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Mitchell, Prinella oral history interview

Andrea L'Hommedieu

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Interview with Prinella Mitchell by Andrea L'Hommedieu

Summary Sheet and Transcript

Interviewee

Mitchell, Prinella

Interviewer

L'Hommedieu, Andrea

Date

June 12, 2000

Place

Waterville, Maine

ID Number

MOH 194

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Biographical Note

Prinella (Dostie) Mitchell was born October 31, 1926 in Winslow, Maine. She married John Mitchell in 1952, brother to George Mitchell. They lived in Rhode Island, D.C., Bangor, Maine, Tucson, Arizona, and then moved back to Waterville, Maine. She became involved in the Democratic party in Waterville in the 1940s, and has supported George Mitchell's campaigns throughout the years.

Scope and Content Note

Interview includes discussions of: community histories of Winslow and Waterville, Maine; George Mitchell family; George Mitchell's 1974 gubernatorial campaign; Waterville high school basketball; and George Mitchell's senatorial campaign.

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Transcript

Andrea L'Hommedieu: This is an interview on June 12th, the year 2000 with Mrs. Prinella "Prin" Mitchell at her home at 14 West Street in Waterville, Maine. The time is approximately one o'clock in the afternoon. And if you could start by giving me your full name, including your maiden name, and spell them.

Prinella Mitchell: It's Prinella, not Prunella, P-R-I-N-E-L-L-A, but many people speak to me, they call me Prunella, not Prinella.

AL: My apologies.

PM: Yeah, right, yes. My maiden name was Dostie, D-O-S-T-I-E.

AL: And where and when were you born?

PM: On October 31st, 1926 at the old Thayer Hospital here in Waterville.

AL: And you grew up in what, in -?

PM: In Winslow, and I graduated from high school in 1945, the same year that John graduated, my husband, from Waterville High School in 1945. And I met John, and at that time,

of course, the Mitchell family wasn't too involved in politics until George, you know, ran for his first office. Oh it was governor, the governorship, yes, we worked very hard then. And of course, times have changed now with the TV and the computer, but then you used to like go door to door and be up late at night typing lists, telephone lists and so forth. But it was very interesting and we all worked very hard, all of the Mitchell family, and our children as they grew up also.

AL: Now, where did you and Johnny meet?

PM: At the Winslow grange hall, which was on Lithgow Street in Winslow. And after the last flood it was torn down, and all of the homes there were also torn down so there are only a few businesses left on Lithgow Street in Waterville. That's where we met, at the Winslow grange hall.

AL: Was that a place for social activities?

PM: Yes it was. Every Saturday night they had a dance and area high school students would go, and there was a small band, and it was something for teenagers to do. It was a fun time, yes, and that's where I met John. And that was in, we were both seniors, that was in, let's see, March, March or April of 1945, the year that we did graduate.

AL: And when did you get married?

PM: In 1952. John's parents were very adamant about their children going to college and that was during the war years. And so after John graduated from high school he joined the Navy. And his family, his mother especially, dear Sitto, made it very clear, (we called her Sitto, that's a Lebanese name for grandmother in Arabic) and she made it very clear that her boys were going to college. They could have girlfriends, but they were going to college before they got married, and so, and they did. John was in the Navy. He went in, I believe, in June or July, no, it was July, and then of course the war ended. So in 1946, in August of the next year, he was out of the Navy. And he went to boot camp in Great Lakes, Illinois and we corresponded back and forth. And then after he graduated he went to University of Rhode Island and came home as often as he could, but it's different today than it was then. He went all alone with one little suitcase on the train to Kingston, Rhode Island, and he was gone for four years.

Then when he came back, he graduated in '49 and we were married in '52. And then we went back to Rhode Island and, right after we were married, and he worked toward his master's degree and coached the freshman basketball team at URI. And then we went to Washington. I had gone to Washington before we were married and was very excited about the city, I just liked being there. So we went to Washington and we were there for two years.

