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Davis, Delia North oral history interview

Mike Richard

Interview with Delia North Davis by Mike Richard

Summary Sheet and Transcript

Interviewee
Davis, Delia North

Interviewer
Richard, Mike

Date
August 17, 1999

Place
Southborough, Massachusetts

ID Number
MOH 141

Biographical Note

Delia North Davis was born on August 28, 1914 in Southborough, Massachusetts where she has lived most of her life. Her father, William North Davis, was a representative of United Shoe Machinery and her mother, Eva Bell Landry Davis, was a bookkeeper, but did not continue after having children. Her family, particularly her father, was Republican. Delia Davis became a Democrat, as did one of her brothers. They came from a Republican community and her father was on the Republican town committee. They had seven children of which Delia Davis was the second. She and all four of her brothers attended Bates College and she was in the class of 1936, majoring in Sociology and minoring in Government and History. She was involved in the Greek Club, a Christian association, and the Spofford Club. She often attended debates where Ed Muskie spoke. After college, she taught U.S. History and English in Harvard, Massachusetts. She then went on to teach at LaSalle College and then to St. Margaret's private school in Waterbury, Connecticut.

Scope and Content Note

Interview includes discussions of: Southborough, Massachusetts during the Depression; ethnic breakdown in Southborough; impressions of Ed Muskie; Democratic Party under Franklin D. Roosevelt; perceptions of how the Republican and Democratic parties have changed since the

Depression; and Bates College 1932-1936.

Indexed Names

Berkelman, Robert
Chase, George M. "Goosey"
Davis, Delia North
Davis, Eva Bell Landry
Davis, William North
Fisher, Lloyd Wellington
Fulton, Ruth (Coan)
Gould, Raymond R. N.
Knapp, Fred
Muskie, Edmund S., 1914-1996
Myhrman, Andy
Roosevelt, Franklin D. (Franklin Delano), 1882-1945

Transcript

Mike Richard: The date is August 17th, 1999 and I'm in Southborough, Massachusetts at the home of Delia Davis; interviewing is Mike Richard. And Mrs. Davis, could you please state your full name and spell it, I'm sorry, Miss Davis, could you state your full name and spell it please?

Delia Davis: Delia North Davis, D-E-L-I-A, N-O-R-T-H, D-A-V-I-S.

MR: And what is your date of birth, please?

DD: August 28, 1914.

MR: And where were you born?

DD: I was born in Southborough, Massachusetts.

MR: And so you've lived here all of your life, virtually all of your life?

DD: This has been home all my life. And I haven't, I've been off at, taught away at schools, but this has always been home base.

MR: Okay, well let's talk a little bit about your family background. First of all, what were your parents' names?

DD: Mother was Eva Bell Landry Davis, Dad, William North Davis.

MR: And what were their occupations?

DD: Dad was a representative of the United Shoe Machinery, particularly of the eyelet department. He traveled a good deal, New England and the Middle West, making sure that the eyelet machinery of the United Shoe Machinery Corporation was performing as it should. Mother, in her pre-marriage days, was a bookkeeper, and didn't work after marriage. Seven children all told.

MR: And where did you fit among those seven children?

DD: I was the second. I was the second of three girls, and then there were four boys. All boys went to Bates. The last two were interrupted by the war and they didn't go back after their soph-, well, they didn't go back after their sophomore years. One was killed and the last one, the youngest one is still surviving. This is going to be a problem (*aside: referring to sore throat*).

(*Tape paused.*)

MR: And your two sisters, did they attend a college or some other school?

DD: Now let's see, my older sister attended Colby Junior College in New London, New Hampshire. And they get another degree now, but I've forgotten, I don't know whether they're a four-year or whether . . . .

MR: I think they're two-year, I'm not sure.

