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Clifford, John, IV oral history interview

Paul Brunetti

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Interview with John Clifford, IV by Paul Brunetti

Summary Sheet and Transcript

Interviewee

Clifford, John, IV

Interviewer

Brunetti, Paul

Date

August 22, 2002

Place

Lisbon, Maine

ID Number

MOH 358

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Biographical Note

John D. Clifford, IV was born December 26, 1951 in Lewiston, Maine. His parents were John D. Clifford, III and Athena (Kesaris) Clifford. His mother's parents were Greek immigrants, and he is the grandson of Judge John D. Clifford, II. He attended Exeter High School and Bowdoin College and later the University of Maine, School of Law. Clifford's family has been involved in Maine politics for several generations. At the time of this interview he practiced law in Lisbon, Maine.

Scope and Content Note

Interview includes discussions of: personal and family background; growing up in Lewiston; ethnic makeup of Lewiston, Exeter; attending Bowdoin; law school; Clifford family background; John Clifford, II; Clifford, II's relationship with Frank Coffin; John Clifford, III; the Cliffords' relationships with the Delahantys; meeting John F. Kennedy; Louis Jalbert; recollections of Ed Muskie; impressions of Jimmy Carter; and changes in the Democratic Party.

Indexed Names

Baldacci, John
Bell, Alexander Graham, 1847-1922
Blaine, James G.
Brann, Louis
Bush, George W. (George Walker), 1946-
Carter, Jimmy, 1924-
Chamberlain, Joshua Lawrence, 1828-1914
Clifford, Athena (Kesaris)
Clifford, Jere
Clifford, John
Clifford, John, II
Clifford, John, III
Clifford, John, IV
Clifford, William H.
Clinton, Bill, 1946-
Coffin, Frank Morey
Cohen, William S.
Curley, James Michael, 1874-1958
Delahanty, Kevin
Delahanty, Tom, II
Despins, Fernand
Eisenhower, David
Eisenhower, Dwight D. (Dwight David), 1890-1969
Farley, James "Jim"
Ford, Gerald R., 1913-
Gauvreau, N. Paul
Gore, Albert, 1948-
Hathaway, Bill
Jalbert, Louis
Kennedy, John F. (John Fitzgerald), 1917-1963
Kennedy, Rose
King, Angus
Malenfant, Ernest
Mitchell, George J. (George John), 1933-
Muskie, Edmund S., 1914-1996
Nixon, Richard M. (Richard Milhous), 1913-1994
Reagan, Ronald
Reed, Thomas Brackett, 1839-1902
Reich, Wilhelm
Roosevelt, Franklin D. (Franklin Delano), 1882-1945
Smith, Al
Smith, John McMunn C., 1853-1923
Smith, Margaret Chase, 1897-1995
Snowe, Olympia J. (Olympia Jean), 1947-
Stevenson, Adlai E. (Adlai Ewing), 1900-1965
Truman, Harry S., 1884-1972

Tunney, Gene, 1897-1978

Transcript

Paul Brunetti: . . . August 22nd, 2002. It's 9:30 AM; this is Paul Brunetti interviewing John Clifford IV. Mr. Clifford, could you please state and spell your name?

John D. Clifford, IV: My name is John D. Clifford, IV. Clifford is spelled C-L-I-F-F-O-R-D.

PB: And when and where were you born?

JC: I was born in Lewiston on December 26th, 1951.

PB: And did you grow up in Lewiston?

JC: Yes, I did.

PB: Nineteen fifty-one?

JC: Yes.

PB: Great. What were your parents' names and occupations?

JC: My father was John D. Clifford III, and he was an attorney. My mother was Athena Kesaris Clifford, and she was at home.

PB: Can you spell her first two names?

JC: Athena is A-T-H-E-N-A, her middle, or her maiden name was Kesaris, K-E-S-A-R-I-S.

PB: What was Lewiston like growing up, politically, socially, economically?

JC: Economically it was a very depressed area. As I remember it around '61 or '62, something like that, the average annual income was about twenty-five hundred dollars a year. Most of the people worked in the mills. The mills were open twenty-four hours a day. There were three shifts going on all the time. There weren't anywhere near as many cars as there are today, because people didn't, at least the people who were working in the mills, didn't have automobiles. On Sundays, all you had to do was follow the crowds and you'd end up at a Catholic church. A lot of Catholic schools, like there are today. Actually, there were more Catholic schools in those days than there are now. It was a great place to grow up.

PB: And what were the different ethnic groups in town back then?

JC: In those days the predominant ethnic group were French-Canadians. I would say by far the majority of the people in the city were French-Canadians. There was a large Irish population

whose ancestors, or at least virtually all of them, had come to dig the canals and build the mill buildings, so the Irish had been there from the 1840s, 1850s. There was a good size and relatively prominent Italian population, Poles, Lithuanians, Greeks. There was a good size Greek population, although smaller than it had been earlier in the twentieth century. Very few Albanians, a few Armenians, a few Turks. A good size Jewish population, good size Jewish population; most of them were Eastern European.

There was a Chinese family, the Chins. I remember the old man, the old grandfather, he was a good friend of my Greek grandfather. And they would all, he and, old Mr. Chin and my grandfather and Shuzis the tailor, who was from Lithuania, and some of the old Jews and some old Poles, and old Mr. Steckino used to meet at my grandfather's business which was on Park Street. And they would all tell stories about what it was like when they were little boys in the old country. And I remember Mr. Chin talking about how dragons flew in the sky in China when he was a little boy, and I thought that was just marvelous. I kept looking for dragons, but he told me there weren't any in Lewiston, they were all back in China.

There were, some of the old Jews would tell stories of the czar's troops coming into the villages in eastern Poland to wreak havoc. And one of them, whose name I can't remember now, told me how his sister had pulled him, he was in the street which was all mud, and he was playing in the mud when the Cossacks came, and how she grabbed him and brought him in before the horses ran him down, and hid him underneath the house while the Cossacks sort of pillaged their way through the town. They were great stories, they were really wonderful stories. And it was, you heard all kinds of different languages around these guys, too. It was neat, it was really, really neat, the stories that these old guys told.

PB: Stories don't happen as much now as they used to do then.

JC: Well, you've got, those people all came to America with the exact same dream, and that was to have a better life. They held on to their own heritages, all of them did, but the thing they wanted most for their kids was that they would be Americans. And they wanted to be accepted as Americans. They didn't come here, for example, my grandfather from Greece didn't come here to be a Greek in America. He came here to be American. He fought, like all of these guys had, fought in WWI. My grandfather Kesaris carried German shrapnel in him until the day he died; they'd been in the trenches in France. These men were so proud that they were Americans. And they loved nothing, other than their families perhaps, more than they loved this country. At the same time, they were very conscious of their own ethnic heritages, but they were Americans first, last, and always. My grandfather used to cry about it. I can remember old man Shuzis, the tailor from Lithuania, crying about America and how much he loved it and how wonderful it was. The interesting thing is, virtually none of these guys ever went back to the old country. They'd talk about it all the time, but they never went, they stayed here. And they wanted their kids to be Americans.

PB: So were they able to find their American dream here in Lewiston?

JC: Oh absolutely, absolutely, no question about it. And most of their kids ended up going to college, or if not their children then certainly their grandchildren ended up going to college. And

they've become very, very successful people.

PB: Great, great. Now, you grew up in the fifties.

JC: Yes.

PB: And sixties.

JC: Yes.

PB: What were the relations between the ethnic groups during that time?

JC: I don't remember any particular problems at all. I mean, we were all sort of mixed up together. The Greek kids and the Jewish kids were real close, we were very close. Because after American school, three days a week, the Jewish kids had to go down to the synagogue that was at the corner of Shawmut and Sabattus, and we had to go down to the Greek church, which at that time was down on Lincoln Street. They had to go to Hebrew school; we had to go to Greek school. Everybody else got to play; we had to go to school until five o'clock in the afternoon, so we got along real good. The Jewish community and the Greek community were very, very close. They'd come to our dances, we'd go to their dances; we used to do a lot of things together.

