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Interview with Julie Gosselin by Andrea L'Hommedieu

Summary Sheet and Transcript

Interviewee

Gosselin, Julie

Interviewer

L'Hommedieu, Andrea

Date

September 1, 1999

Place

Lewiston, Maine

ID Number

MOH 148

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Biographical Note

Julie (Chaput) Gosselin was born in Lewiston, Maine. She graduated from Lewiston High School in 1942. Julie worked on the social page at Sun-Journal and married Hal Gosselin in July 1946. She has served as president of Auxiliary at St. Mary's Hospital.

Scope and Content Note

Interview includes discussions of: Maine newspapers; Hal Gosselin; "Lal" Lemieux; Louis Philippe Gagne; Faust Couture; WCOU; Hal's involvement in Chamber, Junior Chamber, Elks Chamber, United Fund, Bates Manufacturing, CMMC, City Controller; Hal's relationship with Margaret Chase Smith; attending Nixon and Johnson inaugurations with Hal; Hal's impression of Muskie; Hal with John Beliveau; Hal and public relations for Bates Manufacturing Company [Bates Mill]; Denis Blais; "Teas" (women and fund raisers); St. Mary's May ball; evolution of women's group meetings; and Bates Mill potential.

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Transcript

Andrea L'Hommedieu: This is an interview on September 1st at the home of Julie Gosselin at 89 Fair Street in Lewiston, Maine. This is Andrea L'Hommedieu. Mrs. Gosselin, could we start by having you state your full name, including your maiden name?

Julie Gosselin: Well, my name is really Juliette, everybody knows me as Julie. And my maiden name is Chaput, C-H-A-P-U-T. And I was born here in Lewiston as were my parents. I have one sister who lives in Lewiston, and two children.

AL: Did your ancestors come from Canada?

JG: Yeah, my grandparents on my mother's side and I didn't know my grandparents on my father's side. I imagine they probably came from Canada, I'm not sure. I don't know. But my parents were born here.

AL: And where did you go to school?

JG: I went to St. Peter's School, and then to Lewiston High.

AL: And when did you meet Hal, your husband?

JG: Well, when I was a junior and senior in high school I worked at the *Sun-Journal* afternoons. At that time they had a full social page and a social page writer, and I worked in that department. The woman in charge was Charlotte Michaud who was very well known all over the state of Maine. She had been with the *Sun-Journal* for years and years, and she would send me on social assignments. At that time there was lots of teas and lots of card parties and lots of fund raisers, and every once in a while she would send me to cover one of these. And that to me was totally exciting, naturally.

AL: Was that in the early '50s?

JG: Well, I graduated from high school in 1942, so it would have been '41 and '42. Way back. And of course they don't do those things any more and they've done away with the social page. Page three was totally social with lots of pictures. Photographers would come to the house and that's why I have a few pictures here because I was very active in lots of groups. And they would go to anybody's house to take a picture of social events.

AL: And that's where you met Hal?

JG: And so Hal was office boy. And I met him, I knew him, I had never dated him. But he left for the service, and his picture came out in the paper, and I wrote to him and he wrote back. Hal wrote beautiful letters. He was, he, we corresponded, there was nothing between us except correspondence. And then when he came back, he came back Christmas Eve of 1945, Christmas Eve of '45, and he called me in January '46 and we were married in July '46. And that's how I met him. And he went back to the *Sun-Journal* when he came home from the service. And I can't remember what, well actually, I guess that when he came back he became a reporter and he covered politics, City Hall was his beat. I don't know whether they still do that, but that's all he did was cover all the meetings and anything that had to do with politics. That's how he became interested and involved, he loved politics. Never ran for office, but he did, he was very much involved. He never ran for anything. And that's where his career started is his writing for the newspaper. One thing he could do was write. He could, he was very good at writing.

AL: I have a list of some of the names of different people who worked for the paper back then. I'm going to give you their names, if you have any sort of recollection of them. The first one is Lal Lemieux?

JG: Oh yeah, Mr. Lemieux.

AL: Who was he?

