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Carignan, Jim oral history interview

Jeremy Robitaille

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Interview with Jim Carignan by Jeremy Robitaille

Summary Sheet and Transcript

Interviewee

Carignan, Jim

Interviewer

Robitaille, Jeremy

Date

July 26, 2001

Place

Lewiston, Maine

ID Number

MOH 306

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Biographical Note

James “Jim” Carignan was born in Conway, New Hampshire on August 31, 1939. His father, Hervy, worked in a wood turning factory and his mother, Florence, was a retail salesperson. Of Roman Catholic, French-Canadian and Irish background, they were Democrats. Carignan was president of his class, involved with New England regional debate and forensics, president of New England Senate, and a Regional Key Club Officer. He attended Bates College (class of 1961), majoring in History and was president of his senior class, and worked in the office of the Dean of Men. Jim taught Colonial American history at the University of Rochester until 1964, Kent State University until 1968 and Kenyon College until 1970. He took the position of Dean of Men at Bates College in January 1970 and later served as Dean of College until his retirement in 2003.

Scope and Content Note

Interview includes discussions of: Bates College; 1954 Maine gubernatorial campaign; 1968 vice presidential campaign during which Carignan brought his kids to Laconia airport to see Muskie; 1969-1972 presidential campaign; Model Cities (Lewiston); Social Clubs in Lewiston; community history of Lewiston and Auburn; Washington, D.C. law practice; creation of the

Muskie Archives: Washington, D.C. meeting between Muskie and Carignan to discuss Muskie's vision and fundraising strategies; 1989 Secretaries of State at Bates College; William "Bill" Cohen; Catholic orphanages; intermarriages (Irish and French, etc.); Laconia, New Hampshire French community; Lewiston/Laconia comparisons; late 1950s Bates College students' interaction with Lewiston limited to Blue Goose, Empire Theater, and American Legion; Walt Boyce; John F. Kennedy at Kennedy Park the night before the election, 1960; Kenyon College; Hedley Reynolds as president of Bates College; Mario's restaurant, Lewiston; and Louis Jalbert.

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Transcript

JR: We are here at the office of Dean Jim Carignan at Bates College in Lewiston, Maine on July 27th, 2001, and interviewing is Jeremy Robitaille. For the record, Dean Carignan, could

you please state your full name and spell it?

Jim Carignan: James W. Carignan, James, that J-A-M-E-S, and Carignan is C-A-R-I-G-N-A-N.

JR: And how about your date and place of birth?

JC: Conway, New Hampshire, 8/31/39. That hurts to say that, but, you could negotiate that.

JR: And what are your parents' names?

JC: Florence and Hervy, H-E-R-V-Y.

JR: And where were they from originally?

JC: My father was born in Laconia, and my mother was born in Laconia.

JR: And what were their occupations?

JC: My father was a worker in a wood turning factory, and my mother worked as a retail sales person (*unintelligible phrase*).

JR: And were they, were either of them at all involved in the community, politically or otherwise?

JC: No, no, not in any significant way at all, no.

JR: What were their political and religious views?

JC: They were both Roman Catholics, my mother was a convert to Roman Catholicism. They were Democrats, and my father was a, you know, believed that Franklin Delano Roosevelt had snatched this country from the mouths of the devils and saved it and was, ought to be canonized.

JR: What can you tell me about growing up in Laconia? Specifically I'm thinking perhaps the ethnic, social, political, religious and economic atmosphere?

JC: That's a complicated quest-, I mean the answer's a complicated answer. My father's family was a French Canadian family, and my grandmother had come to Laconia to work in the mills with her husband, her husband and family. She came with her husband, and the children were born there and then her husband died at a very young age, and she had to put all three children, or thought she had to put all three children, there were three of them, one right after another, a year apart, into an orphanage to be cared for because she had no way to sustain them. And even though she came from a large family, apparently that family was, well, she was one of the younger ones in the family so they already, all her sisters and brothers save two had families that were pretty large, and so she trotted them off to Rochester, New Hampshire and they went

into an orphanage. And I say that because there's absolutely no doubt in my mind that that experience for my father and his two sisters was seminal in terms of having an enormous impact on them and really, this is not the right word, but I guess but it gets to the crux, stumping their emotional development. And my father always had great difficulty showing feelings and I always think it, and I think I do, too, sometimes, and I think it goes back to, you know, when you're in an orphanage you don't ever show that you're vulnerable. You just have to be very tough and very self-reliant, and very controlled and very disciplined, and I think he just learned that as a survival technique. And told some really horrific stories about what these nuns would do, it was a Catholic orphanage. Get them up in the middle of the night and line them all up and put them in cold bathtubs because they had misbehaved the day before. I mean, really horrible things.

My father told this story several times, it must have been (*unintelligible phrase*), he was singled out once to be, to have his knuckles rapped with a strap, and he said, you know, "I just stood there and smiled at her every time she did it. And I knew she was getting madder and madder and she'd do it harder, and it hurt but I just kept smiling back at her." So there was this notion of, you know, 'you're not going win'.

So, this is a French Canadian family, my grandmother remarried, her second husband died, she remarried again, so it was a very, and she was the matriarch of the family, there's no question about that. And every Christmas, Mother's Day, Thanksgiving, that was where the family gathered. And she was a very shrewd and almost charismatic woman; powerful lady. And she really ran things in that family, particularly with her daughters; less so with my father. And my father really sinned in a major way, because he married outside of the French Canadian, he married an Irish woman who didn't know, was not French, did not know French. And that was always seen as a transgression, and it played out in a lot of different ways.

I was, each, my father and his two sisters each had one son, Cliff and Charlie, and my grandmother always favored the other two over me. It's not that she didn't love me, and it's not that we weren't very, very close because we were. But there was a, I was just not quite pure. And so I would not get taken out for ice cream, whereas my other two cousins were, things like that; it's very interesting.