And it was very enjoyable, we enjoyed it very much. I worked in a bank in Washington and John sold insurance in Washington. And we lived at the Woodner on 3636 16th Street, and it was a brand new building and it was huge, a huge complex. And the Red Sox stayed there, and that was in the days of Ted Williams. And he was such a fan of ours and we'd go to see him play at Griffith Stadium whenever he was there, and almost every time I ever saw him play he hit

a home run, in Boston or in Washington. And I can't tell you how many times I sat in the lobby just to get a glimpse of him. Nobody ever saw him. He'd go in the servant's entrance or he'd come in, you know, later, after the team came in. But it was an exciting two years in Washington. But then when we, when I was pregnant for our first child we talked about coming home, because we didn't feel that we wanted to be in Washington, raise a family, so we came back.

AL: What year was that?

PM: Nineteen fifty-four, '54, Susan was born in July. And John went to the University of Maine to finish his master's degree, and then got a coaching job at John Bapst Catholic High School in Bangor, and he was there for two years. And then we went to Arizona, to Tucson. We had a friend, Ed Doherty, who was a coach at Holy Cross in Boston, and he went out to the University of Arizona to coach football and talked to John on the phone about coming out and coaching at a Catholic high school. We thought it would be a nice experience and we did. And our youngest, before that, when we were in Bangor we had our second child Jane, and then our third daughter Rebecca was born in Tucson. Then my mother became ill and the expense of flying back and forth from Tucson to Waterville was more than we could afford to do. So we decided to make the move back to Waterville and we've been here ever since, in Waterville. We've been in this house for forty years. We bought this house when we came back and we've been here ever since.

AL: Now, when Johnny was away in the Navy and college, you were still in this community?

PM: Yes, right, I worked at that time, which was the Federal Trust Company, and it is now Fleet Bank, Fleet Bank bought it out, and I worked at the bank until I went to Washington. I went to Washington two years before we were married and worked at the Rigg's Bank down in Washington. And as I told you, after we were married we went back there to live.

AL: When you were here and he was away, I understand that you were somewhat active in attending the local Democratic meetings?

PM: Right, yes. A good friend of ours, Thelma LaSalle who was, well she was still teaching then in Winslow, I never had her as a teacher, but she was very fond of John, because she and my husband were great basketball fans. So through John I met her and she really was very instrumental in organizing the Kennebec County Women's Club. They met once a month at different homes, and Jane and Ed attended many of the meetings, and actually that's where I first got to meet them (John went to school with Jane, Jane was in his class in high school), but they attended all, I think, just in the Kennebec county area, like Hallowell, Augusta and Waterville, Winslow. And that was a very active, I think I was secretary or treasurer or something. Mrs. LaSalle got me involved in that, but it was enjoyable. And that really, in the early, that was about in the mid forties. That's when Ed was a lawyer in town, I think he was a lawyer right on the main street, and then he ran for mayor and lost. I don't know how, but he lost to Russell Squire, a Republican. But after that he, you know, he really, he made great strides.

AL: Now, did you know him well enough when he ran for mayor to support him?

PM: Oh yes, oh yes, we did, oh yes. I did leafleting for him in, you know, in the Winslow-Waterville area and at the football games, but I really didn't get involved until he, when he ran for governor. I think that was in the fifties.

AL: Fifty-four.

PM: Fifty-four, fifty-four, we were in Bangor then because we had, yes, John was at John Bapst then. And I wasn't active then, because I had a new baby; Susan was only three months old when we moved to Bangor.

AL: What were the county meetings like? What sort of things did they do and discuss, do you have any recollections?

PM: Well, that was quite a while ago. I can't remember too, too much. It was more of a social, you know. But they always had speakers, like Frank Coffin.

AL: You heard Frank speak?

PM: Yes, oh yes.

AL: What was your impression?

PM: Oh, he was a brilliant man, he really was a wonderful speaker and very fond of Ed, you could tell. And we would try to get speakers, you know, to come to the meetings.

AL: Did Ed ever do any speaking at the meetings?

