems with federal agencies, people who had grievances or felt that they weren't being treated properly – by the Veterans Administration or by Farmers Home Administration – I did feel that I was helpful to the people I was speaking with on the case work thing, to try to help them understand the bigger picture and try to help them understand the place where—if they needed to put more emphasis—if they were going to be successful in their claims. The encouragement, giving them the encouragement that I could give them based upon my helping, putting the Senator's office into the situation, expressing the Senator's interest, getting good information, getting better information than they were able to get on their own from the agency about what they should do or what the problem was; advocating for them in cases where there seemed to be the need to do so. Always advocating for them, I suppose, but in some cases it's more perfunctory than others, and in some cases you really did see situations where people weren't getting the attention they deserved, or people weren't understanding things, there were communication problems.

But in terms of education, I really did feel that by putting myself out there, talking to people about the Senator's work - Occasionally I did stuff with schools, but this was mostly working with groups. I remember working with a group of Windjammer captains -

MH: Jim Sharp, was he still around?

TB: Sure, sure. But a number of guys who were—who felt—who, for good reason, felt that the Coast Guard was treating them like ocean liners, and because of their independence I think they were in danger of making the situation worse. But I remember putting together some meetings and helping to keep those—

MH: The Coast Guard was proposing rules that would be really difficult for them to meet?

TB: Yeah, yeah, and had already resulted in some economic disadvantages to them. And meeting with that group to sort of help them come up with a strategy, and doing some research for them, finding information for them, I think was very helpful.

There was another case where getting information, often they talk about cutting red tape but – here's a good example. There was a group of people here in Thomaston who objected, this was after Senator Mitchell's election in 1982 but—I think it was '83 or '84—a group of people in Thomaston and the *Town* of Thomaston, and people, and environmentalists in the area suddenly learned of the proposal by Martin Marietta who ran the cement plant to incinerate hazardous materials—solvents—in their kiln.

MH: Were these solvents that they produced themselves, or solvents that other people produced and brought to them?

TB: Both. You know, they said, "Why not use our facility?" In any case, [] our office became very much involved. Senator Mitchell by that time was the chairman of the Environmental Pollution Subcommittee, of the Committee on Environmental Protection, and was involved in hazardous materials legislation. And Charlene Sturbitts was his staff person, environmental staff person -

MH: In Washington.

TB: In Washington. And we were of great help to this group, in terms of making these Marietta people slow down a little bit, because we were expressing our inter-, our concern and asking the EPA exactly what it was doing to make sure this was safe.

But what I remember is, there had been some research done in, down in Puerto Rico, on just this kind of thing, and [] this had been tried down in Puerto Rico and the people in the company were sort of suggesting it had been very successful, but there was a research report that had been done, and the people that were fighting this, the town, really wanted to see this research. You know, they'd been—they'd met closed doors wherever they could.

Apparently this research, when it was—so you know—I was able to, or we were able to, by working hard on it, finding out exactly where this thing was and what form it was in, why couldn't it be sent up here and so on and so forth, we secured this research report, which eventually was instrumental in Martin Marietta withdrawing the proposal. There were hearings by the EPA, and even though the EPA was holding these hearings up here, the report still wasn't extant. And that was – I guess that's stretching the term of educator, but providing that information to this situation was really important.

MH: Tell me, Tom, when the Senator came to your—to the area that you were, was there kind of a routine drill? In other words, were there certain people that he had to see when he came to the mid coast area that you were responsible for, or was it different every time? It's been suggested that when he went to Aroostook County he had the kind of, he would always see certain people in the newspapers and things. Was that the same down here?

TB: Well, one of the things that I got to say is, this was a man who really worked hard when he was in the state, and seeing the newspapers was important. It wasn't so much you *had* to see somebody as—because that was important. Especially as an appointed senator in 1980, running in '82 against an incumbent congressman hailing from this part of the world, and the newspapers were very much—just starting with them—the newspapers were very much on our minds every time he came to the place, to the area. And I used to spend a lot of time dropping by, when I went to places for office hours, I would go by and say hello to editors and sort of kept up my relationship.

And it turned out that a lot of these people were people I really enjoyed staying in touch with, which was a good thing. People like Jay Davis at the *Waldo Independent*, and Phil Device at the Wiscasset newspaper.

MH: What was his name?

TB: Phil Device.

MH: Could you spell the last name?

