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Interview with Mike Aube by Andrea L'Hommedieu

Summary Sheet and Transcript

Interviewee

Aube, Mike

Interviewer

L'Hommedieu, Andrea

Date

April 4, 2000

Place

Bangor, Maine

ID Number

MOH 177

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Biographical Note

Michael "Mike" Aube was born on July 17, 1950 in Biddeford, Maine and grew up in the Biddeford-Saco area where he attended a local grammar school, parochial schools, and Thornton Academy. He attended Boston College from 1968-1972 majoring in History and Education, and spent summers in Maine working in textile mills. Had wanted to teach, and became certified in teaching (in Maine), then went into government and politics. Mike came from a Franco-American family and spoke French before English. His mother worked as a clerk/cashier at a grocery store and his father was an electrical worker for a small electrical contractor in Saco. In 1957 his father started his own small electrical contracting business. They lived in Ward Five, and his father served on the City Council. Michael Aube was actively involved in politics (as a Democrat). He worked for McGovern in 1972, and in 1973 became president of Maine Young Democrats, and was on Maine's Democratic State Committee and worked for George Mitchell. In 1975-1980 he went to Washington to work for the Senate Budget Committee (Muskie was chairman of the committee) as a researcher, and was then promoted to Director of Special Projects in Maine. He stayed in Washington until 1981 to work for Senator George Mitchell.

Scope and Content Note

Interview includes discussions of: Biddeford and Saco area communities in the 1950s and 1960s; textile industry; importance of football in the Biddeford-Saco area; Boston College between 1968-1972; George Mitchell; Senator Muskie speaking at Georgetown, Kentucky; Muskie's temper; receiving bronze eagles (the emblem of Boston College) at a Boston College campaign; similarities and differences between Ed Muskie and George Mitchell; and the importance of Muskie's environmental legislation.

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Transcript

Andrea L’Hommedieu: This is an interview with Michael Aube conducted by Andrea L’Hommedieu at City Hall in Bangor, Maine on Mar- I’m sorry, April the 4th, the year 2000, at 10:30 AM. Mr. Aube, could you start by stating your name, your full name, and spelling it for us?

Michael Aube: My name is Michael Aube. The last name is spelled A-U-B-E.

AL: And where and when were you born?

MA: I was born in July, on July 17th, 1950 in Biddeford, Maine.

AL: And where did you grow up?

MA: I grew up in the Biddeford-Saco area and until I went to college. I went to local grammar school, parochial schools and to Thornton Academy, and then went on to college, Boston College, for the period of 1968 to 1972 and spent all my summers in Maine and then got interested in government, history, and politics.

AL: So what was your major in college?

MA: I studied history and education. It was my hope to be a history teacher. And I came out of college in 1972 when there really was a glut of teachers, and so I ended up being a teachers’ assistant for a year and then ended up moving more directly into government and politics at that point in time. But I really have always enjoyed history; I’m certified as a teacher in Maine and do a lot now as an avocation, if you will, of teaching different courses and specialty courses at both higher educational institutions and in the public school system.

AL: Now, when you were growing up in the Biddeford, the Biddeford and Saco area should we say? What was that community like growing up?

MA: Well, obviously I’m from a, with a name like Aube I’m from a French speaking family.

Both my parents worked, my grandmother raised me when I was very young, during the day I was brought to my grandmother's house, mémère's house and then spent time there. I spoke French before I spoke English because that was the, in that particular time in the early fifties communities like Biddeford, Lewiston, certain, and Waterville, and other communities throughout Maine obviously had very large Franco-American populations. The community was a very homogeneous community. It was, you know, predominantly French speaking Catholics. Hard working people, very committed to family life, really trying to do things to keep families together. Most families lived in neighborhoods, brothers and sisters, even though they'd gone on. That was no different than my mom or dad's family although that began to change in the mid-fifties as recession at the time probably forced a lot of people to look elsewhere. And so you found your extended family moving to communities in Connecticut, Nashua, New Hampshire, and the like.

But Biddeford was a very, I think, active community politically through the various I think church events, and the Democratic party obviously had a big influence in local government and local politics. My grandmother who always would tell the story that during the Depression time my grand-, her husband, my grandfather, was active in the Democratic party, was a member of the progressive Democrats, however, as opposed to other Democrat is the way they defined it in Biddeford at the time. And she, he died and leaving back a family whose oldest child at that point was like fourteen and with seven or eight children. And she would tell the story of how she'd have to go and walk up to the City Hall and ask for help and, even though the Democrats were in power, because her husband had been part of the progressive Democrats, she was frequently denied assistance of some kind. And, you know, that's just the way it was in those days. You know, strong allegiance to a political entity, to individuals and. But yet that, you know, my grandmother was always one who even in my early age I can always remember her saying the most important thing to do in life is to do public service, to be involved with, and then so I think that's had an influence on me and other members of my family.

AL: What were your parents' occupations?

MA: My mother was a, worked at a grocery store as a salesclerk, clerk cashier, and would work there at, it was a, Red & White was the name of the supermarket chain in those days, and that's what she would do. My dad was an electrical worker who worked for a small electrical contractor in Saco. We moved from Biddeford to Saco in 1955 and I started grammar school in Saco. In 1957 my father decided that if he was going to make anything of his life and improve the livelihood of his family, he was going to go out and start his own business. And so he went to, actually, the grocery store that my mom worked at, and the people there who owned that grocery store lent my father a thousand dollars, and he started his own business and then went on. He was very successful having a small electrical contracting business with a number of people working for him. And now my brother has inherited that business, if you will, and he's got it going, and so, really, it was a small business that my dad really crafted and did very well.

Both my mom and dad had limited education because of their financial situation at home. Both of them only got through the eighth grade, but yet all of us growing up in the family were always encouraged that education came first. If you have the opportunity, you got to go on to school, you got to go to high school. And you know, all of us have done that in the family. And so I

think that was fairly typical of the type of community that Biddeford and Saco was at the time. You know, hard working people, many of whom didn't have, had limited opportunities, but when they did come on, between their hard work and commitment to that, were able to become successful.

AL: And how many brothers and sisters do you have?

MA: I have one brother, who lives in Saco and runs the electrical business, and have two sisters, one of whom also lives in Saco and one who lives in Maryland.

AL: What were the industries in Saco that were most common when you were growing up, that sort of kept the economy (*unintelligible word*)?

MA: That kept the economy (*unintelligible word*)? Well, I think there were two things. There obviously was the textile industry which was still fairly large during the fifties and early sixties, some shoe manufacturing, but primarily Westpoint Pepperill, which was a major blanket manufacturer. The cotton would come up from down south and would be brought in, and there was a, one of the, you know, the old mill sites where everything was not horizontal but vertical buildings now where things, the product went up to the top floor and worked its way down. That was really a mainstay of the economy, the textile mills.

And also I think the economy was also extremely dependent on tourism, particularly with Old Orchard Beach and the number of Canadian visitors that would come down there in the summers and then spend lots of money, which really kept the retail economy going, if you will, during what I would call the doldrums of the winter months. I can remember a lot of small business people having discussions that their true benefit of the summer would come in January and February, they said, because if there was a good summer, good weather, and the tourists had come from Canada or Massachusetts or wherever, and if there were a lot of rooms that had been filled that year, there was enough money in the economy to keep them going through those winter months until the spring arrived again, and new construction and that kind of stuff would start.

So it was very interesting, but the dependency was predominantly on the mills and one in which, you know, people didn't need to have much education to work in those mills, and they would go to work every day and, you know, do their thing.

The big thing that I remember about obviously growing up in Biddeford and Saco is the tremendous rivalries in the football games. Both are football rich tradition, and it was, you know, something that everyone aspired to have the great team of the year. That was, you know, I remember going to St. Louis High School-Thornton Academy football games and seeing ten thousand people there, and although that may not sound a lot now, but ten thousand people at a high school football game is certainly a lot, and, you know, ringing the field. And, I mean, the excitement that that generated within the community was pretty significant.

AL: And you'd probably say that that area was more Democratic than most of the state was?

MA: Well, Biddeford was, Biddeford was overwhelmingly Democratic, you know, probably by a factor of ten to one, or eleven to one. The story that used to go around was that there were more people who voted in Biddeford for President Kennedy in 1960 than there were enrolled voters. And I can remember that story being told, obviously it was a predominantly a Catholic Democratic community, and with a Kennedy, even though Irish Catholic, he was a Catholic and obviously that brought out a lot of people to vote, and so there was predominantly Democrats in Biddeford. Saco was a different story, I mean, it was your typical ying and yang of communities in Maine where you see a lot of what they call the twin cities, Biddeford-Saco, Lewiston-Auburn, Waterville-, and. . . . That Saco was a little more prosperous as would an Auburn be, for example. There it tended to be more of the, say, Protestant, in terms of religious breakdown, more Protestant individuals and families would live. They tended to be more of the managers and the owners of the smaller businesses, the medium size businesses and the managers of the large textile mills. And so you had a demographic change in terms of the communities, which resulted also in a political change. Saco was predominantly Republican in the early fifties and sixties although that certainly changed over time and the mix is probably a fairly even split today in that community.

AL: You said you went to Boston College?