JG: Mr. Lemieux was edit-, I think he was editorial writer. He lives right up here, you can almost see his house from here, he lives on Central Avenue here. And he wrote, I'm sure he was the editorial writer, and he worked there for years and years and years and became a very good

friend of Hal's. As a matter of fact, when his first wife died a few years back, Hal and I were attendants at his wedding, his second wedding. And he still kept in touch with Lal. Lal came over occasionally. And he lives, he would love, I'm sure he would be very good to speak to, because there is a man who knew what was going on.

AL: He's still living?

JG: He lives on Central Avenue here, just a little ways up; Very interesting man.

AL: Did he stay with the paper long after your husband went to Bates [manufacturing]?

JG: Oh yes, he was still there. Lal must be late eighties I think. But I still hear from him once in a while. His health is not as good as it used to be, but he would be good to interview.

AL: What about Faunce Pendexter?

JG: Yeah, Mr. Pendexter was there. I don't remember exactly what he did, but I remember him. I don't have anything, any stories about him or anything but he was there.

AL: What about Ed Penley?

JG: I don't know too much about Mr. Penley. I know the name, but I didn't know him. Mr. Pendexter we knew quite well, Hal did. But Mr. P-, I know Mr. Penley was there but I didn't know him.

AL: How about Louis-Philippe Gagne, did he have an influence on the community? And if so, what?

JG: He certainly did, with the Franco-American community. He was, if I remember correctly, he was, he was, had to be the editor of the *Messenger*, which was the local French paper. And he dabbled in, did he dab-, I'm not too sure, did he, whether he dabbled in politics, but he was very influential with the Franco-American community, very much so, very much so.

AL: So if you were a politician running for an office in this city, you'd want his support?

JG: I think you probably would want to go speak with him. He was a little, short, tiny man, very short man, I don't know, just over maybe five-two or something, a very short man. His daughters live around here, I know some of them, I know some of his children.

AL: *Le Messenger* is not still in publication?

JG: Oh no, that's been, that's been, that hasn't been in circulation for a long time. But at one time it was the going newspaper for the French- Franco-American community.

AL: Faust Couture.

JG: Oh yes, Faust Couture.

AL: Who was he?

JG: His wife is still living, Nancy. She, I think the last time I saw her is at the funeral parlor and, Faust Couture, they live on Webster Street I think. Well, I don't know whether she still lives there, come to think of it. She had a house on Webster Street. Faust Couture was another, very much involved person in the community. What did he do, I don't remember what he did.

AL: I think he had a radio station, WCOU?

JG: Yeah, he had a radio station, you're right, that's what he did, he owned a radio station. And he was very influential in the community.

AL: Was he Franco-American as well?

JG: His wife wasn't. He was, yeah, he was Franco-American. I don't know too many stories about him. Hal knew him very well.

AL: He did?

JG: Yeah, he knew him very well. As a matter of fact, when Nancy came to the funeral parlor I hadn't seen her in a long, long time. And I was surprised to see her but she said, "Oh, I just had to come," because she had fond memories from way back. Of course a lot of the people, some of these people you're talking about Hal knew through business and became, they became business friends. We didn't, we would see them at lots of affairs but, I mean, we really didn't go out socially, so I didn't know them. Except at lots of receptions that we went to and different affairs, because Hal was so involved in the community, in the Chamber, Junior Chamber, Elks Chamber, back. I guess he was chairman of the United Fund for some years, so we got to go to a lot of things, and then through Bates and the hospital.

AL: Who were some of the people that were close to Hal, both, you know, personal friends as well as people in the community that were well-known?

JG: Well, Vincent Bellow was the honcho at the *Sun-Journal* when Hal was there. And he always, he always said that Vincent Bellow launched his career, you know, got him started. Hal was only like twenty-one years old. Most of the people who worked at the *Sun-Journal* were older, and they kind of took Hal under their wing and were a big help to him, you know. Also Lal Lemieux was very good to Hal. But these men were older and wiser, and they did help him a long. Louis Laun, who was in charge of the Bates Manufacturing at the time, he lives in Chappaqua, New York now, but he's the man who hired Hal. In between the newspaper and Bates, Hal was city controller for a while. He was all over the place, I'd say, that's why he got to meet so many different people.