DD: Still two year? I've sort of forgotten. But then it was two year in the associate degree. And my younger sister attended New England School of Art in Boston, and worked in a variety of capacities, didn't necessarily use her art. Actually didn't use her art until after she was married. She worked for a period of time at the *Boston Herald*. But anyway, after she was married she pursued her, a degree. And she taught art in elementary school and in the middle school in New Haven, Connecticut.

MR: And have any of your brothers or sisters been politically active or particularly interested in politics?

DD: I won't say they haven't been interested. My oldest brother John has always been interested. He is a, was, a professor of history. But no, nobody was active. No one took any local office or anything like that.

MR: What were your parents' political beliefs?

DD: Well, they were good Republicans. Dad was a good Republican, and thought Franklin Roosevelt was the worst thing that ever happened to this country.

MR: How did he take it when you changed . . . .?

DD: I was very quiet about it, I didn't talk about-, I said very little. And when John was, he called my brother John a pile of pink. My memory fails me, who was it that was, was it Wallace? So, I've forgotten. Anyway, that's when he, in his undergraduate days at Northwestern, I say undergraduate, he was working for his masters and his doctorate when he got out of the service, and became interested in the Democratic Party, and Dad was sure that was, you know, he was going to perdition then.

MR: Did your father ever find out about your, I guess you'd call it (*unintelligible phrase*)?

DD: Oh yes, oh yes, because we didn't keep it a secret but I just didn't bother to get into any kind of a tirade...

MR: Was your mother also a staunch Republican, as much so as your father was?

DD: Well you see, she wasn't brought up at the time when women were particularly active, you know, politically active. She voted, she felt that was her right to do it, but I mean she didn't, she didn't make a big deal of it. She went because Dad thought it was the right thing to do, so forth. But I think she pretty much followed what he had to say. I don't think she followed, I don't think she had any ideas of her own.

MR: What was the community like politically, was it . . . .?

DD: Republican.

MR: It was Republican.

DD: Yup, Dad was on a Republican town committee.

MR: And how would you say, since you've lived here for all of your life actually, how would you say that situation has changed, if it has changed?

DD: It has changed. I'm ashamed to say that I can't give you any percentages, but I would say that it was still basically Republican.

MR: And has that been pretty much consistently so (*unintelligible phrase)*?

DD: But I think the new trend, the new interest, that it's probably changing. But no, Republican candidates usually get the majority of votes in the elections, you know, state wide.

MR: Okay, well I'll just ask you what it was like to grow up in this neighborhood and in Southborough during the Depression. It was more during your teenage years, but.

DD: Well of course so much of my Depression was when I was in college, and it was, it was a sacrifice to go off to college. Dad had done very well with the United Shoe Machinery, but at that period of time they cut back with their salaries, which of course meant, that affected the family. So we were very careful, very careful. Good meals, always good meals, good hearty

meals but no frills, no fancies. Dad kept chickens so that old saying about chicken every Sunday, you know, because you know, we'd kill a chicken or two so weren't deprived in any way, shape or manner. Just being very careful, mother was a very frugal cook.

I remember in the Dep-, my college thesis was, had to do with the Depression and. This is interesting, I haven't thought about it for years! The emphasis on macaroni and pasta dishes, of course we didn't call them pasta in those days, but anyway that emphasis on that in the diet and how that in many instances kept families afloat, and reliance upon that. And of course hot dogs were an inexpensive meal in those days, now they're right up with everything else, three dollars and something a pound, but in those days macaroni, or macaroni and cheese or frankfurts, you know, we were well fed, and inexpensively.

MR: And how would you say that your family compared to other families in the neighborhood or the town socially or economically?

DD: Well, there were a good many families. I guess I'd have to call them laboring, if you want to talk about class, laboring class. Southborough was settled in, the Fayhill section of Southborough, by Italians who played a large part in the building of the metropolitan water system through here. And, you know, they were good solid citizens. Became citizens of the country as time went on and so on. No, I wouldn't say that we thought of ourselves in any way, shape or manner as a different class. I don't know why we tended to, my brothers particularly tended to have friends with a young man who was Choate, Charles Choate, and they enjoyed certain advantages the summer vacation.