PM: Oh yes, he did, oh yes he, he'd talk about social, you know, of course I can't remember that far back.

AL: Oh sure, specific issues.

PM: No, no, because they'd change. But he was so well admired, he really was, and such a warm person, as was Jane. And they had two or three children then, so, you know, it was an effort for them to get out like at seven o'clock at night. And the meetings only lasted about an hour, an hour and a half. And whoever entertained the meeting would have a little dessert. It was really a good start for Ed Muskie, and he was always interested in anything political. He was a very bright man and very compassionate, I found.

AL: Now when you would see Jane at these meetings, did you have that connection that Johnny had gone to school with her?

PM: Oh yes, oh yes, she was very, very warm and, yes, we did, you know, we were very, we were never very close. But Jane worked downtown on the main street, which was a bonnet and ladies clothing store. And she was, you know, really very, as I say, warm and kind, and very

nice person. And we, and you know, they have come back. They went back to several class reunions they had. At first, you know, you have a class reunion every five years and then every ten, and Jane and Ed came to quite a few class reunions even when he was in Washington. Of course, they summered here in Maine and they would make the trip, if at all possible, to come to a class reunion. And they had a big class. I can't remember how many but it was over two hundred, I believe, in their graduating class. As a matter of fact they're having their fifty-fifth class reunion in July, middle of July.

We haven't seen Jane. We saw her quite a few times when we were in Washington visiting with George when he was, you know, in the senate. And she was always so happy to see us. I'm not sure where she is now though. I don't know if she's in Washington. I think she is.

AL: Maryland.

PM: Maryland, outside of Washington, yes. But Winslow was always a very Democratic town. Of course it's changed a lot now with the building, you know, and the Back then it was Hollingsworth and Whitney Company, hard working people. And they, I'd say eighty percent of them were good solid Democrats, so it wasn't hard to get folks in Winslow. But here in Waterville, well Russell Squire, they owned a department store, a ladies apparel store in Waterville, so they were a very prominent family. And, of course, Ed had not been here that long when he did run for mayor, and running against a prominent Republican I think probably had something to do with the reason he lost.

Like when George lost the governorship to Ed [*sic* James "Jim"] Longley, you know, he, that was devastating to the family. Oh, we worked so hard. That's when we were, you know, I was working at the time and typing until two in the morning. And, you know, we were very confident, we all, everyone was quite confident that he would win. It was a set back when he lost. But from then on he really has done so well, hasn't he, yes. And I think, you know, so much of it had to do with his association with Senator Muskie, because he just admired him and when he took him on his staff, he was just so pleased and so eager to learn. Of course, he was a fast learner anyway, but he learned much about politics and government, and the Clean Air Act and the environment from Senator Muskie. He was so pleased to be, honored to work for him. He was with him quite a long time.

AL: Did he ever talk about his impressions of Muskie when he first met him, or did he talk about Muskie in later years as to what he felt he learned from Muskie?

PM: Oh well, he learned, he said, he has said many times that he felt all he, so much of what he had learned was from Senator Muskie in politics and the environment, and you know, many, many things. And, of course, he traveled with him when he was running. When was that? That was back in the eighty, no, when Senator Muskie ran for vice president, was that in the -?

AL: Oh, that was '68.

PM: In '68, yeah, not eighties, no, heavens. George went into the Senate in the eighties when Senator Muskie became Secretary of State, right. And then in the election I think in '82, right,

yes, yes. But, oh he found him very compassionate and very bright. He always said he was such a bright, bright man. We were fortunate that he settled in Waterville really, but it was unfortunate they did look, not unfortunate for him because after he lost the mayorship he did great things, really, he did.

AL: So, do you remember the '54 governor's campaign when he first ran for governor? Were you involved with that?

PM: No, now in '54 we were in Bangor. No, because that's when I, we had a new baby.

AL: Oh, that's right, you've mentioned that.

PM: So I really wasn't involved, no. But, let's see, in '68 when he, it was '68 that Senator Muskie -

AL: Ran for vice president.

