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## Atkins, Barbara (Mitchell) oral history interview

Mike Richard

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## **Interview with Barbara (Mitchell) Atkins by Mike Richard**

*Summary Sheet and Transcript*

### **Interviewee**

Atkins, Barbara (Mitchell)

### **Interviewer**

Richard, Mike

### **Date**

August 13, 1999

### **Place**

Waterville, Maine

### **ID Number**

MOH 137

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### **Biographical Note**

Barbara (Mitchell) Atkins was born in July of 1945 in Waterville, Maine. She grew up with four older brothers: John, Paul, Robert and George Mitchell. Her mother, Mary, was a weaver in the woolen mills in Waterville, and her father, George, Sr., was with the Central Maine Power Company and with the Colby College maintenance department. The family was Maronite Roman Catholic of Lebanese descent. Her mother was born in Lebanon and came to the U.S. in 1920. Barbara attended St. Joseph's elementary school, Waterville Junior High School and Waterville High School where she played volleyball, basketball, was a cheerleader, a member of the French Club, and involved in editing the yearbook. She earned her degree at the University of Maine at Orono, majoring in Sociology. She married Edward L. Atkins, a Waterville man who had a printing and photography business. Barbara managed the office staff for her husband's business when she wasn't teaching. Edward Atkins was a strong Democrat, although he came from a Republican family.

### **Scope and Content Note**

Interview includes discussions of: Boys Club in Waterville; Edward Atkins; impressions of Jane Muskie; impressions of Ed Muskie; Atkins printing business; Dick McMahan; Lebanese social

events in Waterville in the 1950s and 1960s; and the economic and political situation of Waterville, Maine.

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## **Transcript**

**Mike Richard:** The date is August 13th, 1999, it’s 10:00 AM, and we’re at the home of Barbara Atkins in Waterville, Maine. Interviewing is Mike Richard. And, Mrs. Atkins, could you please state your full name and spell it?

**Barbara Atkins:** Barbara M. Atkins, A-T-K-I-N-S.

**MR:** And what is your date of birth?

**BA:** I was born July of 1945.

**MR:** And your hometown?

**BA:** Waterville, born in Waterville, raised in Waterville, and live in Waterville presently.

**MR:** And what about your family background? First of all, how many siblings have you had?

**BA:** I grew up with four brothers. Three are presently around. One brother was deceased two years, three years ago, but I have four older brothers.

**MR:** And that's, let's see, there's John, Paul, George and Bobby?

**BA:** That's right. And it, of course Paul, I'll go in the order of the eldest: Paul, John, Robbie, who is deceased, and George, and then myself.

**MR:** Okay, and what were your parents' names?

**BA:** Mary and George Mitchell.

**MR:** And what were their occupations?

**BA:** My mother was a weaver in the woollen mills here in Waterville; she worked in several of the mills. And my father worked, had a few jobs, was with the Central Maine Power Company for a while and then was at Colby College in the maintenance department.

**MR:** And what were their political beliefs if they ever talked with you and the family about them?

**BA:** Well, I think in the beginning my father may have been a little bit Republican, way, way back. But then they became rather strong Democrats towards the end of their lives. And I remember that they always spoke very, very highly of Franklin Roosevelt. So from the Roosevelt time on, anyway, I'm sure they were Democrats.

**MR:** Okay, and what about their religious beliefs?

**BA:** Both Roman Catholic, Maronite Roman Catholic.

**MR:** That's from the Lebanese. . . .?

**BA:** The Lebanese, yes, yes. My mother was born in Lebanon and came to the United States in 1920. And we had here in Waterville quite a Lebanese community, and that community built its own Maronite Catholic Church in the, I don't know, maybe thirties or forties; I don't know the

exact time that that church was started. But during all of my lifetime there was a, and still is, a Maronite Roman Catholic church, St. Joseph's.

**MR:** And, did you learn to speak Arabic?

**BA:** I did. I can still understand everything, but I don't speak it any longer, and I have a hard time now conversing. But I do understand everything that's said in Arabic.

