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Interview with Jay Davis by Mike Hastings

Jay Davis

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Recommended Citation

Davis, Jay, "Interview with Jay Davis by Mike Hastings" (2009). *George J. Mitchell Oral History Project*. 154.

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George J. Mitchell Oral History Project

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Jay Davis
(Interviewer: Mike Hastings)

GMOH# 090
April 24, 2009

Mike Hastings: The following is a recorded interview for the Senator George J. Mitchell Oral History Project. The date is April 24, 2009. I'm in Belfast, Maine, on High Street at the offices of *Village Soup* and *The Republican Journal*, the interviewee is Jay Davis, my name is Mike Hastings, I'm the interviewer. Could you please begin by giving me your full name and spelling your surname?

Jay Davis: Jay Davis, J-A-Y, D-A-V-I-S.

MH: And your date of birth is?

JD: May 4, 1943.

MH: Place of birth?

JD: Hartford, Connecticut.

MH: And your father's full name?

JD: Franck Kelso Davis.

MH: And your mother's full name.

JD: Helen Hewes Davis.

MH: I like to begin by asking a little bit about your parents. Where is your dad from? Can you tell me a little bit about him?

JD: Sure, he was a businessman, he was a WWII Navy vet, retired as a lieutenant commander in the Navy, and was in the Pacific theater and saw a lot of action, and came back and worked for a company that made piano keys, of all things, out of real ivory, in Ivoryton, Connecticut.

MH: The town is named after the piano company?

JD: Yeah. Ivoryton, Connecticut, which is a part of Essex, Connecticut, where I grew up. And my mom was a [homemaker]; there were five kids, five of us in the family, and my mother

took care of us. And so that's basically what she did.

MH: So it was like a manufacturing company for just the piano keys themselves, or -?

JD: No, they made the keyboards and actions, so the board, and then inside the piano there are these strikers that hit – what do you call them? – the metal, they're like the strings on a guitar. And so you hit the key, the striker hits the wire.

MH: It's like sounding board equipment.

JD: Exactly, sounding board, and -

MH: Did he do that most of his working life, of working at one company?

JD: Yeah, yeah.

MH: I see. And where is Ivoryton, Connecticut, where is it located in the -?

JD: It's up right on the Connecticut River, maybe five miles up from Long Island Sound. Nice, nice quiet place.

MH: And that's where you grew up?

JD: Yeah.

MH: What was it, how big a town is it?

JD: I think it's about sixty-five hundred, almost exactly the same size as Belfast.

MH: Is that right?

JD: And they both have main streets that go perpendicular to a river, and Essex has more of a history, it was invaded by the British – well, so was Belfast, actually – but it was more established then, they were building boats and ships there back in the 1700s.

MH: What was it like growing up there?

JD: Well, it was pretty idyllic. I used to walk to school and play outside every day, play sports. It was quite idyllic.

MH: Did you get into New York much, or was it -

JD: Yeah, some. I mean we'd go if my father would take us -

MH: How long would it take you to get to New York?

JD: Two hours.

MH: Two hours, so it's still a pretty good hike.

JD: They built the Connecticut Turnpike when I was a kid, and that made it easier. But we would go, my parents would take us in to, I remember seeing *Peter Pan* on Broadway, and seeing Fats Domino and Ritchie Valens and Buddy Holly in a show, but not often. It was definitely far enough away so it wasn't affected by New York. It wasn't rural, and it became, definitely, actually a very wealthy bedroom community.

I had a paper route when I was like ten and eleven, my brother and I kind of split up the town and we would get up before dawn and deliver *The Hartford Courant*.

MH: *Hartford Courant*, is that your first exposure to the print media?

JD: Yes, and the papers would arrive in these brown paper covered bundles with a wire around it, and we'd snip the wire, and my brother would immediately put them on his bike and take off, and I'd sit and read the paper.

MH: What time of day would you begin your route?