AL: Did he ever work with Don Hansen?

JG: Don Hansen, I don't know that name.

AL: Now that was the Portland paper, or Peter Damborg?

JG: Well, he knew Peter. I don't know, but I know he knew Peter because I recognize those names as you mention them. But that would have been through business, you know, that would have been through business.

AL: Now when did you and Hal first meet Margaret Chase Smith?

JG: You know, I don't know. I don't know how that happened.

AL: Or maybe an easier question -

JG: I really don't know how we, how Hal met her, but they became fast friends, I mean very good friends. We went to Washington a lot. As a matter of fact we attended, through her, we attended a launching of an astronaut, we attended two inaugurations, through her.

AL: Which inaugurations?

JG: Nixon and Johnson. We went. We were in Washington a lot. Hal had to go a lot especially when he worked for Bates. And he would be in Washington quite often on different bills that concerned the industry, and you know, probably about cotton or about different pricing and unions. And every time he did he would see, do business then and see Senator Smith. And through the years, quite a few years, became very friendly with her and had a lot to do with her camp-, two of her campaigns. The last one where she was not reelected and I guess the one before that. I don't remember those years, but it would be easy for you to find out because that's when she lost to Hathaway. And traveled a lot to different, uh. . . .

AL: What sort of things did Hal do for her campaign?

JG: Lots of phone calls. She would not accept any money, so they didn't do too much fund raising, that wasn't. . . . Hal always thought that was one of the things that defeated her the last time. But the regular routine type things, you know, flyers and phone calls and mailings and lots of advice. And she turned to him a lot for his, I don't know whether it was so much advice as his opinions on different things. And he was in touch with a lot of people and didn't. . . . He did go with her to some of her speeches, he'd go with, you know, he'd be with her, as well as many other people, but he would be one of the people that, and got lots of people to work for her and that kind of thing.

AL: Now how did you come to take care of her summer cottage?

JG: Well, that evolved because, through friendship, she mentioned that she had a summer place. And I think what originally happened is that she had mentioned that there was no one to look over the place. And Hal said, "Gee, we'd be happy to go up there once in a while and open the windows," because at times she didn't, she wasn't there a whole lot. She would come weekends

once in a while when she could get away. And he had said that he would, that we would go up and open the windows, as I say, open the windows and maybe do a little mowing. And I had said that I could plant a few flowers around there, she was very proud of that place, and things like that. And so we started to go, we would only go weekends, and we didn't stay in the main, her place, because it was huge and it was just too much work to really. I would come in in the spring and kind of give it a going over a little bit. But I, we stayed in her assistant's, General [William C.] Lewis' place, he had a lovely place right next door, so I would stay there. But we only went up weekends because I just didn't want to stay there by myself all week. And it was a little far for Hal to be commuting, so we'd go up weekends and enjoyed it a lot. But we kind of helped maintain it, she had people doing things for her, but we overlooked and saw that things were in order and stuff.

AL: And where was her camp?

JG: Cundy's Harbor. It's since been sold; everything has been sold after she passed away. Hal was on the library board until he passed away, and the money went to the library, I guess.

AL: Did she have other relatives?

JG: Oh yeah, she had a sister, she had a brother, she had a sister who was married to a Bernier, and I think they lived in Florida. They must have passed away since. And she had a sister. Also lots of times when she was there she would entertain, and I would help her with that. She would have a caterer, but I would sometimes help her out a little bit. She would have the people on the library board, they came from all over the country.

AL: You mentioned General Lewis. What was his role with Margaret Chase Smith?

JG: Oh, my God, he was her right hand, he was her right hand. He was just everything to her, he was in Washington with her, and he just. . . . She couldn't have got along without him, he just did everything. And I don't know exactly what his title was, but he worked with her in Washington. He was the number one man overlooking everything, and he was a general. I used to have a booklet here. I wonder if I still have that, that gave his history, the whole thing.

AL: Oh, really.

JG: Yeah, (*unintelligible phrase*).