MA: Right.

AL: What was that experience like, going a-, you, was that your first time really away from home?

MA: Yeah, I, yes, it was my first time away, big time away. I mean, we always took family trips in the summer and did things, you know, in New York or Washington, or tried to, our parents always tried to take us someplace. But I was ready to go away. I was ready to see a change, to go on to a larger, more urban area and yet not too far from home. So I was only ninety miles away, and so I could frequently get home for a weekend if I wanted to. But at that point in time the choice was to continue to go to school in Maine or to go on somewhere else. And a lot of my friends were going to the University of Maine. And I just wanted to, I was ready for a different experience, I wanted something to, to meet different people, to be in a different place, to see a larger setting, and so that's why I chose to go to Boston College. I loved it. I think it was, added tremendously to my experience and perhaps gave me openings and opportunities that I otherwise wouldn't have if I had stayed in a more homogeneous, mainstream kind of operation. Certainly communities like Biddeford and Saco didn't have much diversity and perhaps wouldn't even know what that issue is, but as you, being a product of seeing a lot of those tensions in the sixties and political activism, I just wanted a setting that would expose me to that, and I think that Boston College did that.

AL: Were there any teachers who influenced you that you felt really changed your thinking in some way?

MA: There were probably, well there was a, two teachers I think that really changed my thinking. One was a professor Floresque was his name and he discovered Count Dracula's castle in Romania, and he would actually wear a black cape to class. And he was really a character and

frequently wasn't there because he was always doing TV interviews around the country because he was really sought after and had written this book on the real Count Dracula, that there was one, and it wasn't a blood-sucking individual, but had done certain things which created this mythology about him if you will. He was very dramatic. And I think what he exposed me to was again the whole different world population of trying to identify, not believing everything you're told and trying to research for yourself what really is important and make your own judgment about that, you know, that really had an impact on me. And the other person, whose name I can't recall, was a black professor who was teaching the history methods. I was in the education department, and he spent a fair amount of time showing us history from a different perspective, and that, you know, the first person to see the North Pole was not Admiral Byrd but in fact a black individual; the person who invented the traffic light was not the person that gets all the, those are just a couple of examples that I vaguely remember, so he really opened up perspective to us.

And I'll never forget being in the gym, which I used to go to quite often when I was at Boston College, I really enjoyed going to the gym on a daily basis and doing things and playing basketball. And he was there, and he was shooting some baskets, and so we were doing a pick up game and, this is a black professor, the first time I had a black professor, and I said, "Well, do you want to play with us?" He goes, "Sure," and so he played with us, and he was terrible, he was just terrible, and he looked at me at one point, and he goes, "That's the other thing you got to learn; just because I'm black, I'm not a good basketball player." And again, it was, I just remember those two experiences as saying, you know, perspective is very important.

And so then I went on to do, because of that I went and did student teaching units that really dealt with perspective. I taught one semester at Waltham High School, U.S. history from the, the entire unit was from the perspective of the defeated party, if you will, so from the Native American, from the, as opposed to the cowboy; to the Ku Klux Klan as opposed to the reformists in the Civil War period and others, and so I always took the other point of view. And that was really, I think the kids at the high school really liked that. I don't know if they were ready for that kind of dialogue, but I certainly wanted to, it's always, that's really helped make me who I am is looking at perspective, so.

AL: When do you first remember or have recollections of becoming interested in politics?

MA: Oh, probably when I was around eight or nine years old. Obviously the reason I say eight or nine years old is the 1960 presidential election was one that I remember tremendously, and probably that was the Catholic influence of being in a Catholic family and a Catholic home. My parents, I think, were still Democrat then. They changed to vote, they changed to support a friend of theirs who, Peter Garland, was a Republican mayor of Saco, to support him in the primary, and so that was like '57, '58. But I think they switched back; they just did that to vote for Peter Garland and did their thing. And so that had an impact on me, and I really remember that, I remember the closeness of that election, and so those types of things really got me involved in politics. And obviously the assassination of the president in '63 is something that, for those of us who grew up at that time can remember those three or four days very, very clearly as to what the mood of the country was like and what you watched, what you did. It was a fascinating time. And so I think that captured an imagination of government and the role of

government in everyday life for me, and so I probably was active ever since then.

AL: As far as activity, when do you feel you first became, or when did you first become actively involved in a campaign or in your town or?

MA: Sure, yeah, well my dad was on the city council, and so I would get involved in his local elections, and, those were partisan election in those days; the Democrats ran a slate, the Republicans ran a slate. We lived in ward five, which was the heaviest Democratic ward. My father ended up winning and was generally the swing vote because there were seven wards, and there were four Democrats and three Republicans. But he would be always the swing vote, and he enjoyed being the swing vote because then he could hopefully move something in the direction that he thought made sense and didn't have blind loyalty if you will to the so-called party group that had done that. And so I was involved in his elections.

I got very much involved in the '64 election as a freshman going into high school. There was a group of us who really got involved, and ironically active supporters of Barry Goldwater because the war issue was beginning to wear on some of us, and I think there was a mistrust of, by some of us then, of Lyndon Johnson. What is he really saying here? And didn't know enough, Goldwater was clear that he would end the war, and that was something that I think at that time that sort of, some focus. And I remember having discussions with a teacher in high school and wearing my H2, AU-H-2-0 button that I had for Goldwater, and he was saying, "Well, you're a Democrat; you can't be for Goldwater," and I says, "I can be for whoever I want. Just because I'm a Democrat," you know. And so I was involved then. And then that led to some political activities, continued political activities while I was in high school.

AL: Like what?

MA: Well, involved in community affairs, you know. They tended to be more local, I mean I would always volunteer to help Democrats, whether it was, you know, leafleting campaigns and those kinds of things. But I can remember getting involved in community days, doing things for like the Bangor bi-centennial, I think, and I took a leadership role in all the youth activities, if you will, and got the high school to do certain things, and tried to engage, to create a Democratic Party club at the high school level, and a Republican club. And so it was that kind of broad-based, general activism, if you will that I did during the high school days in Saco. And always very much involved, would go to local city council meetings, would try to stake out positions. I can remember even junior or senior in high school speaking on issues to the council that I was following. And so there was always this interest that government is an appropriate service for the community, and it's your right to influence it. And so that's kind of where, those times where. I went on to college after, in fact after Senator Muskie was vice presidential candidate in '68, so that, I mean, obviously that was a time of a lot of unrest in '68. And I can remember those also very clearly and vividly: the assassination of Martin Luther King in April of 1968, the assassination of Kennedy in '68, in June of '68.

In fact I was, I had gone to bed watching the California primary; I was really hoping that Bobby Kennedy would be the nominee of the party, and, probably more emotionally than really the thought process, a cerebral process. But, and I had gone to bed quite late because it was a close

vote, if I recall, and I had exams the next few days in high school. And my dad came up and woke me up like at three in the morning, and he said, he was shaking me, and he says, "Kennedy won but they shot him." And I jumped out of bed and twisted my back, and I've had a bad back ever since. And I don't know if there's a direct correlation there, but it really is a, you know, I just jumped out of bed and, you know, put on a shirt or whatever and went downstairs to watch TV to see what was happening.

And obviously those were, if, when you were young and really believed that government could make a difference, to see those things happening really were discouraging. And so I was really hopeful that, you know, that whole episode, that would have moved on. And Gene McCarthy, you know, had been running that year as well, I think, is that correct, no that was, yeah, that's '68, yeah, it was '68, yeah. And there was a place up to Sebago Lake where high school kids used to go and party, it was an established place, it wasn't a place we'd just go party, but there'd be dances there. And it was, everyone who was there was for Gene McCarthy, and then people moved over to Kennedy, and no one really wanted Humphrey. And so those, that was a tough spring and summer and obviously then the Democratic convention in '68, which was a fairly dramatic.

And I had decided that I was going to go, I was going to be part of the protest, and began to, my parents said, "No, you're not going," and I says, "Yes, I am going." And, I'm eighteen, so you think you know best and you decided you were going to do this. And I remember leaving and heading out and I was, it was a, a gentleman by the name of Don Doyle was mayor of Saco then, and he was a Republican, and his son was an active Democrat with me, and we were going to hitchhike out to Chicago. And so we were supposed to meet each other down by the Interstate, and I had my little suitcase or whatever I had, and I remember my father riding by, you know, saying, "Get in the car," and I, "No, I'm going." "Get in the car." And so I got in the car and I'm glad I didn't go, as the events unfolded, because I don't know what that would have meant in terms of choices or decisions that would have affected me in the future. So I really got kind of bummed out at that point in time and went on to college in September and got involved with college friends and, but ultimately I remember the election of '68 again, now, going to bed and really hoping that Ed Muskie would become vice-president. Because despite what had happened throughout the whole year, the reverence in which my grandparents, my parents, and everyone that I knew spoke of him and what he had done for Maine, what he had done for regular people, really made me feel that maybe there's a chance, maybe there's a chance. And of course they lost by just a squeaker of a vote in '68.