We were members of the Episcopal Church and the Burnett family, the Robert Burnett family was interested in our seven children and offered the summer camp, their summer camp to the family for one week in the summer. And this is through the effort perhaps of, well, Mrs. Burnett's interest, but also the Minister at that time. And so we had an advantage there. We went off to this lovely camp up in New Hampshire for a week, and I guess in that sense, you know, we had a privilege that others in the community didn't have. But I don't think it put us, gave us any ideas of being any better than anybody else.

The fact that there were seven of us, we had our own group. Mother always said, "Play with your friends in the school," school was right across the street before it became a police station, fire station. She said, "Play with your friends at school, but, you know, we have our own little playgroup right here at home," which was true. Seven were enough to take care of. And as the three older girls, we had our share of responsibilities helping out with the younger ones.

So we didn't do too much except through church, you know, church Sunday school and summer picnics, the church Christmas parties. As we got older we sang in the choir, we took part in the church activities, so our social life was through the Episcopal Church. Mother had been brought up a Catholic, Dad was a Congregationalist. We became Episcopalians pretty much as our own choice I guess. We older girls, because of a, oh I suppose you'd call her a nursemaid, I don't know, that mother had and she was a member of the Episcopal church and she wanted to know if she could take us to Sunday school with her, so we just got used to doing it, you see. When my grandmother Davis came to visit us in the summer time, she would take us to the Congregational

church. And, but anyway, we were baptized and confirmed in the Episcopal Church, all of us. So, I don't think that put us in a select group at all.

MR: And you mentioned earlier an Italian immigrant element in the town, what were some of the other ethnic groups as such that were dominant at the time?

DD: I would have to say that the Italians were dominant, the Italians were dominant. Great people. I've had their, I've had them as youngsters. I taught here in Southborough seventh and eighth grade for seven years, and they were interested little students and they jolly well better be because that's what their parents wanted them to do, no problems in those days.

No, I can't think of any. There might have been a few Polish, but for the most part it was Italian, large number. They virtually settled the so-called Fayhill section of town at the time of the building of the Metropolitan reservoirs. In the early days before that there were, there was a hat factory in Fayhill. I've never heard of any of the, any other immigrant group in the hat factory. I suppose according to the trends of history and early industry, there might have been Irish in the hat factory. And then there were mills, blanket mills in the south part of town, Cordoville, Southville: this was the main section. And I never heard of the, of immigrants working in those mills at all, (*unintelligible word*) in relation to the real, you know, pick and shovel work of the building.

MR: And did you attend the Southborough public school district through high school?

DD: Un-hunh.

MR: What were some of your interests in school, whether they were academic or clubs or sports?

DD: I never was a very good sportsman. And we didn't (*unintelligible phrase*) school then, Milo High School, the athletics was a big thing. Girls' basketball, boys' basketball, boys' baseball. We had our share of the senior play, something on that idea. At one period in time there was a teacher who was very much interested in elocution and we gave performances, I distinguished myself once or twice in that respect. I suppose, I never had much of a voice, though I wasn't very good in the chorus. I suppose the drama would have been it if anything, but I can't even remember what my part was in the senior play. Everybody had a part in the senior play. There were sixteen in the class, graduating class, so it was a small high school, very small.

MR: Was this a regional high school, or just the Southborough high school?

DD: Not then, no, no, just Southborough's little high school. The high school was here, and there was an elementary school in the south part of town that people, children from Southville and Cordoville went to, and then there was a little elementary school here in Fayville. And then when they reached the high school, they came to high school in Southborough. They were bussed to high school.

MR: Okay, well I guess I'll ask you about how you chose to attend Bates College, what were

some of the factors that were (*unintelligible phrase*)?