AL: Has he passed away?

JG: He passed away before Margaret. As a matter of fact, he passed away at Cundy's Harbor. They were up for a weekend and he was in his place, and she found him dead, I think, he had died overnight or something. Anyway, he died before she did. And I used to have a booklet with his obituary and his whole history. That probably went out the window, I'm not sure I still have that.

AL: What are your over all impressions of Margaret Chase Smith?

JG: Well, she was a grand lady, really, really was, a grand lady. It really was a privilege to know her. She was a very down-to-earth, very down-to-earth. And we used to bring people up to Cundy's and so she met several of our friends, and she really enjoyed everybody. I mean it was just like, she was just like part of the gang, you know. And, of course, my friends were very impressed with her. But she was so nice to everybody, lots of my friends have nice memories of having met her and really enjoyed her because. . . . And then, of course, she just loved to come over and talk politics with Hal. They would spend hours just talking politics. They really, really enjoyed each other, they really did. She was just a lovely person, that's it. I mean, she was just a lovely person. Very generous, very kind, and she was very nice to us, very nice to us. Hal really, really liked her.

AL: Did you ever meet Stanley Tupper?

JG: No, I know the name but I don't know anything about him. As I say, if Hal was here he could write you a book, he really could. I'm just so surprised that he never mentioned that you had called him. I'm just so surprised because that is something that he would have talked about, you know, but he never did. And he didn't to Paul either, and he used to confide in Paul, he was very close to Paul. Paul was his pride and joy, you know.

AL: I don't remember the exact date that I called, but it may have been very close -

JG: Well he was, yeah, he was not, he was not at all well and he recognized the fact that he wasn't, you know. So that probably, that probably was the reason because there's nothing he would have enjoyed more, believe me. He was a talker, he was a talker. He would have had plenty to say. But I'm sure that some of these people that I mentioned would help you a lot.

AL: What would he say about Louis Jalbert?

JG: Well, Louis Jalbert and Hal were friends in a funny kind of way. Louis Jalbert had some stories to tell. And, they were, Hal would get so perturbed with that man, he would get so upset with him, but then again in a funny sort of way. Louis for a while was coming here constantly, he would stop in constantly and they would argue and, about, of course Louis being the staunch Democrat that he was, Mr. Democrat as a matter of fact, and Hal at that time being so involved, they would get into heated arguments. That was, I mean, totally funny to me. But they had known each other for a long, long time. There were times when there was no love lost between them, he didn't like Hal any more than Hal liked him at times, but it was just life I guess. They were not enemies, you know, they were not enemies, but -

AL: Do you have any recollections of some of the funny or tumultuous incidents?

JG: I lots of times would go shopping. They would just like come and, you know, have discussions about different things and they were never on the same side of an issue, naturally, they wouldn't be. Hal loved to argue, Louis did too, and so it would, they would just have fun doing that, you know. And then he'd go out the door and Hal would say, "I never want to see him again!" But he'd be back, they'd be back.

AL: What was Louis Jalbert's physical presence like? Was he a big man, or a small man?

JG: No, he was average height, not extremely tall but a good height, and he was, he was impressive. He was beautifully dressed, always dressed impeccably. He looked nice. He was not, I mean he was average looking and average build, trim, not skinny but trim, and, and very sharp looking all the time. I never saw Louis look ruffled or, always looked nice, Louis always looked nice. Always wore a tie and a, like a white shirt and a tie, and beautiful suits and, he looked good, he looked good. I remember that about him. And his wife was a lovely lady, so different from Louis. You wonder how people get together.

AL: What was her name?

JG: Her name was Yvonne, Yvonne. She lived on the next street. And someone told me she had sold her house and I don't know where she is now. If I remember right she came from Pemaquid I think originally, I think she was from the Pemaquid area or something. And I have no idea where she's at. I used to see her once in a while. I haven't seen her in a long time. I just don't know where she's at. But Louis was a character, that's what he was, he was a character. He had a lot of influence.

AL: Did Hal ever discuss with you his, as being a Republican but respecting Muskie?

JG: Oh he certainly did, he certainly did.