And so I kind of really tuned out after that point in time, got involved in other things in college. I was involved in the anti-war demonstrations and those kinds of things; I remember going to mid '68. Also in the fall election George Wallace was American party candidate, I believe, and he was having a big rally, he was having a rally at Boston Common. And all the colleges were rallying people to go down and, not to do civil disobedience, but we, there were thousands and thousands of college students there, and after he was introduced to speak, everyone just turned around with their back to him. And it was meant to be a silent protest, and that was kind of interesting times. There was also the times in Boston with Louise Day Hicks, who was anti-bussing and was head of the school board, I believe, in Boston. So Boston was a very hotbed of politics then, the whole civil rights movement, the whole anti-war movement and all that was all

coming together and really having an influence on a lot of people.

And so I was engaged in those kinds of things but kind of, you know, went to class, did my thing, enjoyed my friends, went to the gym, you know. Came home every summer, worked summers in the textiles mills for the most part, although a couple summers I did work for the city of Saco cleaning up on the trash trucks, picking up trash and throwing it in the trash trucks, which was-, my father used to always say, "Well that's good for you; you'll want to go back to college when September comes." And he was right, I couldn't wait to go back to college.

Anyways, so, let's see, that leads us to '72, I got, I wanted to get, very much to get involved in the presidential campaign. Ed Muskie had started that, the campaign as a odds on favorite to be the nominee of the party, and I went down to Muskie headquarters in Boston early on, in January, February, and said, "I want to volunteer; I'll go up to New Hampshire and gave my name and number. They never called, and when you talk to other friends of mine who did similar things who weren't from Maine, same thing, they never called. The organization really saw itself as, I think that they concluded that they had won the election, that they had the nomination in hand, that all they had to go through was the steps, and I think disengaged a lot of people who otherwise would have been involved. At least that was my experience with the Massachusetts and Boston components. So as a result I ended up never going to New Hampshire, you know. I'd volunteered two or three times I'd go down. That never happened.

And we had the Massachusetts primary, by the time the Massachusetts primary rolled around Muskie was really sort of like one of those status, I'm still a candidate, but I'm not actively campaigning because he, even though he had won in New Hampshire, the media portrayed it as a loss. And then there was the Wisconsin loss and others and could never really catch on after that.

And then McGovern became the nominee, I very much worked for McGovern that fall, I was ba-, I graduated that summer and came back, and that's when I was a teacher's assistant in public schools for a year. And McGovern lost, but during that time period I met a lot of people in state politics and decided to, at that point in time run for the presidency of the Maine Young Democrats; was that the state club then? It was Maine Young Democrats. And I was from Saco, and the heir apparent was someone from the Augusta area, and they had their slate, and they had been running things for a number of years. But we were very active in Saco, we had formed a pretty active group of Young Democrats and went to the state convention and formed a coalition with people from Bangor, ironically, and were able to win. And so I became president of Maine Young Democrats, getting on the Democratic state committee, getting to know a lot of other people and building a really strong campaign. Our efforts on behalf of McGovern, Saco had that year, we worked that summer, there must have been about ten of us, every day and every night. We'd go to work, all of us had jobs, and we'd go to work, and then we'd come back, and we had headquarters and we. The huge banner that, somewhere there is a picture of, we were on the second floor and the Republican headquarters was on the first floor. And the Republican headquarters had, you know, they had a banner, "Republican headquarters," and we had ours, which was four times the size, and it was painted, "Come Home, America" which was the theme then in 1972 dealing with the war issue.

We worked very, very hard and, for two pe-, for McGovern and also for Bill Hathaway. Bill Hathaway was running against Margaret Chase Smith. And we were able to get in Saco that year, I think if you look at the results, approximately ninety-two percent of the people voted. It was a huge turnout. And what had happened during the course of the summer is the political activism of both parties really stimulated great debate in the community. People wanted to go out and vote, I mean they were being, and I don't, I think Nixon won probably, but not by much. Hathaway won by a sizeable margin, so people were beginning to split their ballot. In fact that was the first year that Maine had the split ballot, we didn't have the big box. And it was ironic, at least, the way it was told to me is the, as the Democratic party thought that Muskie would be the nominee and that Hathaway was going to run against Margaret Chase Smith, the idea was that the big box would bring them election, bring them victory for that slate. And the legislature changed that that year and got away from the big box and really was probably the saving grace for Bill Hathaway because if it had been big box, Nixon easily carried Maine, he probably would have gotten a lot of those Republican ballots. So people split their ballots and I think that was probably that, at least in our community in Saco. I remember really talking with people about that and that was brand new, the idea of splitting a ballot, and people liked that idea.

So that went on, and that was '72, and went on to get involved in the Democratic state committee and others and as a result of that I think the successful organization that we were able to pull together. George Mitchell came down and visited us two or three times because he was thinking about running for governor in '74, and he offered me a job to be his driver. So in August of 1973, or June of '73, something like that-, I'd just finished teaching, my teaching assistant position-, I went to work for George Mitchell, and I think it was in the summer of '73 driving him around. It was just he and I, and then he hired Debbie Bedard Wood, who then was the kind of office manager, and people like Tony Buxton and Jay McCloskey who's now the U.S. attorney here in Bangor and, were involved in working for George Mitchell.

And that was a great year and a half full-time experience, and George paying you a, the great sum of I think thirty-two dollars a week or something like that, you know, in those days. But anyways, that was a great campaign. The first phase of that was to, I was really assigned, first I was George's driver throughout all of Maine, then I did some scheduling, and then because of my more grass roots knowledge base, was assigned a part of the first district with an emphasis on Biddeford and making sure that the vote in Biddeford was split in such a way so that Joe Brennan in the primaries didn't come out of that, out of Biddeford with that huge of a margin, the idea was to split it. And so we worked very hard to get as many votes as we could for George Mitchell or for Lloyd Lafontaine who was the local favorite because we knew that Lloyd Lafontaine wasn't going to win, and so every vote that went to him was a vote that otherwise could have gone to Joe Brennan. So that was a really good primary activity.

AL: What was George Mitchell like then?

MA: Oh, wonderful, I mean, you know, brilliant man, very easy to talk with, coming across, I think, very compassionate, had great ideas, very organized, very logical, very thoughtful, very judicial, as proved further in his career. And, but probably not that great of a campaigner. He worked hard at it, con-, I mean no one worked harder than he did, I mean, all the time, all the time, a lot of work. But you could just sense that, I mean this is the post-Watergate era, and he

just wasn't connecting with some people. And yet his message was sound, his thoughts were sound, but it was just an inability to connect. And it wasn't that people rejected him and his ideas; I think they were just discouraged, and it was hard to build that bond. And it's very ironic if you consider the bond that he built later on in his career with Maine voters, which was enormous a bond. But in '74 he just couldn't (*unintelligible phrase*) together, and I think that was a function of the times.

AL: Also, I've seen some clips of him from his early days campaigning. He looked very stiff compared to later on.

MA: Yeah, yeah, he was very, well he's very independent and I think he's not, I think on first, well he's very reserved, and that reservation or that standoffishness if you think sometimes I think worked against him. And yet that, for those of us who knew him on a day-to-day basis, I mean that was who he is, and I think that was his way of being respectful of other people. Doesn't win you many votes when they don't know you that well, but he had a tremendous memory. And I remember one night, we were campaigning at Bowdoin College, and it was in the fall, this must have been in early September, and so the Red Sox were still going. And some of the students were really giving him a hard time and, because this was still sort of a, you know, he had supported Muskie, he had supported Humphrey and, you know, the anti-war movement was still, you know, why are you doing this and that. Someone got up and, one of the students, and, which was, the way to do things then was you didn't ask questions, you gave a speech even though it was supposed to be give and take, and he gave a speech saying how he wasn't going to vote for someone who had done all these things and really didn't have any relationship to the common person and wouldn't even know the things like, you know, what baseball is going on, this and that. Well that, George Mitchell got up and he says, "Wait a minute, what do you mean, you don't say I don't have a connection with baseball?" He says, "If I can tell you the batting average of the nine starting players for the Red Sox, will you vote for me?" And the guy says, "Sure." This is in a public audience. And Mitchell went through and named every single player and their batting average of that day, just like that. And the guy says, "Okay, I'll vote for you." And it brought a little humor to it, and it was that, you know, you look at that and you say events like that could have really brought him, if those could have been seen by more people that, the ability to be seen as a real genuine human being which was, didn't pan out in '74.

So, but it was great campaigning for him. And I remember him going up to the Rumford mills one day early in the morning, doing the gate and handing out the brochures and everything else, and then going back in the car, and then he says, "You got to go in there and get the brochures." I says, "What do you mean?" He says, "Well, most of them have gone to the men's room, and they left the brochure on top of the urinal or whatever, the sink." He says, "Those cost too much money; you got to go get them." And I thought he was joking, and I looked at him, I says, "What?" He says, "I had to do that for Ed Muskie all the time; you go in there, and you go get those things." I says, "Okay." So that became a normal thing and he always went afterwards to a little, if there was a coffee shop or a men's room or, at one of the mills, and you could collect, recollect some of your brochures which, I don't know what they cost then, but obviously we ended up giving them out again. But that was one of the funny stories I think that I can remember in that campaign.

AL: You mentioned a little while ago about your parents supporting Ed Muskie. You were probably too young I'm sure in '54 to have any memories of that campaign, but did they ever talk about that '54 campaign when he became governor? He was Catholic-?