JD: Well in the winter it was before dark, so that was fun, and it was indeed my initiation into the newspaper business.

MH: So is this, was this town, I mean was it a town of houses with apartments in them, or, I mean was it, you mentioned your father's company, was it a mill town, would you call it that? Or was it a, was that the dominant thing in the town, manufacturing, or was it -?

JD: No, it had been, but it was kind of like Belfast in this way too, it was a prosperous shipbuilding community in the seventeen- and 1800s, and because it was just up the river, it had a sheltered harbor and so there were a lot of really nice big wooden houses. And there still are, it's much like Belfast, and one of the attractions of the community is this two hundred year old or more housing stock, and its location right on the river. There was manufacturing but that was not its [main enterprise].

MH: High school, did you go to public schools, I assume?

JD: No, I went to a private school in New Hampshire, the Holderness School.

MH: Holderness, okay.

JD: And that's in New Hampshire.

MH: Okay, okay, I see. And did you go there for all of your -?

JD: Yeah, for four years.

MH: For four years.

JD: And then I went to Williams College. And a few years after I graduated from Williams I got a master's in teaching from Harvard.

MH: I see. So did you plan to be a teacher, or was that -?

JD: No, I was a journalist, and I was working for the *Berkshire Eagle* in Pittsfield, Mass. and I had this kind of tiff that – I've had a lot of newspaper jobs and for one reason or another left them, but this one I left because I thought that Don Miller and his brother [Lawrence "Pete" Miller], who owned the paper, were not treating their employees very well.

MH: When would that have been, the *Berkshire Eagle*?

JD: That would have been 1969, I believe. I worked there for a year and a half. And so I brought a newspaper guild, of course I'd worked at the *Boston Globe* before that, and I brought a newspaper guild person up there and they started an employee bargaining association, which probably still is there. But it was funny, the first thing they did when I told them that I was, that I thought they weren't doing the right thing by some of their employees, was give me a forty dollar a week raise, which was like a thirty percent raise at that time, to try to, I think, to try to buy me off, but it didn't work.

So I decided, "Oh, so if I didn't want to be in journalism, now what would I want to do?" And I went up to Williams, which was of course right nearby, and I went to the, not counseling but the [career center], I wanted to find out where I might be able to go to get a teaching degree. And I wasn't a very distinguished student, so they said, "Well, I think you can go to Vanderbilt or Mississippi or someplace like that." And I said, "No man, I want to go to Harvard." And they said, "Good luck." So I only applied there and they accepted me, and so I left the *Eagle* and went to Harvard to get a degree in teaching.

MH: I see. Now when I was waiting for you to come in here for this interview, I read the most recent copy of the *Republican Journal*, and you had an article in there about the union bill that's being considered currently, in the legislature.

JD: Right.

MH: Or a bill that the unions are –

JD: Supporting.

MH: - supporting. So is it safe to say you've had a long time interest in kind of union-related issues? Or is that just coincidental that you mention this *Berkshire Eagle* event and then, and I see this article about union -?

JD: No, not, well I grew up in a really good Republican family, and when I went to Williams I got involved with demonstrations in Washington for Civil Rights and peace, and so I became a not good conservative Republican, [indeed a progressive activist]. I think the interest in labor is not just focused on unions, but on the larger issues of justice and fairness in our society, and those have remained big principles in my life.

MH: Get me from Harvard, taking a masters degree in education to coming to Belfast.

JD: Okay, so in 1971 I was married and I moved to Monroe, Maine, which is just up here, and we bought a small farm and wanted to be self-sufficient. And that was at the time the cities were burning, and Martin Luther King had been killed. It was like that was my whole – I had worked as a community organizer in black communities, and the Black Power was [] kind of morphing into the Civil Rights movement. So I figured that maybe the best thing that I should do is come to a very rural place and live an honest and self-sufficient life, if I could.