DD: Well, the big factor was my dad was brought up in Lewiston, and my, his sister graduated from high school in Lewiston. Dad didn't graduate through high school. He went through I guess it was sixth or seventh grade, I can't remember now, and then right into, well, I don't recall just now when he went with United Shoe, but early on in his years he was with United Shoe. Well, he was a twenty-five year man, I know, but I can't remember now when the actual job started.

MR: And when you were at Bates what were some of, first of all what were some of the maybe classes or academic interests that you had?

DD: Well, when I left high school, I was very much interested in the romance languages. And I had admired very much my Latin teacher and I seemed to excel in that area, so I was determined that I was going to be a Latin teacher. So, Latin was on the schedule, and we had, I didn't do as well in French despite the fact that my mother was French-Canadian background. I was interested basically in the languages, particularly to be a Latin teacher, as my Latin teacher.

Then my freshman year I had Professor [Anders] Myhrman in sociology, and I was fascinated with him and I was fascinated with the whole idea, this whole study. It was just in its infancy in those days, you see, sociology was. And so I began to change my ideas about what I wanted to do. But I knew all along that if I was going to teach, I had to have basic either language or, you know, history, government, something like that.

So it was in my sophomore year that I decided I wanted to pursue not the languages, as much as I had loved, don't tell me I've forgotten that dear professor's name, Knapp, Professor Knapp, Latin teacher, and Professor, the Greek teacher, I know I took a year of Greek, I wanted Greek, anyway, I can't remember his name, have to look him up. I decided I'd change, and I changed to a major in sociology and a minor in government and history. So, I had a variety of courses, you know, probably all more of a smattering than anything else. And I'm trying to think of the history professor, Gould I think it was, Professor Gould.

MR: Was that Pa Gould?

DD: I think so.

MR: Yeah, I've heard of that name a lot, actually.

DD: Yeah, he was a terror but he was wonderful. You know, it's true, the ones that made you work the hardest are the ones that you miss.

MR: Yeah.

DD: [Raymond] Gould, Gould, I can't even see it (*unintelligible phrase*), I'll be so glad when I get my new glasses. (*Unintelligible phrase*), he was a fascinating professor, I enjoyed geology because of him.

MR: Professor [Lloyd Wellington] Fisher?

DD: Professor, yeah, Fisher, he was, in those days he was kind of on edge, he was a little too liberal at the time.

MR: Was he too liberal for your tastes, you mean, or for the college's taste?

DD: No, no, but when I say too liberal I mean he, he wasn't the, I mean, steady professor that they were all supposed to be. Enjoyed him, a year of fun.

MR: Were most of them pretty staid, though, in real life, they were?

DD: Yeah, well, I mean that was the impression that they gave out. I don't see his picture, that's strange. I enjoyed him very much, Professor [Robert] Berkelman, (*unintelligible phrase*).

MR: Oh yeah, I've heard that name.

DD: Where is he? He must be, and Gould must be in here somewhere, I just can't find him. [George] Chase was the Greek professor, I didn't do too well in Greek. I can't find him, but he must be in here somewhere.

MR: Which department was he again, he was the Latin professor.

DD: He was, Gould was history, it's Gould that was history, U.S. history, and he was fascinating. He was very demanding but I enjoyed him. I think that's probably what switched me. I can't find it, it may be here, maybe you can find it. But he was a very demanding history teacher.

MR: Oh, is this him, actually? I'm sorry to interrupt, Raymond Gould?

DD: Yeah, doesn't look like himself, yeah. So, all right. And when I got out of course to teach, if you've reached that stage yet, have you, he, Depression.

MR: It was difficult to find a job.

DD: There was no jobs. And they would, if you wanted, you had to have experience. Well, how do you have experience if you don't have a job. Well, you just become a helper or assistant or whatever, just because you need to have the time, you needed to have experience. Well that was a little difficult for me because I had an older brother waiting for me to graduate so he could go to college, and he'd been working in the meantime. So I was of course hoping that I would find a job, and I did in October of '36. I found a job over in Harvard, Massachusetts. Dunlap, this principal of this little school over in Harvard, Massachusetts and he knew a girl who was teaching history and English and I don't what else, had found a job, I'll say Springfield, but anyway west somewhere, and they were going to be without a teacher. And Isaphene, who was also a classmate of mine, was teaching, what did she teach, I think she was teaching Latin. Mr.

