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Trafton, Richard oral history interview

Meredith Gethin-Jones

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Interview with Richard Trafton by Meredith Gethin-Jones

Summary Sheet and Transcript

Interviewee

Trafton, Richard

Interviewer

Gethin-Jones, Meredith

Date

March 23, 1999

Place

Auburn, Maine

ID Number

MOH 075

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Biographical Note

Richard “Dick” Trafton was born in Lewiston, Maine, January 17, 1949. Willis Trafton, his father, ran against Edmund Muskie for governor in 1956. Richard attended Andover Phillips Academy and then Dartmouth College (Class of 1971), majoring in Geography with a focus in urban and regional planning. His wife, Barbara (McKnight) Trafton, attended Wellesley College. She marched on Washington to protest Vietnam, ran for city council, and served three terms in Maine legislature immediately preceding Richard (1976-1982). They met while she was pool director at YWCA and he was Lewiston city planner for three years. Both volunteered going door-to-door for McGovern during the 1972 Presidential campaign, were delegates to Maine State Democratic Conventions, and are involved in alternative area newspapers to the *Sun Journal*.

For graduate school, Trafton attended the University of Maine Law School, studying real estate, tax and business law and physical land-use planning. He joined his father’s law firm when Damon Scales was appointed as a judge. Trafton is part of an Auburn downtown planning group and was made Chair of the Charter Commission in Auburn in 1978. He was a State Senator, District 12, from 1982 to 1986, serving as Chair of the Judiciary Committee during his first term and as Chair of the Committee on Legal Affairs during his second term. He also chaired several governor-appointed “Blue Ribbon Commissions” dealing with tort reform, land use enforcement, and restructuring the probate court system. He served as Mayor of Auburn for one, one-year

term and two, two-year terms from 1989 to 1994.

Scope and Content Note

The interview includes discussions of: Muskie's first term as Governor from 1955-1956; the 1956 gubernatorial campaign during which Willis Trafton ran as a Republican candidate as a means of strengthening Eisenhower's presidential campaign in Maine; Trafton's childhood view of Muskie as his father's nemesis; Muskie's 1976 Senate campaign; Muskie providing sound bites for Barbara and Richard Traftons' state legislature campaigns; environmental protection (Clean Water and Maine's paper companies); Barbara Trafton's contact with Muskie's office in connection with her involvements with marches on Washington in protest of Vietnam; Model Cities (block grants, UDAG, downtown improvements for Lewiston, Bangor, Portland); Muskie support for Bath Iron Works, Limestone/Loring Air Force Base and Kittery; Willis Trafton's political leanings (Nelson Rockefeller-like liberal Republicanism, fiscal conservatism, individual rights in social issues) as predominant in Maine in the 50s and early 60s; French being the prominent language of businesses on Lisbon St., Lewiston, Willis giving campaign addresses in French; a shift in the early 70s and 80s towards conservative Democrats (fiscal restraint); Lewiston/Auburn as the center of textile and shoe mills (the Strike of 1937, movement of textiles to the Carolinas during the 40s and 50s); Trafton, Scales and Smith (or Trafton, Smith and Matzen) country law practice; issues he faced as Mayor of Auburn, such as the budget, economic development, local tax rate, political organization; and a rewriting of the city's charter which changed the terms of office, staggered terms, and expanded city council; Cooperative efforts between Lewiston and Auburn, including economic development, bus service, Central Maine Power, and the Great Falls Hydro Station; his family history of public service; judiciary issues he dealt with including liquor liability, tort reform, and land use enforcement; and his experiences in the 1980s in Senate district 12 (Auburn, Hebron, Mechanic Falls, Poland).

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Transcript

Meredith Gethin-Jones: Okay, this is an interview with Richard Trafton conducted by Meredith Gethin-Jones on March 23rd, 1999 at his law office in Auburn. Could you please state your full name and spell it?

Richard Trafton: My name is Richard L. Trafton, T-R-A-F-T-O-N.

MJ: And could you please tell me your date, you place and date of birth?

RT: I was born in Lewiston on January 17, 1949.

MJ: And the names of your parents and siblings and your place in the family?

RT: That's going to take a little while. I am one of nine children. My parents were Willis A. Trafton, Jr. and Virginia G. Trafton, who lived in Auburn, Maine. I have eight brothers and sisters; starting from the oldest moving on to the youngest I have a brother Peter, a sister Susan, a brother Jelsom, a sister Sally, a sister Becky, a brother John, a sister Barbara and a sister Frances.

MJ: Wow, that's a very large family. Could you tell me what your parents' occupations were?

RT: My father was a lawyer. He started the law firm in which I'm involved now. He also was involved in public service. He was in the Maine legislature and Speaker of the House for one term.

MJ: And your mother?

RT: My mother graduated from Wellesley College, taught school in Connecticut for a while, also at Mt. Holyoke College, and then did not work after that other than in the home.

MJ: Did your, were your parents religiously affiliated?

RT: They belong to a Congregational Church, here in Auburn.

MJ: What were their political and social attitudes?

RT: Well, my father called, did call himself a "liberal Republican." And by that I think he would have been compared and did compare himself to Nelson Rockefeller in the Republican Party, feeling strongly about fiscal conservatism but believing strongly in individual rights in terms of social issues. Back in the '50s and early '60s the liberal side of the Republican party was relatively strong and that was the predominant wing of the party in Maine at the time, unlike today where Republicans seem to be so much more conservative.

MJ: So what was your family, or your parents' attitudes towards different groups in terms of ethnicity or economic standing in this area where they were influential?

RT: I'm not sure I understand the question. Are you saying, are you asking what their feelings were, or how they related to different groups?

MJ: Both.

RT: All right. Both my parents were very well educated. My father went to Yale, Harvard Law School. As I said my mother graduated from Wellesley. They both had many opportunities for worldwide travel; they had been exposed to a lot of different people, different cultures, different viewpoints. I would never have considered them parochial in any sense, although both of them ended up living the longest part of their life in a small town in Maine; Auburn, Maine.

They clearly were upper class in terms of socio-economic standing. My father's father had been a successful businessman in Auburn and my father grew up in very comfortable surroundings, as did my mother in New Haven, Connecticut, so that they were unlike the larger number of people growing up Lewiston-Auburn, Maine. My father had gone away to both prep school and college and also graduate school for that matter, so he had lived outside of Maine and then had come back. He was well-respected by people of all socio-economic classes in Auburn. Many of his clients were French-Canadian; not particularly wealthy but knew the family, knew his father, knew the reputation of the family and would come to him expecting sound counsel, respect and honest answers.

And that was the position he enjoyed and my mother enjoyed in the community. When I grew up, there was little sense of separation between our family and other people living on the street. We lived in a relatively mixed neighborhood; we had friends who were Jewish, Catholic, we, I had friends that were black, even though very few black people lived in Auburn-Lewiston, Maine. Our, we had many visitors from different countries of different backgrounds. And I think clearly my parents had the view of exposing their children to as wide a range of ideas, of people, of culture that they possibly could.

MJ: What did they, what was their attitude towards the Franco, or, what did they feel the atmosphere of the Franco-American population was in Auburn and Lewiston, and was there tension, did th- . . .?