AL: What did Hal think of Ed Muskie?

JG: He was totally impressed with Senator Muskie. They, I, I'm- they had occasion to be in the same place at different political gatherings, and he had a lot of respect for him, and admired him for everything he did. He had, he knew him on a first name basis, and he knew Hal. And I don't know that they had that much involvement because of different parties, but he had occasion to run into him and was very impressed with him. Never had anything bad to say about Senator Muskie, he had a lot of respect for him, I do know that much. Occasions where they had, they would have had occasion to get, to meet, I don't know too much about that. I remember him going to things and saying that he was there, and I went to places where, that he was at. But it was all through business and politics and stuff like that. But Hal did know him quite well.

AL: Now I discovered, in doing the interview with Judge John Beliveau last week, that he considered your husband, Hal, to be his mentor. Do you have recollections. . . . ?

JG: I wouldn't be surprised. Of course John is younger than Hal, and they also probably would have met through the political scene. I don't exactly remember. And then, of course, John was starting his career way back then, and Hal thought that John had a lot of potential. I did know that, because he had mentioned it to me before. And again, I guess they would run into each other through these different, you know, these different things that they were, John was just starting to get involved in. And then when our son became, was in high school and thinking about college, I guess John had mentioned Notre Dame to Hal, and so the three of them went

down and visited the campus. And I remember Paul saying, Paul was totally impressed and I remember him saying, "I'd be crazy not to go to school there." But John is the one who really put the bug in Paul's ear, because I'm not sure that we would have thought that that, neither Hal nor I had been to college. But we knew Paul was going to go to college, but we really didn't know too much about Notre Dame except for what we heard from Ray Geiger.

Have you heard the name Ray Geiger? You haven't heard the name Ray Geiger. Ray Geiger owned Geiger's Almanac place here in town, his sons are running it now. And he had gone to Notre Dame and was a staunch Notre Dame man, so we had heard a lot about Notre Dame from Mr. Geiger, who was a rather influential figure in this city because he owned this company which is world renowned, still is. He used to be on TV, national programs a lot, being interviewed. He was a very important person. His wife is still living, and his sons run the company now. I'm sure you've seen the, matter of fact, let's see, did I throw it away? I've been doing a lot of cleaning because my children are after me to get rid of my junk. They're worried, they worry they're going to be left with all this. You know, Farmers Almanac, you know that. I used to have copies from years back but I think I got rid of them. I'm trying to clean things out.

AL: The new one just came out.

JG: It probably did. This is a 1999 one. I guess that probably would be the only one I kept, probably the only one. I had them for a lot of years here, but as I say, since Hal died the children are after me to move some of that stuff out.

AL: What can you tell me about Tom Delahanty, was he a friend of your husband's as well?

JG: Ah, yes, yes. Judge Delahanty and Hal were good friends. I can't say, I can't tell you anything specific except that they were- they talked to each other a lot. And, it's just that Hal was involved in so many things, you know. Starting with the newspaper where even as a, he was twenty-two when we were married, and he became a reporter, but he got to meet all the politicians because he was covering that City Hall beat, and all the night meetings. Back then they had to go to all the meetings that were, all the different boards. He was on the Police Commission for, I can't remember, for at least four years, maybe more. He was, there used to be commissions back then and they were appointed by the mayor. And he was on the police commission for a long time. They would meet every, at least every couple of weeks, I think. And then from there he became city controller. So here again he met all the politicians, there's no more city controller, but back then there was, and got to meet so many people at City Hall.

AL: He must have known Lucien Gosselin.

JG: Oh sure, I know him. Sure, I know his wife. Oh yeah, he knew Lucien. He knew all the old time politicians. Now I'm talking back in, we were married in '46. He probably was, he probably, this would be in the early '50s and that's when all the, I imagine, I haven't seen them in, I'm sure most of them are deceased, but he knew all the old time politicians because that was his job. And then from there he went to Bates. At that time there was thousands of employees. Here again, did a lot of traveling because the home base was in New York, so he traveled a lot. And from there went to the hospital. So he was meeting tons of people because he always did,

he did union negotiations for Bates. He did public relations. That's what he was hired for at Bates, but then became, and he met all these union people from New York. They had to settle contracts all the time.