So we came up here in the winter of 1970-71 when it was friggin' cold. There was a big blizzard at Christmas time and there was [deep] snow, and I remember the first night we stayed in a friend of a friend's place in Etna, and we walked in there and snow was up to our waists, and walked into his cabin that he said we could stay in. And if that didn't scare me off, you know. So we looked around and we bought this farm in Monroe and moved up that spring, and for ten years I lived in Monroe, was a selectman for six years.

The first two years I taught school at the Oak Grove-Coburn School in Vassalboro, and then I left that because I had a little tiff with the management and – it's a common theme – and so then I was elected a selectman, and I didn't have a job. And I went to the editor of the *Republican Journal*, Steve Curtis, who's now a really good friend of mine, and I asked him if he'd hire me. I'd worked for the *Globe*, and the *Providence Journal* and *Hartford Times*, and the *Berkshire Eagle*, and he said, "No, I can't, I don't have any, I've got all the people I need."

So I talked him into letting me write a whole page in the paper every week, and I'd sell ads along the bottom to pay for it – which I've never heard of anybody else ever doing that in a local weekly newspaper – and I did that for four years. Eighty bucks a week selling four ads on the bottom of the page. Actually, they started selling the ads after a couple years. But I could write about anything I wanted. And what I wanted to do was learn what this community was all about, so I would go talk to farmers and crafts people, and every week I'd write like three thousand words on something and take some horrible pictures to go with it. But that was just a terrific introduction to Waldo County.

MH: Now, who ran the *Republican Journal* at that time?

JD: Rusty Brace.

MH: Russell Brace was still here?

JD: Diversified Communications.

MH: Before you go, continue with Belfast, I, you mentioned you were an organizer in black communities, could you tell me a little bit about that?

JD: Sure. In the summer of 1963 I was an organizer for a group called the North End Community Action Project in Hartford, NECAP, and it was the first real -

MH: Great acronym.

JD: Yeah, right. And it was the first real modern Civil Rights group in Hartford. And we did demonstrations against slum lords, and businesses that catered to blacks and didn't hire them. And I remember coming back from a demonstration and hearing on the radio, "the long arm of Civil Rights has finally come to Hartford," and a lot of people got arrested and it was a contentious thing. I didn't get arrested, but at the same time I would get up at six in the morning and I had a Newspaper Fund scholarship to work for the *Hartford Times*, for that summer, and I'd get up at six and go work for the *Times*, and then I'd come home to the North End and then we'd do the other stuff.

So it was quite a hectic summer, and then finally I left the *Hartford Times* because they were, I mean I'd walk into work and they'd say, "So where are you guys going to be today?" I figured, "This is not a good way to be a journalist." And the guy from the *Wall Street Journal*, which gives the Newspaper Fund scholarships, came to Hartford and said that I was the first person who had ever forfeited the scholarship.

MH: How old were you when you were doing the NECAP work?

JD: Twenty.

MH: Twenty, okay.

JD: Just twenty, and a young twenty at that. But that was really, that was an eye-opening summer, but it was totally wonderful.

MH: I also wanted, before, the other thing I would like to follow up on is, you mentioned you worked for Oak Grove School.

JD: Yeah.

MH: Back in the 1920s, '30s, '40s, the gentry in Belfast, Maine, used to send their daughters there -

JD: Yeah, right, it was a boarding school for girls.

MH: And it was very, very popular with the well-to-do in Waldo County, and as I recall, it was founded as a fairly progressive school.

JD: Yeah, it was a Quaker.

MH: By a couple -

JD: Yeah, the Owens.

MH: Who stayed on until they were -

JD: Yeah, they were still alive when -

MH: Incredibly old.

JD: Yeah, when I was there they were still alive.

MH: Were they there when you were a teacher?

JD: Yeah, these mysterious people. There was an elevator that you needed a special combination really, to get out on the fourth floor of this beautiful building that, I'm sure you've seen the school building. And they were up there, and I never saw them.

MH: Never saw them.

JD: Nope.

MH: Is that right?