PM: For vice president with Hubert Humphrey, right. That's when, we took the children, they were young, and traveled around New Hampshire and Massachusetts leafleting in parking lots and mills, you know. And even the children did, and it was a good experience for them as well.

AL: Have any of your children gone on to be politically interested?

PM: Well our daughter Susan, our oldest daughter, yes, she loves politics, she always has. She's now working in Augusta and she has, you know, she has never run for office or anything but she has been a hard worker for the Democrats and, locally and statewide. Our other, our daughter Jane, when George was running, had a party for him. They live out in Sydney, and he, they had I don't know, fifty or sixty people to an afternoon tea or coffee. But that's about it.

AL: Now, let me go back, when you became part of the Mitchell family, what was that like, what were Johnny and George and Paul's and Barbara's parents like?

PM: Oh, they were very warm people and hard working. John's mother worked in the mill at night, three to eleven shift, got a ride to Skowhegan. She worked in the woollen mill and always prepared their big meal at noon, because then the children had an hour for lunch at school and they would walk home from school. And they would walk from Silver Street and they lived on Front Street and that was quite a walk, but they'd walk home for lunch. And because his mother would work the three to eleven shift she would have their hot meal, their big meal, at night, I mean at noon time. And John's father also would come home and they'd all have their big meal at noon time. But she always left something on the back of the stove, a hot meal, a lighter meal, for dinner at night, or supper they called it then, you know. And, oh, she was a very hard working And she always had, like Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners with all of the family and, you know, and then after we got married and there were quite few grandchildren. It was such a warm, loving place to go. And our children have fond memories of going to Sitto's for Thanksgiving and Christmas dinner.

AL: Have you ever been, have you ever heard your husband and his brothers or sister talk about what they felt their parents instilled in them as they were growing up, the values?

PM: Oh yes, great values. Honesty. Of course then there wasn't any TV and they read a lot, they all, they would read and John's father would help them with homework, because John's mother was working. And they spent a great deal of time at the Waterville Boy's Club after school. They'd go right to the Boy's Club and then be home at a certain time and have their dinner. And, of course, Barbara was the youngest, and she was the only girl, and she would do whatever she had, you know, the motherly part, and she's been so close to her brothers. Barbara has always been very, very close to all of her brothers. She used to wait on them, and she still does. Yes, so they're a really loving family and very religious family. Of course they live close to the church, and John's mother was always reaching out to help someone, as busy as she was. And their dad as well. They didn't have a car back then. But they were a very close knit, warm family.

And their main objective for their family was to go to, they always made it very clear as I told you that they wanted their children to get a college degree and they all went to college, every one of them. They worked hard. But, of course, back then after the war, Paul and John and Robbie had the G.I. Bill, and George did too. Yes, they all, they were all in the service except Barbara, she was too young. So with the help of the G.I. Bill and what they could save, they all got college degrees. And that was their main objective for their children. They wanted them more than anything to get a degree because, of course, they never had that opportunity. But John's mother was very, very bright. She would, she was one of the few people in the area, Andrea, that could read and write Arabic, so many of the families then would come to her to write letters back home to Lebanon. And she, again, took the time to read their letters for them and to write for them, back home in Lebanon. A wonderful, great family.

AL: And what role did basketball play in the Mitchell family?

PM: Well it, back then of course during the war, Andrea, there wasn't very much going on, you know. And they went to the Boy's Club and they played basketball like maybe two hours every night after school, so that they really were good basketball players. And they were fortunate at that time, the high school team had a very good basketball team and they said, because they played all the time at the Boy's Club. And it played a great role in the whole community, Andrea, because it was something to look forward to and forget about the war. And they would be, the high school was right here, Andrea, on Gilman Street, right, you know, around the corner and it was very difficult to get tickets to those basketball games. Of course, I lived in Winslow then, I didn't know John, but I'd come over to a game once in a while and you'd be in line right down the street, just stand in line to get into the basketball games.