AL: What was his relationship like with Denny Blais?

JG: Well, Denny Blais was a union man and Hal was a company man, and so they would meet, they would meet to settle contracts constantly. Any time a contract came up, back then unions were very powerful around here because there were so many employees at Bates. And so they would meet and hash things out, and I remember them sitting in the living room here. And it was a matter of, if you give this up I'll give that up, and you know, it was negotiating, that's what it was. He knew Denny very well, they did business together all the time Hal was at Bates. Denny was a, Denny was a good guy, Hal liked him. He was a jovial guy, and he's still living. I'm sure he could tell you tales about Hal.

AL: We interviewed him.

JG: Yeah, did you? Yeah, did he talk about Hal?

AL: I don't remember if we knew to ask that. It was more than a year ago.

JG: They knew each other very well, very well, because they did all this negotiating for years. Hal was at Bates for nineteen years and they did all the contract negotiation. And here again he got to meet all the union, a lot of the union leaders from New England and knew all these union guys in Washington, because from the local it had to go to national, I guess, to ratify contracts and every other thing. He was totally involved with so many things, you know. I was home a lot alone, believe me. Can you see that, can you see that picture? Because he was always gone someplace.

AL: And you've been involved with the church over the years?

JG: Well, not partic-, well some, but not particularly. It's just that, I was pretty involved with the community at one time. I mean it would be more a, I was involved with the, I was president of the auxiliary at St. Mary's Hospital, and then Hal went to work for CMMC, so. But I still, you know, I still see all those girls that I'd become friends with. And I was involved with church groups and I was involved with lots of things. Junior Chamber had a women's group, I was involved in that. I was involved in a lot of things, but mostly social.

I mean, we put on, this is when I was much younger, but we would put on lots of, back then we had teas, you know. You probably don't even know what that is. But we, they were fund raisers and we would have, someone would open their home, we'd get someone in the city to open their homes to- and the women would come and make a donation. We had a silver bowl at the door, they called them silver teas, and make a donation, and we would have some of the members pour tea here and coffee there. And the women would get all dressed up with hats and gloves and everything, and they were in the afternoon and they'd be fundraisers. Well, that had to be organized and planned. And then we'd have card parties at the armory where we'd get three,

four hundred people, or more, five hundred people, and they were fundraisers. We charged admission and we'd have Ward Brothers or some local store put on huge fashion shows. I mean, they were fun things. Kids today don't get to do all these things. And then we'd have May balls, St. Mary's would have a May ball and the other hos-, CMMC would have a, when was their ball, probably in the fall, can't quite remember. And we would decorate the armory, the whole armory we would decorate for weeks, and everybody wore gowns and tuxes and. . . . Don't do any of that stuff any more.

AL: Sounds like fun.

JG: We had a wonderful time. We made so many plans because we'd all be working on these projects. I remember when I was involved with St. Mary's, once a week we used to have a workshop up there and we would start making decorations, we had one lady who was a genius at this kind of thing. And I remember one year we had made can-can, about four feet tall, can-can girls with crepe paper skirts and everything, and decorated the whole place. Even the ceiling we would decorate with streamers and everything. And there was one of these mirror balls at the time- that rotated and caught the light, you know, there used to be one of those. And another year we made shrubs. She made forms with chicken wire, we stuffed them with newspaper and spray painted them green, and we had shrubs all over. We made great big huge flowers. We would work six months to make the decorations for the ball, once a week. It was a social thing, too, I mean the girls- we all became friends. I have friends I made back in the '50s from these things.