RT: I never felt any tension as it related to my parents. In fact, both my parents spoke French, Parisian French that they had learned in school. They'd traveled in France, would use their French locally. When I was growing up I remember walking down Lisbon Street, when I was, oh, about ten years old or, about that age. And the predominant language was French in the shops and it was never threatening. It was, shop keepers and other people speaking French might immediately switch over to English when we walked in, you know. We frequented a number of regular stores and people knew us and knew, they would identify the Anglos as opposed to the Francos. But never did we feel any, any strain in that relationship. And if anything it was culturally a more interesting place to be. My father gave several campaign

addresses locally in French, enjoyed the fact that he could speak French and occasionally talked to some of his clients in French. Although, clearly, English was his predominant language and French was something that he simply enjoyed.

MJ: Can you tell me how your family affected you when you were growing up? I know that's a very broad question.

RT: It is, but I think I've alluded to probably the most important part, and that is that my parents had placed a great deal of emphasis on education and exposure to different ideas, different people, different cultures, different languages. There was always something new, whether it was a foreign exchange student from Brazil or friends from Europe or Australia, or travel in this country and beyond. My parents, rather than guiding us along the track on one particular set of beliefs, felt very strongly that we would pick up our own values and our own beliefs if in fact we were exposed to a variety of different people, cultures and ideas. Sure, the base values of family and education and hard work were instilled early. But never did I sense there was any limiting factors, at least imposed by my parents as to what was available to me in terms of education, as to where I wanted to go to school, how I wanted to spend my summers. We were given as broad a range of opportunities as we could.

MJ: So it sounds to me like your parents gave you a lot of freedom in terms of who you wanted to be. But despite that, did you end up with your, the same political attitudes as your parents?

RT: To a degree. My general beliefs probably weren't too far distant from my father. My father was a, as I described, a liberal Republican. I, when I served in public office I was a conservative Democrat and although that raised many eyebrows because I was the first active Democrat in, among my parents' children, the parties had changed. The Democratic Party had flourished. There was a strong element in the Democratic Party in the early '70s and '80s that was very similar to the liberal Republicans which, as I say, had generally phased out. So conservative Democrats- liberal Republicans were very similar. When I describe a "conservative Democrat," what I'm referring to is a Democrat who clearly is enrolled in the Democratic party but has some conservative views in terms of finances, fiscal restraint; not quite the Johnson "great society" Democrat but feeling very strongly about personal and individual freedoms. And in that way, as I said, [I am] quite similar to that liberal Republican way.

MJ: Did you share your parents' religious beliefs?

RT: Did I go to the same church while I was young? Yes, I did go to Sunday school; I would sit in church. I can't say that I am an active church-goer. At different points of my life I would go to church more regularly than otherwise. I guess technically I'm a member of the Methodist Church as opposed to the Congregational Church at the moment. But I can't say that I'm, I can't say that the church is as large a part of my life as it was in my parents'.

MJ: Can you also tell me if you think that your social outlook is the same as your parents', if they influen-, I know that they influenced you to the extent with providing everything and asking you to make your own decisions given your options, but do you think that you've adopted the same social outlook as them?

RT: To a degree. I mean, I think that's one of those questions that you keep asking yourself as you get older. Occasionally you will hear your parents' words come out of your mouth when you least expect it, and inevitably that happens. In some ways, both personal and from a more public view, I've tried to differentiate myself from my parents. Not that I find, not that I disagreed with my parents' approach. I think it may be more generational. But I find it striking as I get older how many similarities there are between my parents and myself. And as I say, that may simply be inevitable; those initial values that you adopt start coming out in funny ways.

MJ: Now, in terms of politics, was that, were politics discussed at the dinner table, so to speak?

RT: Oh, sure, I mean, politics was always an issue. My father had a clear interest in politics at our dinner table discussions. . . . And we would have a sit-down dinner every night and there would be a topic of conversation. It, rarely was it the sort of informal, "Gee, what did you do today? And what are you thinking about? How are you feeling?" But there was almost a preset discussion at the dinner table and politics often would come into play, whether it would be local politics as to a zoning issue or a state issue or, such as an east-west highway, or a national issue. I mean, as I said, my parents were very well-educated, very well-read, they kept up to date on public issues and expected their children to. I think one of the ways they encouraged that, was to have these discussions.

MJ: So your parents really encouraged you to learn and keep up with politics and they informed you a lot?

RT: Yeah. I'm not sure they informed us as much as they created the interest. They were interested, they discussed these issues. We would have visitors. We would have, frequently we would have people at the dinner table and there would be broader topics of conversation and we were exposed to these public issues, and for some reason or another the interest took hold.

MJ: Were there any other influences in your life, growing up, that were significant?

RT: I guess whenever you grow up you have significant influences. In what way? Significant as to what kind of development?

MJ: Well, I don't, well, political for one. It sounds to me like the community in itself influenced you to an extent because it was so diverse, and your family influenced you. Were there any other people who greatly affected your life?

RT: I'd have to say family probably was the most influential. You know, clearly, exposure to a high quality of education was important. I mean, when I was thirteen I was in prep school in Massachusetts, as were most of my brothers and sisters, so that that exposure to people from all over the world, to very good teachers, professors, clearly had a major impact. So from the time I was thirteen, you know, travel, different activities during the summer, whether it would be guiding on the Allagash River or working up in the White Mountains, all those things had some influence. But the, I can't point to one individual and say that person had such an impact on my life that it went in a different direction.

MJ: Now you've already told me a little bit about the Auburn-Lewiston scene in terms of shops and speaking French and so forth, but could you give me a, I guess, more specific description perhaps of what Auburn was like or anything that stands out to you that you remember about the city?

RT: Well, I assume you're pointing to the time when I was growing up in the '50s and '60s because, as I said, I went off to prep school when I was thirteen in 1963 I guess. So, the size of the community was about the same as it is today, twenty-five thousand in Auburn, forty-two thousand in Lewiston, so it hasn't expanded greatly. It was more of a manufacturing community; more blue-collar, if one can believe that the changing roles of the schools whether it be Bates College or Central Maine Technical College or L.A. College, all those had an impact, but I remember it as predominantly blue-collar, low-income, French-Canadian, not a risk-taking community. What was, what had been good for the prior generation was good for the current generation in terms of, you know, economic development efforts. The communities would make an effort but there was no great momentum to sort of move the community forward.

It was small town. I mean, as I said that I remember, partly because of my family name, when I would go in to a store or a library or an office I would be known, my family would be known. In that sense it was a small town, and I guess that had an impact. Because most of the, whatever you did people were looking at you as a member of your family. It was a comfortable community to grow up in, I mean, there were, many friends that I had through elementary school. I grew, the, for, my first school was a two-room school house, two grades in each room. And the, one of the teachers was the same teacher my father had so that there was this sense of continuity from generation to generation. And I think that was true in most of the neighborhoods.

It was in the '50s and '60s and clearly in the '70s when you had a lot of people leaving the community for more opportunities economically in other states, in other locations. And I'm sure that started before that but I really didn't notice it until the '50s and '60s when I would see families moving out. Clearly this wasn't a magnet community that attracted a lot of people. And when I went to Massachusetts to school I immediately realized that I was clearly not as worldly as a lot of my fellow students at prep school. So, there was a sense of, a bit of a sense of insecurity in growing up in a sort of small-town Maine; that lack of worldliness, not a sense of being, not an inferiority complex in any way but just less of a, more parochial, not as worldly.

MJ: Can you, how would you characterize it politically?