Dunlap was a Bates man and there was some connection, well, I know it was Maine, but there was some connection between Isaphene and the Dunlap family, but anyway Isaphene said, "Listen, there's going to be a vacancy. Are you interested?" Well, of course I was interested, and I went and I taught English and I taught history, U.S. history, in this school.

MR: And for how long did you teach at the Harvard school?

DD: I taught over there, I think it was only two years. Let's see, fall of '36, I think I came here in '39 or early '40. I was three years here, though, when I came here to teach. Well anyway, I'll say two years, I've forgotten. Two years. That was a great experience, that was a really little country school. We had a small, it was a small school, do you know the area at all?

MR: No, not very well.

DD: And the, in the two, there was one big room and the children had their desks, their chairs and their desks, but then there were these two little side rooms and they sat on benches, which was both an advantage and a disadvantage, you know, (*unintelligible phrase*). And the youngsters for the most part were farm youngsters, and I had one student who performed constantly for the will of the teacher, and the will of the classmates. Benny was always ready to get a laugh, he read beautifully upside down and he'd hold his book, you know, he'd be sitting in the chair and he'd hold his book upside down and he'd read, and the kids would start to titter. Well then I knew that Benny was reading upside down. Well, the upshot of it was usually there was just enough unease and so forth, so I'd ask Benny to please leave and I'd ask him to come back after school or whatever, which he always did very willingly. And one day, distraught, this young woman came bursting into my classroom after school and said, "You little fool, don't you know he does these things because he likes you?" So, I was growing up all the time, learning these things, of course, Benny was misbehaving because he liked me and in order to stay after school with me. Plus the fact that he was a farm boy and it was more comfortable to stay after school than it was to go home and do whatever farm work he had to do.

MR: And so you, you said you've lived in Southborough, worked around the Southborough area in different schools, all of your life, or most of your life?

DD: Well, I was here, and then I went to, had an opportunity to go to LaSalle College. In those days, that was the '40s, it had a lower school and a high school, two years of college, a two year college with a lower school. In the course of my years at LaSalle they did away with their lower school, they had the two years of high school and the two years of college. So when I left here, I went into what was the high school at LaSalle teaching history, U.S. history and European history or whatever, I've forgotten now what it was, but it was the same program that I had taught here in Southborough. And then they did away with their two years of high school and just concentrated on their two years of college. I picked up my sociology, which I hadn't touched before, and taught sociology and some elementary, well it was all elementary of course in those days, first year, beginning of sociology and psychology.

And I stayed with that and when I left LaSalle, and when I left LaSalle I went to St. Margaret's private school in Connecticut, in Connecticut, what was the town, important industrial city,

Waterbury, Waterbury, Connecticut. A lovely school, church sponsored, and I had to pick up my high school subjects, history, that was U.S. history and I think it was Middle, I mean European history. And then, I was also was an assistant to the head mistress, and my reason for being so interested in the job was that I wanted, thought I wanted to get into administration, and it was, I was there for two years and it was quite an experience.

I enjoyed it, and probably would have gone on pursuing the administrative angle of it if my dad hadn't died. And by that time the other members of the family were married and off and I was the one who seemed to be most moveable to come home, and I was very fortunate to find an opening in the (*name*) school in Natick, so I left St. Margaret's and came to (*unintelligible phrase*). And I taught U.S. history and I think we threw in some ancient history and some medieval history and what not when I was at (*name*). But basically, there again I was back in my history.

MR: Have you married, actually?

DD: Never married, no.

MR: Well getting back to your time at Bates, what were some of the extracurricular clubs that you were involved in, or?