And I know that my mother had to learn to understand French because in family settings, particularly early on in her marriage, they would lapse into French and talk about her. And so she knew that, to do that. So there was this dynamic of the French community and the others.

And when I went to, there were two churches, two Catholic churches in town, the French Catholic church and the Irish church, it's always called the Irish church. And they each had parochial schools, and I went to the Irish, we went to the Irish church which was not, I mean why would anybody do that. And I went to the Irish parochial school. And I can remember my grandmother thought it horrible that I didn't know French, and so she took it upon herself to teach me French. And she, her house was on the way back and to school, and I would have to stop there often and have a little lunch with her on the way home from school, we were very close, and she would start to, and started to teach me French.

And actually that's an interesting story because when I was working towards Ph.D. I had never had French courses and I had to have two languages, so I passed the French language exam on the basis of work that she had done with me and what I had picked up as this sort of bastardized pronunciation by being in that family. I mean, it was a kind of defense mechanism, you had to learn it or else you were left out. And part of the time it was conscious on their part, but as time went on I don't think it was conscious, they just lapsed into their native tongue and were more comfortable with it.

I think that all, I'm going on about that because it exemplifies, in my mind at any rate, what was a defining bifurcation in the community. There was the French community and everybody else. And the other people owned the stores, they owned the small businesses, they owned the shops and the factories, the shoe factories and the textile factories and so on, and so it was not unlike what's, I think, as I understand Lewiston history would be. You know, the Irish folks were the foremen, and the owners, and they were the movers and the shakers. And they were always trying to do something to, as a member of the French community.

When it came time to go to high school, this exemplifies it just right to a T, when it came time to go to high school, there was a new French parochial high school as part of the French, it was not accredited and it really shouldn't have existed. And my grandmother fought within the family really quite hard for me to go to that school. And my parents said no, and I said no, and she said to me, you know, don't you, that when you go to Laconia High School, they won't treat you fairly because you're French, you have a French name, and you will not get treated fairly. So it's a very deep sense that the immigrant, the French immigrant community was an exploited and alienated community, in her generation and in significant portions of my father's generation.

I think that's changed over time as, there are more French names on lawyers' offices and more French names on bankers' offices and so on and so on. But I think that was clearly the case back then. And I think there's a kind of residual sense that part of the tradition, that's part of the culture. I know, in Lewiston I think it plays out all the time; it's a community that is untrusted and always skeptical. There's nothing wrong with being skeptical, and there's nothing wrong with being a little bit on your guard, but I think it's really quite profound and quite deep. And it is simultaneously the source of a lack of self confidence, that you're not in control, and that is sort of demeaning, but it's also the escape hatch and a safety valve because you can always blame the situation on the foreman or the owner or whatever, the government, the people in charge, those folks.

You hear a lot of talk about 'they' do this, 'they' do that, 'they' did, and it's always about people doing things to them. And I heard that in Laconia, I hear it in Lewiston, and I think it's a common characteristic. It reinforces I think the sense of the kind of demeaning lack of self confidence. But it simultaneously gets you off the hook for accepting responsibility for being in a position that you're not particularly happy with or you think you could be better off, you know, if it weren't for somebody else. So I, it's very interesting to see that, and there's a, you know, probably comparable size French Canadian community in both of those cities, proportionately. Laconia's much smaller. But it's an interesting dynamic.

That's a lot more than you asked for, isn't it.

JR: Oh, no, that's, you're giving me pearls here. Speaking a little more to that, also on the Laconia and Lewiston comparison, what was your sense of politics in Laconia growing up? It may be less (*unintelligible word*) because your parents weren't so much involved?

JC: Yeah, I mean it was always, it was interesting, it was always, that's a hard thing, I'm going to start the answer one way but then I realize I had two lives, so I have to get lives in. When I was with the, on the family side of life, it was always beyond my control, something that other people did, it was not connected to my community at all. And so it was, you didn't pay any attention to it and what you did was voted party, it was about the party. And the working class people in Laconia, New Hampshire were like the working class people in Lewiston, Maine solidly Democratic. And no matter who a guy was or the, it was always guys back then, but who it was, the Democratic was always better than the Republican. I've come to understand (*unintelligible phrase*) as I've gotten over it, but it didn't make much sense at the time but now I understand it.

But, this is getting quite personal actually, but I think because my father was in an orphanage and did not have an opportunity to do things, and I was is only son and only child, often he tried to live vicariously through me. I don't think I was aware of it at the time, although maybe a little bit. And so, he loved athletics, and I wasn't particularly good at athletics and, I didn't have any coordination, but he was determined that I was going to be an athlete, and so he very much pushed me very hard into athletics and so I played football and basketball and all that stuff, very badly, but I did. And as you know there's a, I mean I'm sure you're aware, there's a culture that develops around the male locker room. And in Laconia that culture expressed itself most directly in gathering at Plumber's Gas Station near the high school every night after dinner and hanging out. And I had this other life, like I was in the debate, and I was in the Key Club, and I was with the Irish people, you know. And so my father would go to the gas station and hang out with the guys, and I would go out to meetings and he'd fill me in at night when I got home on what had happened.

And so that part of my life was one of connection to lawyers' and doctors' sons and daughters and to people who were much more in either official or unofficial leadership positions within the community. And I just sort of always sort of admired that, was in awe of that, liked that. I wanted to be one of those players and didn't want to be at the gas station, metaphorically speaking. And so I had that exposure early on, and I don't think I was particularly sophisticated in the way I thought about it but I was sort of, you know, and I think it may have been as, you know, vain as status and prestige and symbolic attachment to people who have no money nor social standing whatever. But I was always attracted to that side of life in the community.