TB: D-E-V-I-C-E, at the Wiscasset newspaper, I remember them. And folks at the *Times Record*—my classmate, Dave Swearingen, was at one point at the *Times Record*. And the local reporters, who were, especially a couple guys at the *Bangor Daily News*, Ted Sylvester and Emmet Meara; there were Mike McGuire, Steve Hederick—were folks at the *Courier Gazette* who were the editors and political reporters at the time, and those were the people that we made sure we saw every time.

MH: Did he have other people who weren't, I mean in other lines of work, that he liked to check in with?

TB: Well, you know, the local Democratic Party activists were people that he would see and who—we would—there were a lot of events, a lot of Democratic Party events, would provide the occasion for coming to town. And when he came to town, sometimes there would be receptions and the Democrats would try to do something that would, could bring in other people. Because they knew what he was doing, trying to meet as many people in the area as possible. There was a lot of cooperation, a lot of good feeling with the Democratic Party leaders at the time. But he would come; certainly speaking engagements with Rotary Clubs and so forth were -

MH: Would somebody drive him up from Portland, or would you go down and pick him up and bring him up/back?

TB: I would usually go down and pick him up. That was usually the way things worked. I remember a few hand-offs when he was coming from one territory into another, but the schedulers usually would put a day into one field representative's territory so that he would, so that I—I spent many—many is the time I would drive down to South Portland and be hanging out in the driveway at seven thirty on a Saturday morning, and I wouldn't have to wait long before the Senator would trudge out and we'd be off.

MH: Do you have any partic-, were there any meetings or public meetings or events that were particularly memorable for one reason or another, that bring a smile to your face, or you remember as extremely confrontational?

TB: Well, there were plenty of confrontations, but nothing - One of the things that the Senator did throughout his tenure, but in particular during the first eight years, were town meetings, public meetings that he would hold, and then we would organize other events nearby during the time.

The Senator was very good at listening, and there were not a lot of public confrontations that I can recall. There were—sometimes the reporters would headline the complaints in the write-ups in the newspaper. I remember—let's see, I guess I'm not going to be able to remember too many details from this—but I remember sometimes that the reporters, seeing things work out so smoothly in a public meeting, would select the one abrasive comment or question to headline. But the Senator was usually able to reason with people that were at his meetings.

I do remember, there was one moment that was consequential. Do you remember the, there was a lot of, at one point—I had a—we went to a public meeting in Damariscotta and everything went beautifully as far as I was concerned, and people raised questions about El Salvador and about the environment and about taxation, and the Senator was able to keep up with everything and made everybody impressed with the information that he was able to provide, and the encouragement he was able to give.

But then after the meeting he had the longest conversation with this guy and it became a little bit animated and I was elsewhere and I didn't know what it was all about. But this guy was complaining about the fact that he was, that the Senator was driving in a Mazda. That, this was

my personal vehicle, a Mazda 626, a darn nice car in most instances.

MH: Very dependable car, yes, people had them for a long time.

TB: That's right, that's right. Well, you can get tired, I mean, and the Senator – all right, so we got back in the car and the Senator, he said, "Tom, that's not the first time that I've had to deal with these people who are talking about me driving in cars that are not American made. Is there any way that we can change this?" And there was some follow-up to that, and I forget who the administrative assistant was at the time but -

MH: Probably David Johnson, in all likelihood.

TB: No, it was, I think it might have been pre-David.

MH: Jim Case?

TB: But eventually, I mean we, eventually I ended up getting a Dodge car, and Cindy used the Mazda, and we were able to move into the American made, the world of American made cars.

Driving the Senator was a joy. He was not always, not always energetic, sometimes he got very tired being in public, and he could be a little snippy. But I enjoyed the fact that he always wanted to see if the Red Sox were, or the Celtics were on the radio, and he was always, that's one thing that was good, he was – he also, when we were traveling, I appreciated the fact that he appreciated the briefing materials that we all had prepared for him and kept track of them.

I did notice one thing, and that was that early on, in an effort to relax, I think, he would say, "Oh Tom, I can't read when we're driving." And I just—it may have been that he had some improvement in his [] correction, but the more and more I worked with the Senator, the more and more he was able to read when we were driving, and he did a lot of preparation for events in the car.

He also was, when you had to drive the Senator, it was very important to be precise and be able to estimate the driving times, and when you were going to leave here and there, and there was a lot of planning that went into it. Sometimes when I was going into a new driving situation where I had to drive the Senator from Brooks to Sabattus or some strange new place, I would do incredible amounts of research—measuring, calling and so forth—to find out exactly how long it was going to take me to get here and there.