I always heard stories that there had been problems between the Irish and the French, and I assume they're true. I never saw anything like that, I just never did. And the Greeks, it seemed, got along with everybody. The Jews, it seemed, got along with everybody. I grew up in a French town, I can't remember when I couldn't speak French, so it seems to me the French got along with everyone. I just, and everybody knew everyone, I mean as I said, everyone knew the Chins, everybody knew the Witonises and the Shuzises and the Polish families, I mean everybody knew, and the Italian families, the Gaccettas and the Steckinos and these people. Everyone knew everyone, and everyone got along. The only ones we didn't know anything about were the Protestants. Didn't know anything about those people, and they lived in Auburn, and we didn't go there.

PB: To Auburn or to the Protestant -?

JC: To Auburn, because that's where the Protestants lived. We, as little kids we were all afraid of walking past Kora Temple because we knew Protestants were in there and if they grabbed like a Catholic kid or a Greek kid or a Jewish kid, it was likely they'd never be seen again. That I do remember. But I mean we didn't really know many Protestants so it wasn't much of an issue.

PB: That's interesting, yeah. Now your schooling, where did you, what was your schooling before college?

JC: Well I went to nursery school on Main Street at a place called Twin Cedars, which was a farm then. It's not any more, it's all houses, but it was a farm. I went to Pettingill for subprimary, I went to St. Joe's, and I went to Jordan, and then I went off to Philips Exeter.

PB: Now, when did you go to Philips Exeter, what years?

JC: I graduated from Exeter in '69, so I went out there, I was there for two years so I must have gone in '67.

PB: What made you want to go there, or go there?

JC: I don't know, I probably thought it was cool. My father had gone to Exeter for a year, for a post grad year in, between '37 and '38, and I was up in the attic at the house and I found a red sweatshirt with an 'E' on it, a black 'E', and I thought it was for Edward Little. And I was all shook up and angry brought it downstairs and said, explain yourself and, you've been lying to me all these years. And then he told me it was for Exeter, and so I asked him what Exeter was, because he'd never mentioned it to me. And I thought, gee, that would be cool to go there, so I did.

PB: What was it like?

JC: Exeter was great. I was homesick as hell for the first three month. I mean I couldn't see straight I was so homesick, but after I came home for the first Christmas break, then I went back and I loved it.

It was wonderful to go to school there because the people who were there were really interesting. You know, David Eisenhower was there, President Eisenhower's grandson was there. The guy that lived next door to me was Jim Coors, the Coors brewing family. There was an attorney general under Kennedy by the name of Nicholas (deBelleville) Katzenbach, both of his sons were there. There were Fords there, Rockefellers there, and then there was a guy who was one of my best friends who came from Bedford Stuyvesant in New York, so it was just really a broad range of interesting people; people from all over the world, which was neat. I know some of the people who went there who came from very WASP kind of backgrounds were a bit put off because of all these foreigners there. But again, growing up in Lewiston, I mean, gee, that's what I grew up with. People, everybody's grandfather was from somewhere else, believe me, when I was growing up, they were all from away. And so for me, I mean, that wasn't a problem at all. It was for some of the kids, as I remember. Exeter gave me a phenomenal education, and they asked me if I wanted to graduate a year early and I did, I said, yeah, sure, (*unintelligible phrase*), and then I went off to Bowdoin.

PB: And what was Bowdoin like?

JC: Bowdoin, academically, was not much of a challenge after two years at Exeter. I enjoyed Bowdoin thoroughly; I mean I had a good time at Bowdoin. But it was a tough time, I mean there was, the Vietnam War was really heating up. There was a lot of division on the campus between people who were supportive of the effort in Vietnam and people who were opposed to what was going on in Vietnam. There were a lot of guys who'd come back from the war and were going to college, so there were a lot of older guys around who had gone through a war, you know, and seen some really powerful stuff.

The big student strike in the spring of '70 was really something after the Kent State shooting. Bowdoin shut down in that late spring, just like everybody else did. People were going off to demonstrations and, you know, against the war and against the people who were against the war, and that sort of stuff. I did get a great education, no question about it, and I had a lot of fun and I'm still close to the people that I went there with, and in fact I'm on the, our thirtieth reunion's coming up and I'm on the reunion committee, I've stayed very close to Bowdoin.

PB: What were, were you involved at all in any of the protests or demonstrations?

JC: No, I mean, I was, my gang was sort of cynical about it all. We were like outside agitators, you know, we would, I remember one time we went down to Portland, there was going to be a demonstration in Portland in front of City Hall, so we all decided it would be fun to go down and rabble rouse. I mean, we weren't particularly for or against the war.

PB: Was this a fraternity?

JC: What we were for, we were for was the fraternity, okay, that's what we were for was the fraternity, and we figured it would be fun to go cause trouble at this demonstration. So we did, and the other guys, there was a fellow by the name of Lou Epstein who was a very dear friend of mine, and Louis somehow or other got a hold of a microphone on the steps of City Hall, and so effectively rabble roused that a riot broke out and he came running past me waving his arms saying, "Flee! Flee!," and we ran away. We never got caught by the cops or anything like that, and we rabble roused and ranted and raved, we did that. I was down in, I was in New York City on Wall Street, must have been in the spring of 1970, where there was a, there was a big demonstration down there and all the demonstrators got attacked by a bunch of these construction workers, hard hats.

PB: Really.

JC: Yeah, who had their flags on the side of their helmets. And I was going down, my parents knew that this was going to happen, they came to Bowdoin and they said don't go, didn't go. And I gave them this excuse that I had to go down there and I had to demonstrate, and on and on and on. The truth of the matter was that I had a girlfriend at Sarah Lawrence in Bronxville, and what I really wanted to do was go down and see her. I could care less about the demonstration. But anyway, I went down there and she wasn't there, she was gone for the day or something. So I figured, well I'll go watch. I wasn't going to get in it, I was just going to go watch. I got down there and I'm standing at the back of the crowd and this riot broke out, and the hard hats came and they're clubbing everybody. So I went across the street, I think it was Morgan Guarantee or something like that, and I sat in the front lobby of this bastion of capitalism in a great big easy chair and watched the riot and the tear gas, and everything else. I just sat there and watched. When it was all over, I walked away because I had nothing to do with rabble rousing that, I just happened to be there when it happened. And the only reason I was in New York was not to go demonstrate, which I told my parents I had to do, it was, you know, I went down to see a girl and that's why I was there.

PB: Looking back on the late sixties, early seventies, what kind of impression has that left on

you, do you think? Maybe your generation, too?

JC: It's part of a life experience, Paul, that's all it is. I mean, it didn't, I don't think it changed me at all. I was a fraternity guy, you know, I looked forward to parties, you know, and cocktails at five. I mean, that's what I was doing, I wasn't out, I wasn't out saving the planet, I wasn't, the only time I've been involved in any demonstrations to any extent was literally to rabble rouse, and it didn't make any difference which side, I really didn't care.

It was a different time in the sense that we all had the draft hanging over our heads, and so that was a concern. I mean, there was a very real war going on and every night on the news they'd show pictures of the people who'd been killed in Vietnam. So we were scared, a lot of us were very, very scared that we would get sent out there. But by the time I graduated, I think it was by the time I graduated, or maybe a little while after that, the draft ended so that the, you know, that was sort of the end of that. That may have had some effect.

Even then I thought that a lot of the sort of very liberal activism that was going on was way overdone. That people were, they were just, they were being so self-righteous about things, and so deadly serious about things, that a lot of us, again, even then realized, they didn't know what the hell they were talking about, they had no idea what they were talking about. They couldn't, they were eighteen, they were twenty, they were twenty two, they didn't know what they were talking about.