**MR:** Okay, and just taking a little bit about your brothers' growing up- what were their, what were their interests as they were growing up, and how would you say that their parents, well that your parents, affected your interest and your brothers' interests?

**BA:** Well my older brothers, Paul and John in particular, and Robbie, were very athletic. And I think at the time they spent, I know at the time they spent quite a lot of their free time at the Boys' Club. It was then the Boys' Club then, not the Boys' and Girls' Club, which it is today. But, so, this was I think encouraged by my parents, because it was a very healthy and good thing for young boys to do, to spend their time that way. And George was quite young when he graduated from high school, he graduated I think at age sixteen. And he was very slight in his physical build. Now, it's strange, because now he's the tallest and the biggest of all of the brothers. But at the time he was a slow grower physically, so he was not quite the sports person that my other brothers were. So he spent most of his time with books, I guess. And I think at the time it was mostly comic books, when we were growing up. But he was an early reader. And, but he did, he did play some sports, but not, I don't think, as much as, and at that time, as well as, my other brothers.

**MR:** And what about some of your interests while you were growing up?

**BA:** Well, I think my interests were trying to do what my brothers did. I was always kind of, like, tagging along, and I know my mother and father tried to make my brothers include me in most of their activities, which was not always successful. But I think probably I, I played some sports and had, you know, girlfriends, and we just did the things that kids do.

**MR:** And, where did you go to school for elementary and secondary school?

**BA:** Elementary I went to the, St. Joseph's had a school at the time and I went to St. Joseph's up through the fifth grade. And then I went off to Waterville Junior High School, and then Waterville High School.

**MR:** And what were some of the classes or clubs or sports that you got especially interested in during that time?

**BA:** Oh I think probably I had, I was in some of the women's sports groups at the time, volleyball, basketball, and that sort of thing. I was a cheerleader, and I was in the French club. And probably I think I was on, or was involved in the yearbook, editing of the yearbook, and that sort of thing.

**MR:** And do you remember any particular teachers or other students maybe who particularly influenced you while you were in high school or earlier on?

**BA:** Well I remember my French teacher, not so much that she influenced me but that she was kind of tough. And, I think I just remember that I believe I had a very good education. I think, also going back to my elementary days, I do remember some, we had nuns, Ursuline nuns who taught us. And I do remember many of them, and I think they were quite good teachers. They were certainly disciplinarians. I remember being cuffed on the hands a few times with a ruler. But it didn't do me any harm; I think it did me good. But yeah, I think they were quite good teachers, the Ursuline nuns.

**MR:** And was that a mixed girls' and boys' school?

**BA:** Yes it was, yes. And, mixed girls and boys and mixed classes. And I also graduated from high school at sixteen and I think the, there were only two, maybe two or three rooms in the school and, perhaps K through three in one room and maybe four through six in another room. And if you were able to do the work, if you were in first grade and could do third grade work, the nuns just let you go, you went right through. And I believe that's what happened with George, and I think that's what happened with me.

**MR:** So you and George were, I believe the rest of your family didn't go to St. Joseph's, but you and George did; is that correct?

**BA:** I think Robbie did, because it wasn't in existence when John and Paul were real young. But I think my brother Robbie went to St. Joseph's also.

**MR:** Were you ever, actually, were you at the school at the same time that George was? Did you have much contact with him while he was going to the school?

**BA:** Not, not too much, no. I had some, but not too much.

**MR:** Okay, and did you become politically interested or active at all, maybe by the time you were in high school or later on in those years?

**BA:** I don't think I was in high school, no. But I believe I started maybe when I was in college, perhaps by taking some courses in current events and that sort of thing; I may have.

**MR:** And where did you go to college?

**BA:** I went to the University of Maine in Orono, and enjoyed it very much.

**MR:** What was your major there, actually?

**BA:** I majored in sociology. And when I graduated I taught school for a few years. And I taught in the Boston area for a year and then, I never really went into anything that had to do with sociology, but I taught in a junior high school outside of Boston. And then I taught in the

Waterville area.