MH: You didn't want to get lost with him sitting in the chair beside you.

TB: For one thing, I didn't want to get lost, but I also wanted to be sure of the time. Well invariably he would say, "Jeez, is this the quickest way to get here?" "Jeez, Tom, are we going this way?" And I would say, "Yes, Senator, I think this is the fastest way." And he would

sometimes roll his eyes and say, “All right, well this is not something I want to argue about.” So we would go on.

But sometimes, sometimes either the schedule would change quickly or there would be suddenly [] no urgency. I remember one time we were leaving Camden, and he was going back to Waterville and I think spending, planning to spend the evening with his family at his sister Barbara Atkins’ house on Nudd Street, with her husband, Ed. Which was often where he was, you know, either we’d drive back to South Portland or we’d drive to Waterville.

But here we were in Camden, and he wanted to get back to Waterville, fast. We had a long day, started very early, it was the middle of the afternoon and he, for one reason or another, he wanted to get back there fast. So - But there wasn’t any event or anything like that, so there was nothing to lose.

Well he, before the prior event, the next to the last event, the Senator had a few minutes so he took out my DeLorme’s atlas and he mapped out this area. And I don’t know if you’ve ever driven from Camden to Waterville but it’s not easy to find a direct -

MH: It’s like going from Maine to New Hampshire, east-west.

TB: That’s right, or you’re driving to Burlington, Vermont, from here, you end up going to Massachusetts. But -

MH: Inevitably, he probably came out in, he went out to Unity, didn’t he, out on 137?

TB: No-no, Unity? Come on, you’re an amateur, you’re an amateur. He had, before he went to his last event in Camden, he had already mapped out exactly where we were going and he had begun to communicate that to me. Right? But he didn’t have to finish communicating it, because he had it in his mind, exactly where we were going to go, and with the help of the atlas we did that, and we made it from Camden to Waterville in fifty minutes.

It involves taking Route 105 from Camden, and right out straight to Appleton and Washington, and then taking a dirt road at that time, called the Turner Ridge Road, up toward, it later, it now is a tarred road, the Turner Ridge Road goes from Somerville, Maine to Route 3, through the town of Palermo, or part of the town of Palermo, taking a left on Route 3, and then instead of going all the way to Route 32 and going up through Vassalboro -

MH: Up through China?

TB: Going through China on the east end of China Lake, and down into Winslow on 137. But we—but he—but we tried at a certain point to go on another dirt road to more quickly get around China Lake, but we only got about a hundred yards in and the Senator said, “I don’t think this is going to work,” we turned out and went back this way. But we had—to that day, I have been giving that route, I’ve been telling people about that route and people invariably come back

to me—I mean because it works from Thomaston and Rockland, too—people invariably come back to me and say, “Jeez, how did you figure that out? That’s much faster.”

MH: You’re not the only one who tells these stories about the Senator’s geographic knowledge. It’s absolutely – this is a recurring theme.

TB: So many is the time my careful research went out the window and he had the map in hand and was saying, “All right, we’re going to go another couple of miles, then we’re going to take a left.” He loved going, moving through the dirt roads and getting to where we wanted to go ahead of schedule and it happened frequently.

MH: What do you think sets him apart, in terms of being an effective political leader?

TB: Well, he’s a man who is very strongly influenced by family and community, but also, a man who has a very broad intellect and field of interest. And at an early age he became interested in the world and was, and this doesn’t make him unique, but he’s somebody who is uniquely able to balance the local – again, I don’t really feel like using the word ‘unique,’ but he’s, like other successful politicians let’s say, able to balance his curiosity about the world and his dedication to family values and to local traditions. Which is really, in Maine, a lot of what we’re fighting about all the time.

And so I think he was comfortable representing Maine. I saw some—I was reading some—I mean, you might think he could represent anyone. I saw, he could represent any state and many people who thought he should run for president thought he didn’t have a lot, you know, the Maine location wasn’t so particular, wasn’t so important. But he did have, he certainly did have an ability.

I mean, working for him for fifteen years, I mean I know how important his Waterville roots were to him. Not just his family, which is extremely important, but his friends and so forth.

MH: Tom, while you worked with him, did you ever get the opportunity to go down and work in the Washington office briefly or did you, did they, did you get down there at all for any events, or?