And then the young women started to go to work. See, our meetings were in the afternoon. And all the young people were going to work and didn't have time for this kind of stuff, raising families and everything. They just, the last thing they wanted to do was go to a meeting, you know. But that's all we had to do, all my friends, we all stayed home, we didn't work, we all stayed home. So that to us was a big deal, that was, going to a meeting was a fun thing for us to do. And they were mostly, what we did was, didn't amount to anything, but they were fundraisers. The money went back to the hospital. That's what they were, we were raising funds all the time. And they really, I mean I, kids miss out, you young people miss out on lots of stuff really that we had fun doing. But times change. And then, as a matter of fact, then we reached a period where we said, well we're sick of doing this, it's time for the young people to do it. And then some of the young people started to do it, but then they, they went to work and, times change, that's all, it was just a matter that, times changing. But we had an awful lot of fun doing these crazy, crazy things. I guess they didn't amount to much. And it didn't change humanity in any way, but it was lots of fun, you know.

AL: I need to stop the tape here.

End of Side A

Side B

AL: We are now on side two of the interview with Juliette Gosselin on September 1st, 1999. In wrapping up the interview, is there anything that I haven't asked or mentioned that you feel would be important to add about your husband Hal, or about his connection with Senator

Muskie, or the times that you lived in growing up?

JG: Well, I don't know. I say, I know that Hal respected, and he knew his wife, Jane, he knew her. But it was mostly through his affiliation with so many different causes [that he] had a lot of respect for him.

AL: Do you have memories of the Depression years in Lewiston?

JG: No, I really don't. I was born in 1924, my mother was a homemaker and my father worked in the shoe shops. And I guess that we weren't too prosperous, but I never knew the difference. I remember having a lovely childhood, I had one sister, we didn't seem to lack for anything.

AL: Did you have any recollections of others being poor or needing food?

JG: Not really because I was brought up, I was born and brought up on Pettengill Street, and that at the time was considered like country. All my friends lived, I went to Catholic school, St. Peter's, and most of the students or the kids in my class lived right downtown, in the downtown area, Bartlett Street and Maple Street and Horton Street. And all those streets, which were residential, beautiful residential areas back then, they were nice places to live. And we lived on the outskirts, so I really didn't know too much about what was going on downtown because once we got home, while I was in grammar school, once we got home at night we didn't go any place because we lived far, they called that "Far!" My friends thought I lived far. And so I really didn't know anybody that needed or that, I wasn't close to anybody that needed, so I don't really know anything too much about that, except tales I heard, too, but I really don't remember. My father worked off and on because he was in very poor health. Matter of fact, he died when he was forty-three years old. So he, he was, he really was in poor health. But I have no recollection of too much going on in that.

AL: What was it like for you and your husband being Republicans in such a strongly Democratic city? Did you ever feel it, or?

JG: Hal loved it. He was a staunch Republican.

AL: In what ways did he like it, because he could argue with people?

JG: Yeah, I was going to say, Hal liked to discuss. He was a doer, Hal was a doer, he was a leader, there's no doubt about it, he was a leader and he was a doer. He ran, I remember he ran Roland Marcotte, have you interviewed Roland? He ran one of his mayoralty campaigns, I remember that. And he, he just dabbled. He just seemed to dabble in all this stuff, nothing dramatic that I know of, but he just enjoyed it. He just liked politics because he got an early taste of it having, working for the newspaper at that young age, meeting all these politicians, and somehow he liked it. And so, and from then going to work for the city as I say, he just had the opportunity to run into a lot of this stuff and evidently he liked it. I didn't always like it, but he did. He was having more fun than I was. And so I guess that's how it all came about. He, I don't even know how he happened to become a Republican, that, I don't have a recollection of that.

AL: No strong political feelings in his family, his parents, or?

JG: No, there was nothing. Actually, no one in his family was anything like that really, they were just, you know, common folk and no one was involved in politics or anything of that kind. He had a brother, his younger brother, who is still living, eventually became the head of the welfare department in Lewiston. But that job came after he had been working, I don't remember where he worked. Not with the government, not with politics, not with anything. He just, he was working someplace and evidently got offered this job so he did work for St. Mary's Hospital and he became director of the welfare department, I think, in Lewiston. But beyond that, I think that just came about through his, because of the opportunity he had of meeting these people through his work and enjoyed it, that's it.

AL: What did Hal's father do for a living?