**MR:** And what level did you teach in Waterville? Was it also junior high level?

**BA:** No, in Waterville it was fifth grade.

**MR:** And how long did you teach for, overall in your life?

**BA:** Overall, because I left and then I came back and taught, I think overall I taught about four years.

**MR:** So how did that work out? You grad-, what did, first of all what year did you graduate from U Maine? Was that around 1940's, or. . . .?

*(Taping paused.)*

**BA:** When I, when I, I met my husband, and, in Waterville; he's a Waterville native, and was married and entered into the business with him, which was a printing business.

**MR:** And what's your husband's full name? What was your husband's full name?

**BA:** Edward L. Atkins.

**MR:** And so, actually I'd like to talk a little bit about the printing business that your husband was involved in. How did he first start the business, or at what time did he start the business?

**BA:** His father started the business. It's one of the oldest businesses in Waterville still existing on the main street in Waterville. I think it is the oldest family-run business in Waterville. So he kind of inherited this business from his father. It was a combination of photography, we used to sell cameras and do work in photography, and printing. I believe my husband's father was more interested in the photographic end of the business, and my husband was more interested in the printing. So it eventually evolved into really more just a print shop.

**MR:** And what was the nature of your work at the printing business when you were working there?

**BA:** I worked mainly in the office area. I kind of managed the office staff.

**MR:** And for how long did you work there?

**BA:** Oh, I worked about fifteen or seventeen years in the printing business with my husband.

**MR:** So your, your occupations have basically been about four years of teaching and the many years at the printing business?

**BA:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**MR:** Okay. And what was your husband's political affiliations, or the political affiliations of his family, the Atkins family, first of all?

**BA:** Well the Atkins family, I believe my husband's father was a Republican. But my husband was a very, very staunch Democrat right from the beginning. He was a real Democrat, Democratic supporter right from the beginning.

**MR:** And do you know how his Democratic leanings were looked upon by his family, or at least his father, who was a Republican?

**BA:** Well I think his father- he and his father grew up alone together. His mother was not around at the time and his father brought him up. So I think no matter what my husband did, his father was, eventually approved of it or what-; they had a very, very close relationship. They just diverged I guess on the po- . . .

*(Taping paused.)*

**BA:** . . . . *(unintelligible phrase)* on the political affiliations. But I don't think it affected their rela-, their personal relationship, you know, adversely.

**MR:** And so what was the nature of the printing business and its involvement with the Democratic Party?

**BA:** Well, it was a, it was a commercial print shop. We did a lot of, you know, letterheads, brochures, booklets, that sort of thing. Had printing for the state, for Colby, for Hathaway Shirts and so on. But we also did, because Eddie was very much involved with the Democratic Party here in Waterville, he did printing for the Democrats. And it just started that way, and. . . .

*(Telephone interruption - taping paused.)*

**BA:** . . . .an early backer of Ed Muskie's. He just started at that point doing most of the printing I think for then, I don't know if, I think Ed Muskie ran for mayor or something in Waterville. I believe it's the only election he ever lost. So maybe Eddie got involved at that, at that stage; I'm not sure. That's, that was a little bit before my time, before I was married and was in the business.

**MR:** But he was also involved during, in the mid-fifties, in the Democratic resurgence in Maine?

**BA:** Oh, I think so; yes, I do. He was very friendly with Dick McMahon, who I think was a, used to dr-, in the early days as I understand it was a, drove around with Ed Muskie when he was campaigning for governor I think, drove Ed Muskie around the state, and so on. But my husband was very friendly with Dick.

**MR:** And, you mentioned that your husband was already politically involved in the community.



What, which offices did he hold or what were the-?

**BA:** Well, the only thing I know that he did; he was not, he did not have elective offices, but he, he was a police commissioner and was on a few boards in town and that sort of thing. But he, being a merchant on the main street I think he was active in merchant's associations and so on, and some of the social clubs in Waterville. But he was very, very active in the community, more probably than being politically active. He was politically active in the sense that he supported the Democrats and did, you know, the printing. But he did not run for elective office.

**MR:** And how involved were you, during your time at the print shop, how involved were you with the political side of things, and how well did you get to know the politicians you dealt with through that work?