JR: So through high school you were very involved in debate and Key Club. Did you really involve yourself like outside of the community in that same vein, or was it kind of limited by the (*unintelligible word*)?

JC: Oh no, I was very active in the community. I was active in, I was president of the class, I was active on the New England regional level of debate and forensics, I was president of the New England Senate, I mean I was, not international but a regional officer of Key Club, and so I, you know, traveled around. So I was very, very active and very, I did Boy's State, all of that kind of stuff.

JR: With all that traveling around in particular, did you really, did that help you get a perspective on Laconia as far as -?

JC: No, I mean, I don't think I was particularly reflective, you know, I was just doing my thing and, I mean I liked being president of the class, I liked being, I liked standing out, I liked being a, not a leader, but being, having some status, some power. I didn't have any power, but it felt like it, you know. And so I, I mean, I think normal over achiever kinds of characteristics were in play.

I do think, and I didn't think about this actually until this past year when I, I had a very good friend who's an ordained minister and a very thoughtful and reflective guy, and he works with the Willy Foundation right now on developing new paradigms for ministerial work. And I had him come to talk about, to the leadership academy here at Bates, about religious institutions and leadership, and he gave a very interesting talk. And at the end, and his thesis was that leadership is, requires a core sense of values that you're confident about, that you're committed to, and that you want to see more in play in the world in which you live. And so he embarrassed me by saying, so, in front of all these kids, so, you know, we have a leader here, Dean Carignan, and so Jim, what, you know, what made you what you are. This is not the kind of question you want from a friend at seven thirty at night after a nice dinner. And he pushed hard at me, he was being very, very mischievous and he pushed hard at me. And I finally ended up saying, you know, I just, something happened in those eight years of parochial school, in spite of all of the guilt that they loaded on me for everything, something happened about this notion that one needs to lead a good life, and part of leading a good life is giving something back to the community and making a difference. And I think that got, somehow or other, in spite of all the walls that I put around, nuns trying to inculcate virtue, I, you know, as every kid does I think, I think somehow that got, that notion got through and got internalized and got to be a part of me. And I don't know if that's an accurate, I mean it was an honest answer. I don't know if it's a correct answer, but I found it interesting that I said that.

You're learning an awful lot about me, more than you bargained for.

JR: Perhaps. So, why did you choose to attend Bates College?

JC: One of the very good, that's a long story, too. These are wonderful stories actually, I think. They're fun. One of the very good friends that I made in high school was a fellow by the name of Frank Tilton, and his father was an attorney and the Tilton family was a, had been, his grandfather had been a judge in Laconia so they were on the right side of some tracks (*unintelligible word*) I lived in. We were very good friends, very, very close friends, and we spent some time out at the family's summer camp on Lake, it was Paugus Lake actually, which is

an extension of Lake Winnepesaukee. And the summer of our junior year we got, he sent away for lots of college catalogues and things, and my parents had, you know, neither had graduated from high school, didn't know anything about college. And he looked through them and Bates had come on the radar screen for me from a teacher, Ruth Estes, who was a Bates graduate and the debate coach at Laconia High School. And she was a tyrant, she was a, I mean this is a word I hardly ever use and I think only use in connection with Ruth Estes because it fits her perfectly, she was a battleaxe is what she was. She was an absolute tyrant. And yet, she produced debate teams that absolutely fantastic, national contenders year after year.

And I remember, I got involved because I took Latin II from her, was it Latin II? Yes. And the first day of class she started around the room and went to every desk, (*unintelligible phrase*), have you ever done any public speaking? No. Why not? Well. Then you show up in my room at 3:10 this afternoon. Just signed everybody. You didn't dare say no, because you're in her course. And that's how I got hooked into it. And so then she would make you go to, she had a what she called a special class, non-credit, met every day at 6:30, and she invited certain people into that and we did debate. We had a quiz every day, I mean it was hard work, with no credit. But no one ever dared say no Ruth Estes. And so we did it. And I was invited into that class and we felt it was like a real privilege to be invited into this special class, so we did our work all the time and we debated all the time. And so I started going to the big tournaments with her, and I remember I played basketball one night, it was a game, (*unintelligible phrase*) season game, and I was supposed to come to Lewiston the next day, and we were all to gather downtown at the railroad station, and she was going to drive this team up here. And I sprained my ankle very, very badly that night, and I was the next to the last one out, and I was on crutches and iced and, I mean, I was in bad shape. And as I came out on crutches, there stood Ruth Estes with her arms crossed over ample bosom and, Mr. Carignan. And I, Mrs. Estes, I don't think I'll be able to go tomorrow. Well, why not? Well, I'm having trouble getting around. I see that. You will not have to get yourself to the railroad station, I will come to your house and pick you up. Give me the address, six o'clock in the morning. But Mrs. Estes, I don't think . . . There's no reason you can't go there and debate. Your mouth isn't hurt, it's just your foot. She happened to be a Christian Scientist and I think she was pushing it pretty hard. But I came to Bates that day, and I didn't feel very good but I had a good experience. And so it came on the radar screen. So, I was thinking about Bates. And when it came time for my interview with my guidance counselor, they brought you in, you know, got your ten minutes with the guidance counselor. Herman Caswell was his name, he was a shop teacher who did guidance on the side, and that was, that's what you get, you know, that's absolutely typical of what guidance was all about. And so, Jim, have you found out what you want to do. Yes, I want to go to college. Good, so have you thought about places. And I said, yes, I have, I, sort of three places stand out in my mind, Dartmouth, Bates, and Bowdoin. He was, oh, oh. Is there something wrong, Mr. Caswell? Well, yes, those aren't going to be right for you. What do you mean? Well, you won't be happy there, you know. What do you want to do? I want to teach. Well, then you should go to Plymouth State, that's where you should go.