But John's father seldom went to a basketball game. When they won the Eastern Maine championship, he didn't go. When they won the New England, I'm sure you've probably heard this story, John's mother took a bus and went to Providence to Brown gymnasium where they won the New Englands. Yes, and she had a little difficulty speaking English, you know, but she went to Providence for that. And she didn't miss many games. Maybe at that time she had changed shifts; she may have been working days. She didn't work at night all the time. Most of

the time she did, but I think in the forties, oh I believe she was working in Waterville at the Wyandotte [Worsted Company] Mill as a weaver, she was a weaver. And so she was able to go to the high school games at, you know, at night. And it was, it was great for the community.

AL: Was Johnny considered the best basketball player?

PM: Yes, he really was, yes, he was very talented. But Paul played and Paul was older than John, Paul was a year ahead of John in school. John, I believe he played as a freshman. Of course then you could play, you know, as a freshman, so he played, you know, for four years. So he was captain of the basketball team in 1945. It was just an exciting time for the families and the community. And I believe there were four or five Lebanese boys that were on that basketball team when they won the championship in 1944. And they won sixty-seven straight games without a loss which was quite a feat, you know, back then, and it was great. They lost, I believe, to Hillhouse in 1945, John's senior year.

There were the Jabar boys, Shiro, and they not only played basketball, but they played football and baseball as well and I think that goes along with, you know, if you're an athlete. And, of course, with the war some of the students had gone to war, the seniors had, you know, so there were limited athletes. But these, they played at the Boy's Club as a team all the time, so I think that's why they excelled in basketball especially. But they were also football champs that year. I believe both years, '44 and '45, I'm not sure. They just had winning ways.

And, of course, then that's why John when to University of Rhode Island, because Frank [W.] Keaney [Bates College, Class of 1911] was the coach and he was an outstanding coach. He developed the "fast break" which was quite new then. And so John, he wanted to play for Frank Keaney and he did only his freshman year and then he had a new coach called Red Hair. But he had a wonderful college four years playing basketball, and he was captain of the basketball team at Rhode Island his senior year and they had good teams.

And they traveled, you know, quite a bit. I went down with the LaSalle family, with Mrs. LaSalle, this great Democrat. They played in North Carolina in a Dixie Classic tournament and they took me down. And John was named on the all tournament team which was quite a feat, because there were college teams from all over the east and very good players. And John was only five-eight but he made that up, he made up for that with his speed and he really was, a good shooter, he could shoot. That's why, that's how he got the name Swisher, you know, they'd call him Swisher. They still do. Our grandchildren call him Swisher, because he'd shoot that basket from way out and it would hardly move the nets, you know.

Unfortunately I didn't, I wasn't interested in Waterville basketball, coming from Winslow, until . . . Well in 1944 they took the train back from Providence and there were, oh, I think four thousand people at the railroad station greeting them because they had won the New England championship and they had beaten Somerville, you know, a huge school. And they had an outstanding player, Tony Lavallee, but John froze the ball the last, I don't know, I can't remember how many minutes. But then you could, you wouldn't, you don't, now you have to take it out of bounds, you know, so many minutes. But he froze the ball and they couldn't get it away from him. So it was a great time. And there were four thousand people.

And my, a friend, my dear friend, Christine, who married John Winkin, she passed away a few years ago, she called me, she was one of the few that had a car and we were living out in the country and she called and asked did I want to go to the railroad station to see this team come back. I said, "No thank you, I'm not interested." And I didn't go. I said, "No, I really don't want to go." And it was the next year that I had met John.

AL: If you'd only known.

PM: Yes. But that, it was a great thing for the city, for the whole community, you know, the championship. Everybody went to those games, you know. As I said, it was during the war and it just gave them a great lift, the people, the townspeople. And you know, they still talk about it and some of the young people say, "Gee, they're still talking about it and it was fifty years ago." Actually more than that now, like fifty-five. But it was a great time.

AL: What, do you have any recollections of Johnny's aunt, Jane Kilroy?