Other than that, I mean I, I'm a little surprised today when I look at Bowdoin that there was not more activism in the sense of good deed doing, okay? And I don't know enough about the run of the mill student at Bates or Colby to comment on them, but there were a lot of needs in communities. And I don't mean the great big world, but I'm talking about in Lewiston and Brunswick and in Waterville, for those three schools. There are a lot of kids there that needed mentoring, a lot of kids there that need a big brother or big sister. There are people with mental retardation living in the community who maybe could use a friend from outside of the system that they're, the program that they're in. There are elderly who need some help. And I'm just surprised that most of the kids at Bowdoin are not involved in that kind of thing. Because it's a real need, and it's good deed doing. It's not saving the world or anything like that, I mean, God knows there's no big show about it, it doesn't involve demonstrations and tear gas, or big political things. It's just going out and trying to help this individual and that individual, and that sort of thing. And I'm disappointed that the liberal educational establishment at Bowdoin, which is nothing like the leftism that you see in a place like Bates -

PB: Got to get some of your personal commentary in there?

JC: I'm just surprised that at Bowdoin, that the school doesn't do more to encourage the kids to get out into the community and do good deeds, be good deed doers. I always think of the Wizard of Oz when the Tin Man gets a heart because he's a good deed doer. Well, people should be good deed doers; they should be good deed doers. These are smart kids who have all kinds of advantages, and they should be out just helping out. They don't need to make a show out of it or anything else. And they don't seem to be doing it, and that's kind of a disappointment.

PB: Now, you went to law school, you graduated in '73?

JC: Seventy-three.

PB: And you went to law school right after that?

JC: Yes.

PB: And what was, where and what was that like?

JC: At University of Maine in Portland.

PB: And what was that like?

JC: Law school was tough the first year; law school was very, very tough. That's true anywhere. There was a movie back in those days called "The Paper Chase", which was about first year law students at Harvard, and it absolutely is the truth. I mean, law school, that first year of law school is like one year of Marine boot camp. The next two years were I think a joke, I thought it was sort of silly then and I still think, and now I think it's even sillier. Eighteen months of law school is plenty, at most eighteen months, and then people should go out and practice law first and learn how to be lawyers. The last, certainly the last year and a half, maybe even the last two years of law school are just, it's a waste, it's a waste. Unless you planned on being an academic, then it would make some sense I suppose. But to practice law, it was kind of a waste.

PB: And then you, when did you start practice?

JC: Started practicing law in, I was admitted to the Bar in September of 1976, started practicing law in Freeport, in a firm, and then four years later I opened my own shop and practiced there until 1994, when we moved the office over here to Lisbon Falls.

PB: Great, now let's go way back I guess. I want to talk about the Clifford family. How did they first get to Lewiston, and when was that?

JC: They came to Lewiston sometime in the, either very late 1840s or 1850, '51, somewhere in there, from a town called Sneem, which is in County Kerry in Ireland. And Jeremiah Clifford and his wife, Katherine McGillicuddy, came here and had a whole bunch of kids, only one of whom married, [and that one was] my great-grandfather. They had a farm around Hogan Road at one point, and then they moved, I think they moved to Cleveland because there was work there, and then came back to Lewiston. And my great-grandfather dropped out of school in the eighth grade and ran away, ran away from home. And he went down to New York to Brooklyn and he opened a House of Freaks. He had a mummy from the catacombs of Egypt that was a stuffed burlap bag behind some frosted glass.

PB: Now, was this John Clifford, Senior?

JC: John D. Clifford, yes, John D. Clifford. He had a two-legged horse, he had a wild man from the darkest jungles of Borneo that was a baboon with hemorrhoids. His mother wrote him a letter, it was addressed John Clifford, General Delivery, Brooklyn, New York, and the letter said, "Dear John, Dead or alive? Mother." And he wrote back, "Dear Mother, Alive. John." Anyway, he eventually came home and got a job digging ditches, and he went to a construction site, it was a guy named Bearce that ran the construction company, and asked for a job, and he said, when can you start, and he took his jacket off and said right now, and grabbed a shovel and went to work. Next thing you know he was a partner, and basically forced Bearce out and formed, it was Bearce and Clifford, the construction company, that built City Hall and dams, and the Bangor City Hall, they built all kinds of things all over.

PB: So did he have money when he came back to Lewiston from the House of Freaks?

JC: No, he probably had five cents in his pocket.

PB: So he made himself in construction.

JC: Yeah, he was a self made man in the construction business.

PB: And so he, he had -

JC: Although the whole family, all of his siblings did very well, too.

PB: Really.

JC: Yeah, they, one of them was a professor at Harvard, I think Harvard Medical or Harvard Dental. Another one was a very successful dentist down in Boston. One brother, Jeremiah, went out west and he was a grubstaker in the silver mines in Montana, and he had a common law wife but no kids, and he did very well. Never carried paper money, always carried silver dollars, wore a ten-gallon hat and smoked big cigars.

PB: Really.

JC: There were a couple of sisters who I think were Alexander Graham Bell's first telephone operators, and they ended up inheriting everybody's money, all these ones that didn't get married, they left all their money to these sisters, plus they had all this telephone company stock. So they ended up very well set those two old ladies, who were scary old ladies, very scary old ladies.

PB: Did you know them?

JC: I remember one of them. I don't remember the other one. And I remember their house, they had a place on the west side in Old Orchard Beach, and I remember this Victorian house. I was just a little boy, I remember being in the living room with the sun coming through a big window from the porch into this room, and there was dust in the air. And I remember dead geraniums, and how terrified I was of these, because they looked like witches.

PB: Black cats in the house?

JC: Probably, probably.

PB: So your great grandfather, John D. Clifford, Sr., had, how many children did he have?

JC: He had four children; five actually, five. First one was a child by the name of Jeremiah who died when he was about two years old. And then my grandfather, John D. Clifford, Jr., my uncle William H. Clifford, my aunt, her name was Mary Louise, but they called her Louise, and then Aunt Katherine. And his wife's, and my great grandmother's name was Katherine Patricia Sullivan, and she was from Nashua, New Hampshire. Her parents were also from County Kerry in Ireland.

PB: Really? Interesting. So your grandfather, what, let's see, can you give us a little background on him, I guess?

JC: He grew up in Lewiston on Main Street. He was born where Bedard's Pharmacy is now, and around 1902 they built the big house at 460 Main Street, and so that's where he grew up. Went to Lewiston High, was a great football player at Lewiston High School, and then went off to Bowdoin. He graduated from Bowdoin in the class of 1910. He was born in 1887, May of 1887; he graduated from Bowdoin in 1910. His brother Bill graduated the next year, 1911. Bill was a great football and baseball player there. My grandfather had smashed his knee playing for Lewiston High so he could not do that any more, when he went to Bowdoin he wasn't able to do it. He would go around when he was at college, and would debate all comers during the elections, and he was a Democrat. I mean, he would take on any Republican comer, would challenge them to debate the issues with him. And in fact we've got some paperwork somewhere in the house of him debating some republican here in Lisbon Falls, he'd come over from the college to debate some guy; soundly trounced his opponent in the debate. So he started that stuff when he was in college.

Prior to that, when they were in high school, my grandfather and my Uncle Bill used to run dances at what was called the Egyptian Ballroom, which was on the top floor of the Clifford block, which is now People's Bank on Main Street in Lewiston, and they would run dances up there for the high school kids and the young people of Lewiston. I assume they did it for money, but the family owned the building anyway, so they'd hire a band and they'd hold dances up there and charge admission, and that kind of stuff.

PB: How did they become active in the Democratic Party?

JC: I have absolutely no idea. My suspicion is that because they were Irish, and because the Democratic Party in New York and Boston had taken care of the Irish when they arrived, that it was a family thing. That's just an assumption on my part, Paul, I never knew why. I mean it just, they always were.

PB: Did the family have any connections with the Boston Irish?

JC: Oh yes, very, very strong, because my great grandfather's, all of my great grandfather's siblings who lived long enough to grow up, and you know, go off in the world, were in Boston, except for Uncle Jerry who was off in Montana. So they were back and forth all the time, down there to Boston. In fact when my grandfather went off to law school, he stayed with some relatives down there by the name of Keegan, when he went to Harvard Law. But he got thrown out of Harvard Law.