MA: Yeah, yeah, they, I can remember some discussions about it, not right around '54 but afterwards, I mean, talking about. I mean, Ed Muskie to many of these people was a, you know, Roosevelt Democrat Catholic, you know, and giving them hope. It would not be uncommon for us on Sunday afternoons to go to my grandmother's house, and the other aunts and uncles would show up there, and we'd end up, it would be after dinner and end up having soup or something like that; they'd always be talking politics of what's going on. And Ed Muskie was always seen as someone who they identified with who cared about them, their daily plight. And so there was this, you know, he's one of us kind of feeling. And I don't know as if my mom or dad or aunts or uncles ever really met Ed Muskie, in those early years. They certainly met him after that in a variety of ways, and, but yet there was this real appreciation for what he was doing as governor and what he, and then obviously I remember when he ran for the senate in '58, I remember that a little better, that he could just carry those things forward.

But I don't know whether history is correct or not, but I remember some discussion about-, I went to parochial schools as did many of the kids in Biddeford in those days, and school buses for a while weren't allowed, because they were publicly funded, didn't bring kids to the parochial school. And then suddenly we could, and I remember discussion saying, well, people saying, "Well, Muskie did that because he saw education as being good for everybody." I don't know if that's true or fiction or not but it's certainly a memory of those times and how people perceived him of saying, "Hey, education's important; it doesn't matter what kind of school you go to. What can we do to get the kids there? Let's think of that." And so it was that kind of image that a lot of people had about him.

AL: I'm going to stop and turn the tape over.

MA: No problem.

*End of Side A, Tape One
Side B, Tape One*

AL: We are now on side two of the interview with Mr. Micheal Aube. And we were just talking about. . . . school bus. . . .

MA: Um-Hmm, of how Ed Muskie was perceived by people in Biddeford. Again I think, you know, obviously he had his uh, political connections with people in the community, but those really transcended. And people felt differently, you know, we talked a little bit about George Mitchell. They felt differently about George Mitchell than they did uh, Ed Muskie. Muskie was sort of like the patriarch you know, someone who was just part of this whole process. And George Mitchell was the anointed one by Muskie, and that helped a lot with a lot of those people. There was still a little uh, well, he's not like us, and, and, and yet if you consider both their paths, and how they grew up, and economic status and everything else, both are very similar. But you know, Ed Muskie had the ability to really connect with people of different,

maybe his own ethnic background of being Polish, he had the ability to connect with that, had the- You know Mitchell was Catholic as well um, and um, but there was just a real difference there.

And I can remember going to Jefferson-Jackson's Day Dinners in the state or else, and you know when Ed Muskie spoke, well the older I got the more I hoped that he didn't speak as long as he was going to speak, and get to the point, but he really had a tremendous ability to captivate a crowd and, and, and to stay on message and, and, to share. It really came across that he spoke from his heart and I think that that, that was one of his greatest strengths.

AL: Now, we left off in '74.

MA: Yeah, '74, George Mitchell goes on to lose, you know, I remember closing, it was my job to close Biddeford headquarters. We had, to get out the vote I was assigned York County, and so we closed that a little after eight. And I went home to quickly shower, and then we were going up to a big celebration in Portland, and I was on my way up to shower and, it literally was like 8:15 or 8:20, and my mom and dad were there watching TV, and we all wanted George to win, we had had George down to our house for a lobster bake and, you know, really got to know him as a person. Anyways, Walter Cronkite comes on and says, well, we're predicting Jim Longley the winner in Maine. I was sort of like, "You got to be kidding, there's just no way." And that was how I reacted. I mean we had just left, they had just closed the polls in places like Biddeford and Portland and other communities which I knew were Democratic strongholds, and that that wasn't going to happen. So I quickly showered and went up and it wasn't a very good evening.

So, that was in November and didn't really know what I was going to do next at that point in time. Trying to consider some options. So I was doing some substitute teaching for a month or so, and then, or three or four weeks actually, and then Charlie Micoleau called me from, who then was working for Senator Muskie and, take that, let me take that a step back.

I got a call from George Mitchell who said, "Would you like to work at the State House?" That's what it was. And I said, "Sure, what do I do?" And he goes, "Well, I don't know," he says, "there's a bunch of you guys that I can get jobs. The legislature will be starting in January, and we're going to try to place people until you at least, you've got something to do, you've got some income until you figure out where you're going to go." So I said, "Sure, I'll do that." So I went up and ended up being the document clerk in charge of the document room and, you know, not a high policy job but all of us, many of us who were involved in the campaign were provided for in that way for the interim until we figured out what we wanted to do. Debbie Bedard Wood became clerk of the house eventually. She started out as a secretary and ended up being clerk of the house. And so a lot of us went up and worked in Augusta for that session.

And about two or three weeks into the session, now you got to remember, you know, you can't stand Jim Longley because he's the guy who's just beaten the guy that you've spent a year and a half working for. I got a call from Charlie Micoleau and Charlie said, "Would you have any interest in coming to Washington to work?" And I said, "Well," I says, "when?" He says, "At the end of the session." I says, "Well let me think about it." So I thought about it for probably

all of two days and said, "Sure, absolutely." You know, the idea to go to Washington, I didn't care, I figured if, you know, maybe I'm in a document room somewhere in the Senate, but that's okay, it would get me to Washington. And so I ended up packing my car and leaving in June because the session ended on a Thursday or Friday and the following Monday or Tuesday I was in Washington. Didn't know where I was going to stay, just packed my belongings and knew I had a job. And my parents were very, were actually pleased with that because I, it was a chance to do something else and move on.

And [I] ended up working for the Senate Budget Committee. They had a position over there, a staff position. And so I had to do a little research, and I'll never forget, my first research assignment was, Senator Muskie was chairman of the budget committee, and that's why they had positions on the budget committee and personal staff and the like. And so that, my assignment that summer was, as a so-called intern of the budget committee looking at revenue sharing. And I remember doing, I was asked to pull together some research, where are communities spending revenue sharing money? And let's find out. So I collected a lot of data and, you know, from the Governors' Association and League of Cities and things like that, and all these different data bases and pulled together a report and went and gave it to my boss, and my boss looks at it, and he goes, "Well what is all this?" I said, "Well, that's what they're spending." He says, "Oh no, anything less than a hundred million dollars I don't want to know, I don't need, put an asterisk; I don't have time for that." And that was my first experience at the difference between the Maine legislature and my family's personal checkbook and then Washington. It was sort of like, wow, where I come from a million dollars is a lot of money, and he's saying anything under a hundred million, don't even bother, just put an asterisk.

So I went through that summer doing that kind of work and then was transferred over to personal staff and started doing a variety of things there. Ended up being the senator's direct, Senator Muskie's director for projects, special projects in Maine. So it was my job to work with the field staff, work with community leaders to try to help communities who had a pending application in to different agencies or whatever to see if we could get it funded. And also, I think, obviously I was brought in because of the political network that I was aware of having just come off George's campaign and Muskie gearing up for the '76 campaign, reelection effort. He went through a period of time of not telling us what he was going to do, in fact considering not running, and that had a lot of us on pins and needles as to what that would mean.

And you know, those days I remember fondly of working with people like, you know, Charlie Micoletau and Madeleine Albright. Madeline and I used to commute to work together; she'd drive one week and I'd drive the other, we lived in the same neighborhood; I rented an apartment, she had a nice home. But, you know, Madeline was, it was just wonderful to be with her, and so I remember, I learned a lot from her and people like Gayle Cory obviously and all the others, Al From and Leon Billings.

AL: Al?

MA: Al From, F-R-O-M, who worked, he was on the senator's staff for, what the, oh, what was that, intergovernmental relations subcommittee, okay. Al was the director there. But I learned a lot from those people. David Johnson -

AL: Leon Billings, how was he to work with?

MA: Leon Billings, of course, oh well, he comes later in this, he comes in after the reelection effort really, if you want to know the story. Yeah, Leon was around. But Charlie was the administrative assistant during the campaign basically, and Gayle Cory and Jim Case, myself, Mike Hastings, quite a few of us were involved at that time. And the campaign geared up, and we started moving, some of us moving from providing governmental service to political service.

And I was asked to come back to Maine and spend the summer of the '76 campaign. Phil Merrill was the director then of the campaign effort, and that's where I first met Mary McAleney that we talked about earlier. Because Mary was one of the field staff for the Muskie election campaign in '76. And that was a great election, period of time. He was, he ran against Bob Monks who wasn't even a close contest. I think Muskie's interest in that was, had a pretty high level. He certainly, he really wanted to win because he certainly wasn't going to go out a "loser," quote, unquote, or having lost the election, and so it was a pretty high energy campaign. Monk, spent a lot of money. For a while there, there was that whole issue of will Bill Cohen run? So we were very much engaged in raising Muskie's profile back in Maine. There had been a sense that he had lost touch because he had been through a vice-presidential campaign, a presidential campaign, and was he really in touch with Maine people? And I think that's why a lot of us from Maine were brought into the campaign staff, who knew the different networks and mechanisms and, in the state, that perhaps there had been a loss of relationship there for a period of time.