DD: I mean, it's all there in the book, I was in the (*unintelligible word*) Club and the Greek Club, I never could understand why because I just took that one year of Greek. But I enjoyed it and we went to the, into the community, the club, they allowed us to come on in and we had a great time. I was in the, oh, what represented the Y, it was a Christian association, and did work with the, some young Polish girls in Lewiston, that was a great experience. And, let's see, what else did I, oh, I noticed in the, looking over my book that I was in, I think it was the Spofford Club which was the English Club, and I don't know who got me into that and what my intentions were because I don't remember that much with the English. And those clubs, basically the Greek and the Y. I'm quite sure we called it the Christian Association, and I remember I was, I had the great responsibility in the fair one year, which was a money making thing for the organization.

MR: And what was the social life on campus like, what would you do for fun, or what was dorm or house life like?

DD: Well, as far as the dating life was concerned of course, all of us were under the influence of the Depression, so there wasn't anything very expensive in the way of dating. As I implied, maybe I didn't finish my thought, a good date was to walk to the Qual-, I don't know if that's still down there or not, a Quality shop, it was a drug store?

MR: Oh, there still is Quality Market just down on College Street, I don't know if that's the same one or not.

DD: Well, it's where, at some intersection, it's before you got all the way . . . .

MR: Yeah, it meets College Street and Holland Street, I think?

DD: Maybe, I don't know, but anyway, it was a good walk but it wasn't too far and, you know, the date could afford to buy you an ice cream soda and so forth, I mean that was a date in my freshman year. We didn't go to the movies very often. Most of the social life that I recall was really the social life on the campus, various activities that were taking place. Plays were always I thought great, I was interested in those. I always went to the debates, particularly if Ed was involved in it.

Of course there were winter sports and carnival time, there were dances every season, I was usually fortunate enough to get invited to a dance, to go to a dance. And I was trying to think of the highlights in the dance in those days, he-dances they called them, when the girls got a chance to invite the boys. But then there were Saturday night dances, too, at Chase Hall and those were very popular. I wasn't a good dancer, I didn't try to do that kind of thing without a date, but I usually managed to get somebody to go to the dances.

I enjoyed the winter sports, such as I was. I distinguished myself once on snowshoes, a dash or something. And, you know, we'd go to Thorncrag, we'd do all very fun things with the boys.

MR: And what about living in the house, I guess Ruth Fulton said that you were her roommate, or actually you said that Ruth was your roommate.

DD: We lived, Ruthie was my roommate my freshman year and we lived in, is it Chase that's near the president, Cheney is near the president.

MR: Yeah, right across the way, actually.

DD: Right, and we were on the first floor, right near the back door there. And then our sophomore year we lived together but we moved upstairs, or we roomed upstairs. Our junior year we were both, she was a student government representative to, is it Milliken House? The first house down on . . . .

MR: On the corner down across the hill? Yeah, that's Milliken.

DD: She was a student government representative and I was the housekeeping representative or whatever you call it, you know, counting the sheets and keeping track of stuff like that. But she carried the real weight, and of course we roomed together there too. Then senior year of course we moved into the senior dorm, it's still a senior dorm, isn't it, Rand, up on the hill?

MR: Now it has several years, I think there's even a freshman center or two in Rand, so it's all mixed.

DD: And we didn't, we changed roommates, I've forgotten who her roommate was, mine was Elizabeth Doolittle whom I had known of course through my college years. I can't remember how we, why or how we made that arrangement, unless we decided that perhaps we deserved a change from each other. I always enjoyed, Ruth was an excellent student, she was always an

excellent student. I managed to paddle along, but I was no outstanding student at all. When I think of what they expect of Bates students today, even for entrance, I think, oh, I never would have made it, never.

MR: Okay, well did you, talking about Ed actually, did you have any classes with Ed, or were you involved in any clubs that Ed was involved in? Basically, I guess, how did you get to know Ed Muskie?

DD: Well, I got to know him through that crowd freshman year. Frankly, I can't remember now, except that our dorm and, what was the name of the dorm?