**BA:** Well, I did through that work, yes, you know, you're bound to meet them when they come in and order printing and so on. But you, I became most involved when my brother started, you know, his quest in politics, his running for various offices. And we did the printing for him, so at that point the entire family was involved. And we would do some of the, you know, the work that had to be done. Envelope stuffing and, you know, the things you hear you have to do: go around and attend different functions and that sort of thing. And we hosted several parties here for my brother, and I think some of the other candidates, too; I can't remember now, exactly.

**MR:** Okay. Speaking about your husband a little bit more, what were some of his other interests beyond the political and his merchant activities?

**BA:** Well I think- I'm trying to, in the summer time he was quite a golfer. He liked golf. And he also was a good tennis player. So those were some of his interests. And he, he played some cards at times. And that's probably it. He loved his, he loved his business, so he worked many hours. But that was mainly what interested him.

**MR:** And you mentioned that he and you got to know Ed Muskie quite well. Did you also get to know the Muskie family, or maybe Jane Muskie or some of. . . .?

**BA:** I did, I got to meet Jane Muskie through political functions and that sort of thing. She grew up in Waterville with, at the same time I think as my older brothers. I'm not sure, Johnny or whatever, went to high school with them. So I did not know her then, but I did through Ed Muskie's time in, you know, in the Senate and after. I got to meet her at quite a few functions.

**MR:** And what are your impressions of her as a person?

**BA:** Oh, she was a very, very charming woman, very thoughtful. And I was always impressed that she remembered my name. You know, that's a, I think, a very impressive thing, when politicians and their wives can see you maybe twice a year or three times a year and still able to say, "Hello Barbara," when they see you. So I, she was, yes, she was very, very thoughtful and very gracious and charming.

**MR:** Okay. And what about Ed Muskie? How did, when did you first meet him if you. . . .?

**BA:** I don't know. I, it was just during this time sometime. I can't be sure, Mike, but it was maybe when he was in the Senate. I really don't remember the exact time.

**MR:** That's alright. And what were your impressions of him?

**BA:** Well, I thought he was always such a stately man and a very, very intelligent person. And I, I always felt we were so lucky to be served by him, lucky here in the state of Maine to be served by someone of his intellect and nature and standing in Washington.

**MR:** Actually, I'm not sure if I asked you this; I might have. But just to pick up on one other point, how long did your husband, how long was your husband involved with his printing business and printing for the Democrats? Was this into the late sixties, seventies?

**BA:** Oh yes, right until, until my husband died in 1992, and he was still in the business.

**MR:** Did he still continue to do printing for the Democrats?

**BA:** He did printing for the Democrats and a lot of Democrats on national, you know, I mean presidential elections. We did printing for Senator Kennedy and Mike Dukakis. And, I mean we did, we were a union shop also, and at the time there weren't that many union shops in the state of Maine.

*(Taping paused.)*

**BA:** . . . . *(unintelligible phrase)*, anyway, as I was saying, we, yeah, we did printing for a lot of national figures also.

**MR:** And did you say earlier that. . . .?

**BA:** Oh, I was, I think I was saying that we were one of the few union shops in the state. So through that, we did printing for many Democrats, because, you know, at the time they, and still are, very closely affiliated with unions.

**MR:** And were there any people from the unions that you remember getting involved with in particular, or was it kind of, the connection wasn't that close with people who worked with the union and your printing business?

**BA:** It really wasn't that close. I got to know some of the names and the people we'd meet at these functions. But no, I couldn't say that I got to know them that well, no.

**MR:** How would you say the unions have been over the years that you've been involved with them through the printing shop? Has it been a strong force in Maine?

**BA:** Well they, well, I can't speak for Maine; I can only speak for the print shop. And we did, through the unions, receive much printing. We were a union shop so, that's all, I just, you know,

can't really say for the rest of the state.

**MR:** Actually, I guess at this time, for one thing, did you get to know the Gray family as a family while you were growing up in Waterville or know anything about how they were looked upon by the community (*unintelligible phrase*)?