PB: Tell about that?

JC: Well he was, what they used to do is they'd go out and brawl.

PB: The Irish.

JC: Yeah, the Irish would fight the Italians or whatever, and he got into this gang, one of whom was a guy name Gene Tunney, who was a great buddy of his. The heavyweight champion (*unintelligible phrase*). And anyway, I guess his brawling took precedence over his studies, and he was asked not to return. So he ended up at Georgetown Law School down in D.C., where he met my grandmother at a reception at the White House that was held, President Taft, the president then.

My grandmother Clifford was the daughter of a congressman from Charlotte, Michigan, and all of the congressional families were invited to this party at the White House that President and Mrs. Taft were giving, and they needed escorts for the young ladies so they went over to Georgetown and said, we need all of you guys to come over to the White House to act as escorts for the daughters of the congressmen and the senators. So they asked my grandfather, and he went. In the meantime he'd gotten into a fight and his hand was all bandaged up from the fight. So he was standing there in white tie and tails with a bloody bandage on his hand, and my grandmother came over to give him a lecture on having the temerity to show up at a White House reception with a bloody bandage on his hand. And one thing led to another, and they ended up getting married.

PB: And what was her name?

JC: Lucille Smith. And her father was born in Northern Ireland, and came to America as a little kid. The name had been MacSmythe, and when they came to America they changed it to Smith. His name was John M. C. Smith, and the M. C. was from the MacSmythe, and he was a farmer, an industrialist, a banker, a lawyer, and in his spare time he went down to D.C. to do the people's business as a congressman from Charlotte, Michigan.

PB: Jack of all trades.

JC: Absolutely. And when he was in Washington he lived in, because the family stayed home, he lived in a boarding house and ate at a common table and everything like that. I mean, it wasn't like today when they're all down there treated like, you know, a bunch of Caesars or something.

PB: Homes in Bethesda.

JC: Yeah. No, no, no, no, not in those days, not in those days.

PB: So what was your grandfather's political involvement when he, back in Boston and in D.C., in law school?

JC: My grand-, I don't know, I have absolutely no idea what he was doing when he was in law school. I mean, I assume, because he was so involved in politics when he was in college, I assume when he was in D.C. he was doing things, but I have no idea what it was. My grandmother's father was a Republican congressman. And a Protestant, so you can imagine what that was like.

When he came back, when he got out of law school and came back to Maine, he went into business with Governor Brann, who was a governor then, Brann. And then my Uncle Bill got out of law school and came, and they all practiced law together for a while, then they formed Clifford & Clifford on Lisbon Street. My grandfather was in the legislature some time in the teens, I don't know if it was 1914, 1916, 1917, some time in there, he was elected to the legislature from Lewiston. By then he'd married my grandmother, and my Aunt June was born in 1916. He was just active in Democratic Party politics, in the 1920 presidential election he was working, and then the one that I remember hearing about; the next one I remember hearing about was the 1928 election when Al Smith ran. And everybody was all excited about that. By then my grandfather's sister Kath had married an Irishman from Boston and they lived down in New York, and so he was down there a lot and was very involved with the Smith campaign, with Governor Smith. Of course that was a defeat. He then ran for, I think he ran for Congress in 1932 but was defeated, my grandfather was, was defeated in '32, but had also worked very hard with the Roosevelt people, and of course Roosevelt won in '32.

PB: Do you know if he won in Maine?

JC: Oh no, no, no. I think Brann may have gotten elected governor that year, maybe in '32, but Roosevelt (*unintelligible phrase*). I think it was just, maybe just Maine and Vermont didn't go with him, or maybe that was the next time around, I don't remember. But at any rate, he was made United States attorney in 1933, for the district of Maine. But in those days you could continue to be involved with politics, so he stayed very, very involved, and he was back and forth to D.C. all the time. He was great friends with Big Jim Farley who was the postmaster general under Roosevelt. Very close friend of Tom Clark who was attorney general and ultimately became a justice of the Supreme Court. He got very friendly with a number of the New Dealers, he knew Justice Douglas, Bill Douglas, who at that time was not on the Supreme Court, I think he was with the SEC or something like that. But he knew all those guys, and they were always doing things. In the meantime he'd gotten very close, from his days in Boston, in the early years of the century, with James Michael Curley, and they were extremely close, extremely close. And he would plot strategy with Curley, he kept, my grandfather kept a room at the Parker House in Boston and they used to hold strategy sessions at the Parker House down there.

PB: Really? Did James Michael Curley ever come up here?

JC: Oh yes, Curley came up, and he came to Lewiston. Big Jim Farley came, Tom Clark came, Douglas came, all those guys, they all came up here. And what they would do is they'd take them off on a hunting trip, so they'd say they were going on a hunting trip or a fishing trip. What they'd do is they'd go off and smoke cigars, drink whiskey, and plot the overthrow of the Republican party, is what they would do. And they'd go up in the woods someplace.

In the twenties my grandfather built a reputation as an attorney for bootleggers, he represented all the bootleggers. And apparently, when the blues would show, they'd, he'd, because he wanted his whiskey, too, and they would be sitting in the living room at the Ware Street house that you've been in, and a car would, a touring car would pull into the driveway, flash the lights twice, and my grandfather would get up from the chair, hmph, hmph, hmph, hmph, and he'd go downstairs and you'd hear the cellar door, the underground garage door opening up, the touring car would come in, unload all this booze, stack it up. There's a big closet in the garage, it used to be absolutely full with cases of booze, this gigantic cedar closet down there was just absolutely filled with booze that they would bring in from Canada. Anyhow.

PB: (*Unintelligible phrase*). Now, other stories with your grandfather and James Michael Curley that you know of?

JC: Yeah, there are, well there are all kinds of them, but there are two really good ones. There was one where they, Curley was in one of his races, whether it was for Congress or for the governor of Massachusetts, I can't remember which one. And, probably it was for the governorship, and the Protestants were really, really against Curley because, you know, I mean this was a state that had had the Cabots and the Lodges and all of these WASPS, and here was this, you know, pug-ugly Irishman that was going to be governor of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, sit in the chair that, you know, Endicott Peabody would have had and that sort of thing. And so there was this big anti-Catholic campaign, a whisper campaign. It was kind of like with Kennedy, you know, or Al Smith. The Pope will be presiding on Beacon Hill and that kind of thing. Well, in those days, the clan was still very powerful in New England, and they were very anti-Catholic. That's who they were against were Catholics, and immigrants. So they gave, he was out in western Massachusetts one time giving a speech, and thundering about the dangers of anti-Catholicism and anti-immigrant sentiment, and spewing of hatred and all of this stuff, and he was waving his arms. And at one point, this was all set up before, they'd set on another hill this big cross they'd set up there, but it was dark, see, nobody could see the cross. And the signal was when he threw his arm out like this, that they would light the cross, and sure enough he waved his arm, he touched it off and boom, this big cross, and "Ah, ah, the Klan, the Klan, see, see how they hate me, they're out to get me, you know!" I think it was, it was a setup that had been dreamed up in a room at the Parker House a couple of days before.

The other one was, Curley was convicted of, I think it was mail fraud, something like that, and he was going to be going off to prison. And they knew that he was going to be running for reelection or something to Congress while he was in prison, and so they wanted to build up a lot of sympathy for him so they had this meeting at the Parker House. What they decided to do was, they gave him one of my grandfather's shirts. Now Curley did have, I think it was some kind of,

either diabetes or a kidney problem or something, so the word was he was sick. And indeed he was sick. But they put him in one of my grandfather's shirts, which was about five sizes too large for him, and got somebody's wheel chair, and they get, you know, one of my grandfather's suits that just, my grandfather was twice as big as Curley was. And there's a very famous picture of Curley, I think at North Station, could have been South Station, one of the train stations in Boston, all shrunk like this in a wheelchair, being wheeled off to prison. I mean, the guy was fine, he really was. He had on all these clothes of my grandfather's that were way too big, to make him look like a shrunken old man, and everything like that. And in all the papers, poor Curley, poor Mayor Curley, he's so sick, look what they've done to this sick man. And this had been dreamed up literally the night before in the room at the Parker House.