Well, I mean that just sort of struck it, I mean it sort of bold relief set this notion, oh, right, you're French, you're from that side of the street, the tracks, you can't go to those places. And I, like I just hit bottom, you know, and I walked out of his office and was I walking along the

hallway and I went by the principal's office, Don Piper, and he saw me. Jim. Yes? Come here, what's the matter, you look bad. I said, well, I'm kind of upset. I just had this meeting, and explained to him. And he said, look, if you want to go to those colleges, we'll make it work and I'll help you and I'll be happy to write letters for you, and so on. So I, you know, okay. So I applied and got accepted at Bates and at Bowdoin, and wait listed at Dartmouth, and I chose Bates.

So it was, it was a, and I just often, I've told that story a lot because I still think it happens, and I'll be it happens here in Lewiston where secondary school becomes a sort of a class based (*unintelligible word*) system. And there's so much that's wrong with that, there's just so much that's wrong with it. And had it not been for Don Piper, my life would have gone on a very different trajectory. And so that's a scary story, it really is.

JR: Okay, so you come to Bates.

JC: I come to Bates.

JR: What are your initial impressions of it, and of Lewiston?

JC: My initial impressions of Bates were, oh my God, I'll never be able to make it. And this comes as a surprise to current students, but I read every assignment twice my freshman year, because I was, I was at a place that I didn't expect to be. And I had very little self confidence that I could do it, and I lived for a couple of months with the notion that, well, you've finally overstretched. You had a good run in high school with those folks, but you're really out of your league now. But I made it, and pretty soon I started to do pretty well.

I remember the first history exam that I had, I got a D on it. Never had a D in my life, and I was devastated. The next one I got an A. And so (*unintelligible phrase*) but, it was not an easy time but, for the first few months, but I got along well and I had a great, great time at Bates. But Bates was pretty much Bates and not Lewiston. In the exception of the Goose, and the local cinema, the Empire Theater, and, this will probably surprise you, the American Legion.

JR: Really, the one out by Kennedy Park, that one?

JC: Yeah, a group of us, maybe a dozen, couples, would often go down there and they'd serve us drinks, and even learned some (*unintelligible word*) songs (*unintelligible phrase*), and we partied, then we'd come back, on Saturday nights, to campus. So it was fairly limited contact with the community, very limited contact with the community. And there were almost no connections to the community structurally from within the college, hardly any.

JR: And did you, were you as active at Bates as you had been in high school?

JC: Yeah.

JR: Same sort of things?

JC: I was president of the senior class.

JR: And what professors and/or peers even were really influential, I mean that really stand out for you?

JC: Toby Jackman, who was a history professor, Ernie Muller who was a history professor, were instrumental in my life. Actually sat me down when I was a junior and said, they always called me James, James, you need to be careful. If you're not careful, you're going to wake up teaching in some secondary school when you're forty years old and you're going to say, oh, why am I doing this? What do you mean? You need to think of going further, you need to think of going to graduate school, you need to think of getting a Ph.D. Well this was just mind blowing to me and, but I was a very compliant guy and I said, well, I'll think about it. And I remember saying to my father, you know, two of my teachers have said that I should think about getting a Ph.D. And he said, why not, you know, why not? If they think you have the ability, and we know you have the ability, go as far as you can go. So I did

So they were influential. The other person who was influential was Walt Boyce, who was Dean of Men, and I worked in his office. And when I came back here as dean I knew some of his same things, some of the same things he did, you know, I was (*unintelligible word*) people, and I made dean's list, and he tried to maintain a very personal, connected relationship with students, and I'm trying to do that. There were others, but those were the critical key figures that mostly affected my life.

(Pause).

JR: All right, history major, right?

JC: Yup, history major.

JR: And what did you end up focus-, what part of history did you end up focusing on?

JC: Well, as an undergraduate I was most intrigued with European history, but when I went on to graduate school I worked in American history.

JR: And at your time at Bates, and I actually speak to your post grad as well, how would you describe I guess your, your political awareness, like you know, national politics and beyond that?

JC: Bates was a pretty conservative campus. I think it probably was fifty five percent Republican, so it was a generally conservative place. I don't think we were terribly sophisticated at all about politics. I remember participating in an anti-war, sort of (*unintelligible word*) manner, on the steps of Hathorne Hall once. And I remember waiting until like two thirty in the morning in Kennedy Park for Jack Kennedy to come the night before his election in 1959. But, and there was a lot of campus politics, you know, around issues like why can't women come in to the men's dormitories and things like that, but not a lively political place.

JR: So you graduated from Bates '61?

JC: Yup.

JR: And so where did you go from there?

JC: I went to the University of Rochester, studied history there, and got married and had two kids, twins, and did my work in colonial American history, and left there in '64 and went to Kent State University where I was an instructor for four years in the history department. And there I met a fellow by the name of August Meier, and August Meier was a white American historian of African American history, was one of the real sort of trail blazers in the study of African American history. And we'd often have lunch, and always at the luncheons we had, well, Jim, you ought to read that book, it's a really good book. And every book it took me longer to get my dissertation as a result.