RT: Well, I think a lot of those comments that I just made have an impact on its politics. It, socially this community has never been a risk-taking community. And there was a wonderful seminar in the early '70s that I remember about the "mill town mentality". And I guess that's what I'm sort of pointing at, that blue-collar manufacturing communities tend to hold on to what they have rather than drop jobs, take risks and move the community forward. And that has been described as a "mill town mentality" that it has, and it's a lode stone around the neck of these communities that have dragged it down. That's not always the case. And you can point to examples of things that have made the community move forward in some ways in terms of

economic development, of social development, some of the things like going out and lobbying hard for L.A. College in the location of Lewiston, the Lewiston-Auburn Technological College.

But this community geographically is very much like, you know, Hanover, New Hampshire, like River Junction, Lebanon that has flourished as a technology center. It's very much like a Lawrence-Lowell, Massachusetts that has a mill town base and then brought in a number of computer businesses that for a while flourished and the national monument of the mills was established and it had a major impact on the vitality of the community. This community, which in the late '20s was described as a utopian community because of the opportunities, economic opportunities that it afforded, sort of withered and never really picked up steam after that. There were a number of families that came here to Lewiston-Auburn seeing it as sort of a "silicon valley" in terms of textile mills, shoe mills. And they were very successful, very wealthy, and built wonderful homes, contributed to the communities in many ways.

But after the shoe strikes of '37 and natural moves of the textile to the Carolinas in the '40s and '50s the community was drained, capital drained, of human capital, and the politics showed accordingly. The Democratic Party grew because it was more of a blue collar community and the Republicans shrunk, registration numbers in the Democratic Party or enrollment numbers in the Democratic Party quickly exceeded the Republicans in both Lewiston and Auburn in the '70s and early '80s. And yet, the communities never really functioned as a political unit. The Lewiston-Auburn delegation, at least in the Maine state legislature, was al-, has always been fractious and fractured in that they've never seemed to work together as a cohesive unit to pull in state money, state programs. They've never really been successful in that way and part of it is that they reflect the community. They've never been really aggressive, really progressive and risk-taking in the sense that they could speak for the community and sort of lead the community.

MJ: Can you tell me what Lewiston-Auburn was like from a religious perspective? What were the, was the majority of the population in one religious affiliation?

RT: I think it you looked at just sheer numbers, French Canadian influences said that the Roman Catholic churches were the strongest. And you look at the various parishes in Lewiston which have historically had very strong geographical lines and, you know, everything from the parochial schools to the credit unions were a very strong influence. More in Lewiston than Auburn but in Auburn, too. You start with the premise that Auburn is less French Canadian than Lewiston, but downtown Auburn clearly had the same base as Lewiston in terms of the French Canadian parish, particularly New Auburn. You had a small but influential Jewish community with a couple synagogues, one in Lewiston, one in Auburn. You know, after that you have a diversity of different faiths from Greek Orthodox to Lutheran to Universalist and Methodist and Congregational. But clearly I think the biggest influence was, although declining during the '60s, '70s and clearly the '80s, was the French Canadian Roman Catholic influence.

MJ: What was life like for you socially? For, you know, being a child of an active politician in Auburn, and for your brothers and sisters?

RT: Well, as I said we were a known family and in that way marked, you know. We all in-, probably informally and unspoken, had it impressed upon us that anything we did reflected on

the family and our brothers and sisters and parents so that. . . . And that's why I was saying the small town mentality of "you can't hide." So when you walked down the street you were conscious that people knew you. But, you know, we had lots of friends spread out mostly through Auburn because they were people we went to school with and in the greater neighborhood, you know, active in sports teams and particularly skiing and those types of after school activities, weekend activities. And, so that, you know, we had a very full social life whether it was the YWCA dances on Saturday night or going to ski team races in the winter.

During the summer, however, most of us in my family were never around. We went to summer camp for seven or eight weeks every summer so that we were sort of pulled out of the community at that point and didn't do things like little league baseball and other summer activities because we were away. And then I guess the other influence in terms of separateness is my parents have, had a house in Jackson, New Hampshire where we would go skiing a lot every weekend and that was sort of a family activity. Friday night we'd pack up the car, drive over to Jackson and ski Saturday and Sunday and come back Sunday night, so that, that was a big family time. And we had friends around Jackson, New Hampshire from New Hampshire or Massachusetts and around that would be doing similar things during the ski season. So that, although we were part of the social scene in Auburn at the time, there was this separation as well, both summer and winter.

MJ: When you went away in the summers did you feel withdrawn? Did you feel like you'd missed out on things that some of your friends here were doing?

RT: Oh sure, yeah, I mean, you know, schoolmates would be doing baseball and around for the summer and spending time together. And we would have a few weeks before, at the beginning of the summer and a few weeks at the end of the summer. But there, clearly there was a separation that made us a little bit different. I mean, I don't remember resenting having to go away to summer camp because that's what the whole family did and we enjoyed it and there was a, it was fun and we just, that was the family way. But clearly there was that separation.

MJ: Okay, I'd like to move on a little bit. Could you just tell me what your wife's name is?

RT: My wife's name is Barbara. I also have a sister Barbara so I ought to specify that her middle initial's M. My sister's name is Barbara W. Trafton.

MJ: I see. When and where did you meet your wife?

RT: I met her in Lewiston actually in 1971, soon after I had come back to Auburn after college and started work in Lewiston as a city planner.

MJ: And how did she end up in Lewiston?

RT: She had just graduated from college that same year and had taken a job with the YWCA to manage their new pool building. And so she was a pool director for the YWCA.

MJ: And has she shared your involvement in politics and community concerns?

RT: Well, of course I didn't know her during high school and college in any way. So during that period of time she was involved, she grew up in Rumford, Maine and gone to Gould Academy and then Wellesley College. She, you know, was, marched on Washington during the Vietnam War and had been involved in social issues that way. I don't think she had been involved in any presidential campaigns until she and I did some door-to-door for George McGovern in '72.

MJ: Did either of you have influence on the other in terms of becoming politically involved, or was it mutual, and were you politically involved prior to meeting her, to the extent that you are today, maybe?

RT: I can't say that other than general interest I was politically involved. And, you know, other than her activities in college during the Vietnam War I don't think she was politically involved. I think it was something that we both fell in to after we met and started living in this community. Politics in Lewiston and Auburn are very accessible. And if you see that you want to get involved and you feel it's worth your time, it's so accessible that you can feel that you have a major influence or make a mark quite easily. So that going, starting with some friends who were doing some political work for McGovern led us to becoming delegates to the State Democratic Convention and getting to know more people.

And I think the attraction was that it was a way to get to know not only our community a little better, but get to know the state better and get to know people beyond Lewiston-Auburn. I think we were both hungry to some degree to have our sights set somewhat beyond just the Lewiston-Auburn community, that there must be something more out there. And I think both of us, because of our various exposures when we were in school said, "You know, probably Lewiston-Auburn isn't the penultimate [sic] community to live in; we both have our reasons to be here. And let's explore what the communities are like, what opportunities there are, who lives here, what issues interest us and whether we can be involved."

MJ: What were some of your findings, in terms. . . .?

RT: Well, that there was more in terms of interesting people, opportunities, issues than, you know, we would have known if we hadn't been curious and spent some time looking at it. We were both involved for example in creating a bilingual newspaper. I mean, I've always felt the *Lewiston Sun-Journal's* probably the worst newspapers in the world, and so we were, we helped start an alternative newspaper that lasted a year or two. And we, as I said, did some work for McGovern and started looking at some of these state issues, meeting people.