**BA:** No, no, I really, I really didn't. I know Jane, Jane Gray Muskie's brother Howard. I didn't know him but I knew he was involved with the paper, the newspaper here. Howard Gray, I believe he was an editor or something with the paper. But no, I did not know them.

**MR:** Okay. Well, I just have a pretty short list of names of political figures of the time that I'd like to ask you about to see if you have any recollections of them. First is Frank Coffin.

**BA:** I've met him and I know, I can just remember my husband speaking of him in, in, with very high regard. And I've always heard that he was a brilliant man, but I did not know him too well.

**MR:** And Max Codere?

**BA:** That's another name; I think he may have been a contemporary of the, contemporary of my husband. I'm not sure either. But he was a local, I believe, wasn't he, a local pol-, Waterville politician?

**MR:** Yeah, yeah.

**BA:** But no I, I, no, I didn't know Max Codere.

**MR:** And how about Don Nicoll?

**BA:** Well, I met Don through Ed Muskie and through Eddie and through the printing, and so on. And always, he always greeted me very warmly. And I believe he was an assistant in the Washington office with, for the Senator, Senator Muskie at the time, and did his job very, very well, very handily I believe, got to be quite well liked. And, you know, (*unintelligible phrase*).

**MR:** And how about Harold and Bob Dubord and the Dubord family?

**BA:** Well I, I know the names; I knew who they were. I, they had, they have a younger sister that I remembered a little bit in school. But, you know, I didn't know them socially. I just know they, again, they were a name and a force in the local Democratic Party.

**MR:** Okay. And you mentioned Dick McMahon. Is there anything else you want to add about him? Did you get to know him particularly well?

**BA:** Well, I think I got to know him before I knew him politically, because he worked at the American Woolen Company and was the paymaster, and my mother worked there at the time. And I remember she used to talk about Dick McMahon. She knew him through that and I, I

think that's when I first got to know who he was, that way, before he became involved politically and before my husband became involved with him. And then, we used to occasionally go over to Dick and his wife at, Nellie I think, at the time. They used to host these functions over in, they lived in Winslow, over at their place. And I think we were invited to a few of those affairs, and that was always a fun thing.

**MR:** And what were they like, both he and Nellie, as you got acquainted with them?

**BA:** Pretty warm. And Dick was very, very, he had a wonderful wit and he, he was quite humorous. And Nellie was a good person; she was, she was a lot of fun too. And she, I remember one thing specifically, she baked cheesecakes, and she made wonderful cheesecakes, so.

**MR:** And how about Professor Paul Fullam?

**BA:** I did not know him. Again, I know the name, and I know he was a very active Democrat. And I just can't really comment, because I didn't know him that well.

**MR:** And how about George Jabar?

**BA:** George Jabar I knew, because he was Lebanese. And I grew up, at the time the community lived, the Lebanese lived mainly in one part of Waterville. So we grew up knowing all of the other Lebanese. and I knew him. His daughter, his younger daughter, was close to my age, and so I knew the family fairly well because I grew up with, you know, grew up with them. And he was I guess with the unions, George Jabar was, and pretty active with the unions, and the father of a wonderful family. There were seven or eight Jabars that have all done quite well in Waterville and outside of Waterville.

**MR:** And you mentioned that you were very involved, or that your family was very involved in the Lebanese community, that it was a close-knit community in Waterville? How did, what were relationships with some of the other ethnic communities maybe in Waterville like, and what were some of the other ethnic communities in Waterville?

**BA:** Well, I think the biggest ethnic community in Waterville was the French community, and they just, they lived in another part of town. And back then I think people sort of just stayed with their own ethnic groups. We stayed where we were, and the French were in what is called the "south end," was called the "south end," I don't know if people refer to it as the "south end" any more. And outside of that there weren't very many, there are not very many Italians in Waterville, and there aren't many, well I guess there was a little bit of an Irish group in town. But when I was young and growing up I think I stayed close, because I went to St. Joseph's, and that was a Lebanese Maronite school, so I stayed right with the Lebanese people.

**MR:** And when you went to high school that probably changed (*unintelligible phrase*)?

**BA:** Oh that changed in junior high school; it changed. Then I just, you know, then I was in school with everybody else, so to speak, everybody else.