And so then, I'm moving along quickly here, then I went on to Kenyon College and I taught there for only a year and a half. And when I got to Kenyon I thought that was where I would spend my life. Bought a house, it's a wonderful little college, and it was on top of a sort of hill and it was very, very nice, and we bought a nice house and we were settling in. And we had this problem in our first year, which is not uncommon in Gambler, Ohio, we were often sick a lot. The college ran the water system for the town of Gambler, and I think we did well in the classroom but we didn't really know how to run water. And I think people got sick from all the disease that was carried in the water system. And so our family was sick all the time. I was in the hospital on the critical list once, Sally was, it was just awful. And Stephen, one of our twin sons, was very, very sick with paratyphoid and it, I mean, we really thought we were going to lose him. And so I was in the hospital all night with him, and then I would be home juggling the other two kids, teaching my classes during the day, because Sally was in the hospital and this went on for about a week. So any mail that came we just sort of put it aside if it wasn't, you know, urgent things. And this letter came from the president of, office of the president of Bates College and I thought it was a dunning letter for money, so I put it aside. And Stephen recovered and we opened all that mail, and it was a letter from him asking me to be a candidate for the position of Dean of Men. And I wrote back to him and said, no, I'm not interested at all. And Kenyon, I like Kenyon, we bought a house, we intend to stay for some time. And my sense is that I'm doing okay and I have a good shot at tenure and so on. But I will, I said, use my position as alumnus of the college to provide you with unsolicited advice and then went on to say that I thought it was silly for the college to continue this gender bifurcated deanship and that I also felt that it carried with it connotations of an innkeeper and a disciplinarian and that we needed to get well beyond that, and that what we needed to create as an institution was a structure that encompassed all of the student, from across the board, all of their interests and concerns, and it had to be not gender rooted. So I went on to describe this position.

Well, he called me and said, you know, I read your letter and, he said, I'd like you to come to Lewiston and talk with me. This is a new president. And I said, I don't think you really read my letter very closely, I'm not interested. He said, no, I understand that, but I'd really like you to

come to chat a little bit. And so Sally said, well, go ahead, you know, maybe we won't have to take our vacation to go east to visit parents, you could do that while you're there and we could really have a vacation somewhere else. And so I came and saw and got sort of hooked I guess. So I showed some interest, and the family came along with me and we ended up coming back. And I came as dean of men in January 1970, and then became dean of the college in June that year. And the rest is history.

JR: The rest is history, that's right. All right, so how, how had Bates changed from your days as a student to coming in -?

JC: Well, I mean, (*unintelligible phrase*) that I had never had any intentions of coming back to Bates, and in fact fought the, and participated as students did in those days and I think still do to some extent this day, in sort of denigrating this community. You know, Lewiston is the armpit of the nation, and that sort of thing. And so I didn't have any, I mean I didn't think I had any interest in coming back and settling in this community which I found a repressed community and so on. But, I mean, that's why you have to be careful about what you say because I came back, you know. And I think what appealed to me, and this is, I need to be careful how I say this because I say it as a reflection of a very young and not particularly mature person, I thought I'd gotten a good education here, but I didn't think it was a good education because of the institution, I thought it was a good education because of the, a handful of faculty who really cared and really attentive, that were really attentive to me and took an interest in me and reached out to me and sort of (*unintelligible word*) up my own self confidence and reassured me and affirmed me. And as a result I think I've always been sort of an over achiever, playing in a league just one above where I probably belong. But that was part of the wonderful experience I think that I got at Bates. But it wasn't in any sense an institutional loyalty at all, it was to the Mullers and the Jackmans for those folks.

And so what intrigued me was a new president -

JR: Was this Hedley Reynolds?

JC: Hedley Reynolds, who clearly understood the need to change the institution (*unintelligible phrase*), and clearly understood the need to build up the faculty and to get more Mullers and Jackmans and so on, and to make the institution into a place that was supportive of student learning and not just a place full of rules and regulations that seemed to sort of inflexibly regulate student (*unintelligible word*).

End of Side A
Side B

JR: Please continue.

JC: So I, there was a fresh wind in the air, and it was an intriguing wind. And I guess I'll be brutally honest and say what it came down to for me, in my very naive mind at that point, was okay, do I spend the rest of my life working in a faculty position, knowing full well that

scholarship for me, and research, will always be painful and not enjoyable. And, but I mean, you know, really sustained work, I mean I enjoyed it periodically but it's not what I enjoyed most of the time. And so then I had my impact that way. Or, do I take this opportunity to be in a different kind of position, with a certain kind of authority, and with a new wind. Do I catch that new wind and try to really form an institution in a way that would be really, really supportive of the intellectual life, and obviate all the energy that goes into these battles with students, these battles with faculty, just work in such a way as to create a much more (*unintelligible phrase*).

I say it was naive, of course, you know, you don't herd cats very easily and that's what this is all about, it's about herding cats and a certain amount of the conflict is inevitable in the structure and the nature of what we are as an institution. But that finally became a very seductive sort of image for me, and so I ended up here.

JR: Do you know, like the, not the present context, but just how such like a progressive person as Hedley Reynolds ended up getting the presidency at Bates, or does -?

JC: Well, I think it's always, when that kind of thing happens, it's always a group of members of the board who set a higher bar and who make the right decisions in terms of who they're going to bring in. And I don't, I shouldn't say set a higher bar, I mean Chuck Philips was in his day a very, you know, dynamic president, and judged by many to be very, very effective here. And then, you know, there are those people who now look back on Reynolds' tenure and say, wow, God, they didn't do much with development during his presidency and, you know, boy, we're really paying the price of not having done very much good development work back then. So each presidency has its strengths.

I just think that Hedley had a vision, he knew where he wanted to take the college. He wanted, and it was in some ways quite simple yet quite profound, he knew that what distinguished a college was its faculty. All the rest of the stuff you can get in other institutions, but you can't get faculty anywhere else. And so he, and he believed that a strong faculty, the very best faculty that you could possibly pull together, was the mousetrap that brought good students. And those were the two dynamics for him, quality faculty of excellence, and the best quality student body we could get. And then provide them with the kinds of facilities that are necessary for them to do their thing. So it's a pretty simple formula, and yet he was quite focused and quite determined, and when I as dean said we got to do something about housing, he would say yes, you know, we don't have the resources and I'm not going to step back from my commitment to building this faculty. And so he was quite determined and he built the faculty, and I think we're still benefiting from that initiative.