TB: Oh yeah.

MH: What were those?

TB: Well, it was mostly something—I never *had* to go down to Washington, but I frequently wanted to, and I went down and participated in activities and was a spectator. But I wasn’t called upon to bring my local expertise to bear on situations in Washington at all. I enjoyed seeing all of you guys in your office environment, and certainly meeting people. We had a lot of fun entertaining Washington people when they came up here, and I felt the same -

MH: I remember I substituted for you one summer. I don't know if you remember that, but I -

TB: Oh, I do.

MH: It must have been af-, I'm trying to think when it was, I think it was after, I think it might have been the summer of 1983 for some reason, because I think my youngest son was a babe-in-arms when we were, we stayed at my second cousin's house in Rockport and -

TB: Well, I remember one of the things that I appreciated about your having visited, and I think it makes me - I'm not sure, Mike, I would have thought that it was before '82.

MH: Well, perhaps, perhaps.

TB: The reason I think it was before '82 is because I didn't have—Carmen Wilder or Jeannie Hollingsworth were not working, I mean I had an intern.

MH: So it's when you were alone.

TB: Bill Leonard was an intern. Bill [] had a full time job elsewhere, as I recall, or, he wasn't going to school, he was doing—he had some other work. But he was spending a lot of time in the office. He was an avid Democrat, the son of Frank Leonard, the postmaster, and Halley, Frank and Halley Leonard who were dyed-in-the-wool Democrats from Camden. He was working with us at the time just to help me out. As I recall, he had intern status. I think later he did receive s-, I'm not sure, but he was really doing good work for us. Bill and I have remained good friends since then.

MH: Does he live in the area now?

TB: Yeah. But I remember that that week you were willing to do office hours for me. You didn't only do case work from the desk, you had some people you wanted to see in your role as a legislative assistant and so you moved around; but you were willing to do office hours.

Office hours was something which I considered very important at that time, and I think was very valuable to the Senator. We would—I had these four counties, and so for each of the four counties I would set aside one week of the month and, planning office hours for Wednesday of -

MH: Right, I do remember I did some office hours, right.

TB: Well you did, I think you did, I remember you were making some contacts down in Sagadahoc County. You wanted to go down to the iron works, too, or something like that, and -

MH: Yeah, I handled defense and foreign policy, and so the defense—it gave me an opportunity to see some of the Bath Iron Works people that I worked with in their place of work. Tom, have there been any, is there any stories you'd like to tell, or a story you'd like to tell that I

haven't asked a question for? Toward the end of an interview we ask this question because, you know, perhaps during the interview you've thought of something, or?

TB: Well, you know, I've got to tell you about this – the speed with which we've gone through my life during this interview has shaken up my preparation for it a little bit so that I'm not sure -

MH: Well it doesn't have to be the last interview either, it is possible that if you begin to think of some things, we could certainly have a follow-on.

TB: Well I think it's important, there are lots of particular incidents I could relate, but I do think it's important to speak about my relationship with the Senator, which continued from this attraction based upon my feeling about his personal generosity, continued to be one of my respecting him. But I think it's important to point out that his relationship with his staff—certainly most of his staff—had the air of formality about it, as opposed to informality. And when I describe this I often—I often when I'm describing it in general terms to others—I often contrast it with the relationship that Senator Cohen had with his staff.

Now you perhaps are the only person in the world who can testify to the difference in the way they dealt with their staff, and so I'll leave that for your interview [Note: the interviewer served on both Senator Cohen's and Senator Mitchell's staffs]. But in my experience, we had lots of opportunity to observe Senator Cohen and his staff, and Mitchell and Cohen were often at the same place at the same time and were friendly, and I was friendly with his staff and so forth. But it was always, Bill this, Bill that, and lots of sort of pal-ing around.

The Senator always treated me, as I say, generously, and thoughtfully. There was never, well I'll say rarely, a request that I considered to be taking advantage of me in any way, he was thoughtful about what, of my time and so forth. But [] he did maintain, he maintained a clear distance. He was always grateful, he always inquired for my family, he was especially interested in my family -

MH: And your family grew while you worked for him.

TB: That's right, that's right, and he -

MH: How many children do you have?