JD: Never. I mean I think they, somebody said that one of them had elephantiasis or they had some disfiguring condition, and so they stayed right there.

MH: Now it's a State [Criminal Justice] academy.

JD: Yeah, right, I've been there. I went back, my brother taught there too, and he lived in the big building, and I went back with a friend of mine who works for the sheriff's department graduating from the criminal justice class last year, and I tried to find my brother's apartment and they've reconfigured the -

MH: Oh, so the two of you were there together?

JD: Yeah, yeah.

MH: Oh, okay. And what did you teach there?

JD: I taught part-time, and I taught like literature and current events, and what else? Writing, creative writing.

MH: How many students did you have when you were teaching there?

JD: Did I have?

MH: No, the school.

JD: Oh, the school. You know, it was a strange place, and it was in real financial difficulty, and I think they had maybe twenty or twenty-five boarders and, I don't know, fifty, seventy-five day students.

MH: Was it coeducational?

JD: Yeah. Because it, I mean there was a merger of Oak Grove and Coburn, which was a coed day school in Waterville, and they got together and did everything, so those two schools combined in that one nice building.

MH: I see. Interesting experience. So, you're in Belfast and you're working for the *Republican Journal*.

JD: Right, which I always thought was incredibly ironic; I still do. So I did that for four years, and then I had a little tiff with them and I left.

MH: Right.

JD: And I did some freelance writing for *Down East*, and then Dick Saltonstall bought the *Republican Journal*, and Steve Curtis was still there and Steve put in a good word for me with Dick, and so I called Dick and asked him if he would hire me, and he said, "Oh, we don't really have any openings right now, but I'll tell you what I'll do, I'll hire you to write the 150th Anniversary issue of the *Republican Journal*." I said, "Terrific." So I did that, I produced this supplement to the paper, and it was really fun to do. Again, I read every local history about Waldo County towns that I could find, including Williamson's *History of [the City of] Belfast*, and so I did that, and then they hired me as a reporter. And then about a year later, in September of 1980, Dick had bought the *Bar Harbor Times* and the *Camden Herald* so he was not going to be running the *Journal* day-to-day, so me made me the editor. And then in 1981 he died, in our office.

MH: Suddenly, very suddenly.

JD: Yeah, he had a heart attack and died in our office, and it was so sad. He was a really nice and wealthy and forward-looking man, he would have done some really interesting things journalistically if he had lived. He was, I think, forty-four years old. Then I was the editor of the paper and I had some difficulty with the ownership again. But these things are, I don't want you to think that I'm some crazy idiot, I wasn't a crazy idiot, but I had some principles and sometimes they came in conflict with people who I thought didn't have such good principles. But I stayed as editor of the *Journal* until 1985, when I had a tiff with management and left, and seven of us started the *Waldo Independent*, and we became competitors of the *Journal*, first competitors they'd had since the *Waldo County Herald* went out of business in 1918, which, that's a great story. You should buy the book just to read that story.

MH: Jay has a *History of Belfast in the Twentieth Century* that he showed me before the interview, and I'm going to be walking out with one of those.

JD: So seven of us started the *Independent* and I was there for five years, as the editor and president, and then in 1990 I became editor of *Maine Times* and commuted from Belfast to Topsham, and I was there for two years and the *Maine Times* was going through financial difficulties, so they let me go, and *Maine Times* kind of floundered around. And I went through a period of, I just couldn't find a journalism job, so I did whatever I could. I edited the *Progressive*, which was a monthly tab newspaper, and I worked for the University of Maine in Machias writing press releases for a while.

And then in 1997 Doug Rooks, who was then the editor and kind of part owner of *Maine Times* hired me as a reporter, and I went back to *Maine Times*, and all kinds of crazy stuff happened at *Maine Times*, it folded when Sherry Huber and John Buell, who were the investors, ran out of money, and then Chris Hutchins in Bangor bought it and moved it up to Brewer, and Doug and I went there and Chris, I don't know if you know Chris but he's a very difficult man to work with, and he fired Doug about a year after we were in Brewer. And then I was named to succeed him and I was the editor for a couple years until he closed the paper in 2002, and then I came here to work for *Village Soup*, which was just an online thing back then.