PM: Oh yes, Jane. Of course, without a car the Mitchells, they never did get together too, too often, but Aunt Jane and Uncle Frances used to come up occasionally, and we're still in, they're still in touch with Richard and Bobby, Richard and Bobby and who's the other one, I can't think of the other one. But they still see them occasionally. We saw Richard when George spoke, when he was on in Portland two or three weeks ago, Richard was there.

Aunt Jane was a real Democrat, oh my, and she loved, she had a beautiful voice and she'd love to get up and sing at all, like the Democratic state convention, and she was a really hard worker. And she was in the legislature I believe, boy, she was probably the greatest Democrat in that area. She loved, loved politics. And she was so excited for George, you know, was interested in politics. But she's been gone for quite some time now, I don't know how long, probably fifteen years at least, or more, yes. Of course, you know that Uncle Frances and John's father were brothers, and Jane was Uncle Frances' wife, so that's that connection.

AL: Did she ever, Jane, did she ever work on any of George's campaigns?

PM: Oh, I'm sure she did, oh, in the Portland area. Yes, see, I'm not sure Andrea if he was, I'm sure she was alive when he ran for governor. After that I'm not sure, you know, I really can't remember because as I say, she's been gone quite a long time.

AL: Now you talked about, I'm going to switch back to the governor, George's gubernatorial campaign and you talked about working on the lists and such. What was your feeling during that campaign, did you have a sense that you thought he would lose, or what was -?

PM: No, no, we were, we all, no, we felt quite confident, you know. And, you know, we worked so hard. Of course a lot of people work hard and lose. But no, and gee I can remember so vividly we were going to Portland of course, that night, you know, for the returns, and were in the den watching the six-thirty CBS news and they projected that Longley was going to be the winner, and oh, oh we were, we felt, oh no, and John said oh yes, you know, they aren't usually

wrong, they usually aren't wrong. But it was a long trip to Portland that night, and then you know we really became quite nervous. But then, you know, of course, you accept it, you have to. And we stayed in Portland that night, we didn't drive home after that. And they had a, we had a nice gathering and, because he had a lot of support, you know.

But yet, I remember we were leafleting at the Shop 'n' Save supermarket which was in the Concourse, which is now the Concourse in Waterville, and we had a sense that we were passing out leaflets and people, some of the people weren't interested, they didn't even want to take, take the leaflet. And we got back and at dinner we talked about that and John says, "Well I don't really think that means too much, you know, people are busy." It was like at five, no, four o'clock. "They're busy shopping and going home and preparing dinner and like that." But then when we heard that news report from CBS at six-thirty and they kind of projected, said that it looked like Longley may be the winner. But then you know as we got, when we were down there you know how it changes and all, oh, we'd get excited and then, oh. But -

AL: What, over the years have you seen George develop a style or just develop as a person?

PM: Oh yes. Of course, he matured. Right out, he graduated from Bowdoin [*sic* high school] when he was only sixteen. And then he went in the service and he was in Germany in intelligence, and when he came back from Germany he matured a great deal. Of course, you know, I can't recall how long he was there, Andrea, but he had really matured. And then he went to Bowdoin and he just worked, he was, his work ethic was incredible. He always gave a hundred and ten percent in whatever he did, and we were so happy to support him and we worked, of course the family worked so hard whatever he wanted, intended to do. And it was, but the good times were when he won the Senate seat, you know, that was just, and from then on it's just been roses for George and we all, we just think so much of him and we're so proud of all he has accomplished. But he worked so hard, Andrea, you know, it's incredible. The time, the hours he spends, and he's an avid reader, he always was. He was always reading. I think today with television children don't read like they used to, you know, and it's, I know our grandchildren watch TV. Although I have to say my, our daughters, they don't watch television during the week, only on weekends, but I think the TV has taken such a big step backward, I believe.

AL: Let me stop, I'm sorry, real quick and turn over.

End of Side A
Side B

AL: We are now on side B of the interview with Mrs. Prinella Mitchell. And we were just talking about George and my next question is, what about the time he ran for the Senate? What was that like, that campaign?