End of Side A
Side B

PB: This is the second side of the interview with John Clifford, IV. You were talking about your grandfather, John Clifford, Jr., or II, or Junior, and his activism in Boston. Now, what was his early party activism in the Lewiston area and the state of Maine?

JC: He was, they basically organized the party, and it was essentially organized around Louis Brann, Governor Brann who was a lawyer in Lewiston. They were able to organize the Irish is what it was, and the French, organize the Irish and the French, and they organized the party. That's ultimately how Louis Brann became governor.

PB: Do you know how they organized the French?

JC: I'm assuming that they must have gotten, you know, probably other, probably French attorneys I would think, or the priests. It may have been the priests. But I'm thinking maybe they got like Fernand Despins, somebody like that involved with them. You know, it was all patronage system in those days, and there was a lot of patronage to hand out. And essentially the development of the French power in the Democratic Party in Lewiston came from the Irish teaching them the way that it was done, and they were the majority and they got into the positions, and that's how they got it.

PB: Now, how did your grandfather become judge?

JC: He was appointed United States district court judge for the district of Maine in 1947 by President Truman. It was hotly contested, but ultimately Tom Clark and Jim Farley and some of those other guys threw all of their support behind my grandfather and the president appointed him. In fact, I've got the appointment hanging on the wall in my office.

PB: Really?

JC: Yeah, and I got a letter from, there's a letter from Harry Truman in there accepting my grandfather's resignation as United States attorney for the district of Maine, but he said he was accepting it gladly, because he was appointing him as the federal judge. There had been a great judge by the name of Peters, who was the federal judge before, and Judge Peters retired and

that's how my grandfather was appointed.

PB: And did he remain politically active after he became judge?

JC: Not really, no. I mean, he may have done some things with Curley down there, but once he became a federal judge, there just, there wasn't any time for it, I mean, he was very busy. He was sitting in Maine, he was also sitting in Puerto Rico, a system that still exists, and so he was busy. I mean, he always had politicians around him and everything like that, but I don't think he was active the way he had been in the old days.

PB: Now let's see. Do you have any stories of your grandfather's judgeship? Do you know, because I know he had a lot of, you know, he had the respect of a lot of people when he was judge.

JC: Oh yeah, he was a very, very good judge. And he had, he had great common sense. He, he's the fellow who started implementing in Maine in the fifties something approaching what is now called the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, of having pretrial conferences and things like that. They'd never done that before. He started doing that sort of thing.

He had some very, I mean, well he had one very famous case involving a fellow by the name of Reich, or Reich, who was some sort of left wing psychologist or psychiatrist, and he had built this box that pulled energy out of the universe. It was called an orgone box, and it had all twinkling lights in it and everything like this. The FDA shut him down; I mean the thing was a fraud. And Wilhelm Reich, that was his name, Wilhelm Reich, and he was a lefty, and the FDA ordered him to cease and desist, and he didn't cease and desist, so there was a big trial in Portland. I remember going to it, I remember seeing the orgone box. I was just a little fellow, and I remember the box.

PB: Must have been exciting to see that.

JC: Well, I probably wasn't all that sure what was going on, I was pretty little. But I do remember sitting and seeing the orgone box and the twinkling lights. And my grandfather sent him to prison and, for contempt. And we've got letters at home from Reich writing to my grandfather from prison. There's been some kind of a real resurgence the last twenty years about this guy, saying, you know, that he wasn't a bad guy, or, he was okay, this was part of the whole Red scare, McCarthyism kind of thing. He was just a guy who, you know, he was ripping people off, telling them he was going to cure them with a box of pulled energy out of the universe. He set up an area up around Rangeley called Orgonia. You can check him out on the Internet.

PB: Is this related to the Reiche treatments now? With the-

JC: Yes, that's the guy.

PB: That's the guy.

JC: That's the guy. And that was one of the most famous cases, or the most famous case

probably. I mean, he had a number of cases, a lot of them having to do with admiralty law, some admiralty cases are still cited. He was very well thought of as a judge, very well thought of.

PB: Do you know anything about his relationship with Frank Coffin? I mean Frank Coffin-

JC: Frank Coffin was his clerk, yeah, he clerked for my grandfather. And Frank Coffin was the, either the son or the grandson of a very, very dear friend of my grandfather's, who was a lawyer by the name of Frank Morey Coffin. I think that may have been -

PB: His grandfather.

JC: His grandfather, yeah. They were great buddies, and he was a great lawyer. And Judge Coffin lived right around the corner from us; he lived on Benson, not Benson Street, Mountain Avenue. And my grandfather thought the world of him, and I remember him when he was my grandfather's clerk and I was little, little. He was a great guy. And he used to come, after he became, he became a lawyer, and of course ran for Congress and was congressman and all that stuff. But they lived over on Mountain Avenue, and every Christmas Eve they came to the house to sing Christmas carols. They would come, we'd open the door and there'd be Frank Coffin and the rest of them, and his son Dougie and their gang, all this gang, and we'd all go Christmas caroling together. Yeah, I can remember, geez, just like it was yesterday, with the snow falling and singing Christmas carols with Coffin and all the others. And Coffin, of course, ran around a lot with Ed Muskie, when Muskie was running along with my dad and my Uncle Tom Delahanty, Frank Coffin, Ed Muskie. These guys were like, you know, the young Turks who were taking on the system, and by God, they did take it on and they won.

PB: Now let's go to your father, I guess. Your father was politically active, followed in the footsteps of his father.

JC: Yeah, not quite to the extent of my grandfather. Dad was a lot more behind the scenes than my grandfather was. Dad was very involved with Muskie and Coffin. He was very involved; the first thing I remember him being involved in was the 1956 Adlai Stevenson campaign. I remember how disappointed he was that Stevenson had lost the election. And then my grandfather died right after that, he died at the end of November, or mid November of '56, so that was a tough time. My grandmother had died in September of '56, so that was bad for my father.

I remember, I remember that they were always going to party fund raisers, things like that, and they would always have these meetings in the house, in the living room. When Muskie was running for governor, I can remember coming down the stairs, and you know there's that big mirror in the front hall, I could sit on the stairs and look in the mirror and I could see them all in there, in the cigar smoke and, you know, the whiskey, whiskey and cigars, and the smoke being so thick you could cut it with a knife. Dad, my Uncle Tom Delahanty, Frank Coffin, Ed Muskie, some of these others guys that, you know, were around in those days. Bill Hathaway, those guys.

PB: Was this Muskie, in '56, or maybe '60, '58?

JC: Fifty eight, that would be '58 that I remember that. During that campaign, I went in my room one time and I found Ed Muskie asleep on the bed. He was exhausted and he laid on my bed and went to sleep, and I came in, there he was, *snore*. I thought he was the Jolly Green Giant from the food ads, because he was so tall. I thought he was a giant. He came down to the beach one time; this was at Delahanty's house at the beach, which had been my grandfather's house next door to our cottage.

PB: In Scarborough.

JC: Scarborough, yeah, in Pine Point. It was the three hundred and, must have been the 300th anniversary of the founding of the town of Scarborough in 1958. And the lord mayor of Scarborough (*unintelligible word*) came, with his body guard and his wife, and he was a little guy and he had this big gold chain with the seal of office on it, and he was very nice. And his wife was a slender woman with a canary yellow dress and dripping in emeralds, I've never seen so many emeralds in my life; she was just covered with emeralds. And that's what the body guard was for were the emeralds. Well anyway, Muskie was the king, and Kevin Delahanty and I were little guys, and he arrived and it was the big Cadillac limousine that the governor had with "1", the license plate number 1, and a state trooper driving who was as tall as Muskie. So Kevin and I were there, we saw everybody, we talked for a while, and then we decided we wanted to go for a ride in the limo so we went out and got in it and the state trooper took us all around Pine Point to visit all of our friends, and down to the creek and everything riding around with a cop in this limousine. That was fun.