**MR:** Do you remember if there was any, any incidents or ethnic prejudice or tension at school or in the community at large?

**BA:** Oh I don't think at school. But I think, yeah, there were some slurs at times against the Lebanese, as there are, I believe, with many immigrant groups. And not only from those who are not, so to speak, "non-immigrants," but from other immigrant groups themselves. So I think it's, it just happens. It's been a fact of life and it's nothing that, no violence ever occurred; I don't remember any violence between these groups. And it was, I never felt any real harm or fright or scares or, even today, scars from that. But I think there were some, some little prejudices, and so on.

**MR:** And do you think that situation has changed over the years in Waterville, or the ethnic makeup and the way that the communities interact?

**BA:** Yes, I do, because they, I think it's, everything is more integrated now, yeah. I mean, the Lebanese don't all live down on Header Falls and King Court, and the French don't all live in the south end. And they're all, and there's been a lot of intermarrying. In my own family, Paul is married to a French descendant who, from the south end, and Johnny and Robbie, you know, it's just such a mix now that, yeah, I think it has changed that way.

**MR:** And speaking of the Waterville society in general, what were some of the things that, some of the groups or organizations in the community that were very important, or things that families did for fun or recreation and things like that?

**BA:** Well, we, in the early years we did a lot of things with the Lebanese community. You know, they had their summer festivals, church festivals at the different beaches, and so on. Then, as I grew up, if, if a person wanted to join this club or that club, it depended on what their interests were. You did things that interested you.

**MR:** And the things that your family in particular were involved in, was that mainly within the context of the Lebanese community or within the church?

**BA:** Yeah, I think so, yes, within the church. And then, of course, because my brothers were so active in sports, we did a lot that way. You know, we went to different sporting events, and so on. But I think generally you can say we did a lot of, most of what we did with the, within the context of the Lebanese community. Or, at least that's the way I remember it.

**MR:** Okay. And would you also like to comment a little bit about the economic situation in Waterville and how that's changed over the years, or maybe, like the way it was when you were growing up?

**BA:** Well, I think it was very, very healthy back when I was growing up. Right now I don't think it's quite as healthy. We've lost some of the manufacturing. The Scott Paper is now no longer existent here. And, so we, we're into a little bit of an economic depression in Waterville, which I think is passing. And I believe our Main Street, like many of the main streets throughout

America, not just throughout Maine, are all having a little bit of a tough time, because of the malls and that sort of thing. But I believe Waterville still is a healthy community, a very good community. School systems are good; we have Colby College which is a wonderful, wonderful college. And, you know, there's Hathaway Shirts and the Chinette Company. So we're still, we're still a good community. Of course there's, we, it could be a little healthier, but I think that's hopefully changing now.

**MR:** And, one other thing is, how do you think that the political situation in Waterville, maybe the dominant party affiliation, if there is one, has been when you were growing up, and how has it changed over the years?

**BA:** Well, I think the one thing now that's so obvious is, it seems to be it's all Democratic. It's unfortunate, but the, whenever there's a race for mayor there's no Republican candidate, and, which is so unfortunate, because I don't think it's good for a, for the city not to have, you know, good healthy competition in politics. But it seems to be a predominantly Democratic town now. Which, you know, I'm a Democrat; I'm happy about that. But I would like to see some, and there are plenty of good Republicans out there, but they just don't seem to want to show their faces too much when it comes time for some of these elections.

**MR:** And, would you say that situation was different when you were growing up as far as (*unintelligible phrase*)?

**BA:** Oh I think it was. I think there was a lot more competition back then. Don't forget, Ed Muskie was beaten by a Republican for the race for mayor in Waterville.

**MR:** Would you say then, though, it was, that it was overwhelmingly Republican, or was it more of Democratic?

**BA:** It may have; yes, it may have been. I think Ed Muskie is the, kind of acknowledged founder, not founder but I mean, person who rejuvenated the Democratic Party in the state of Maine. And that, of course, included Waterville.