And so that's what I ended up, you know, working pretty hard for Ed Muskie in that campaign, and I was successful and then came back to Washington to work in his office for, until he went over to the secretary of state's office, and those were great years. And that's when I met more, Leon Billings became administrative assistant, and I took on different responsibilities and ended up doing a lot of traveling with the senator because in those days you could have honorarium. Senator Muskie would add to his income by giving speeches around the country, and I did, with Gayle Cory scheduling. So Gayle and I would do the scheduling, and then I, not in town scheduling, but out of town scheduling. As a result of that you get to know the family very well, too. So I got to know the kids, and I knew Jane quite well and, from other experiences earlier, and so you really know the family and they have, I think they build a trusting relationship with you in a different way than they do other people because you end up spending so much of your time doing things with them or for them, or to make sure that things happen in the right way.

And so I ended up traveling a lot with Muskie and those are some of my better stories that I really remember of, one in particular was the senator was speaking at Georgetown University in Kentucky, Georgetown, Kentucky. And so we went down to Georgetown, Kentucky, and the senator always enjoyed having a cocktail before dinner and we were on the plane and flying down, and I had a cocktail, and he says, "Oh, I'm going to wait and have one at the reception, because there was always a reception and a dinner, then the speech. Kind of typical, well, we get to the college and this is a Baptist college which has no drinking, and so we're having a glass of punch, and he says to me, he goes, "I should have followed your lead on this thing," you know, or something to that effect. So we have the dinner, and he gives a very nice speech, and we go

back to our hotel, and he goes to bed. And gets up the next morning and we have to catch a 6:45 AM flight from Lexington, Kentucky back to Washington because there are votes scheduled on the floor. And the student who organized this thing on the campus said that they'd pick us up and give us a ride. Well, they pick us up in this vehicle and we get in the back seat and they're driving us on the Interstate and a tire blows off, and so we have to pull over to the side and there's no spare. And Senator Muskie looks at me, and he goes, "Well, I didn't get up at 5:30 in the morning to miss my plane," you know, something like, well, as if it's my fault, you know. But that was his way of saying, "Well, what are you going to do about it." And so I jumped out, and they're trying to figure out what to do, and I said, "The only way we're going to catch the plane is if we hitchhike."

So I start hitchhiking, and the senator is in the car, and he sees what I'm doing, so he comes out, and I says, "Well, I'm going to hitchhike." He says, "Well, I'll stand here and wave to people; maybe that'll help." So here we are on whatever it is, I-95, you know, major highway in Kentucky, and I'm thumbing it, and there's Senator Muskie standing by this broken down vehicle at 6:40 in the morning or whatever it was and waving to people, and this car pulls up, and they said, "Is that Senator Muskie? And I said, "Yes." And they go, "God, we hate him," and they peel away. And so the senator, he says to me, he goes, "What was that all about?" I go, "Maybe you want to go sit inside the car. And so he did do that."

And we get, I finally get picked up by, keep in mind, this is the seventies, by what I would call hippies, and we get in the car, and they are really stoned. And so Muskie's in the back seat, and I'm in the back seat, and these two kids are driving, and it's, "Wow, are you really a United States senator?" And I'm thinking, oh, I can't let. Senator Muskie was so nice to them, you know, but meanwhile my heart is racing and pumping away, you know, are we going to catch this plane? Is he going to miss the votes? What if we got picked up by the police? How do you explain this situation? I don't think he had a clue what they were on or what was going on, somewhat oblivious to it. And he was so nice to them, you know, and we finally get to the airport, and he's getting their name and address and going to send them some autographed pictures and stuff like that. We get in the plane and get in our seats and just, you know, with just seconds to spare and I go, "Whew, we made it," and he goes, "Why, did you think we wouldn't?" I mean it was so, it was really amazing. And you know, that's one experience that I recall in traveling with him.

And another one that I think is, I think says volumes about the type of person he is, is we were being, he got asked to speak to one of the big eight accounting firms in New York City, in Manhattan. And so they pick us up at the airport and, in a limousine of course, so we, really we've gone from Kentucky to these broken down vehicles, these limousines, you know. And we go, and they check us into the Waldorf Astoria, and we each had two rooms, and they said, "Well, we'll pick you up at six fifteen, and then it'll be cocktails, dinner and then your speech kind of thing at the (name)," I think was the name of it.

Anyways, they pick us up around six, we're in the lobby, they pick us up at six fifteen, and this limousine literally goes across the street. We could have walked across the street. And so Muskie goes, "You mean they sent a car for us to go across the street?" And I go, "I didn't know where it was, they just said they'd send a car, and that's the easiest thing," so which is

fine. So we go in there, and there's the cocktail party, and people are doing their thing. And then we're sitting down to dinner, and it's very nice, and it's on the top floor in Manhattan, midtown Manhattan overlooking the city, and it's very beautiful, and it's a private club.

And I'm at a different table than the senator, and all of a sudden I hear the pounding of his fist, and I'm like, oh, the Muskie temper, yes (*unintelligible word*) I'm sure you've heard about. What is he saying to them? And I go, oh, well I figured I'm just going to eat; I'm not going to go over there. And sure enough the voices are getting a little louder, and there's shouting, not shouting, shouting, but you can tell there's some agitation going on. And so I, well, he's a big boy, he can take care of himself, I'm not going to get involved. And so the dinner finishes and then now for the speeches. And so the person who had organized this thing whatever gets up and introduces the senator, and the senator goes up there, and he says, "Well," and he takes out his speech and he goes, "Here's my speech," and he rips it in half in front of everybody. And he says, "You didn't really want to hear what I had to say. You just wanted to take your shots. So go ahead; take your shots." So someone raises a question about certain legislation and someone else does and this is going on, and I'm sitting there thinking, oh, this is, I'm really not enjoying this at all, but, you know, it's who he is; that's how he felt.

And someone raised a question I think about, this is during the energy crisis time, fuel assistance program the senator has sponsored legislation for to give low income families help with their heating bills and for gasoline to and from work, or something like that. Could have been the (*name*), what is now known as the (*name*) program. But someone was raising a question about that, and Muskie said, "Well, let me ask you a couple of questions." And he goes, "How many people in this room will be going to Florida or Boca Raton or the Caribbean this winter?" And, you know, you look around, a sea of hands goes up. And he says, "Well, you know, where I'm from in Maine, we can't afford to go do those kinds of things. People that I represent can't afford those things, and winter is tough up there. And you got to look at it this way, that they're going to get a little money to maybe heat their homes to a level that their kids won't get sick, and they won't have to go to the doctor's. And maybe it's going to give them a little extra money so they can get to and from work and, you know, people travel great distances." And he gave this very passionate answer, which I don't think satisfied the people there, but it really ended the evening in a very quiet way.

And so we ended up leaving, and he basically, the senator concluded by saying, he says, "I wouldn't expect you people to understand, but there are different ways of living in this country," and he says, "Part of my job is to make sure that people like that are not forgotten." And, it was excellent, I mean it's one of those moments when you have tremendous pride and, you know, good for him, you know, he really told it like it is. But I, the humorous part of it was as we were leaving he said, "Go get the check." So I guess he got paid to speak, and so, and it was my job now to go up to the guy who he had insulted and ripped the speech up and say, "Do you have the honorarium?" and they presented it. This was certainly, again, everything in perspective, he had to earn his money, too, so.

But those are just a sampling of some of the times that I had with the senator. you know, they just were, I don't think there's a, and I traveled a lot with him because I was single then, so it was, I'd get the duty of what we used to call "babysitting Ed" and, yeah, well pe-, if they were

having a late night session, you know, someone had to stay, either staffing him on the issue or staffing him, making sure that he got all his stuff and got home okay, and his homework, as he liked to call it, a big black notebook full of briefing papers for the next day's meetings and the like. And so we, I ended up doing "babysitting Ed" all too frequently, and, but I learned a lot from it. And then traveling with him, which was really fun.

AL: What are some of the things that you feel you learned from him?

MA: Tremendous honesty. That ultimately people are really judged on their honesty and that, you know, you got to tell it like it is and tell people how you feel. Sometimes he told them how he felt in a confrontational way. I think I learned from him maybe there's a way of doing that without being confrontational. But his style was appropriate perhaps for the times. But I think ultimately, I mean, he was a very honest politician, both ethically and as an individual but also in his philosophical decision-making. That's what I liked about him. He would emphasize consistency, and he would emphasize that it's important that you think things through and when you'd gotten to that point, you can't change midstream because that isn't good for the next thing. I mean, you got to be consistent in your philosophical approach to decision making. And so I found that a very high quality, that's something I learned from him.

The other thing I learned from him is that in the political process, and now being mayor of Bangor, is what he used to say was, "I'll carve out the middle," you know, "I don't want to be on the extreme because if you're at the extreme being the champion for something way out here but not being willing to carve out the middle, you're not going to see the incremental gains that are necessary in a democracy." And his point, when we'd travel, he'd talk about that a lot. He goes, "Yeah, I could go do this, but is that going to get me any votes to where I want to go." And this may be where he wants to be, but in order to get there he'd always say, "Well, I'm going to carve out the middle. I'm going to, you know, take those incremental gains. Those are good gains, and those are gains, that I can rally people around and then move them forward in small steps." He clearly understood the need to make those dramatic stands when necessary, but I think he saw good public policy being formed when you carve out the center and you build enough consensus around it that people either feel enough pain or enough good that they're somewhat happy with that decision making process.