MR: Was it Parker Hall, that . . . . ?

DD: No, Parker Hall was a big hall, what was the hall, Roger Williams?

MR: Oh, yeah.

DD: I think he was in Roger Williams, but somehow or other the girls in my house and Roger Williams people got together, and I dated somebody from Roger Williams. And I don't remember really how, what the connection, I have a sneaking feeling it was because of his attraction to this girl that was in Cheney House with us, in our crowd. But he was always so generous, bless his heart, you know, I mean if she was dating and busy and he had some time and he wanted to, you know, accompany her, would you go to the Qual or whatever, you know, I mean it was friendly kind of visiting and conversation and we got together, long walks up to, up to Thorncrag or . . . . I'm trying to figure out who was involved in that horrible ski accident, not ski but, oh, what it is, flat and it doesn't have any control?

MR: Oh, a, like a sled, a tob- . . . .

DD: Yeah, like a sled only what it is, what did we call it?

MR: Toboggan?

DD: Toboggan, toboggan, no, that wasn't, he wasn't involved in that. No, I saw very little of him after freshman year except, you know, as part of the audience part of the group.

MR: What were your impressions of him as part of, maybe as someone who looked upon him from afar as you said before?

DD: I thought he was a hard working student, and always very generous in his opinion of other people, wonderful sense of humor. I was fascinated in some little article I read about his quick temper. I never of course saw any of that. Each successive year as he became a leader of the class or distinguished himself in one way or another, demanded more and more of my attention, I was so proud of him that he was doing this, you know, in the class of '36. So it was that kind of admiration from afar. He was always very generous if you met him anywhere. Going back to reunions, you know, you were always welcomed along with everybody else and this kind of

thing. I remember the year that he was in the governor's mansion, (*unintelligible phrase*), well, I know it was a cocktail, tea time kind of thing, and someone made some remark and he says, "Wouldn't you expect that I invite my class to come to the governor's mansion," you know, "join me here"? (*Unintelligible phrase*), Jean? No.

(*Tape paused.*)

DD: So, I was just very proud that he was doing so well himself. Never knew very much about his, you know, natural home background or anything except the kind of thing that you would hear as a classmate, and never sat down and talked about it. I never knew, except from (*unintelligible word*) publications and so on that his dad was a tailor. And I knew that he'd gone into, when he graduated from college and he got involved in his law work and that kind of thing. But, no, heard very little, had very little close contact after graduation, you know, he was part of the group, the class and class activities, as I said, class leader, that kind of thing. But very little contact, personal contact with him, but (*unintelligible phrase*) of hello, you know, how are you, how's everything, that kind of always welcome to the group.

MR: Do you have any anecdotes about him while you knew him in school? You mentioned his sense of humor, any story about that or anything else about him that you can think of that impressed you in some way?

DD: No, I can't think of anything along that line. I'm sure (*unintelligible phrase*). And he was always keeping us in gales of laughter over something, though I can't tell you now. Well, you know he was very retiring, I thought. Eager to share whatever successes he had with the rest of us, I'm thinking of the luncheon the whole, or dinner the whole class had in the archives. Pretty much the same attitude as he had at the governor's mansion, you know, "Wouldn't you expect me to have you here, wouldn't you think that I would invite you to share this with me," or something like that. There was no, at least in my mind anyway, never any feeling of, 'oh, how am I going to say that', superiority or whatever. It's just that we're all part of the same group, and therefore naturally I want to have you share it with me, that kind of thing, you know. No, I can't think of anything off-hand. I wish I could, I wish I had some special little thing to treasure. Well, I told you I admired him from afar, particularly as he accomplished so much and became important in politics. Proud of what he did in Maine.

MR: Yeah, actually (*unintelligible phrase*), what would you say, this might be kind of a broad question, but what would you say his legacy for politics and for Maine have been?

DD: His legacy?

MR: Yeah, his most important effects, or.