And [we] recognized that there were some local issues that related to schools, opportunities, economic development that were in a sense frustrating for us. You know, I'd gone to Dartmouth College and I guess one of my earlier frustrations was here's a community that's geographically and historically very similar to a Hanover, White River, London, and yet this community doesn't have the same feeling, the same progressivity, you know, that that area doesn't and why doesn't it? I mean, and, in a sense it's the make-up of the community. And I guess, intellectually, I was exploring the differences and why this couldn't be a little bit more of an exciting community.

MJ: Now you said that you had gotten your schooling here in a two room school house, and you just mentioned that you went to Dartmouth. Where were you between then? You said you were at a prep school in Massachusetts?

RT: Yeah, I was in school here through eighth grade and not all of that two room school house. But that was I guess through second grade. After eighth grade I went to Andover Phillips Academy and then on to Dartmouth. And then worked for a few years before going to law school. But you know that eight year period of Andover and Dartmouth certainly was very different from living in Auburn, Maine.

MJ: I'd like to continue asking you about your schooling in a moment but I do need to stop the tape and turn it over.

End of Side One, Tape One
Side Two, Tape One

MJ: Okay, you just said that you got your secondary education at Andover Phillips Academy. Could you tell me what your experiences were like in school?

RT: Well, I lived there for four years from being a freshman to a senior and it certainly was an eye-opener in terms of exposure to different kinds of people from all over the world, all different backgrounds, cultures. I didn't, I guess I felt a bit parochial, as I said, coming from small-town Maine, and yet I didn't feel out of place. My brother had graduated from Andover, oh, maybe four, five years earlier. I'd certainly been there; my father had graduated from Andover. I had a brother who had gone there for a year before I got there who decided he didn't like it and came back here. So it wasn't as if I felt out of place, and I was able to quickly establish sort of my identity there.

But it was, you know, it was a wonderful opportunity to be tested and stretched academically and intellectually. And although I don't consider myself a great student, it probably was the most influential four years in terms of my academic growth. When I went on to college everybody else seemed to be struggling and I, college seemed to be a snap for me. So that, I think that says that Andover certainly gave me a leg up. But it was clearly exposure to different people, different ideas, professors, books that was the opportunity for me. And again, this was sort of my parents' view that: put a kid in a place where there's activity, intellectual activity and a range of people and ideas and good mentors, and they're going to fly. And to some degree I think that's entirely accurate, and this was that opportunity for me.

MJ: So after Andover you moved on to Dartmouth College. Can you tell me why you decided to go to Dartmouth?

RT: I wanted to ski. That, I had met some people who had gone to Dartmouth and they seemed to be interesting people. I can't say that my college search was particularly exhaustive or thorough. I was captain of the ski team at Andover and wanted to continue my skiing, and Dartmouth probably was the named college with the ski program that attracted me the most.

And as an ivy-league school, it was probably the only ski program, college with a ski program that held any interest. So that from a family that seems to gravitate toward ivy-league schools, this seemed to be the choice. And when I was accepted I quickly said, "That's where I'm going," even though none of my siblings, or relatives actually, had ever been to Dartmouth.

MJ: How did your experiences at Andover and at Dartmouth shape your beliefs and attitudes towards things and interests?

RT: Well, in the sense that it was a continuation of the dinner-table conversations that my parents provided: a range of intellectual offerings, exposure to many different people, an opportunity to play with ideas and concepts and travel. I went to the school in France for a while while I was at Dartmouth; I had a great time at Dartmouth. I mean, I, as I said, didn't feel that I was so tied down academically that I couldn't take advantage of other things. Skiing was a wonderful challenge. There were, you know, when I got to Dartmouth there were maybe eight or nine members of the national team on the ski team. And they dragged me from a lower level to a national team member myself. And that was a very influential part in terms of my growth, in terms of showing myself, showing to me that I could grow in terms of skills in that way, and yet maintain an academic level that seemed to be of interest. And it was a very enjoyable four year period.

I wasn't particularly socially involved in terms of the political unrest during the Vietnam War, I was, went out training for the next ski race as opposed to sitting in the administrative building finding fault with the Dartmouth College administration. I didn't march on Washington. But clearly all those things were swirling around and topic of discussion at various levels, mostly outside of class. I wasn't particularly involved in anything beyond the Hanover community. Although, I lived off-campus in a small community in Vermont, and just loved being out a way from the downtown academic community and living on my own, but pursuing the activities I enjoyed.

MJ: What did you study at Dartmouth?

RT: I was a geography major, which allowed me to focus on urban and regional planning in which I had an interest. I had worked one summer as a regional planner in the planning commission and was fascinated by some of the opportunities that planning presented. I mean, it doesn't take much to look around you and say, "If only planners had had an opportunity to shape this situation." So that summer job interested me and I took the geography major and melded some economics and some urban planning courses into that geography major; sort of came out with a self-designed major under the title of geography.

MJ: What led you to go to law school?

RT: When I realized that planning was a waste of my time I had to figure out how could I affect the world. I worked as a city planner in Lewiston for three years and planners are always looked at suspiciously by decision-makers. And although I wrote zoning ordinances and sub-division ordinances and water land use control ordinances for the city of Lewiston, and was relatively successful that way, it was very frustrating because the decision-makers wouldn't always listen

to what I had to say or policies that I created for them to adopt that were sort of ignored. And during all this process I worked with a number of lawyers who were able to, through their clients, accomplish some concrete things that I couldn't do as an advisor to a local government. So I thought, "Well maybe that's to go, the way to go." But frankly, the, probably the bigger reason was I knew I wanted to live in Maine, that I wanted probably to work for myself in order to control my own work schedule existence geographically where I could live. And so I thought a law degree was the ticket.

At that point I was married, had a house; my wife was in a teaching program. So I was looking at graduate schools in Maine that would work and the law school was a forty-five minute commute. And that was, see, those factors all seemed to fit together and say, "That's where you should go." And I went back to school for the three years of law school and found myself a much better student, enjoyed it. [I] didn't expect to be practicing law, I was going to continue on with planning in some capacity. But when I got out of law school my father, one of my father's partners was appointed a judge and they needed somebody to fill in for a period of time. And I've been there ever since.

MJ: Where exactly did you study law?

RT: I was at the University of Maine School of Law in Portland, which is the main, Maine law school.

MJ: So you were not planning on becoming a lawyer?

RT: No, not initially, that I saw it as sort of a continuation of a liberal arts education. It was very much along the lines of some of the work that I was doing in land-use planning, that I honestly expected to use it more as a sort of continuation of, and extension of the land use planning work that I was doing.

MJ: So that was the law that you specifically studied?

RT: Yeah. I studied a range of law but clearly my interest was in real estate law, tax law, business law that related to a lot of planning work that I was doing. And I wrote some theses, various extended papers on various kinds of planning issues and legal issues that related to physical land use planning.

MJ: And then after graduating you said that you were, you got a job through a judge?

RT: Well, my father, one of my father's partners was appointed a judge . . .

MJ: What was his name?

RT: His name was Damon Scales from Auburn. And he had been working with my father for, you know, twenty-plus years. [He] had a desk full of work to do, and not my father but another one of his partners said, "Would you want to try this for a while to see if in fact it holds any interest?" I was at that point studying for the bar exam and I said, "Well, let me get through the

bar exam and see and I'll make a decision." And so I did and as I said I've been there since then.

MJ: What was the practice like when you first started out?