It's really a very exciting thing, but I'm not a tech person. And they had this system that enabled me, a non-tech person, to take pictures and put them up online and so [an] absolutely terrific approach to local news. And it started in Camden, and before I came here in 2001 they opened an office in Belfast. And the Camden office always, that's where the owner, Rich Anderson, lives, and it was really amazing to me as a local community journalist, how they got into the community, and it was very interactive. At that time they had these things they called boards for the community, which is – these are kind of common now, but they were not common then – where people could post opinions and respond to other people's opinions. And you could get two or three hundred people chiming in on an issue. It was a terrific thing, but they could never figure out how to make any money at it. I mean advertisers, it took them a long time to

understand that if you have the same kind of reach into the community that a newspaper does, that you can do different things with that medium, and that it's worth paying for.

So they just couldn't make any money with it online so they started the *Village Soup Times* in Camden in 2004, and then about eight months later they started the *Waldo County Citizen* in Belfast, and I worked for both when they started, I worked for the *Times*, and then when they started the *Citizen* I came up here and have been working here ever since. And then last year they bought Courier Publications and they closed like five papers, and they closed their own paper, the *Citizen* in Belfast, and they closed the *Waldo Independent*, which had then been bought by Courier Publications, so now there's just the *Republican Journal*. And so it's like a circle.

MH: What do you think is the future, not looking too far ahead but in these next five years of journalism in small communities like Belfast?

JD: Well, I think that this is where the future of journalism looks rosiest. There is still a demand, an active demand, for the kind of things that a local newspaper and an online provider provides. And I think it's just the question of selling the information to advertisers in a way that they're going to be interested in participating and responding. So I think *Village Soup* is a, this isn't important, but I think they made a mistake when they bought the Courier papers, and then the culture of *Village Soup* has become much more Courier-like, and to me the *Courier* was a good example of how *not* to do it, but I think that's going to change.

MH: But let me ask you this, are the people, are people in a community like Belfast, that have an interest in what's happening outside of the town, outside of the state, outside of the country, are they going to get their international news, for example, through you, or are they going to have a national paper and *Village Soup*?

JD: Well that's a good question. In the early years of the twentieth century, and of course in the nineteenth century, the local paper, including the *Republican Journal*, was almost all national news, because that was the only way that people could get news, there wasn't radio, there wasn't TV. And it was only later, when the papers became more local in, say, the nineteen-teens and '20s, they would often offer a joint subscription to the *New York Times* and the *Republican Journal*, because the local paper was giving up this franchise for national and international news, but they didn't want the people to lose that.

So this seems to all go round and round and round, so I think that *Village Soup* is a good example of a business that provides as much news online as it does in a paper.

(Interruption to close door)

[]

JD: So I think that it's possible that a paper like the *Republican Journal* could become just an

online product, and I think that could happen quicker in Knox County, where I think the computer ownership percentage is higher than it is here. And I think that that might not be such a huge loss. I'm not pessimistic about the future of journalism, because it's all about information and professional people are going to, are the best at provided that information. It's just a question of who is going to find the best way to sell the information to advertisers. And I don't know how that's going to work.

MH: It's been a long time since the midcoast had a congressman or a senator who came right from here.

JD: Right, Dave Emery was -

MH: Dave Emery from Rockland, Stan Tupper from Boothbay Harbor.

JD: Boothbay Harbor, yeah.

MH: How have you become familiar with people who have ended up in national office, and how do you get to know them?