So it was a clear vision, a lot of energy, and an understanding of the institution as a liberator rather than a trainer of young people. And so it was a significant move. I often heard him talk about, it's important for us to be a mature institution. And I think that meant that we need to trust faculty, we need to trust students, we need to recognize that not only should people take risks but you need to encourage them to take risks, and you need to recognize (*unintelligible phrase*) a mature institution that says that's okay, and doesn't try to hide (*unintelligible word*) because they (*unintelligible word*). So I think we made some significant progress in those years.

(Unintelligible phrase).

JR: I also understand that Hedley Reynolds did quite a lot as far as Bates' relation to Lewiston. Can you speak to that?

JC: Yeah, I think he started. And again, it depends, you know, what your vantage point is. People now look back and say, God, you know, nothing was done with Lewiston at all. I remember, this is a sort of emblematic story, but I re-, there used to be a group that would meet in the back room of Marois' restaurant and, oh, Irving Isaacson and Jack Clifford and people like that were in this group, and they were somewhat bawdy in their language, I mean I think it was a totally politically incorrect group. I never was there, but this is what I've heard; totally politically incorrect group, and probably as sexist as you can imagine, and all of that. And the language was probably vulgar at times. And Hedley just went barging in one day, and as he says that, you know, they were absolutely shocked that the president of the college would come downtown and sit around and have a cup of coffee with these people. And they were, I mean, just blown up when he swore in response to their swearing.

So I think he tried to connect in various ways. He opened all events on the campus to the community. I mean, they weren't open before. He certainly supported student groups getting involved in the campus association, we established a volunteer office and things like that. So it was an effort, but not, how do you say, not as staying and as vigorous and as robust an effort as we have seen in the last ten years.

(Break in taping.)

JR: Okay, so when you, in your first years as dean at Bates, what sense do you have, and this may have to call on later experience, but what sense you have of how Lewiston, its people, its politics are changing, or did you have that feeling, or was this later on when you get more involved?

JC: I didn't have much of a sense of Lewiston, I really didn't. I, it was a place where we shopped, it was a place where, you know, you read the newspaper, and your connection was mostly in terms of how it impacted the college. And I can remember that first year I was here, there was a big debate going on about the bridge here.

JR: The Veterans Memorial Bridge?

JC: Yeah, and where that should be. And the president merely took on the leadership of the legislative delegation and the city, trying to get them to locate it further up. And there were plans for a circumferential highway and all that sort of thing. And Louis Jalbert, of notoriety in this community, was on the appropriations committee and he was leader of the delegation. He was alleged to be a power, and he was committed to getting money for the third bridge in Lewiston. And the story goes that what was shaking up was that there was not going to be enough money for a bridge further out, which was going to cost more because of this island out there, *(unintelligible phrase)* so it was cheaper. And so the state said, 'it's either there or

nowhere'. And the president continued to fight. And I remember he went down to Louis' office and walked in and made his pitch, and Jalbert, he called him Hedley, leaned forward and said, "Hedley, you're gonna lose this one." And sure enough, Hedley lost it.

So it was that kind of connection. But the notion was, and there's still a lot of this around, the college is not really part of the community and so we don't need to pay attention to the college, and the reverse side was the college doesn't really need to pay attention to the community.

JR: And when did that really first change?

JC: In the eighties.

JR: Eighties.

JC: Yeah, I think. And that's being a little bit unfair. I mean, I remember that what, when we had the Vietnam War, you know, and we had the killing of kids at Kent State and the Cambodia bombings and everything, campuses just exploded, and we did, too. I remember that one of the things that we tried to do, with success, was to redirect energies toward the community. And the line was that, you know, if you really, what's happening of course is that tax dollars are being siphoned off to support the Vietnam War effort, and so what we ought to be doing is trying to do things in the community that aren't being done. For example, spring clean up is not being done, and so on and so on. And so there were lots of activities that went on in the community, and I remember the president drove a truck, it had a, it was a big dump truck, downtown from the campus with students walking behind it, and it was a group of people who were going to spend some time cleaning up the inner city as a way of trying to demonstrate their opposition to the war and the siphoning off of dollars that should be invested in the infrastructure of the inner cities. So it was those kinds of connections that happened along the way. There's a lot of volunteer work going on, always has been in this college, a long history of that kind of connection. So, it wasn't that we ignored it, but there wasn't, there wasn't a kind of (*unintelligible word*) recognition at the highest levels of the fact that we are in a place, and that place helps to define what we are.

JR: Well, let's change gears a little, and tell me about your association with Ed Muskie.

JC: I was wondering when we were going to get to Ed Muskie. Well, after eighteen and a half years of deaning, I, Muskie was on the board so I knew who he was and, you know, twice a year we'd shake hands and say hello and that sort of thing, but I didn't know him. And after eighteen and a half years of deaning, I moved out of student deaning and took on some different responsibilities, and one of which was the Muskie Archives which was just in the forming up stage at that time. And so I went to Washington to meet with Ed Muskie and talk about what is vision for the archives was, and actually wanted to talk to him about how he might raise, help us raise some money to support things. Of course he said, well, that's not an area in which I'm very good at and nor do I really want to be involved in, and I think one of the Muskie things is that he didn't pay much attention to raising money and as a result he did not develop a financial follower who was really committed and loyal (*unintelligible phrase*). And as a result, the efforts

to raise money in his name subsequent to his (*unintelligible word*) in the state, the Department of State and subsequently his death, have not been particularly lucrative, rewarding, because there was no sort of structure or tradition built by Ed himself around raising money.