PB: How much whiskey was inside the limousine?

JC: I don't have, absolutely no recollection of any of that stuff.

PB: Before we go too far, what's your family's rela-, the Clifford relation with the Delahanty's?

JC: Jeanne [Clifford] Delahanty, who's still alive, is my father's sister, and she was married to Justice Delahanty, Tom Delahanty. And the Delahanty family was sponsored, Tom, Justice Delahanty, not young Tom but my uncle Tom's father, was sponsored by my great-grandfather to come to America. They were from the same village in Ireland. And when any Delahanty wanted to come to America, they got a hold of my great grandfather to sponsor him to come here, must have been sometime in the teens. He died in 1918 or 1919 in the influenza epidemic.

PB: And so his son was Judge Delahanty?

JC: His son was Justice Thomas E. Delahanty [who is] on the Maine Supreme Court.

PB: And his son's on the -

JC: His son is Justice Thomas E. Delahanty, II, of the Maine Superior Court, and he's the past chief justice of the Superior Court.

PB: There we go, okay, just to clarify that I guess. And so growing up with the Delahanty's, what was that like, what was the relationship like?

JC: It was very, very close; we were together all the time. I mean, Tom Delahanty, John Delahanty, Kevin Delahanty, they were like my brothers, I mean we were just, we were with them all the time. And my parents and my uncle and aunt were very, very close, extremely close.

PB: And so they were, in political gatherings they were always -?

JC: In fact, Tom Delahanty and my Aunt Jean, my Uncle Tom and my Aunt Jean are my godparents. They were always involved in political, they were always going off to fund raisers and things like that.

PB: More so than your parents, or they were always together?

JC: No, no, no, together, they were always together, they were always together in these things. Although my Uncle Tom I think was probably a lot more active. He actually ran for Congress at one point. He as a lot more active I think than my father. And then in '58 he went on the bench, so that was the end of that, I mean he didn't, wasn't involved in politics, at least -

PB: There's a story I'll tell you later. It's a good story about having a meeting in your uncle's home with Labor, after he was on the bench.

JC: Oh, I'm not surprised. They used to do all those kinds of things, they used to do that all the time.

PB: Days long gone I guess.

JC: The big campaign that seemed to get everybody excited mostly was when Kennedy ran in 1960. I mean, that was really, really something.

PB: And you were nine then.

JC: I was nine, or almost nine, and that was just incredibly exciting. It was exciting in the family because the family knew the Kennedys. They actually knew the Fitzgeralds better than the Kennedys, because the Fitzgeralds used to come up to Old Orchard Beach, on the west side, and before my great grandparents bought their summer place around the corner from Walker Point in Kennebunkport, they had a big place on the west side of Old Orchard Beach, and the Fitzgeralds would come up. So then my great aunts and Rose Kennedy, who was then Rose Fitzgerald, were very close, they were girls together in the summer. And so the family was close with Honey Fitz, and so we were tied into it. In fact my aunts always said that they felt that Rose Fitzgerald had married way below herself when she married that no good Joe Kennedy. My aunts did not like Joe Kennedy at all; they didn't like him a bit. They thought he was no good, and they loved Rose (*unintelligible word*).

PB: Did the relations tail off after the marriage?

JC: No, I don't know. I mean they always seemed to be in touch with, you know, with Rose Fitzgerald they would call her, they didn't want to even call her Rose Kennedy, Rose Fitzgerald. And Jack Kennedy, my mother had known Jack Kennedy, had met him. Dad knew him. I mean they didn't think a great, I mean he was just, he was, you know, a young senator from Massachusetts, but they knew him from the party and stuff like that, they liked him. And anyway, when he ran it was a great thing because here was an Irish Catholic running for president, and that was just wonderful. So the whole family was really, really involved in that one. And they went to, I remember they were down in Boston a lot during that period of time, and then involved with things here. And of course the nuns were, with us kids, were all pushing Kennedy, Kennedy, Kennedy at St. Joe's.

PB: Were the French also big on Kennedy, the French Catholics?

JC: I don't remember. Everyone at St. Joe's was, but I mean we were little. I don't remember whether they were or they weren't. I remember we used to run around the school yard saying, "Kennedy, Kennedy, he's our man, Nixon, Nixon, trash can." I can remember that in the school yard. And then he came to Lewiston, right near the very end of the campaign.

PB: Yeah, right. How was that?

JC: That was super, because I was, I, we were all set to go down, and we were going to be right there at the bandstand and, in the pack. And he was delayed, and so I went to bed. I was sent to bed. And the next thing I know, the light goes on in my room, Johnny's room now, and Dad says, there's somebody downstairs wants to see you. And so I got up, he says "Put your ski pants on over your pajamas." So I put on my ski pants and everything and I went downstairs, and there was Kennedy.

PB: Right in your living room.

JC: Yeah, and he says, "Come on, we got to go downtown." So I rode in the convertible and down we went.

PB: Going to?

JC: Yeah, yeah.

PB: Really?

JC: Yeah, and I was on the bandstand.

PB: Really. What did he have to say?

JC: I don't remember.

PB: You don't remember?

JC: I have absolutely no recollection.

PB: So in awe of just being with a hero?

JC: Oh, I mean, you know, "Aaah" it was that kind of a thing. And I remember he gave a speech; I don't even remember what the speech was about. I remember it was cold, it was really cold. And I can remember the lights, there must have been, they were like flood lights or something, maybe it was for TV cameras or movie cameras, maybe it was for movie cameras. Really bright lights, and all the steam from people's breath.

PB: It was midnight, right?

JC: Yeah, yeah, it was the middle of the night. And it was cold, and the crowds lining the streets and cheering.

PB: That's one of my grandmother's only political stories, is going down to -

JC: Kennedy Park?

PB: Wait for Kennedy when he was coming there.

JC: Yeah, it was really, it was really, really something. And then there was the election, and my folks had been up all night. And I went downstairs and my mother was asleep on the big couch in the living room, and I said, "Who won?" And then she said, "We won." Not Kennedy won. She said, "We won." And I can remember running through the house screaming. I don't know where Dad was; mother was asleep on the couch. And I remember running through the house screaming, and then going out and getting Hank St. Pierre from a couple doors down, we were all cheering and everything. It was great; we were really excited about it.

PB: Now, that election also saw Frank Coffin running for governor.

JC: Yeah, and losing.

PB: And losing, because Kennedy also lost in the state of Maine. I mean, what are your recollections of your family and Frank Coffin running during that election?

JC: They were, well, he was at the house a lot because they were neighbors, I mean, so he was around all the time. To have Frank Coffin in the house, that wasn't an unusual thing, at all, I mean he was a neighbor, he was a friend, he was my grandfather's clerk. I mean it was -

PB: What was his relation with your father?

JC: They were very good friends, very good friends. In fact, he was, he as you know was, still is I suppose, retired now, actively retired, a judge at the First U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. He

was at my swearing in, when I was sworn in as a lawyer in, over in Androscoggin county, in the court house, in September of 1976. Judge Coffin was there, along with my Uncle Tom who swore me in, and then all the other Clifford lawyers, including Dad obviously.

PB: Filled the house.

JC: Oh yeah, we were full. He was a friend of the family, I mean, you know, it wasn't a big, it wasn't a big deal to have Frank Coffin around. Maybe it should have been, but it wasn't, I mean he was, it's like today. If John Baldacci came to the house and sat down and was just shooting, and I like John a lot, I like him a great deal and I hope he ends up governor of the state of Maine. But to have John come by the house, it's nice, I mean a friend comes by, but it's not like, oh my God, the congressman came. Or when I'm in D.C. and we get together down there. I mean, it's two guys who know each other and apparently enjoy each other's company. We get together and we have a good time, we laugh, we say bad things about people sometimes, you know, and we have a good time. I mean, it's like we walked through the front door of the Army-Navy Club a few years ago, so we're walking through, Baldacci turns to me, he says, "Not bad, huh, they let us through the front door of this place." And I said, "Yeah, we've come a long way, Baldacci." I mean, they were very disappointed that he lost, and I remember how extremely disappointed my Uncle Tom was. And they were disappointed because he was their friend, and they liked him.