PM: Now that wasn't, we weren't, we were back here in this house in Waterville. Again we worked very hard, and he had a lot of respect, and many people in this area worked hard for George when, you know, he ran for the Senate. And John went with him on speaking engagements and, because it had been a long time since the high school basketball

championships and all but when he'd go, especially up to Aroostook County you know, that's, they love basketball up in Aroostook County and they'd mention John to George, so it was good for John to be with him. And he enjoyed . . . John was teaching at the time, but whenever he had the opportunity he would go with George to campaign for him. But he worked hard. I believe he went to every high school in the state, you know, and spoke to the students and he worked very, very hard, long, long hours as he still does.

AL: Do you get to see him very often, or?

PM: Not much any more. We go to Florida after basketball season. John still coaches up at Colby part time, and after the season is over we go to Florida. I have a sister there who has, lives year round, and John's sister Barbara has a, had a place, she sold it, but we still go to Key Biscayne with her for about a month. And George and Heather have a place, or rent a place in Key Biscayne, so the most we see him is when we go to Florida. But then, Andrea, like we were there in March and the first of April, and he was only there on the weekends; he was traveling all the time. But they got to play tennis and cribbage.

The family always, they loved to get together to play cribbage: Barbara's husband, Eddie [Atkins], and Robbie and Paul and John and George. Those were the good times when George had the time to play cribbage together and they had, it was very, they enjoyed it so much. And tennis, George doesn't have time, much time to play tennis now, but they did play tennis. And then in August, when George is up in Bar Harbor region, we go up usually for his birthday in August and spend an overnight, and they get time together. But other than that, like if he's in the Portland area we try to get to see him, but his schedule now, he doesn't get home very often any more.

AL: What are the things that keep him so busy. I mean, of course the Ireland, that is ongoing all the time for him?

PM: Well, no, not as much any more. But he's on quite a few, he's on Board of Directors, you know, for many big, like FedEx and Disney. So he travels, oh, he travels a great deal all over the country and that's what takes him away from Andrew, who's a beautiful little three-year-old. Oh, he's precious. They're so close to him, and of course he doesn't see him enough I'm sure. But they're in New York now and he gets to take him to Central Park walking and, oh, he's a precious baby. George is thrilled to have a boy and have his wonderful mother, wonderful couple. But he's so busy we just don't get to see him like we used to, not at all.

AL: Now Johnny's brother, Paul, still lives in the area.

PM: That's right, he does, uh-huh.

AL: And Barbara, too, for most of the year.

PM: And Barbara lives right down, just down the street, yes. And Robbie's widow, wife, Janet, lives up off Mayflower Hill, so we're all here and we're very close. We're going out to lunch on Friday, we try to get together for lunch occasionally, and we're very close, very close

family; wonderful family. I'm so happy to be a part of this family, a beautiful family.

AL: We touched upon some of the changes in this community, or in society as a whole and you talked about television changing the way we do things and view things, and computers. Are there other things that you've seen change in the Waterville and Winslow community in the years you've lived here?

PM: Well, of course when Scott Paper closed in Winslow a couple or three years ago, that was devastating to this community, you know, people who had worked, and they really made good money over there and they had a really good lifestyle. And then all of a sudden, you know, like two hundred people were laid off and that, I believe it was just before that, that Hathaway was threatened, they threatened to close and it isn't a depressed area but it isn't far from it now, really and truly. A lot of those people are without jobs. And they were, you know, they had worked there like most of their lives so they had no jobs and really nothing else to turn to. But thank goodness for Colby College. Colby and Thayer Hospital, we're fortunate to have three hospitals, well, three, yes, three hospitals in the area. And they do employ a lot of people. But these poor people that lost, you know, their jobs at Scott, it was, and of course times have changed. When I look back, like the main street, well forty or thirty years ago, of course it was during the war where everything flourished, but oh, the main street was just the place to go, but as it is in many communities, these (*telephone interruption*).