But we talked, we had a good meeting, we were on the same page with regard to where the archives ought to go, what its essential direction should be, and we stayed in touch. And this is my interpretation, never anything he said led me to believe (*unintelligible phrase*), but that would lead to this conclusion directly, but I always had the sense that as he got older, and as his old close friend colleagues and opponents passed away, Hugh Scott and Scoop Jackson and people like that, he became more and more lonely.

JR: More what?

JC: Lonely. And he was, he had this job at this law office, but it was, you know, it was clear that this was a sort of sinecure, it was a, I mean he did some law work but it was mostly high profile stuff, it was in showing up, it was in the name, that kind of thing, rather than down and dirty. I don't think he ever enjoyed the practice of the law at all. So I think there was a sense of loneliness, and, we didn't become close friends, don't get me wrong, but he'd call me once in a while, we would chat. When I was ill he followed my progress, and sometimes lack of progress, very closely. He was very considerate. And we were quite friendly, and we'd always get together a couple of times in the summer time because he was in Maine, have dinner together, and our wives would join us and so on. So, there developed this, I don't want to make too much of it, but what was a, you know, a gem for me, this opportunity to have these conversations with this man who I came to admire and respect a great deal.

And I remember, I mean that admiration was not real new because I remember once visiting my parents in Laconia, New Hampshire, and it must have been in 196-, well, '4 or '5 really, and taking, well maybe it would have been in '68 I guess, it was '68, and taking my twin sons out to the airport because he was running for vice president then, and Muskie came into Laconia airport to do a, you know, just a stop at the airport. And I took my kids out to that airport and I said, you need to see this man, you know. And they were, I don't know, how old were they, maybe six years old, about six years old, five years old I think. And so I always thought, you know, he's one special guy. And part of that was that he's a Bates graduate, (*unintelligible phrase*). So I got, in those last years I got to have a few wonderful moments with him.

JR: Okay. What can you tell me about his association with Bates College over the years, like his relationship with the college, you said that he was on the board for a time?

JC: Yeah, he was on the board, and I think he always believed, he always believed and always said this, that Bates College had been seminal in his life. That his experience here in that four years made all the difference in the world. And he was quick to give the college credit for that, and he was until his dying days, very, very loyal to the institution. In part I think because he felt that this young Polish kid from Rumford, Maine got a chance to do something significant in part because of the college.

And I, you know, I think that's an important thing to understand. I think this college has historically had a commitment to doing that kind of thing, taking the poor kid from fill in the blank, but Rumford, Maine fits very, very well, father was a tailor, a very good tailor, and giving that kid a chance to, on the basis of intellectual promise and ability, to go up the ladder to a different place and play a different role. And it happened to me, it happened to lots of people at different times.

JR: Okay. Were you aware of any tensions between him and the college over the years at all?

JC: This is a very difficult thing to say with accuracy - in a public sense, no. And I mean it when I say that he was profoundly and consistently appreciative of the college. When we had the secretaries of state here in 1989, I mean, he was thrilled. It was a, you know, just a wonderful moment for him, all secretaries came to his alma mater. And I think he did a great job, I think he did it right, and it was just a, and he kept saying all that weekend, to everybody, Bates has meant so much to me. So I think it was a genuine feeling.

Now Ed had a big ego, as do most folks who reach that kind of stage. And I'm not sure that he ever really believed that the college understood how really good he was. But that was very, very, I mean that, that never showed in any public way. I don't think, I don't think he ever ver--, he never verbalized it to me or to anybody, but I just sort of felt sometimes that maybe he thought we should have (*unintelligible phrase*).

JR: Okay. This one may, you mentioned that you really didn't have a sense of Lewiston in your early days.

JC: And I, one thing I would add, I think that Jane and Ed, but particularly Jane, felt that President Harward didn't appreciate him. And, I don't mean this to sound self serving, but Jane on more than one occasion would say to me, "Well we need to get this done while you can get it done, because I'm not sure other people there will pay attention." And so, I think there was that sense that (*unintelligible phrase*).

JR: What sense did you have, and like I said, it may be less prevalent with you in particular, but his association with Lewiston and how his work affected the community, how the community viewed him?

JC: Oh, this is a, you know, incredibly sensitive political figure, and he knew Lewiston and Auburn were critical to his success in the state. He paid attention to Lewiston and Auburn. Model Cities, Lewiston benefited enormously from Model Cities. He worked Lewiston hard, and he knew Lewiston, where Lewiston really was, and enormous capacity to just go right in to those places. I mean, Hedley once told me that the doorbell rang one night at eleven o'clock, and there was Ed Muskie. And he had just spent the night down on Lisbon Street working the clubs, it was an election campaign, and he was just stopping by to say hello and have a drink. And so he spent the night down here in Lewiston working those clubs on Lisbon Street. So he knew Lewiston, he knew how, you know, I remember he once said to, you know, you could always tell when Louis Jalbert was in trouble, he'd put himself into the hospital. If you called

and they said Louis was in the hospital, you knew he was in political trouble.

And I remember going once to a Jefferson-Jackson dinner over here in the Armory, and Muskie was the speaker. He started out and (*unintelligible phrase*) and it was one of the best political speeches I ever heard. And it was full of brimstone and just enormous energy and, oh my God, the crowd was, you know, getting ready to, they would have canonized him if they could. They just, they loved him, they just loved him. So he had good, I think he had good relationships with Lewiston and Auburn.

Frank Coffin, who was his first campaign manager and major sort of strategist, Frank of course grew up on this street, right down the street here. In fact, maybe either in the next lot or the next, one down from there. So he knew Lewiston very, very well, and Chris (*name*) has said, as recently as this past year, he said it to me, you know, the key to winning in Maine on a statewide level is Lewiston and Auburn. If you take (*unintelligible phrase*) vote, you're going to take the city, and if you take the city you're going to do well in Biddeford, you're going to well in blah-blah-blah, and you'll take the state. So I think Ed understood that, he paid attention to Lewiston and Auburn, and he knew how to reach the real Lewiston and Auburn.