PB: Do you remember how Frank Coffin reacted to the loss?

JC: No.

PB: Not at all?

JC: No. I remember him in the living room when they were all talking about it, but I, you know, kids, kids weren't around to the extent in those days, around grownups, the way that they are today, you know. I mean, we would be, that's why I would watch from the stairs and look in the -

PB: Yeah, today kids would be on the couch with them.

JC: Yeah, and it just wasn't that way then.

PB: So, let's see. So what was your father's relation to some of the Lewiston area politicians?

JC: He didn't have much to do with them. The only one that seemed, it was almost like he wanted my father's approval, or an imprimatur from my father, and that was Louis Jalbert.

PB: Yeah, I was going to ask you.

JC: Yeah, it was Jalbert. He didn't have much to do with the others. Well, that's not quite true. I mean, there was Mayor Marcotte who was a good friend of his, Dr. Gauvreau ran for mayor at one point, and Dad and Dr. Gauvreau had grown up together and they were very close. We always supported somebody in an election, but he didn't have much to do with the French

politicians particularly. And as far as I know they didn't have much to do with him.

PB: So he wasn't involved in Lewiston city politics?

JC: Only when somebody in the family was involved, or some good friend. I mean, like there was Marcotte, there was Gauvreau, who lost, at least I think he, yeah, he lost. You know how they killed Gauvreau's run? The day before the election, they took a picture of him walking into an Episcopal church.

PB: Really.

JC: Yeah, because he was an Episcopalian, for reasons best known to him, and they took a picture of him either going into or coming out on Sunday morning of a Protestant church and that was it.

PB: All over the papers?

JC: Oh, yes, right in the paper.

PB: Now, Ernest Malenfant wasn't one of your family's closest allies.

JC: No.

PB: Where did that come from?

JC: I have absolutely no idea.

PB: Is it your grandfather or father?

JC: I suspect my grandfather. Because Pop Malenfant was doing his deeds, his evil deeds, before Dad was out of high school, so I'm sure. I suspect what it was was that here was a guy who was a crossing guard at the mill, who could barely speak English, whose French was abominable, and I suspect that the family felt that he was a disgrace and didn't want anything to do with him. And Malenfant has certainly had his supporters, a couple of times tried to take us on. And he lost, as everyone knows, and things happened that, yeah. Anyway, I mean I don't know a lot of the details other than my, you know, the family felt that the man was a disgrace. But they also felt, they also felt, and I have no idea whether it was true or not, they also felt that he was crooked, that he was very, very crooked. And there's one thing about the family, about the Cliffords, and the Delahantys, no Clifford or Delahanty ever made five cents out of politics, and they never made any money. A lot of other people made it, like Malenfant, Jalbert, people like that. The Cliffords never made five cents out of politics.

PB: Now Malenfant it seems used to speak about the "Clifford clique", you ever heard that term?

JC: I never heard that expression, no.

PB: Okay.

JC: You know, some of the older Cliffords might have heard it, I mean, so you know, my Uncle Bill's sons might have heard of that. It wouldn't surprise me, sounds like something he'd say. I mean, that was that whole bunch that when Bob Clifford ran for mayor about, you know, Bob Clifford was born with a golden spoon in his mouth, I mean it was that kind of a thing. Not a silver spoon, mind you, a golden spoon. There was a great deal of jealousy from a certain group because, because we, you know, were at a different economic level than they were, and there was jealousy about that for sure. And maybe there was something about, you know, we weren't French, we were Irish, I don't know. I never, I don't think I ever remember anybody saying that. There was certainly this perception that we were like fabulously wealthy, you know, that sort of thing, which was not true. There was that perception. So this, if people have said Malenfant talked about a "Clifford clique", that wouldn't surprise me.

PB: Now Louis Jalbert, do you have any memories of Louis?

JC: Oh sure.

PB: What do you think his relations were with the Franco community, both publicly and personally?

JC: I think that Louis Jalbert was the ultimate opportunist, and that I think that his, his view of the Franco community was that this was, they were nothing more than a means to an end for him. I don't think that Louis Jalbert cared one bit about the Franco community. Louis Jalbert I think cared about Louis Jalbert. Publicly, I never really cared what Jalbert was doing. I mean, if Jalbert was essentially doing things that didn't hurt the Cliffords, then that was fine with me. Or if Louis did things we wanted done, that was fine with me, too. I mean, I didn't really pay much attention to Louis beyond that.

PB: Do you think his being an opportunist hurt the Franco community?

JC: Absolutely, absolutely it hurt it. I think that Louis Jalbert felt he had a vested interest in keeping them all mumbling their prayers in church, scared of the priest, and keeping quiet and their heads down, uneducated and working until they dropped. I think he kept that population, and in fact the city of Lewiston, from advancing.

PB: And do you think those effects are still seen today?

JC: Well, -

PB: Maybe up to the last ten years?

JC: Yes, yes, the last ten years things have really changed. Yeah, I don't think Louis Jalbert did Lewiston any good, in fact I think he hurt Lewiston.

PB: How did the Franco community react to Louis Jalbert? Was he their savior?

JC: I have absolutely no idea, Paul.

PB: No observations of that?

JC: No, I have no idea. He was always calling the house, always calling the house.

PB: Looking for? Looking for?

JC: I don't know. I mean, the only time that I ever remember talking to him was, I don't know whether we had bought the house from mother and dad or not, so whether it's since '87 or before '87, but on Christmas morning, him calling and wanting to talk to my father. And for some reason or other, either dad had gone to Scarborough, it may have been '87, it may have been Christmas '86 rather, Christmas '86 may have been when he called to talk with my father. And he just went on, and on, and on, and on, about how wonderful my father was, and how wonderful the Cliffords were, and this and that. I couldn't get him off the phone. He just kept it up, he kept it up, he kept it up, he kept it up. And I later on found what confirmed my memory, that he used to call apparently every Christmas morning. But I remember him calling all the time; he was always on the phone. But I don't really know what it was about.

PB: Now what memories do you have of Ed Muskie? You were talking about seeing him as a kid; what were your real first impressions of the man?

JC: I thought he was the Jolly Green Giant, I really did, I thought that he was the Green Giant from the peas box, or the can, whatever it was. He was very nice to me, he was wonderful to me. He'd pick me up, and he was going to put me on his shoulder, and I remember my head hitting the beams in the living room. He was, he was always great to me. I was going to say Governor Muskie, Senator Muskie, Secretary Muskie; he was always wonderful to me. He never, ever, ever was not very nice, and would go out of his way. I mean, he would come over to me, he'd be talking with a bunch, but then he'd come over, how are you, good to see you, Jack, everything like that, how's your family. And from the time I was little until almost the time he died, you know, at fund raisers down at his place in Kennebunk or something, I mean he was just, he'd be wonderful. And he'd tell Elizabeth about, you know, the Cliffords and my grandfather and the Delahantys. I really liked Ed Muskie, he was wonderful to me.

PB: What was your activity with his campaigning after, after '60, beyond that?

JC: Well, I mean we were all involved, let's see, when did he run, he ran in '68?

PB: He ran for, yeah, '68, so, yeah, '68.

JC: Sixty eight, wasn't it? I was involved in that presidential campaign.

PB: No, yeah, '68 for vice president.

JC: Yeah, he was running for vice president. I was very involved in that campaign at the time. I was at Exeter, but I was involved over in New Hampshire in the primaries and that kind of stuff. I mean, as much as a kid who was running in high school could be. Seventy-two, when he ran in the primary for president, I remember being involved in the caucuses here and at the state convention. But, that died relatively quickly, didn't it?

PB: What's that?

JC: The '72 run?

PB: That was his big run, but yes, he ran out of money.

JC: Yeah, yeah.

PB: Do you remember any contention about nominating Muskie in Maine at the '72 convention?

JC: No.

PB: No?