RT: It was a country law practice: a lot of real estate work, small business corporation stuff, a smattering of this and that. And I sort of picked up this older attorney's group of clients from farmers to walk-in traffic. And some of it I enjoyed, some of it I didn't. And I then started looking beyond the practice and started saying, "This isn't giving me everything that I want." So I got involved with a downtown planning group here in Auburn and then was doing a fair amount of extracurricular activity on the outside. And within I guess about four years, ran for the legislature.

MJ: What was the name of the firm that you started out with?

RT: At that time it was called Trafton, Smith and Matzen, or, yes, that's, I guess that's technically the firm that I worked with. It was my father's firm and it was Trafton, Scales and Smith, but David [Damon] Scales was appointed a judge. And then actually about six or eight months after I got involved in the office Jack Smith was appointed a judge, so he left shortly thereafter.

MJ: So who were some of the people who had a significant influence on you in the practice, in your law practice?

RT: In what way?

MJ: I don't know, in terms of community involvement, in terms of social influence, political influence?

RT: Well, Jack Smith who was one of the partners here in the law firm was mayor at the time that I came to work for the law firm. And, you know, just his being mayor had an influence. He encouraged me to get involved in, I guess within a year, getting involved in the office. I was elected to or became chair of the Charter Commission for Auburn and ended up rewriting the city charter with a group of elected officials, and that was probably the start. So Jack was involved as well as a few other people that I had worked with in Lewiston, some local officials. Bob Clifford, who is now a judge in the Supreme Court, was mayor when I was the city planner in Lewiston. John Orestis, who was a lawyer, was mayor after Bob Clifford and he was mayor during some of the time that I was working for the city. I mean, clearly those were people that I rubbed shoulders with and talked with. It's sort of a fairly tight-knit community as I said, and they all sort of point-, helped point me in that direction.

MJ: Now could you tell me what some of the major issues were for Mayors: Jack Smith, Bob Clifford and John Orestis?

RT: Orestis.

MJ: Orestis?

RT: There's no great common theme. Typically the local issues are budgetary issues, economic development issues, smaller-scale issues that relate to the local tax rate so that. . . . And for Jack Smith clearly there were some charter issues that caused the appointment of the Charter Commission or election of the Charter Commission, which started out as a general review of how the city's constitution works. But there were issues of just basic political organization. The community, both Lewiston and Auburn were controlled by small groups of people. And the question was of organization: how could you expand the group of people involved? And what we ended up doing was gradually changing the terms of different elected officials, so that there was staggered terms, and then ultimately larger numbers on the city council, and I mean, basic organization like that to make the system a little more open, a little more easily influenced by the people.

You know, there were basic transportation, downtown development issues, cooperative issues between Lewiston and Auburn. Rather than having Lewiston-Auburn fight on different projects, whether it be economic development or the bus service or the Central Maine Power use of the Great Falls hydro station, all those were sort of negotiated settlements between Auburn and Lewiston. There was a, the parochialism in both communities had an impact. And it was basically the mayors, (who typically at that point were lawyers, respected in the community, family connections in the community) who were able to pull the city councils behind them and say, "Hey, let's look at the broader here, rather than the parochial issue." And frankly it was that, it was a continuation of that sort of, call it "patrician", call it "educated" approach to local issues that encouraged me to get involved.

MJ: Can you tell me how you, did you meet these people who influenced the community so much, did you meet them through your father or did you meet them, how did you meet them?

RT: No I, my father, I mean these people all knew my father. And when I came back into the community, whether it was working with them as. . . . When I was a city planner, I mean, they certainly knew me, my family history, knew my father actually better than me. But it was very soon that, you know, I was their contemporary and my father was just in the background so that it. . . . That's why I guess I said initially that the system, both the governmental system and political system, if you can separate them, was very accessible. I mean, my getting involved made me a player as soon as I was there, it wasn't working up a ladder to gain a political appointment or establishing sufficient credibility so people would listen. The name had some impact. The fact that they knew my history, the fact that I was active and a player on a variety of different roles and issues gave me fairly quick credibility.

MJ: Did you get to know them through city planning immediately after college?

RT: Initially, yes. I mean the city planning job was clearly a introduction and I was very visible, very active. And that supplemented with the newspaper that we helped start, the political campaigns, the, being a delegate at state conventions, social activities in the community, all that. Because you tend to have a fairly small group of active people, again, you become known quickly and you are tapped for doing this and that.

MJ: So you continued to work with them when you moved on to the firm?

RT: Yes, yes. I mean, I didn't, I never moved out of the community. Through law school and then coming back to work I was continually a resident and active in the community.

MJ: How did they influence you in terms of your work?

RT: Well, in terms of my day-to-day work in the law firm, not much. I mean, a client comes in, you work with the client, and you do what you hope is right. It was more on the outside, of the extracurricular activities that there was an influence. I mean, as I said, clearly they set sort of a path for what opportunities were available to me. You know, Jack Smith, Bob Clifford, John Orestis, Bill Skelton, another lawyer, they'd all been in local politics. Several of them had been involved as state legislators, mayors, councilmen, active some of them in statewide, politically. I mean, there was a proven track, and it was the old Maine track, you know. Families have sort of a history of public service; you continue on that family routine. You know, in a sense there's the, "Your parents did it, your compatriots did this role, public service role. Don't you owe something to the community to put back in the same effort and time?"

And I mean, I guess I've always seen politics that way, as a public service. It was not a money-maker certainly. When I was in the legislature, you know, half of my billable time was given away. When I was the mayor about a third of my billable time as just a private lawyer was given away. So it clearly was the sense of public service that other lawyers, other family, families in the community had done to try to pick up the gauntlet, accept a challenge, move, try to help the communities move forward.

MJ: So do you, based on your beliefs, do you think that you influenced these people who, Jack Smith and Bob Clifford and so on.

RT: I don't think I influenced them particularly. I think I w-, if anything they influenced me and encouraged me to sort of do what they had done and take it one step further or move things along a little bit beyond where they had left it. And it's sort of that progression rather than. . . . I mean, they were both, they are both older than me and I was the next generation sort of taking the baton from them.

MJ: Were there any other influences? You said they influenced you in terms of extracurricular, so to speak. Besides passing on the baton, or?

RT: You mean other people or in other areas?

MJ: In other areas.

RT: No, I think as I said it was that role that they played in the community that had the biggest impact. I mean, sure there were little issues that would pop up and I would talk to them about, whether it was Bob Clifford on a zoning issue or Jack Smith on a charter commission issue or something like that. But I think the real influence was here are people who clearly are, have many demands on their time but are making room for the public service of elective office, be it

state or local. And that they find it important and they're taking it seriously and they seem to have fun doing it, [indicates that] maybe that's something that I can do too.

MJ: Were there other influences besides these people?

RT: Well, as I said, my parents had the same role a generation even earlier. Clearly that was my father's view of politics. My wife was very involved in politics before me and so that she obviously was an influence.

MJ: What was the Maine political scene like during your father's time?

RT: I'm not sure I can describe it since I was, that was really '52, '54, '56. Oh, he was in the legislature, ran for governor when he was in, in '56. You know, it was, as I hear talk about it and talk with him about it, it was close, tight-knit. Most of the legislators moved to Augusta for the term, lived right there in Augusta for the term. They didn't do the driving back and forth that is common now. They got to know each other better that way. There was sort of a accepted progression that, the Speaker of the House changed every two to four years, as opposed to what's happened in the last couple of decades where one person would grab it and hold on to it for a longer term and amass power that way. It was more considered to be a public service. A lot of lawyers in my father's generation felt that they had sort of a personal obligation to go up to the legislature and serve for a term or two and then go back home. It was an opportunity for them to meet other young lawyers, other people throughout the state, get to know the state a little better. And that was good from a business point of view, whatever they were doing. Yet they never looked at it as a career.