**MR:** Okay. Well I guess we'll just get back to the rest of the names on the list I was asking about- just a couple more, actually. Paul Julien is one of them?

**BA:** Oh, I didn't know him at all. Have you spoken with my brother Paul yet?

**MR:** Yeah.

**BA:** Okay, because he, I think the business that my brother Paul owns now was in the Julien family back then, so he would know Paul Julien. I didn't know him at all.

**MR:** Okay. And how about Erwin [*sic*] [Erlon] Nadeau?

**BA:** Didn't know him. I know the name, but I did not know him.

**MR:** And Paul Dundas?

**BA:** Again, another name. I knew he was a mayor in Waterville, but I did not know him.

**MR:** And the last one actually is Mayor “Spike” Carey, Richard “Spike” Carey.

**BA:** Well, I know Spike, and I’ve supported him in the past; we’ve done printing for him. And he’s done a good job.

**MR:** And what’s he like personally or professionally, or anything?

**BA:** Well, I don’t know him, you know, I don’t socialize and I don’t, you know, we see him, I see him in the markets and we have conversations, or at functions and that sort of thing. And, you know, I’ve always supported him. But I just, I don’t-, and he’s very, very pleasant and always, if you have something to say he listens. But other than that, I really don’t know him that well. But he’s done a good job for the people that he serves.

**MR:** Do you know his wife Helen at all, or anything about her political involvement?

**BA:** No, no.

**MR:** And, actually thinking of some other people that you might know through your brother’s work, maybe Bill Cohen, have you ever met?

**BA:** I’ve met, yes, I have. He’s been here a few, in this house before, and very able, very capable, and very pleasant. And he’s doing a fine job now in his position as a, in the defense, as Secretary of Defense.

**MR:** And how about Margaret Chase Smith?

**BA:** Well I didn’t know her. But obviously, you know, she was quite a figure in name, a prominent name in political history in the state of Maine. But I did not know her.

**MR:** Or Bill Hathaway, have you met?

**BA:** Well I met him but, again, probably just once or so at some fund raiser, so I can’t really comment.

**MR:** Okay. And just one other one is Olympia Snowe; do you know her?

**BA:** I don’t know her, no. I’ve seen her; I know she’s our senator. And, I have never voted for her, but I, you know, I guess she, she seems to be doing a good job.

**MR:** Okay. Well, just talking about Senator Muskie, how, you mentioned this a little bit, but how well did you get to know him on a social basis, and what was he like personally?

**BA:** Well, it, on a social basis it was only at these fund raisers and parties and that sort of thing, clam bakes and so on. I mean we never, you know, just went to dinner with him and Jane or we never went to the movies with them or that kind of thing, no. But it was always through a political function that we, that I, at least I got to talk to him. And he always was very, very impressive and, you know, just, I kind of, he kind of stood like in awe to me. I was a little bit taken by him that way and didn't feel I had much to contribute to a conversation with Ed Muskie. But he, he was always, you know, very pleasant. I never, I never experienced or witnessed any of his so-called testiness or whatever; I never was aware of that because, again, I didn't work for him and I didn't see him except for these social, social functions.

**MR:** And your husband never told him, told you any stories about his temper, so-called temper, or anything like that?

**BA:** No, no, he might have talked about it or something from, one time or another. But I, no, I don't remember any, any particular incidents, no.

**MR:** Okay. And just a general question: what do you think Senator Muskie's effects of Maine and on Maine politics have been?

**BA:** Oh, I think they were tremendous. I, you know, he did so much. Well, first of all he did so much for the Democratic Party, and then he did so much for the state, you know, with his Clean Air and all of these issues he became involved in. And then, you know, his run for the, well, and he did a great job when he was Hubert Humphrey's running mate, and his own run. And then as Secretary of State he represented the state of Maine very, very well, very well.

**MR:** Okay. Well, is there anything else that we missed that you'd like to talk about, about the politics of the area, your involvement in the printing business or anything that we've left. . . .?

**BA:** No, I think we've covered pretty much everything.

**MR:** Okay, great. Well, thanks for your time.

**BA:** Okay.

*End of Interview*