JC: I've got, and I was at that convention. I don't, maybe there was, I don't remember. I thought it was just, it was a lock, that's what was going to happen.

PB: And was Lewiston completely for Muskie at the '72 city caucus?

JC: Paul, I don't remember they weren't, so I guess I kind of have to assume they were, but I don't have any particular, specific recollection. It was a long time ago.

PB: There were concerns about his stance on Vietnam back then.

JC: There could have been. Yeah, now that you mention it, I remember something like that. But I don't know if it was in Lewiston or at the state, I think that was at the state convention.

PB: I don't, I wasn't there.

JC: I feel like maybe some Legion guys or something like that were upset about it. I was thinking it might have been Legion guys, or VFW guys.

PB: And what about 1980 what was, were you campaigning for Carter in '80?

JC: Yes.

PB: And is that because of Muskie, or because of Carter?

JC: I was campaigning for Carter for two reasons: one, that's who the family was supporting

so that was sort of, that really was the end of the discussion, the family was going to support Jimmy Carter. The second reason was that Elizabeth went down and registered as a Democrat for the first time in her life so she could vote against Teddy Kennedy. Hey, that's good, huh? So, there are your two reasons, peace in the house. But, I mean the word was that we were going to be supporting Carter, and -

PB: He ultimately won in Maine?

JC: Yes, and he stayed at Ben Clifford's house, you know, on Benson Street.

PB: Oh, really?

JC: Yeah, he and Rosalynn stayed over there at the house on Benson Street when they were in Lewiston, that's where they stayed. That's where I met him was over at the house.

PB: What were your impressions of him?

JC: Oh, I liked him, I thought he was a great fellow, I thought he was just a great fellow. I had, and then I had absolutely nothing against President Ford. I mean, I thought President Ford was a nice guy and everything, I mean he wasn't a bad man. But I really thought Carter was going to be something, and was real disappointed. Until this year, as a matter of fact, voting for Jimmy Carter was the last winner I voted for. Oh no, I'm sorry, that was '76, I'm sorry, not '80, '76. That was the, until this year, or excuse me, 2000, that was the last winner I voted for for president, I voted for Carter in '76. And I didn't vote for a winner again until Bush in 2000.

PB: That's a good segue, how have you seen the Democratic Party evolve?

JC: The Democratic Party is not the party I grew up with, it is not the party that my family was loyal to. I'm horribly disappointed in what the Democratic Party has become.

PB: What was your -?

JC: I'm still a registered Democratic and I'll probably die a registered Democratic, but I just think that it is truly awful what's happened to the Democratic Party.

PB: What was your personal involvement with the party, when did it end?

JC: It ended, I mean other than working for Baldacci, and I work for John Baldacci because I personally like him very, very, very much, the last time that I was involved really was the last time Joe Brennan ran for governor, whenever that was.

PB: Ninety-four, or was that Senate in '94?

JC: The last time I really worked was when Joe was running for governor, which probably was -

PB: It was the year Angus won, right?

JC: Yeah.

PB: So '94.

JC: Yes, 1994 was the last time I was actively involved, other than specifically for Baldacci.

PB: And so what's changed in the Democratic Party?

JC: I think that the Democratic Party, the Democratic Party was always a, was a party that respected hard work, it was a party of labor unions, it was a party that had I thought great principles, that was looking through wage and hour laws and things like that to build and sustain a successful middle class, and that is exactly what the Democratic party did. I mean, the union of trade unionism, and the Democratic Party created the middle class. Under Franklin Delano Roosevelt it saved democracy in this country. Under Harry Truman it essentially saved Europe after WWII. It was a party of great principles.

It seems to me that the Democratic Party, for whatever reason, gradually swung further, and further, and further, and further to the left so that it became the party not of, let's get fair wages and good jobs for people, but let's see how much we can give away. It became a party that became so fixated on ideology that we ended up with this whole PC culture, which is I think horribly dangerous to our democracy. It became a party that ultimately created a man like Clinton, who was a horrible disgrace, whose disgusting personal habits and life style polluted this society to a level that is going to take years to clean up.

And to have him come on the heels of a guy like Ronald Reagan, who basically preached a mantra of "What's mine is mine and you can't have it, and oh by the way, I'll take yours away from you, too." You couple that with a man who will say anything in order to get a vote, tell any lie, no lie is too outrageous, who was morally disgusting, and who just continually would lie to us, and raise up the lowest, scummiest people. He, Bill Clinton was trailer park trash, and he taught a gospel of irresponsibility, personal irresponsibility, that was never what the Democratic Party taught, ever. And he has created, and now his wife is doing the same thing -

PB: And so you have, so, definitely not content with what Reagan did either?

JC: Oh no, no, no, for God sakes, I mean, I'm not a Republican.

PB: So why'd you vote for Bush?

JC: I voted for George Bush because I thought that, and I still think, that he was head and shoulders the best guy for the job, in part because he is a fellow who in his family history and everything, and I don't mean just his father, but his entire family history is, has had an element of dedication to the public good through leadership in political positions, okay? The Bushes never got rich because of political connections. They certainly got rich, but it wasn't through politics. This was something that they did. They've had real lives and real professions. And with a guy

like George Bush, who I met when I was a little boy because their summer place at Walker Point was around the corner from my great aunt's place. I figured this is a guy who had some clue about the world, and what really made things go around, as opposed to Al Gore whose home town is a hotel in Washington, D.C., who was as big a liar as Clinton, and who was obviously ready to say anything, do anything, or go anywhere in order to retain a position of power, and exercise power for the sake of power. I don't think the Bushes do that, I really don't. And I think that frankly George Bush has done a fine job. I am very glad George Bush is president of the United States after what happened on September 11th. I don't know where the hell we'd be. We'd probably have, you know, a minaret on the White House at this stage of the game if Al Gore was president of the United States.

PB: What do you think the insurgence of independents has done to Maine politics, and Democratic Maine politics?

JC: It's changed everything, it has changed everything.

PB: For the worse or the better?

JC: I think for the worse. Although I'm not surprised it happened.

PB: No, no, but I'll agree with you.

JC: I mean, Reaganism pulled a lot of people out of the Republican Party, pulled a lot of people out of the Democratic Party, too, you know, these Reagan Democrats, many of whom ended up independents. And the extreme leftism, and political correctness, and the sort of, just an arrogance of the Democratic Party in Maine, is almost like a Communist party in Maine now, have pushed people into this. And what it's done is, that because it isn't organized, it doesn't have a voice in the legislature. I mean, what is it, one independent up there? I mean, she's no voice for the (*unintelligible phrase*), she just isn't. They're not organized, and what it's left unfortunately, I think, is that the Republicans tend to be increasingly extreme on the right, the Democrats have gone so far to the left I can't even see them any more, but that's where the power ends up being in the legislature. I think it's a terrible situation. As I say, I know why it happened. I think it's awful, Paul. That's why our governors tend to be moderates; it's why the governors tend to be moderates.

PB: They have to be.

JC: But the legislature tends to be horribly polarized. It's also why the people we send to Washington tend to be moderates.

PB: Do you have any more commentary, we've got a couple minutes left, about Maine politics, or Ed Muskie's legacy maybe, or memories that we may have skipped?

JC: Ed Muskie fits in with a whole line through history that has extended past Ed Muskie, of great Maine leaders. Not just politicians, but leaders. Going back to guys like Blaine, like justices of the Supreme Court like Nathan Clifford, like, oh gosh, like Fuller, Justice Fuller, and

people like Margaret Chase Smith, Thomas Brackett Reid, George Mitchell, Bill Cohen, now Olympia Snowe. I mean, for a little place, Joshua L. Chamberlain, I mean look at a guy like that who was governor of the state of Maine. We have had, for a small place up at the end of nowhere; we've had some really great, great men and women, national figures. And Ed Muskie certainly is one of those people, and his position in history is secure. And it's well deserved, it's a well deserved position because he did great things for Maine, and he did great things for the United States. This country was real lucky because there was a guy like Ed Muskie around. And we ought to be real proud of that.

End of interview.