So I think those are two things that I really learned from him, you know, intellectual honesty, if you will, and ethics, and the real success of increment-, in small gains being part of a public policy development.

AL: Your time in Washington was from '75 to '80?

MA: Yes, well no, actually I left, he, Senator Muskie went to the State Department and I stayed on and worked for Senator Mitchell because it was, for me it was, what an opportunity, because here was the guy, Senator Mitchell, who I really went to work for in the early seventies now coming back as the appointed senator. And I made a decision to try to, to stay with George. Leon and Carol and others, you know, and Gayle said, "Well, why don't you come down," and Bob Rose, "come on down to the State Department." And I thought about that for a while, you know, my interest is really in Maine, and I felt some allegiance to George Mitchell. I got, I

think, my start down there because he made some calls and got me in the, you know, Charlie Micoleau connected with me and that kind of stuff, so I felt some allegiance there.

And the irony of it is that I had gotten married, and we then, my wife and I had been both working and by, doing relatively well, but had no properties or anything else, so we had paid huge taxes. And so we had to have a good discussion of, well, what are we going to do. And ultimately we decided that it would be best to have, where we want to live would be back in New England, preferably Maine and raise our family here, so I ended up working for George until '81, just a year and half really. And I always question, he and I had a heart to heart talk, where he said, "Well, I understand why you'd want to go back, but why don't you just leave after the election?" He was going to run against David Emery (*unintelligible word*). And the more we thought about that, and I had been offered a job here back in Bangor, and I said, "Well," for me it was time, it was time to end that chapter. And I often wonder if I had said, "Yes, I'll stay," what, my life would have been different, and I wouldn't have done the things I've done, but I may have done other things. I don't regret it, but it certainly was one of those points in your life when you've made a decision which has affected your choice, dramatically affected, perhaps, your experiences.

AL: When you were on Muskie's staff in the late seventies, what was it like with some of the other people you worked with, do you have stories about working with some of them?

MA: It was very demanding work, I mean, we were a very committed office. The senator, because of his seniority, had stature on a lot of the committees. There was also, I think the '76 campaign in Maine rejuvenated in many people down there that, you know, Ed Muskie's got clout and can bring things back home to Maine, so there was high expectations. He was seen as a party elder, he was seen as being able to deliver the goods, if you will. And so a lot of hard work and commitment, but also real enjoyment. It really was like a team because when, and I did scheduling for him after that, you know, get him on that plane Friday afternoon and send him up to Maine. You could almost hear a sigh of relief, the senator's gone, he's now someone else's time, if you will. He's going to go home to the family, or he's going to go do some things up in Maine and that kind of stuff. And, you know, that would usually end up being a long lunch on Friday afternoon if he caught the early plane and the like, and he, so it was great.

I really was, you know, we talk about Ed Muskie's temper, and perhaps the time that I remember him being most dissatisfied with something that I had done was, he hated to miss votes, and this was a Friday night, and it was in the summer. And I, we always had sort of like a hotline to Delta Airlines, was the airline that he would fly, in so I, you always had a Senate desk and you could get in contact with, the senator's on the floor, and is that flight really going to leave at 6:25 and that kind of thing. And I remember pursuing that and they weren't, the vote wasn't happening, the vote wasn't happening and (*unintelligible word*) scheduling time. And I finally, based on information I had, had to make the call to him and I said, "You got to leave now, or you can't, you're going to miss, and that's the last flight, you're going to go tomorrow morning." And he said, "you sure?" and I says, "That's what they told me," you know, "they can't hold the plane much longer." Because the airlines would make up excuses like mechanical difficulty when they were, you know, because we, obviously they didn't want to get somebody upset. So, I told him he had to go, so sure enough we sent the car over and picked him up, brought him to

the airport, get him on the plane.

Monday morning he comes in and Leon must have been the administrative assistant then, Leon comes in, he says, "He wants to see you right now." I said, "Oh, okay." So I go in and see him and he says, "I didn't get home until past eleven on Friday night." And I go, "Oh," you know, "what happened, was the flight delayed?" He goes, "No, when I, as I was sitting on the plane on the runway at Washington National, they announced there's a vote in the Senate, and Senator Kennedy will be coming shortly, so we're going to wait for that vote to take place." So he missed the vote sitting on the plane waiting for Senator Kennedy. Oh, he was not a happy person. I don't know if he was unhappy that they waited for Senator Kennedy or unhappy that he missed the vote, but I really remember that, that was, he was not very happy then.

And I think, another funny story, I think, just during that time is, I had, was one of the few people in the office who had authorized use of what was then called the auto-pen, which was a big disk. I don't know if you've ever seen those, but you put them in this thing, and you put a pen in this machine, and it would sign a letter or correspondence. And you could, we had auto-pen and it would be, "With best wishes, Ed; with best wishes, Ed Muskie; sincerely yours, Edward S. Muskie." You know, we had them all, we had "best wishes, Jane." We had Jane's pen, auto-pen. We would sign their checks, you know, we had access to their checkbook to pay some of their bills and to do other things, and so we could do that. And I was one of the few people who was authorized to issue the use of that.

And Estelle Lavoie and I, I don't know if you've interviewed Estelle yet, would frequently be the two last people working in the office, Estelle later than I would; to her credit. And *Smithsonian* magazine came out, and there was a picture of the Supreme Court justices in the *Smithsonian* magazine, and it said you could get a copy of that, a print of that. And it was, very rarely are all Supreme Court justices pictured together, and this was somewhat of an informal setting, not the traditional court opens up in October picture with their robes on. And so, and it was a back to back cover of the *Smithsonian* magazine. So she says, "You want to get one?" I said, "Sure." So we called, and we sent our money, and we bought the prints, and we looked at them, and I said, "Gee, wouldn't it be great if these were signed by the justices?" And so she says, "Yeah, let's find out." So we called congressional relations at the Supreme Court and asked, so they came back and said, "No, the justices never, ever sign something together; they've never done it," and blah-blah-blah, etcetera, etcetera. So, I said, "Let's send a personal letter over to the chief justice from Senator Muskie." So we write this letter, it was the chief justice, and sign the auto-pen. And we got a note back, "Yes, send us the things; we'll do it for you." So Estelle and I send over the things. I think it was four, I think she had two, and I had two or something like that, and sent them. And they sign them, and obviously send a cover note back, "Dear senator, here's our thing."

Well, they go in, and the person who was sorting the mail that day gives it, puts them on the senator's desk. He goes home with them, he's thrilled, he goes home with them. Now we hear, Estelle and I hear about this, "How are we going to get our pictures back?" So I go in and tell Leon, and Leon says, "You're not getting those back." I go, "Leon, you know," this and this. I says, "Well, fine," and I became a little angry, and I said, "If he's going to keep all four of them, then I want to be paid for mine." They were twelve dollars apiece or something like that. And

he said, “No, you’re not getting paid either.”

So Leon, being the good soul that he is, a couple days later went to Muskie and said, “You know those pictures that you got?” He goes, “Yeah, those are really nice, he says, I don’t know why they,” this was Muskie, “I don’t know why they sent me these.” He says, “Well, let me tell you what happened.” He told him, and Muskie had given one to his daughter, as I recall, and had the other three were sitting on his desk at home and so on.

He came back with all four of them, and he had asked his daughter, and he gave them back to us. But we, so we got our pictures, I still have mine to this day and, you know, there are probably, well there’s really only four in the world, and there’s a funny little story behind them. But then came a policy of how to use the auto-pen after that, but you know, it was a little late in his career, this would have been ‘78, ‘79, so it was all those years, but the use of auto-pen can have its benefits.

AL: It could get quite creative.

MA: It could get very creative. So.

AL: Do you have any recollections of Gayle Cory?

MA: Oh yeah, yeah, I mean Gayle was my, if anyone was my mentor, it was Gayle. She took me under her wing as she would a lot of the interns. And I had a close relationship with Gayle and Don and the two kids, their two daughters, Melissa and Carol. And that came, that was, when I was single, Gayle was always, “Come on up to the house,” and I’d go out to the house, and we’d play bridge, drink way too much bourbon probably and, but just wonderful person. And totally committed to Ed Muskie, I mean her life was Ed Muskie and Jane Muskie. I mean the types of things that she did and put up with, but with heart, I mean she really was an amazing person, just tremendous. And she and I, you know, even af-, and then after I got married, my wife and I spent many times with them. It wouldn’t be unusual, see Gayle would take the train, and if she ended up, to and from work, and if she ended up having to miss the 5:35 train, she couldn’t take another train until 8:30, 9:00 at night and. So oftentimes since I was big Ed’s babysitter, so to speak, I had access to the parking garage. The parking garage, Senate parking garage had two spots, one that the senator could use and one that somebody else could use, and I would always use the second one if the senator wasn’t using it because I had my car, and frequently I would give him a ride in my car. And he, and so I would give Gayle a ride home often, and so our relationship really developed.