JD: Well, because they always come to places like Belfast on their tours around the state. So I've had some really good experiences when people have come to Belfast and they come into the local newspaper office and talk. One of the best ones was, Bill Cohen came one time, a bunch of us were sitting around, our office used to be up on Main Street, we're sitting around, we were kind of a scruffy looking crew, this was when I was at the *Journal*. At the time he was doing his build-down theory, where you give up two big weapons and build a new one. And so he came in and he said, we were just shooting the breeze, he said, "What do you think of my build-down theory?" And we all kind of, "mumble-mumble." So he said, "You don't really like it, do you?" We said, "No, we don't."

So he took off his coat and rolled up his sleeves and said, "Okay, you are the people that I need to convince that this is a good idea, so let me try to do that." And we had this great conversation, it lasted about half an hour, and he didn't convince us but it was fun, it was a good, he made a good effort. And so when you're just sitting around the office in Belfast and Senator Cohen comes in, and you can have a conversation like that, chances are that wouldn't happen too many places other than Maine.

MH: Did you ever get a chance to talk with Muskie?

JD: I - no, no.

MH: No, okay. And how often did George Mitchell come by?

JD: Just a few times.

MH: Really?

JD: I mean he only ran, he was appointed the first time, and then he ran against Dave Emery, now that was when I met him. I had such a clear feeling. We had this funky office on Main Street, for the *Independent*, and so he came in and we all were sitting around, and he had to use the bathroom. And the toilet in this office was, you opened the door and the stairs went down into the basement, and right on this little landing was the toilet. So here was the senator of the United States standing and teetering without falling, and after he finished he said, "I don't think I've ever done that before."

So then, that same visit, we went to the Belfast Cafe, which is just a couple of doors down the street. And we were sitting at a back table and we had a couple of beers, he had a beer and we had a beer, and I remember asking him this question, which is not the question that journalists should ever ask somebody like George Mitchell. I said, "Is Dave Emery as big an asshole as he seems?" And he said, "Yes!" And I thought, "This is a good guy." I mean here we were having a beer, and I asked a very rude question, and he gave me a very direct answer. So I was impressed by that, because that was a sentiment that I shared. I mean, something obviously led up to that question; it wasn't an out-of-the-blue kind of question.

But I always thought that the first time, when he ran against Longley and Jim Erwin for governor-

MH: Nineteen seventy-four, right.

JD: And he was supposedly so grave, and that he was too wonky to be elected to office, but the few times that I talked to him, I thought that he had a great sense of humor and kind of dry sense of humor, he was very pleasant. It was a pleasure to talk to him.

MH: So you remember back in that first race, then?

JD: Yes, yeah. And I don't, so that was in, what year was that, that Emery race?

MH: The race against Emery was in, he was appointed in 1980.

JD: 'Eighty.

MH: The election was in November '82, yeah -

JD: So then he would have been -

MH: 'Eighty-eight was the last election.

JD: Right, so yeah, I probably talked to him in '88 too, but I don't remember it as well.

MH: What were the big issues in that period from '80 to say '94 that were big issues that you would have been, that he would have been interested in, in Waldo County, and that you were reporting?

JD: Well, of course Waldo County, that was in 1981 Maplewood Poultry Company declared bankruptcy and closed, and in '88 the Penobscot Poultry did, and the shoe plants went out and Waldo County was totally devastated economically for quite a while. So that was the big issue, and could the government do something to help, Belfast especially, be reborn? In 1985 there were a couple of federal grants that built the breakwater down at the foot of Main Street, and redid the main street, just significantly redid the main street, and those two things, and they built the industrial park out by your old farm.

MH: Near the armory.

JD: Yeah, behind the armory, so those initiatives, which were Governor – McKernan I think was governor then right? But he, of course, needed help from people in Washington too, and those federal programs immediately, as soon as the main street was redone, businesses started moving into the main street again, and as soon as the breakwater was done the harbor started being used. And then when Penobscot closed and MBNA came with -

MH: That's Penobscot Poultry Company.