JR: What would be your over all impression of him, of his career politically, or political career (*unintelligible word*)?

JC: This is my impression. He was an extraordinarily effective legislator, and that was the result of the power of his intellect and the strength of his character. The intellect allowed him to analyze and discern and figure out, and his character allowed him, compelled him, to do the work, to become knowledgeable, to get all the details (*unintelligible word*), to do the due diligence and follow through. And shake the right hands and lose your temper at appropriate times to get people in line, all of that. He was very, I think he was a very together guy in terms of his capacity to legislate, that's number one. Number two, he had a set of core values that defined him, he understood the art of compromise, but had the capacity to compromise without violating those core values. And so his integrity was always intact, and you could count on his word. And so that enhanced his capacity as a legislator.

He was enormously persuasive. He once said to me, you know, I was getting ready to leave the Senate, I was not going to run again for a lot of reasons, one of which was I was poor and needed to build an estate, you know, I never had any real money. And secondly, the Senate had changed. And I said, what do you mean? And he said, well, you know Jim, it used to be you could go on to the Senate floor and have a real debate, and sometimes your mind would change and sometimes you'd change somebody else's mind. It's not that way any more. It's all back room. And, so I think he enjoyed the debate, enjoyed the challenge of trying to get people to understand where he wanted them to go, and get them to move in that direction, get those votes to go. He really enjoyed that. But he never did it at the expense of his core values and his integrity. And I think that was important.

He was a man who I think listened hard, but then voted his own conscience. And I once asked him, how do you reconcile that, Ed, when you clearly vote in ways that are contrary to your

constituency. And he said, I remember it vividly, we were driving along the Maine Turnpike, and he said, you know Jim, you have to do that once in a while. What you really need to pay attention to is you need to listen very, very carefully and intelligently to what the constituents are saying. If they don't change your mind, then you have to vote it. And then he said, I always came back to Maine to explain why I did it, and explain it as clearly as I could. And you know, I found Maine people were fair, they would understand.

And I just thought that captured that sort of tension that always exists I think in a politician between, are you merely the spokesperson for your constituents, or are you something, are you that plus something else. And I think he characterized that very well in that story, and I think he did that all his life.

JR: Okay. What would you say his weaknesses were?

JC: I've already alluded to one of them, I don't think he, and I think this is one of the primary reasons he never really got beyond, he never got, he was unable to turn that presidential bid into a successful bid. I think he did not do the kind of base building that you need to do in order to run successfully for the presidency in this day and age. And he was always a little bit too much the independent thinker. I think that was what I felt was one of the great things about him, but maybe it was, there was too much of that, the (*unintelligible word*) out there was, well, he really didn't have the fire in his belly, he didn't want it enough. I don't think that's true; I think he wanted it a lot. But his way of wanting was different than that of others who were more successful. So I think that was one of his weaknesses.

He had an enormous temper, and I think that sometimes is a weakness, but I think, Don Nicoll told me instances when he's seen Ed turn it on, had seen Ed turn it on in order to make a point, scare a vote up. And, you know, you don't know how much it was out of his control or in his control, but he did have a temper I think. That may have been problematic. But I think the country would have been a better place had he been president.

JR: One thing that is often said of Ed Muskie, I think specifically probably around his presidential campaign, failed presidential campaign, that he lost touch with Maine. What sense did you have of that, do you think that was a fallacy?

JC: No, I don't think he ever lost touch with Maine. I think that, he was active on a national stage. His energy was clearly going in that direction. But you know, after that was all over, he came back to Maine regularly; he addressed the legislature on a couple of occasions. He worked very hard on the legal aid initiative to try to make legal support available to the indigent and the poor. I don't think he ever lost touch with Maine. I think he knew Maine, and I think it was a kind of knowledge of Maine that, you know, would not go away for, after four or five years. I mean, I think he came, always knew Maine. He spent less time in Maine, and he was frying, you know, trying to fry bigger fish. But I don't think that means he lost touch with Maine.

I mean, you know, he's still a giant. He's still a giant, and this is almost fifty years after his election as governor. There are others who are in the same category with him, but he's still

pretty high. I mean, his head is probably (*unintelligible phrase*). And I think they would, I think George Mitchell would say that, and I think Bill Cohen would say that.

I remember Bill Cohen, when we had his [Muskie's] memorial service here at the chapel, after his death, and Sally and I invited Jane and the family and other dignitaries who were participating in the memorial to our house for lunch before, and Bill Cohen was the first one to arrive and I said, "Gee," you know, he was in the Senate then, "Senator Cohen, I'm so pleased you could come and thank you for getting here for lunch." And he looked me straight in the eye and he said, "Ed Muskie was terribly important in my own life, I'd never miss this." So, and I mean he's a Republican, so I think he's still one of the giants.

JR: I'm thinking that, and let me know if this is -

JC: I'm thinking that we've gone on a long time.

JR: Maybe we've gone on a long time. I still have some more material to cover, but do you think we might be able to schedule another interview? If not some time soon, then perhaps with someone else in the semi near future. That way this incessant squealing won't

JC: Yeah, I'd be happy to do it, Jeremy. I think if we could do it, it would be better to do it with you, because you know where we've been, I mean (*unintelligible phrase*) will have where we've been, but you'll know where we've been and you might be able to do it more efficiently.

JR: Do you think some time maybe early next week?

JC: Sure.

JR: Excellent, okay. We'll schedule -

JC: Just get, you know, (*unintelligible phrase*).

JR: Okay.

JC: Maybe we'll try and keep it to an hour or a half an hour or something.

JR: Okay, thanks a lot.

JC: Fun to talk. Why did you want all that stuff about Laconia?

End of Interview