And the, a funny story I got to tell you about Ed Muskie and my car, and this was in 1976. Ed Muskie was picked to give the response to Gerald Ford State of the Union Address on behalf of the Democrats. Doris Kearns Goodwin’s husband, Dick Goodwin, was assigned to write that speech, and I was assigned to baby sit Dick Goodwin at the Georgetown Hotel. Well, what was supposed to be a one evening turned into like a two and a half day babysitting exercise with Dick Goodwin refusing to come out. He was somewhat of a prima donna. I mean if you’ve ever done any reading on Dick Goodwin, Dick Goodwin was, worked for President Johnson, was one of the speech writers for President Johnson, was actually one of the people on the, if you’ve seen

the movie *Quiz Show*, the federal officials in the judiciary in the committees who really went after that show for its impropriety. Dick Goodwin was one of the legal people assigned to that, and so he, quite famous, and very strong and active Democrat.

Well Dick was assigned the speech, and I was assigned to babysit Dick, and when Dick was done with the speech, I was to take him immediately to the senator's office. And this was supposed to be one night and then the next morning. Well the next morning turned into the next afternoon and Muskie was giving his speech that night at nine o'clock, State of, you know, respond to the State of the State address or whatever, ten o'clock, whatever it would be. And Dick wouldn't come, he wouldn't leave because he, "Oh, I've got one more thought; I've got one more thought." And he, he wasn't eating, and, you know, and I was worried about that, and I was getting these calls. Well, I had been with Ed Muskie on a couple of occasions and, you know, being single and not having lots of resources, the car would break down sometimes and so. It broke down a couple times with him, and we managed to get out of it and he was never too upset.

And so apparently Charlie Micoletto and Leon tell the story of the senator meeting that afternoon with his advisors or party advisors, if you will, who were there to give him information on, input into the speech, but we don't have the speech yet because Dick isn't giving it to me. I can't get it to you, and I can't get Dick into the car, he won't come, and he won't talk to anybody on the phone, you know, except me. And so Muskie's meeting with people and going on and on and on, and he goes, "And where the hell is Mike Aube and Dick Goodwin? Did that car break down again?" You know, "Did they break down and I can't get my speech?" you know, and this and that. It turned into a very comical day and a half because we eventually I get, I finally call and I say, "We're leaving the hotel," and they're all excited, so they get Muskie pumped up and ready to go. Well, Dick stops and says, "I don't want to, I can't go right yet, I got to finish one more thought, and he goes back in his room for another hour, an hour and a half, and this goes on. Finally get him to the Russell Senate Office Building, we're walking through, and he goes, "Oh, what is this?" And it was known as the plastic palace, a place where a lot of staff people would go in and breakfast for lunch or dinner, I mean a sandwich or something. He says, "I'm going to go in there and have a glass of milk and a sandwich." I go, "Good idea. Why don't you do that; I'll be right back."

So I've got what is the makings of the speech to date and bring it upstairs so people can start typing it and getting it into the teleprompters and all that kind of stuff. Dick continues writing on a paper napkin down below and sending things up. We're now shuttling paper napkins from Dick Goodwin up to Ed Muskie's office. Ed Muskie's office is packed with national media who all want advance copies of the speech, Muskie is ba- now throws a tantrum and says, "I'm not giving this speech tonight. I don't have enough time, I haven't read it." You know, "We haven't had enough input, enough dialogue." Senator Byrd was the majority leader, and he and Byrd have a discussion, and Byrd prevails on him, "You can't say we're not ready to give the speech, I mean, when you booked this thing, what would the media say, and everything else.

So I, Ed Muskie went on that night, and I was with him, there were, I walked Doris Kearns Goodwin to Muskie's hideaway office, and Dick Goodwin had just arrived as well, we all arrived about the same time. And Dick Goodwin says, "Well, senator, this is great, you know,"

you know and this and that. He says, "Dick, I haven't read this," you know, and Muskie's really perturbed. I mean, he said it a little more forcefully than that. And Goodwin said, "Yeah, well, you know, you don't have to read it. When I wrote for Lyndon Johnson, he never read my stuff." Muskie goes, "Yeah, and we all noticed it, too. We knew he hadn't read anything before he went on," so they had that little diatribe.

Muskie went on and gave what was not a very good delivery. Not a poor delivery, but not the delivery of the level that a lot of us had hoped. And in fact Madeline Albright and others, we were having a big party that night, we were hoping that that might solicit some energy around a draft Muskie movement for the '76 presidential campaign. But it didn't and, you know, that's the way it went. But that was a pretty funny story.

AL: Tell me a few more stories, if you can think of a few that involve Muskie or the time in his office, or anything that sort of illustrates who he was.

MA: Yeah, as a person. I'm trying to think of some of those when I would travel with him around the country. Well, one that I think is a little bit humorous. He came up to Boston College to speak to students, and I went with him, and obviously reminded him on our flight up from Washington that I had gone to Boston College and everything else. And he gave a very good speech, and we had some really good dialogue. And for me it was a, it was a very proud moment because here's my alma mater, and there's this person I work for coming to speak at it. And they gave him some very beautiful bronze eagles, which is the mascot or the emblem of Boston College. And I was carrying them on the way out, and we were staying at the Copley Plaza Hotel, and he turned to me, and he goes, "You're not to keep those things. I know you want them, but they're mine, they gave them to me." And he was very clear and adamant about it, and I always wondered, I go, why does he want Boston College eagles, you know, in his office?

But in any case it was, the next morning though, the real meat of the story is the next morning we're going to have a private breakfast at the Copley Plaza with Sumner Redstone, Sumner Redstone owns Viacom now, then it was (*name*), extremely wealthy and a major supporter and contributor to Muskie's vice presidential and presidential efforts. And so the three of us are having breakfast at the Copley Plaza, and, you know, so we have, whatever, coffee, eggs and the like. And Muskie in his typical self, I mean, he never carried any money with him, and he, but he says, "Oh, we'll take the bill." And so Sumner says, "Oh sure, fine," and so I ended up paying the bill. And I think back on that now, it was so, you know, Muskie just loved to do that kind of thing and yet had no awareness that, you know, well someone does really have to pay. It's not like all three of us are going to walk out, you know. So there is probably one of the wealthiest men in America if not the world, and Ed Muskie, and I ended up paying the breakfast, but Muskie being perceived as the one who would do that.

Other things, he and his family would often go to Ying Ching Palace on Sunday night, that was on Wisconsin Avenue. And they'd go in and have a Chinese dinner and all leave, and we'd get a call on Monday morning and saying, "Well, the senator came in last night and they had dinner and the price was," you know, "thirty-four dollars," or whatever it was. "They didn't pay." So, on more than one occasion I used auto pen again and the check book, and we signed the check,

and we brought that, the check up to them to pay. And I don't know whether that was coming out of a presidential campaign where you sort of forget that those kinds of things have to be taken care of.

AL: Somebody else is always taking care of it for you.

MA: Yeah, as much as, and he hated that part of it. I mean he, he, I think he understood the necessity of when you're at that level of government or politics that you need staff to help you do those kinds of things which are best left by them so that you can focus your energy on higher level, higher value kind of activities. And, I think he recognized that but he really disliked it, I mean he really would rather do for himself, you know, the Maine Yankee tradition and the like. And, you know, he just, remarkable, and yet there's a dependency that follows that, I mean, staff want to do all these things and then, as an individual you end. . . .

End of Side B, Tape One
Side A, Tape Two

AL: We are now on tape two of the interview with Michael Aube on April 4th, the year 2000.

MA: I think we were talking about the dependency that develops between someone who's been through a vice presidential and presidential campaign and staff always being around, willing to serve your every need, and how I think Senator Muskie felt uncomfortable with that but recognized that it gave him time to focus on higher value kinds of things. And as much as you, as an individual you, I think he didn't like that the dependency was there. And dependency really went to great extremes.

I mean, there are just two more little short stories that I think show that dependency is that, when I was traveling with him once and he was trying to get into his briefcase, and it was a briefcase that had combination codes. And he said to, and it's his briefcase, I didn't, you know, and he says, "You know, well, what's my combination code?" he says, "I can't open it." And I said, "I don't know." And in the briefcase was his briefing papers for a very important meeting that he had the next morning, I think, with the foreign relations committee and also was his speech for that night. And he never was able to get into it. So the next morning I said to him, "Well, have you been able to get into it?" and he goes, "No," and he was very down in the dumps and very upset about it. Thank God I had the airline tickets because who knows what we would have done. So I started trying to make con-, well, you know, "Is it your phone number? Is it your birthday? Is it Jane's anniversary, or yours and Jane's anniversary? And he looked at me, he goes, "Why would I ever want to remember that date?" You know, I think in a, with a smile on his face, he wasn't saying it in a bad way, but, you know. And it clearly, he was getting more perturbed at my suggesting some dates.

A little while later we're on the plane and he opens up his briefcase like this, and I go, "Oh, you remembered the combination." He goes, "Yes, it's the state's area code, two-oh-seven." You know, we had just gone through a day and a half of this exercise. And I think that shows, you know, his asking me, you know, what's my this, and yet not wanting suggestions as to what it might be, I mean, that way.