JG: Hal's father worked, Hal's father worked for years and years until he was in his seventies, he worked for a cleaning concern, what was the name of that outfit? I should know because it was huge, the biggest cleaning, they did commercial cleaning, they did everything, had a big building in Auburn. What's the name of that outfit. I can't remember. And his mother worked in the shoe shop. And he had three brothers. But as I say, I don't know how that evolved, I really don't know, it just happened, it just happened.

AL: How have you seen the Lewiston community change over the years? Has it been for the good, what are the changes you've seen?

JG: Oh yeah, I have a lot of confidence, I have a lot of confidence in this city. I think, I think, of course a lot of the Franco-Americans had a hard time when they first came here years back. And I think it took a lot of years for things to change, the mentality, people were busy trying to make a living, all this kind of thing. But as this, the newer generations are coming up, people think differently. I mean, I think there's a lot of potential here. You can see it with so many things that are happening in this town. That Francophone deal is very important to our city, I think, and then the Bates Mill development. Paul is so gung-ho on that thing, I'm sure he told you about that. And we were talking about that. I went on a two day senior citizen trip, I got back yesterday, Monday and Tuesday. And we were talking about, the girls I went with, the fact that when this Bates thing came out people were very much against it. All you heard is it was going to bring up taxes and it was going to be this and that. But as publicity came out, as people got a chance to hear the details, as people had a chance to go through the mill, I took a tour myself during the festival, during the festival I worked at the library table. The library had tables on the sidewalk. We sold books, so I worked at that. And I took the time to go on a tour. And Hal worked there for nineteen years. I had never been through the mill, I didn't go there, you know. I went to the Bates Mill store, and his office once in a great while. But I took a tour and I was just totally impressed. And there was eighty people who showed up for the tour. They had to separate it in two and even at that it was a large group for the tour. And there were several people who had worked in the mill in this tour, for years. One woman especially and her husband, and they were so excited about what was going on. And I think that that has a lot to do, people have changed. I find a lot of people have changed their minds about that mill deal,

they're for it now, they can see, they can see the future in it, whereas a year or two years ago, people were not happy at all. But I find that things are just changing around here on lots of, on, on, you know, people just, it seems like people are always worried about taxes going up and changes taking place, and, people were worried about things somehow. But our children are thinking differently. And I think that's great, I think it's wonderful. Kids are getting very involved in lots of things. I call them kids, our children are reaching fifty, but they're still kids, you know. But they're interested and they're working at it and they're doing things. Of course they have more education, that's where the difference comes in.

AL: When you were growing up, was French spoken in your home?

JG: Both my mother and father spoke good English, they really did. As a matter of fact, they spoke more English than they did French. But I learned how to speak French before I could speak English. My sister and I spoke French before we could speak. And then back then, the Catholic school we went to, we had half a day of French, half a day of English. Now they have an hour of French, but back then it was half a day, half a day. So, but my children both speak French. They went to the same school I did. French was not as prominent then when they went to school as it was when I went to school, but they still learned French and they learned it at home. But their children will never speak French, you know, the children will never speak French. But my kids can converse and, we don't very much. My daughter speaks French. My daughter will speak French at a drop of a hat, but Paul, Paul's happy he knows how to speak French because he's using it sometimes.

AL: With his law practice.

JG: Sure. He, when he was in high school, like most kids that age back then, they didn't want to speak French any more, they didn't speak French at all. And of course when he got out to Notre Dame, well forget it, there was no French. So he came back and spoke, never spoke French. But then when he went into the business, it was handy to know, at least to know how to speak French and understand French, because if the occasion did come up I'm sure that he could use the second language. But before too many years it's going to be extinct around here. That's why this Francophone thing is really fighting hard to keep some French alive.

AL: Is there anything else?

JG: Well, I think we've covered bases. I wish I could give you more, but.

AL: It's been wonderful.

JG: I don't know. A lot of things happened so long ago, I can't remember. And at the time you didn't feel you'd ever, this would ever come up again. Things happened and like everybody else we were busy and I didn't, now I write dates in back of pictures now and things like that, but back then I thought what do I need to know that for, you know.

AL: Thank you very much.

JG: Okay, thank you.

End of Interview