AL: Well, we were just talking about the community and how it's changed, before we paused. And I guess one thing I'd like to ask is neighborhoods and, I've heard a lot of people talk about the way neighborhoods have changed and letting your children go out into the neighborhood and play. Is there still a sense in the Waterville area of close knit neighborhoods where you know all the neighbors?

PM: Well, we've been in this neighborhood for forty years. You know, it's such a mobile society now, people come and go, they move quite a bit, and I've seen that happen right here on West Street. People move in and out, especially right next door, that's an apartment building so people, you know, mobile and they move around quite a bit.

I don't think, of course times have changed since I was growing up, but we used to have, play hopscotch and ride bicycles as a group, you know, neighborhood group. That doesn't exist anymore I don't think, or maybe it exists but not like it used to. I think because children are in the house watching television, I really do. That has a bearing on being a close knit neighborhood. I, now, when John, when the Mitchell family, when they were growing up, when they lived at the Header Falls, of course they were young and they had very little play area, but they played baseball and, you know, and basketball. They'd have a, maybe they didn't have a hoop but they had, they'd go through the motions, and I don't think there is that close knit neighborhood any more, I just don't.

AL: I have a question that's a follow up to what, something we were talking about earlier regarding the Democratic committee meetings in the 1940s. Do you recall if there's anyone who attended those early meetings that may still be living? We're trying to find people we haven't picked up on who might be good sources for early Democratic

PM: Right, oh Lord no, I don't think so. Of course that was fifty years, fifty-five years ago, and I was young then, I mean, yes, I was young then.

AL: You were probably one of the youngest (*unintelligible word*)?

PM: Yes, I really was, I was really right out of high school, probably eighteen, eighteen years old. And most of them like this Mrs. LaSalle, the teacher, she had been teaching for probably thirty years then, she was, you know, a bit older than I was. And most of the, now there was Marianne and Bill Dostie, they were very active, they've both gone. There were the Gadowskis, they're gone. No, honestly I can't, I'm sorry to say I can't, I really can't think of anyone. Have you ever interviewed the Bradstreets, Seth Bradstreet? They aren't from Kennebec County but they were real Democrats.

AL: Yes, he's someone we're going to be interviewing this summer, we hope.

PM: Oh yes, they're, we saw them at, Barbara took John and me out to Bangor to the Penobscot Country Club on Saturday for John Baldacci, and the Bradstreets were there. They are the best Democrats, they're everywhere, you know, they were really, real Democrats.

AL: Now when you say the Bradstreets, it's Seth and his wife?

PM: Seth and Betty.

AL: Betty, okay.

PM: Yes, Seth and Betty. And they also have a place in Key Biscayne where we see them when we go to Florida. He was a big potato farmer. He's kind of, you know, his son has taken over the business, but they know a lot of names in the Democratic Party because they attend every function that goes on for the Democrats in the state, not only county but all over the state. They go to state conventions and Betty's been on committees and they're real good Democrats.

Like my dear friend Mrs. LaSalle, she was a real, she was national committeewoman when John Kennedy was president. Oh, what a thrill that was for her. I remember she was telling about going out to California to the Democratic convention. That was her life. Now, her husband was a Republican but he had, he'd let her go and he was proud of her, because she worked so hard, but he didn't attend any function. But Mrs. LaSalle was a great Democrat. And she came from Aroostook County, Bridgewater, Maine actually, and took the train to Farmington State Normal School back then, that was Farmington State Normal School, on the train. But that was many years ago. She was a great Democrat, loved politics. Well, I can't think of much more Andrea, I don't know what to -

AL: You have any stories that the family has told, Muskie stories or Mitchell family stories that gives us a sense of who they are?

PM: Muskie stories no, I don't, I wouldn't because I told you I really didn't know Ed that

well. Mitchell stories, I don't know, I really can't come up with anything.

AL: That's fine. Great. Now is there anything that I sort of, I haven't asked you that you think we should add today?

PM: No, I can't think of anything, Andrea.

AL: Okay, well thank you very much.

PM: You're very welcome.

End of Interview