DD: Gosh, I don't recall at all any specific legislation or anything like that. Perhaps there again in a very broad way (*unintelligible phrase*) the first Democrat to lead Maine. He opened Maine to the rest of the United States, or opened, you know, woke up the, they woke up, we woke up, people woke up to the fact that, you know, there were other than the rock rib Republicans of Maine.

End of Side A
Side B

MR: This is the second side of the tape with Delia Davis on August 17th, 1999. And I was just about to ask you about how you decided to change from Republican to Democrat during your college years?

DD: Well, I think that, one, my increased interest in history and government, and awareness of the kinds of things that the Democratic party under the leadership of Franklin Roosevelt were trying to do. I admired the leadership with the country in the distress that it was in, and the fact that he was able to find followers to introduce the kind of social programs that he did which were important. I suppose it was just a general awakening through increased knowledge. I can't think of, I can't think of any other good reason.

MR: How would you say the Republican and Democratic parties have changed since the time that you decided to become a Democrat? Either maybe local politics or nationally?

DD: Well, I think that the Democratic Party during the Depression years broadened a lot it's scope from just kind of the labor outlook. I think it took on a wider political outlook. Unfortunately I think the Republicans have gotten more and more conservative over the years. I was trying to think of the one, I'm so rusty all on this, we had one Republican here in the state who was my idea of what all Republicans should be. Not so bound by early practices and so forth, thinking more of the general welfare rather than just the upper class.

MR: Was this a, someone, maybe a governor or a senator or someone at the state level?

DD: I'm trying to think of his name, maybe you remember, a black man?

MR: Who was that?

DD: He was a black man.

MR: Yeah, I wish I knew more about Massachusetts politics.

DD: I've gotten so rusty on all of these things.

MR: That's okay.

DD: Well anyway, as far as I was concerned, he was the last Republican that had any forward outlook at all. To me the Republicans in Massachusetts have become more and more interested in the corporation and the wealthy class and, well, corporate interests. And I can understand why my dad was eager for us not to have to say too much about it because he worked for a large corporation, and it was important for him to feel that the corporation was the end and all.

MR: Okay, well . . . .

DD: I don't know, maybe I'm wrong on that, but I still think that the Democratic Party has broadened it's concept of society, not just the relationship with the laborer and working society, not just the union interests and that sort of thing. I think that they've gotten broader in their scope of the total society, and welfare of the total society; less rigid as far as class lines were concerned. And I think the Republicans still are. You're probably a Republican and you don't see it that way.

MR: Oh, no, actually I personally agree, but. Okay, well is there anything else that you think that we haven't covered that maybe we should put on the tape, or?

DD: Oh, I don't know what to say.

MR: About Ed or Bates or your own experiences?

DD: I just, I, my four years at Bates were just great. I enjoyed it and I made good friends, and I lost good friends, that's the trouble now, of course, we're slipping away, all of us, and regret that I didn't get back up for the last, that last one I missed. Loved the campus.

I just regret so much that the public at large, call it the United States if you want, didn't get a chance to appreciate Ed, and he of course did not have an opportunity to really have that much influence as secretary of state. I think he would have made an unusual Secretary of State, I wish he could have stayed in that capacity and never mind playing around with the presidency. I mean, he would have made a great president. Actually, the more I think about it, I think he was too, he was way beyond his time in what, in the ideas that he had and the hopes that he had. And of course at my age now I begin to think, well why, this person who had so much to offer is lost, and somebody else who doesn't deserve it all gets it. I think he could have done, he, well he still has. I haven't gone over his legislation, but he made great strides as far as that environmental legislation was concerned, and I think he would have been an excellent Secretary of State in the world today.

MR: Great, well thanks a lot for your time.

DD: Well, I'm afraid it was very (*unintelligible phrase*) . . . .

MR: Oh, no, I don't . . . .

DD: . . . . just an old woman remembering things, and not doing-
(*Tape stopped.)*

End of Interview