JD: Right. When they closed and MBNA came and tore down the building in the early '90s, and then Belfast really had a decade of prosperity, MBNA fueled prosperity. I look back on it now and it was totally amazing what MBNA did for Belfast. They were just, it's like wild, I mean it -

MH: Why did MBNA come here in the first place?

JD: Because Charlie [M.] Cawley grew up with his grandparents in Lincolnville, and his dad made dolls' dresses in what's now the VFW Hall on Field Street, so he used to come with his grandfather to the place in Belfast, and his grandfather had another business in Camden. In our book there's a great interview with Cawley, I didn't do it, Cawley doesn't like me very much. There's a great interview about all this, about how MBNA came here. So he first moved to Camden, and the people in Camden started saying, "Maybe you ought to slow down." And he says in this interview that he looked into what it would cost just to close everything in Camden, move everything to Belfast. And, but they didn't, so they came to Belfast and built this huge building, and then they built another big building and it looked like they were going to build, they had a permit to build another big building, but that was when things started to get a little shaky and a few years later Cawley was out, and then they sold to Bank of America, which is a totally different presence here.

MH: I note that Belfast now has a branch of, or a building for the University of Maine. What -?

JD: Yeah, he built that.

MH: What is the significance of that building for the town?

JD: Oh, I think it has great significance. That was an interesting thing when MBNA was really going strong here, Cawley really wanted the best for his workers, and he wanted them to have MBA's, so he would get Orono professors to come and teach classes in Belfast, which is totally contrary to university policy. So I think that somebody called about it and he went to the university and said, "I'll tell you what, I'll build a building that you can have as a satellite, I'll give it to you, or I'll rent it, you can rent it for a dollar, a dollar a year, and it can be a satellite of University of Maine," and they agreed to that. And so he built this building, and like all MBNA buildings, it took like two weeks to build it or something. They just – totally outrageous.

So they built this building, and a lot of Orono people would teach in classes there, a lot of them being MBNA employees. But the university also was interested in expanding it, and it's now, it's an interesting concept. They offered similar programs that they have at Orono, but at night and on weekends so that working people can be full-time students in a university campus without having to give up their jobs. Everything I've ever heard from the university is it's been very successful and there's a very active senior college, which is a more local thing, and that the building is used, they just expanded, they just doubled the size of it, that addition is going to open in June. I think it gives Belfast a, I mean for years people in Belfast tried to find some kind of higher ed relationship that, the Northern Maine Technical College had a presence here for a while, and there was a group that started a lyceum kind of more informal thing.

But the Hutchinson Center is for real, that is a satellite campus of the University of Maine, and it has, from everything I hear, it's been very successful. And as I said, it's not just that it gives Belfast a connection to the university, it's that people *in* Belfast have access to a very inexpensive university education, which is pretty damn good.

MH: You mentioned Congresswoman Pingree.

JD: Yes.

MH: Do you see her often here?

JD: No.

MH: No?

JD: No, I mean she has been here, but I don't really -

MH: Now is Belfast actually part of the 1st or 2nd Districts, congressional districts?

JD: Part of the 1st District.

MH: It is part of the 1st -

JD: But it has been part of the 2nd District.

MH: Right.

JD: I think it was in the -

MH: It's on the edge of the boundary line.

JD: I think, the previous, now maybe we're in the 2nd, because Mike Michaud comes here. I don't know, I should -

MH: For many years, I know when Cohen was a congressman and -

JD: It's all in one -

MH: When Cohen was a congressman, Waldo County and Knox County were part of the 1st District.

JD: But he was from the 2nd District.

MH: Right, that's right, so he did not represent Belfast, actually, when he was a congressman.

JD: So I'm saying that it must be the 2nd District, because Michaud comes here, and Tom Allen didn't come here.

MH: Okay.

JD: So that's why we don't see Chellie that much.

MH: But she's not, she doesn't, she hails from nearby.

JD: Yeah, right, right. And, but we have been in the 1st District. And there was a time in the nineties, I believe, when Waldo County was half in the 1st District and half in the 2nd.