TB: I have two; and he was always very interested in the family. I remember him having his picture taken right here in this room with my two kids, and I remember my daughter, Elena, at one time in this house when the Senator was making phone calls in my den, Elena was saying (she was something like four at the time), "Can I... Can I... Can I go in? Can I go in and sit down with my Mitchell?" She had—she considered him 'my Mitchell,' she had seen him on TV, and here he was in her house. And so while he was making phone calls about the Clean Air Act, in touch with Washington, here was my little girl sitting on the couch, watching. He was very

solicitous of my kids and -

MH: And you have a son as well, what's his name?

TB: Philip. And Philip came along a little later, so— But the Senator was always very interested in my family, and I, frankly it made me—my feeling—his appreciation of my family I think makes me understand his decision to retire from the Senate a little bit more than perhaps somebody that hadn't seen that.

MH: Did that come as a shock to you, his decision to retire?

TB: Yes.

MH: What were the circumstances? Where were you?

TB: Oh, well -

MH: Do you remember listening -

TB: I don't remember a physical shock, but I don't remember exactly when I learned of it, but certainly I was, I was extremely surprised and -

MH: Have you—I mean to what degree have you followed his career since he left the Senate?

TB: Oh, well, closely, certainly. I mean, with great interest, but not with great intimacy to any of the details. I've been close with a few other staff members, and I've seen the Senator frequently, I would say.

MH: Really?

TB: Well, once every several years at an event or—there have been various events. But I've always appreciated his desire to, in spite of the fact that I will not, I don't call him George, I call him 'the Senator,' and I don't have any desire to call him 'George.' He has always shown his appreciation to me for—there's a certain friendship but a different kind of friendship that he's always shown. He always loved to be able to pay respects.

I remember Cindy and I were married in 1981, in October of '81, shortly—about half way between his being appointed to the Senate and his election to the Senate, his first election to the Senate, and we were pleased. We were married in Portland and we were pleased that he was able to attend the wedding and the celebration.

But the greatest thing happened months later. My family and Cindy's family enjoyed meeting him, and of course this going to weddings and so forth was a good thing for him at that time, he was campaigning for office and so forth—and he'd meet a few people, or a hundred people or so

at the wedding. It's a good thing, good way to campaign. But he really I think wanted to be there for me, and I think he sincerely enjoyed meeting my family and friends, and Cindy's.

But Cindy's dad, Joe Stanhope, at whose—who was retired by that time as [] a nurse practitioner, worked in Portland, fine old Munjoy Hill, born in a big family in Munjoy Hill, and very grateful for the rewards of this life and success of his children—and meeting Senator Mitchell and having Senator Mitchell in his home. But Cindy was telling me this morning, reminding me, how important it was that about three months later, after our wedding, here's Senator Mitchell, he's running for the Senate. Senator Glenn, Senator John Glenn of Ohio, comes to Maine to spend a weekend with Senator Mitchell, campaigning for him. I later met the Senator on one of those weekend days—I drove Glenn and Mitchell.

But the day, the first day, when he first came he went to a rally in Portland: “Oh, really?”

MH: In Scarborough Downs.

TB: Joe Stanhope went to this rally, and John Glenn was there and so on and so forth. And afterwards, Joe approached the Senator, and the Senator recognized him from having been in his house at his daughter's wedding to me, and introduced him to Senator Glenn. Well, you might think that that's just (*long pause*), you might think that that's just the way things happen in events like this, but that just meant a tremendous amount to Joe, that the Senator didn't simply say, “How nice to see you, Joe,” but he said, “Nice to see you, Joe, let me introduce you to-”

MH: John Glenn.

TB: John Glenn, who's orbited the earth.

MH: In some respects, I think that may be the Senator's brilliance, when you get right down to it. I mean, he has all these other very admirable traits and talents and intelligence and stuff like that, but it's that sense of timing and sense that he can make meaningful moments for other people. It's remarkable.

TB: Well, I do think that that's true, and that he—well I've seen, I've seen, and we've—and I've chuckled at it from time to time because it seems so easy for him to do. But he's impressed a lot of people with his personal warmth during his political career, and since. And -

MH: Well, we're nearing three hours here, and I think we probably ought to stop, pull this one to a close, but I do thank you for this, this has been great. And for the record, I want to say this is Michael Hastings, I'm the interviewer, and this has been an interview with Tom Bertocci, who worked on the Senator's staff for fifteen years. This interview, again, took place on November the 8th, at 11 Knox Street—at Tom's residence on 11 Knox Street in Thomaston—and thank you very much.

End of Interview