MJ: How do you think the political scene has changed between the times that your father worked and now you, working?

RT: Well, of course I'm out of the politics at the moment, but I guess I tried to approach it in the same way at a time when the system had changed. Power had been amassed by people like John Martin who had been Speaker of the House for twenty-plus years. Charlie Pray who had been President of the Senate for, you know, eight or ten years. The, it was very difficult to make an influence in the legislature going in for one or two terms without getting involved in sort of leadership, because the power was greatly amassed in the leadership positions. I recognized that, fairly soon after I was there, I did not agree much with the leadership at all and what they were doing. So I focused my activity more on my committee chairmanships. Luckily when I got elected the Democrats took control of the Senate. So I was given some fairly influential chairmanship roles as, well, one as a freshman and one the next term, and enjoyed the committee work and felt that that was the most productive part of my legislative time.

But the opportunities to advance into leadership certainly weren't there without more time and more frustration and doing the political gamesmanship that was necessary to become a leader. That meant helping other people with their campaigns, traveling all over the state. And frankly, I didn't want to spend that time. So within a year, within a couple years I realized that this was going to be a short-term thing for me and that I'd put in a couple terms and do what I can. But I also felt during that period torn because the time demands were great to do a good job in

Augusta and I was trying to run my office here. And I would sometimes drive up and back twice in a day, between Auburn and Augusta, try to do my legal work here and my legislative work there. That took a toll.

MJ: So why did you disagree with the leadership in the state legislature, other than you had to participate in campaigns to get a step up?

RT: Well, those are two different issues. But basically I disagreed with the leadership because of, you know, a variety of different issues for which they took stands. First of all, they were not very charismatic leaders. When I look at John Martin, the Speaker of the House, and Charlie Pray as President of the Senate, he, neither of them were sort of the role models that I had for leaders in that position. They seemed to be more interested in amassing power for themselves, collecting money to dole out to their various friends who would get elected and then vote for them, which is, you know, the traditional way for leaders to get elected. But I didn't see much on the substantive side of their activity. They didn't represent any social movement, any political movement. It was more, "How do I stay in power?" And they would fluctuate from one side of an issue to another depending on how they could maintain their office. And that seemed very shallow to me and I just didn't like that. And then they really didn't get involved in some of the substantive issues. Occasionally they did, but there seemed to be shallow political reasons why, so I guess I didn't see them as people of particular substance and didn't have a great deal of respect for them. We'd talk and work on issues occasionally, but they weren't the kind of leaders that demanded or commanded instant respect and loyalty, as far as I was concerned. As to the other, as to why I didn't really take a stab at leadership, I just didn't have the time to try to collect campaign monies and travel around the state to dole out these monies to other senators in order to get a leg up in leadership campaign. That didn't seem to be a priority to me.

MJ: So you put the majority of your efforts into heading committees?

RT: Right.

MJ: Could you tell me a little bit about some of your memorable events or circumstances from your experience with those in politics?

RT: Well I was chair, first term I was in the Senate I was chair of the Judiciary Committee which is traditionally the committee with all the lawyers and dealing with most of the weighty legal issues in the legislature which, you know, was a very respected position. And I was an unknown freshman at the time and to get that chair was a real opportunity and working with lawyers from all over the state . . .

MJ: Sorry, when was this?

RT: This was in '82, my first term in the Senate. The committee was mostly composed of lawyers, a few non-lawyers. And [I was] working with them working on various pieces of legislation that were very controversial, presiding over, you know, public hearings where there were, you know, more than a thousand people in the Augusta Armory, trying to be fair to

everybody, trying to, try, learning basically how to speak publicly but be a sort of a leader in terms of procedure. That was probably a big introduction for me. I worked on a number of different bills, you know, from liquor liability to tort reform to land use enforcement and reform, and worked on several small commissions appointed by the governor. And all those were relatively productive, results are still in the court rules and law books today and I can point to those and say I had some impact. And that probably is the most rewarding part.

MJ: Did you work with anyone in particular in the Judicial Com-, Judiciary Committee?

RT: Well, you know, there were thirteen members of the Judiciary Committee. And there were a number of people from all over the state that I worked with, from people like Stan Collins who was on the, was later appointed to the Maine Supreme Court, to, you know, attorneys in Wiscasset and Millinocket and Portland. You know, the fairly lengthy list. And then I would work with the. . . . Because we did all the judicial appointments, when the governor nominated a judge we would, held appointments, we would hold meetings to review his appointments and public hearings. So I would work with members of the judiciary that way. Judges of the, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court and I were in touch fairly regularly on a variety of different issues, and I served on some committees that he had appointed. So that was an opportunity to get to know a number of the judges throughout the state. And I would work with other state bureaucrats and had a state planning office at the Department of Conservation on some of the land use issues that I was involved in. So it was a great exposure to how state government worked, who some of the players were, what they were like, how they worked, that sort of thing.

MJ: After that introduction, what were some of the other committees that you worked on?

RT: Well I, my first term I chaired just the Judiciary Committee. Second term I chaired the Committee on Legal Affairs. These were both joint standing committees with members of the House and the Senate. And I was the Senate chair for both of those committees. But I also chaired a number of commissions that, you know, gubernatorial, what they call "blue ribbon" commissions. One was on tort reform, another was land use enforcement, one was a restructuring of the probate court system, and more or less topical committees that were created and assigned to study a particular area of state government.

MJ: Were you encouraged to become such a political figure younger? Did your family expect you to become senator or?

RT: No

MJ: I mean not specifically but certainly one of political, with political influence.

RT: I never felt any pressure to become a politician and if I had I probably would have balked. But I think as I've explained to you, the early discussions, my father as a role model, some of his friends as role models, people in the community that I'd seen do similar things on a statewide basis, and the interest that I had once I'd got involved. And the satisfaction, as I said, particularly from working on these committees that were working on specific pieces of legislation that throws, was a cooperative approach and was productive. That was the

encouragement that I needed, I had to feel that it was worth my time, worth some of the other sacrifices that I was making. But clearly this idea of public service, of giving something back to the community, the state, that I'd always felt had been nurturing for me.

MJ: Okay, there's really only one minute left on this one. Let's stop the tape.

*End of Side Two, Tape One
Side One, Tape Two*

MJ: Okay, could you give me a brief chronology of the political offices that you've held and the dates, starting I suppose from when you started working with city planning onwards?

RT: Well I'm not sure I'd call that a political office but I think that, if I went back to my campaign literature, what I claim to be my first political office was in 1978 when I was elected to be on the city of Auburn Charter Commission. And I was, for two years spent, no I guess it was a year and a half, spent rewriting the city charter, and I was chair of that Charter Commission.

MJ: This was with?

RT: This was with the city of Auburn. It was a local election to revise, review, revise the city charter or constitution of the community. In, four years after that, in 1982, I ran for the district twelve at that time, now twenty-two, Senate seat, which covered Auburn, Minot, Hebron, Mechanic Falls and Poland and had a primary election and a general election, obviously. And [I] was elected to serve starting in 1982 and served two terms, '82-'84, '84-'86 in the state Senate. Then [I] chose not to run again . . .