MH: Yeah, which is unusual, usually you keep to county lines.

JD: Right.

MH: How would you characterize Belfast and Waldo County politically, today?

JD: Well it always of course, historically of course, was a Republican stronghold, and now it is, there are still a lot of Republicans but it is definitely a Democratic, I mean we went for Clinton over George Bush, and it's definitely a Democratic stronghold. Some of the smaller towns have retained some of the Republican ties, but there's been, there have been so many new people. And this slow trickle started in the seventies, most of whom were more liberal.

MH: Are they mostly retired people, or is it across the age range?

JD: In the beginning, in the '70s there were people like me, young people who were trying to find a life here. And now that there tend to be more retired people or older professional people who hang on to a law practice or do some consulting or something. It's interesting that the political dynamic in Belfast itself has changed. Right now on the city council there are four newcomers and one native who feels martyred, because he can't really get anything done. And that's been mostly true, I guess, for the last ten or fifteen years, that the new people -

MH: Is most of the political energy expended in the city council, or is it on the school board?

JD: No, definitely on the city council.

MH: City council.

JD: And not even that much on the city council right now; it kind of waxes and wanes. This council hasn't got its feet under itself, in my view, so there isn't a huge amount of energy either on the council itself or directed at the council by the people.

MH: Well, did you, have you been following George Mitchell's career at all since he left the Senate?

JD: Sure, I mean not studiously.

MH: Yeah.

JD: But yes.

MH: Did the roles that he's taken surprise you, or -?

JD: Well I read an article that, now Tom Federle is a friend of mine, and he used to work for the Senator, and I had a bet with him about whether the Senator was going to be the commissioner of baseball, which I lost because I thought he was going to. But I remember reading this Jeffrey Toobin piece in the *New Yorker* that said he was going to be the commissioner of baseball, and it made good sense to me, that would be. I think that wouldn't surprise me either, I think that he has such a reputation as a judicious person that, and that's what you need in that position, especially after Bart Giamatti and Fay Vincent had been there.

MH: He loves baseball, there's no doubt about that.

JD: Yes, I know, and he's an owner of the Red Sox.

MH: Part owner, I think he has a very small share in the Red Sox, but he is one, I think he's what they call a, he's a 'director,' so he's an officer of the Red Sox organization. But he has the smallest, I think, percentage. But he does love the game, and he loves the whole structure of professional baseball.

JD: Right, I know. And it's neat; my great-great-great-great uncle was the first president of the National League and is in the Hall of Fame, Baseball Hall of Fame.

MH: What was his name?

JD: Morgan G. Bulkeley.

MH: Buckley?

JD: B-U-L-K-E-L-E-Y.

MH: Bulkeley.

JD: He was the governor of Connecticut and a United States senator, and the first president of the National League. So I've always been, I mean since I was little kid, I remember going to Cooperstown and seeing his plaque there. But I've always been, I mean, so I can remember listening to a, I mean today, listening to a game between the Dodgers and the Phillies in 1950, when I was seven years old, that, when Jackie Robinson hit a homerun in the twelfth inning to win a game against the Phillies. And also the famous thing, when Richie Ashburn threw out Carl Furillo [*sic*: Cal Abrams] who was trying to score, and if he had scored (but he kind of slipped going around third base) they would have won the pennant in 1950. So I was seven years old, and I just totally loved baseball. Now I'm an avid Red Sox fan.

MH: Well, George Mitchell turned down, twice, a position on the Supreme Court, but it's never been clear whether he ever actually got offered the position as commissioner of baseball. Well, this has been great, and I appreciate your taking the time on this. We always like to give people an opportunity, if this spurs you to thinking about other things, let me know.

JD: Yes.

MH: And I'd be happy to come back. I'm not far away, I only live in Hampden, so I'd be happy to come back and talk to you.

JD: Okay.

MH: Thank you very much, Jay Davis.

JD: Thank you.

End of Interview