And the other time was the time I got a panic call from him wanting to know where his golf shoes were. I mean he was an avid golfer, as you know, as history will show. He loved to play golf, probably not very well, but loved to play and took it all more seriously than he perhaps should have. But he couldn't find his golf shoes and was very upset, and I was in the office, and he was claiming that I was the last one to have seen his golf shoes. And I had not seen them and made some suggestions and they were falling on deaf ears, they weren't to be found. Finally suggested that, I said, "Well, the last time I saw them, but I didn't touch them, Senator, was," there were some hooks hanging in his closet and I says, "I saw them on a hook there, hanging in a bag." And he went and looked and sure enough, someone put a shirt over it and so they couldn't see the hanging bag.

But again, just two small examples that show the dependency and yet, he really would prefer, you know, I, my sense of him is he really liked his independence, too, and the like. He used to have a great saying when I, again I think of dependency, we put a lot of demands on our public servants, and I think, I saw a lot of that in my experience with Muskie. I mean we, whether it's find my social security check to, you know, issues of war and peace, issues of major public policy. I mean all those were all on someone. And then there's the personal side, dealing with family issues and dealing with personal issues, and we put a lot of pressure on these people. And I was doing scheduling for him once, and I had a schedule ready for him to go, and he used to have this, "Well, what do you think I am, a tube of toothpaste? Squeeze me when you want some more." And he, you know, and I can remember that very vividly about, you know, basically, well, you know, "What else can I do that you guys want me to do?" And yet he knew that he had to do it, he knew that he, it was his responsibility to do it. He accepted the responsibility, but he also saw himself in that way.

And part of his schedule was, scheduling for him was always difficult because he had a hard time making up his mind and committing, and once he committed he hated to retreat, and so he would sometimes over-commit. And you know, part of your job in scheduling is to try to make it also run functionally well, so this person isn't, you know, up twenty-four hours a day doing all these things. You need to care about their ability to sleep and rest and recreate and be with family and that kind. And so I went in to him with a, it was the summer schedule, and, this would have been '78 probably, the summer schedule of '78, '79, and, or summer of '78 I believe it was. And looking at July and August, which they would spend up in Kennebunk.

And so I had three calendars where I had done things, one, each separately and then a master calendar. And one was activities that he was going to do for the Senate, official things he was going to do for the reelect-, not reelection but kind of campaigning, you know, public appearances in Maine scheduled, and the third one was things that we knew he was committed to with his family. And he looked at all those, and then he said, "Well, when's my time?" And there was this pause, and I said, "Well, it's all your time." He goes, "No, it isn't," you know, "you've just given me three calendars for the summer." When do I get to do what I want to do? And I remember leaving that thinking that, you know, yeah, it's a complaint we would hear about from Muskie all the time. But it's really something that was really true about him, and it's, you know, the desire for independence and yet the real knowledge that you had to do these things because it came with the job, I mean the responsibility. And so, you know, those are

interesting stories, but I think they tell more about the individual.

AL: Do you think he was happy as a senator, as a senator in those later years? Or was he more frustrated?

MA: I think he was very frustrated. I think he sensed that his time had passed in terms of, perhaps, achieving the presidency, that he was, that he had made choices which, you know, limited his ability to do things with his family or for his family in a financial sense. I think he was frustrated by, perhaps, some earlier decisions that he had made that maybe, you know, ended up in retrospect being the wrong decisions. But throughout all that, and so I think, yeah, I think there was a frustration, I think there was a mood of, you know, it's time to go on and do something. And that's why I think secretary of state was perfect for him. It was a wonderful way for someone like Ed Muskie to exit political life and public life and gave him that calling at a higher enough level and let him leave in an appropriate manner. I mean, it's a shame that, how that all came to be with the Iran contra thing, but I'm convinced in my mind that no one worked harder than he did to try to do that right. I mean, he really applied himself. But it gave him the stage and the stature that I think was deserving. And so I think he ended up leaving relatively happy, but I, there was frustration then, no doubt about it.

AL: What did you observe between working with both Muskie and Mitchell, some of the similarities that maybe you saw Mitchell got from Muskie, or what some of the differences were?

MA: Well I think the sim-, some of the similarities were both tremendous intellect and capacity, very knowledgeable, very, both very judicious in their approach to things. Both also, I think, feeling responsible and caring and recognizing their responsibility to why they're there. I think that, the, they were both, I think, slow in making decisions, which I think they probably learned from each other. Don't step way out on this thing; think it through. What are all the ramifications? Let's make sure we're right; let's do it for the right reasons. A lot of similarities there that I saw between the two of them in their thought process.

The major difference was I think George Mitchell's ability to deal with staff in a different way. And, you know, Ed Muskie liked to limit the amount of time the people on the staff had with him. I think he was uncomfortable in small talk with staff but tremendous with small talk on the campaign trail. I mean, you know, a really, a very different pic-, we talked about the earlier experiences of his ability to, of people in, really in Maine connecting with him, and George's ability of not connecting with them, George Mitchell's inability of having people connect with him in the '74 campaign. And yet George would come in as the senator and there was a remarkable shift in how he dealt with staff. I mean, he'd walk out, he would never, George, Ed Muskie always went to his office, stayed in his office, and you went to the emperor. George Mitchell would leave his office and come sit next to your desk and say, "Well, what about this, and what about that?" He was seen more in the office, he would have conversations, he would call you up on the phone. You know, one of the reasons I probably did leave was the impact of the Saturday morning calls. "Well, I'm in the office today and do you want to come down? We can go over this, we can go over that," And I had just gotten married, and that kind of wears on you after a while, you know, but totally committed.

And so I, there was that difference, I think. And I think perhaps, I don't know this for a fact, but George Mitchell may have gotten that difference from perhaps the way he saw the operation during the Muskie years -

AL: Having been a staffer.

MA: He, having been a staffer, saying you know, there ought to be a different way to do this and. Not that either one is right or wrong because I think each served the person well. There was always butterflies in your stomach when you had to go in and see Senator Muskie, and that wasn't the case when you went in to see Senator Mitchell. I mean, and certainly Senator Mitchell became majority leader and I remember, you know, I didn't work for him then but going down visiting with him, and you didn't have that sense of, you know, anxiety if you will, or. But Muskie always made you feel, there was this anxious moments here.

AL: What do you think Ed Muskie's most major contribution will be, lasting contribution will be to the state of Maine and to the country? They may be two different things. Do you have a sense of something?

MA: Well, I think, obviously, I think to the country probably would be the environmental legislation. I mean he was so committed to that and certainly a product of his growing up in Maine, and Rumford in particular, and the paper companies and what he saw, what he observed and what he hoped it would be. And I think he was able to, on a national level, an international level really, you know, develop that as his issue. His commitment to things like Earth Day that'll be coming up and those kinds of things. I mean, you know, those are all, those are Ed Muskie issues when people think about those things.

I think in Maine, obviously we're the beneficiary of that national legislation. I think Ed Muskie gave people in Maine a real reason for being, having a lot of pride. If you look at the history of Maine, you know, we've never had a president from here, we've had a vice president, Hannibal Hamlin. But in modern, what you might call modern day history of Maine, we didn't have the stature of political leadership for a number of, for decades, until Ed Muskie came along. And I think what Ed Muskie did for Maine was show that you can be from humble beginnings, and we're fortunate enough as a state that if you do the right things and say the right things and work hard, that you can achieve that kind of stature. I mean, you look at who followed him, people like George Mitchell and Bill Cohen, you know, all people of humble means who never lost their roots in Maine.

I think that, you know, when you, when I think of Maine history, I think of people like Ed Muskie, and that he raised that standard, he raised that bar that said that we can achieve those things. Just because we're from Maine doesn't mean we can't have, we can't be great as individuals or as people and, you know, that's what he means to me. I mean, that's what I think he probably meant to a lot of people, that yeah, we're proud of him, he's one of us, and really one of us, not someone from away who's come here, but he's one of us.

AL: Is there anything that I haven't asked you today that you feel that we should add to the

record before we end?

MA: I can't think of anything. I mean, there's so many positive and good stories and humorous stories, and, you know, not so humorous stories about Ed Muskie that, you know, I think, it's. You know, for me, my whole public life when I look at it and what I contribute now, I mean I'm mayor of Bangor, I was commissioner of economic development for the state of Maine for a few years, I've served on the state board of education. All that public service, I usually draw my strength thinking back to my Muskie years. What did I learn from him, from other staff people, that whole experience in Washington? There are literally dozens of people like me throughout Maine. You know, maybe we should be called the Muskie children or something like that, who are contributing at different levels of government, different levels of public policy. And all of us I think having come back to Maine with those experiences that, I know I wouldn't be doing what I'm doing today if I hadn't had those experiences. Now, we can let others judge whether those are good things or not that we're doing, but people are committed, people are involved. You know, Jay McCloskey's the U.S. attorney, I mean he was, got involved with George Mitchell and some of the Muskie stuff. You know, you can just go down the list, you have them all. And that's what I, there are very few meetings that I go to in the state that I can't identify someone that's got a common relationship to that institution, to what I call the Muskie institution. It's impact will continue.

AL: Thank you very much.

MA: Thanks.

End of Interview