MJ: Why was that?

RT: I was done. I did not want to invest the time to try to become a member of leadership. I thought my impact was somewhat limited because I wasn't in leadership and I was having some frustration trying to balance the time I spent in Augusta and the work I was doing locally to support myself. So I said, "I've done it. I'm ready to take a break." And then I think it was in 1989, three years later, I became increasingly frustrated with local politics and there were some local decisions that just were not making me very happy. So I decided to run for mayor and served between 1989 through 1994 three terms as mayor, one of which was a short term because we changed the charter to change the dates of these municipal elections. But, so there was one one-year term and two two-year terms as mayor, and then chose not to run again in '94-'95. And, I think that's the extent of my political career.

MJ: In the Senate, besides, did you work on any other committees besides the Legal Committee and the Judiciary Committee?

RT: Two committees that I served on, I chose to only work on one committee each term. The first term was the Judiciary Committee, the second was the Legal Affairs Committee. And other than these separate commissions that I served on or chaired those were the only two what they call joint standing committees which are committees made up of House and Senate members

assigned to a particular subject area.

MJ: Besides being an attorney, why did you choose to serve on these particular committees?

RT: They're basically assigned to you by leadership and you can suggest a preference but in both cases it was the President of the Senate who said, "This is the committee that you will serve on."

MJ: Okay. Now, how did you decide that you were a Democrat rather than being a liberal Republican as your father was?

RT: Well the political complexion of Auburn had changed by the late '70s, as I had said. The Democratic Party was the majority party of . . .

MJ: So it was safer, was it safer?

RT: Oh, absolutely, it was safer. In fact, the delegation was primarily, well that's not quite true, the delegation was, meaning from Auburn, the legislators from Auburn were probably split fifty-fifty Republican and Democrat. The party, as I said, that I'd sort of aligned myself earlier on from George McGovern's campaign in '72, was the Democratic Party. And it seemed to be the platform, the people, the direction of the party, meaning the Democratic Party, seemed to be more in line with what I was feeling at the time. The Republicans were sort of the older school, they weren't as exciting, they seemed to be more conservative both from a fiscal point of view and a social point of view. And it was that I reacted against. And there was the other realistic issue of whenever there was a primary or, in many offices, when there was a primary it decided who was going to be elected because often in some of the political seats locally the Republicans didn't even put up a party member as a candidate, so. That wasn't true in the legislature but it was on county seats and some of the others, political seats.

So I had the advantage of being, having come from a Republican family and the Trafton name was recognized as a Republican name. And yet I was running as a Democrat, so pragmatically I had some politically advantages. And with a fair amount of work and hard campaigning I got through my first primary and beat an incumbent legislator who had been in the legislature for several terms and was quite popular. And then in the general election, beat a Republican who had been mayor of Auburn for three consecutive terms. So I was able as a political newcomer more or less to draw from both the Democratic side and Republican side to get elected. And, as I say, part of that's attributable to my family's Republican history. I'm sure there were people who thought I was running as a Republican because of the name, but clearly I was labeled and was running and an active member of the Democratic Party.

MJ: Although your family was Republican, your siblings were about split, correct?

RT: I think that's fair to say, yes.

MJ: How do you think that happened?

RT: I think, again, that was generational. You know, what we had instilled in us as values were liberal social views. Whether it's the right to choose or educational opportunities, multi-culturalism, typical social values that you see on the Democratic agenda more or less, those were all things that were, as I said, family values for us. And as the Republican Party went further and further to the right, they lost more and more of the traditional liberal Republicans. It was just as easy for them to put a D after their name and really have a lot of the same political views that their parents may have had as liberal Republicans.

MJ: So how did it affect your family in terms of, you know, having the D or the R after their . . .?

RT: It was sort of a family joke. I mean, my father got a fair amount of ribbing and there were obviously some old-line Republicans who couldn't understand what went wrong with that next generation. But it's a small enough community, so that for the most part I would say that a lot of, a good part of my parents' compatriots and friends probably voted for me because I was my parents' child, as opposed to what party I was in.

MJ: Are there any other members in your family who are as politically involved as you've been?

RT: No, no. I am the only sibling that has lived in Auburn and clearly that was a political base for me and perhaps a vacuum in which I needed something else to do other than just work as a small-town lawyer. But, you know, I have siblings who have picked up on various social issues of one kind or another but none who have held political office.

MJ: What is your wife's political background?

RT: Similar to mine. She's a Democrat. Her first political race was a local council seat, which she lost. This was in the late '70s, '76, '77, something around that range. Then she ran for the legislature, was about one term in the House and two in the Senate and. . . .

MJ: When was this?

RT: Well, she finished in '82 because I took over her Senate seat, came in on her skirt tails. And so it was the six years prior to '82 so, what's that, '74, no, it was '76 to '82.

MJ: And did she, was she politically influenced as a child as well?

RT: I think probably some of the same is-, some of the same ways that I was influenced influenced her. Her parents were both very well-educated, very bright. She was very active in student government in school, was in a very active political arena at Wellesley, did the Vietnam marches on Washington and contacted U.S. senators and congressmen. And she was in touch with Muskie's office because Muskie grew up in Rumford and she grew up in Rumford and it was that connection, so clearly that was probably how she became involved. To my knowledge there wasn't any other key factor. In a sense it was getting involved in the community as I described for myself, trying to have an impact on the community in which we found ourselves

living.

MJ: What was the transition like when you and your wife switched roles in the Senate?

RT: She said, “Tag, you’re it.” I mean, in a sense it was almost like that. When you have a political seat and you choose not to run again, you want to find somebody to take it over for you because you have a sense of ownership and pride and you want to make sure that the person who follows you takes it seriously. And so she was struggling, “Who takes it over and can. . . .?” And I was not particularly interested or involved at the time, I had just started my law practice. And so she finally convinced me, “You’d like it, you’d enjoy it,” and so I did it. You know, she was a well-respected member of the Senate. People knew her, so I came in with an advantage. A lot of her friends in the Senate sort of took me under their wing, and probably I had a faster start because of her activity.

MJ: Did you and your wife serve on the same committees?

RT: I think she served one term in the House on the Judiciary Committee but other than that, no.

MJ: Do you largely share the same political views?

RT: I think generally, yes. I think, you know, we’re products of sort of the same environment, have a commitment to the state of Maine, believe in basically the same social issues. As we get older we get more fiscally conservative trying to figure out how to pay for college and things like that. But yeah, I think in an uncanny way we ha-, there are, there are certainly differences in our lifestyles that are mostly. . . . I can’t think of any real political differences.

MJ: Okay. As mayor of Auburn, what were your, some of your goals for the city? Jumping back to (*unintelligible phrase*)?

RT: I think what frustrated me the most about Auburn politics, local politics, and what got me involved was sort of the “old boys club” approach to government. And I was convinced that I was going to change that. There was a five-member city council that would meet at a local restaurant prior to meetings to decide how they were going to vote, then go to the meetings and there was no discussion. And it was, it was awful. And not a lot was being done at a time when there were some economic opportunities during the mid-eighties. There was sort of a window of opportunity when the economy was good and I thought the city had dropped the ball in a number of possibilities.

MJ: Were your expectations higher for Auburn after seeing results that the Senate . . .?

RT: Sure. I mean I felt I had some experience, I felt I had some contacts. And I, one of the ways that I ran, one was to say, “I have some connections that will help with Augusta, I know people, I know the way the system works. I can be an advocate in Augusta,” and in fact testified a number of times and worked with various commissioners that I knew, to secure some benefits for Auburn. So that, yeah, I had some political stature and experience that I think served to the

city's advantage.

MJ: Now in terms of your father, what was your father's perspective on the 1956 gubernatorial campaign race?

RT: Well, he again, in a sense saw this as a public service issue.

MJ: Similar to that of yours?

RT: Yeah, but in a slightly different vein. I mean, you know, I think generally he ran for the House initially, served in the House of Representatives. And he had, prior to that, been on the Auburn city council for a long term sort of as a, "I'm trying to reinvest in my community, put some time back in," commitment back into the community. But after he served in the legislature he was. . . . Second term he was Speaker of the House, and as I said there was sort of a tradition of who was next in line to be Speaker of the House or President of the Senate or to run for governor.

Eisenhower was running for President. The Republicans were very committed on putting together a Republican ticket that would run under Eisenhower to give Eisenhower strength on the national level. Even though Muskie had already served one term and was a fairly popular governor after one term, the Republicans said, "We need to field a ticket that will give some strength to the Eisenhower ticket." So my father went to the President of the Senate, who was up in Old Town I think (I can't even remember the guy's name) at the time, and said "Well you're next in line, you're going to run aren't you?" And the guy said, "No, I don't think I will."

So my father was next in line in terms of the traditional roles to run for governor. So he said, "Okay, well I guess it's on my shoulders. So I'll put together a gubernatorial campaign and I'll. . . . "He had a primary which he won, and then ran his gubernatorial campaign, loved the campaigning process more than he realized, got to see a lot of the state. I think it was sort of an educational experience for him to meet more people and see how the state worked and I think he knew it was an uphill battle from day one, as it always is against an incumbent governor. But he felt this commitment to the party because he was next in line to run and, at least that's how he perceived it. And he felt this commitment to Eisenhower on a national level. And whether that was just politics or whether it was because he was in the Army and Eisenhower was the Commander-in-Chief, who knows. But maybe it was a mix of both.

(Tape turned off.)

MJ: Did your father express to you his views of Senator Muskie, either during his campaigning or afterwards, or prior, actually?

RT: I can't think of any particular time where we had that specific a discussion. You know, my general impression from what is, what was said over time was that Muskie had done generally a good job in his first term as governor and that he had a lot of public support, and if anything the support for the Democratic Party was growing. I mean, my father was a dyed-in-the-wool Republican and believed a lot in the party and had all his little elephant statues around. So that

part of that is the party line I think, you know, “Muskie’s doing okay but a Republican can do it better.” And I don’t think that there was a, other than the occasional debate and the shared campaign contacts, that there was a lot of contact between my father and Muskie. I think there was a mutual respect, they certainly knew each other to at least a social degree and a lot of the same people, and I never sensed there was any animosity.

I would see Ed Muskie fairly regularly during my wife’s time as a legislator and during my time and, you know, shared dinner at various political functions. And he was always warm and friendly and asked for my father and how he was, and yet I can’t remember any sharp disagreement on issues other than what you would really classify as partisan party issues. I think frankly that they probably weren’t too far apart in terms of the liberal Republican, the conservative Democrat. I mean, Muskie was not LBJ Democrat in the ‘50s, meaning high-rolling spender for social programs. I mean that just, Maine had been so Republican for so long, his budget was so small relative to other budgets that there was no opportunity to be a liberal spending Democrat. So I think this is one of those examples where probably in terms of issues, social and fiscal, that probably Muskie and my father weren’t that too far apart.

MJ: How was your view of Senator Muskie shaped by your father, your father’s involvement?

RT: Well, you know growing up I always perceived Muskie as my father’s nemesis. I mean that was the way the campaign portrayed it. And of course Muskie won, my father lost and I never sensed any kind of undercurrent that there was something improper or unfair that occurred, you know. In a sense that ended my father’s political career and, by his choice, and he never did anything more politically. And that meant that he was around more, seemed to have more time for family and some of the things that he enjoyed. You know, Muskie didn’t become a person until I got actively involved in politics and, as I said, we would see him, talk with him, listen to his speeches. And, you know, at that point he was a national level politician and regarded by me and others in sort of awe as his success increased in Washington.

MJ: What involvements did you have with Ed Muskie personally?

RT: Well nothing really direct except in terms of political functions in Maine.

MJ: What were some of them?

RT: You know, regular political dinners, various political fund raisers, campaign functions both when he was in the Senate coming back to run, or local, meaning statewide campaigns where he would come back and campaign. He did some sound bites for my campaign on the radio, as he did for my wife. He would provide some written campaign literature for my campaign saying, “What a great guy, you should elect him,” the typical thing that senior politicians do for junior politicians, but not much else. Occasionally, you know, there’d be a referral from, by me to, for a constituent problem to his office in Washington and there’d be some contact with his staff. I knew his administrative assistants and the staff who would be working in Maine. But I didn’t have any direct contact, nor did I expect any real direct contact other than during the sort of campaign process during the year.

MJ: What do think some of his major qualities were as a politician?

RT: Again because I wasn't directly involved in his political activities, I'm not sure I'm really well-suited to answer that. You know, the impre-, I can give you impressions and the impressions that I have are that he was hard-working, whether it was on clean water legislation that was so vital to Maine, or other political issues in Washington. He, once he grabbed on to an issue he stuck with it, whether it was an issue that required several terms of political work. He was respected by not only other politicians for that doggedness, the hard work, but he was respected by federal and state bureaucrats for his continuing work on a particular issue. And again, I'm thinking particularly of the clean water work that he did, in terms of requiring the paper companies in Maine to treat their effluence. And not only did that make a major impact in Maine, but all the states throughout the country. And when I think of any legislative effort that he did, that clearly stands out.

MJ: Besides the clean water work, do you remember any other events or circumstances that illustrate his character or his ability as a politician?

RT: Well, you know, part of a politician's reputation locally, meaning back in the state where his constituents reside, is his ability to bring home money projects, buildings, federal aid of one kind or another. And during his period revenue sharing was a major federal shared program. And how much he was responsible for that, clearly he was known or he was seen as the producer of these funds that were brought back to Maine which trickled down directly to the state. There were various block grant-type programs called Model Cities, or UDAG or those types of downtown improvement programs, social improvement programs which, again, were nationwide. But he was able to influence funding, you know, at, particularly in the Lewiston area, although Portland and Bangor were also recipients of those funds. He was very, he was, again, perceived to be a strong advocate for Bath Iron Works, for Limestone, for Kittery. I mean, again, those were the bacon-type issues, bringing home the bacon to the local community. He never forgot his role even when he was a top-ranking Democrat. He came from Maine; he wanted to give Maine some of the benefit of his seniority. And I think [he] always took that very seriously.

MJ: Did he have any other influences on Maine?

RT: Oh, I think the fact that he was a senior senator, respected in Washington both by several administrations as well as his colleagues, gave Maine a source of pride. And to a small state like Maine I think that makes a big difference. I mean, as George Mitchell carried on the tradition, Maine often was able to hold its head up high, both in Washington and locally.

MJ: Okay, I have no further questions. Are there any important factors which I've missed out on, from your experience that you would want others to know about, about your time or yourself, or?

RT: Gee, I think you covered things pretty thoroughly.

MJ: Okay, thank you very much for your time.

RT: You're welcome.

End of Interview