

George J. Mitchell Oral History Project

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Thomas J. "Tom" Nale
(Interviewer: Mike Hastings)

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Mike Hastings: The following is a recorded interview of the George J. Mitchell Oral History Project, an activity at Bowdoin College. The date is October 16, a Friday, 2009. I'm Michael Hastings, the interviewer. The subject of our interview today is Tom Nale, and we're holding the interview in Mr. Nale's law offices in Waterville. And I'd like to begin, if I could Mr. Nale, could you state your complete name and spell your surname for me.

Tom Nale: My complete name is Thomas J. Nale, N-A-L-E.

MH: Okay, and your place and date of birth?

TN: I was born in Bangor, Maine, Eastern Maine Medical Center, December 19, 1947.

MH: And your father's full name and your mother's full name?

TN: My father's full name is Melvin Travis Nale, my mother's name is Caroline Theresa Nale.

MH: Okay. Now first, why don't we get right on the table right away, what is your connection to George Mitchell?

TN: George Mitchell is a cousin of mine. His mother, Mintaha, and my grandmother were sisters. So my mother and George are first cousins, George is my second cousin.

MH: Very good. Can you tell me about the grandmother that was the sister? What do you know about her?

TN: My grandmother, Mary, had three sisters. One of them was Mintaha, other one was Tamam, and the other one was Rosa. And my grandmother, Mary, gave birth to seven children, one died shortly after birth, and her sisters, one was Mintaha who raised the Mitchell family, the other one was Rosa, who married Elias Karam and those two, wonderful people, did not have biological children. They did adopt one of my grandmother and grandfather's children, that's her last, the last child. My grandmother Mary died at childbirth, at the age of thirty-five, and the child that was born was Mary, who was adopted by the Karam's and she's Mama Baldacci.

MH: Okay, okay. Right, ended up as Rosemary.

TN: Rosemary.

MH: Rosemary, right. Okay.

TN: And then Tamam remained in Lebanon, she never came to the United States to live. I remember meeting her at George Mitchell's mom's house on Front Street, years and years ago, I was probably eight or nine at the time, but she always returned to Lebanon. But I have no memory of my grandmother, Mary, because I think she died several years before I was born.

MH: Okay. Just, Mr. Nale, just for the record here, Mr. Nale has given me a genealogy, which I will send to Bowdoin with this tape so that we get the names spelled correctly. It's a genealogy that was put together by-

TN: A relative of mine, I think his name was John Azis, but he's also listed in the genealogy.

MH: Right, okay. We don't usually take, this is an oral history and normally we don't deal with documents, but this one is so important for the correct spelling of the names, I will send it with the tape and I thank you for that. Can you talk a little bit about growing up in Waterville in the 1950s?

TN: In Waterville, during that time, we were fortunate in some ways, and I say fortunate, we were truly blessed. My family came to Waterville after a tragic fire in Bangor, Maine. We were living in a home, it was owned by Rose [Rosa Saad] Karam, Mary [Rosemary Karam] Baldacci's mom, and we had a fire, I believe it was in probably in 1953, that brought us to Waterville. And, we lived in an apartment building on Front Street that was owned by one of my mother's sisters, Maheba [Boles]. And right across the driveway is where my Aunt Mintaha raised her family.

MH: So that's the neighborhood they called Head of Falls?

TN: Well, that's the neighborhood they called Front Street.

MH: Okay.

TN: Head of Falls was before my time.

MH: Okay. Okay.

TN: And Head of Falls, as you go down Temple Street, across the railroad tracks, the left side of Head of the Falls was where the French people lived. On the right side of Temple Street, at Head of the Falls, was where all the Lebanese people lived.

MH: Now where is the suspension bridge in relation to these two, the right and the left?

TN: The Two Cent Bridge, which crosses the Kennebec River, is right at the end of what is Temple Street.

MH: So it would be north and south of that.

TN: That's correct.

MH: Okay. So the Lebanese neighborhood was south of the bridge.

TN: That's correct. And that's where my grandmother and grandfather lived, and right next to them was the Jabar family, which is also a large family and a big name, a lot of successful people came out of that family. And several others, Josephs, Nessarallas (*sounds like*), Jurdaks. And the Mitchell family, when I was delivering the newspapers at the time, and during the '50s, were up on Front Street, where we were. But at the Head of Falls, there were several grocery stores down there and George Mitchell, George's dad, ran one of the stores down there, and I think that's how he met and fell in love with Mintaha at the time. And my grandfather, Thomas, worked at the Hollingsworth and Whitney Company at Head of the Falls, and when he wasn't working there he was working at home, he had a brick oven, brick oven where he would cook and bake and distribute Lebanese bread to the community.

MH: Well now, what is the company you said he worked for?

TN: [] Hollingsworth and Whitney.

MH: And what did they do?

TN: It was a manufacturing company that manufactured, it was a steel company at the time that was on this side of the river, the Waterville side. Across, the Two Penny Bridge was the Scott Paper Company, as it is known today.

MH: Right, okay. Did you all go to the same church or -?

TN: The church was on the corner of Front and Appleton Street; St. Joseph Maronite Church. The Mass was strictly in Arabic, and you not only went to that church, you also went to the school, which was on Appleton Street. But the Mitchell family went to St. Joseph Maronite when it was the old wooden structure, which I went to for a period of, I think from the third grade to the seventh grade, and then the building was torn down and a new school was built at that time.

MH: Okay, was a new church built?

TN: Well, the new church was built before my time, but there was an old wooden structure there.

MH: I see, behind it.

TN: Yes.

MH: Okay. And so that was the only Lebanese church in town?

TN: It was the only Lebanese church, I believe, in the state of Maine.

MH: Is that right?

TN: Oh, yes.

MH: Okay.

TN: Yes, and as I say, we were blessed, it was just a, the Lebanese community was in fact just a Lebanese community. I mean there were other nationalities there, but we all hung out together, if you will. We all made up the basketball team, the football team, and you could just step out your front door and everyone would be there and you could have any instant team, an instant game, anything, it was just -

MH: Sports were important?

TN: Well, they were important during my time, but they were extremely important during the Mitchells' time. And I think it was extremely important for the city and it was really important for the state. And what a story it was for New England, is that in Waterville you had the French community, the Lebanese community, and the Jewish community, and those factions from time to time didn't always see eye to eye. And as of today they, not just in this community but in others, they sometimes they just don't see eye to eye, but because of athletics at the time, particularly basketball, that team of '44 that won the New England and is talked about until this day, was made up of Lebanese, which was the Mitchells and the Jabars, was made up of French, which was the Canavans (*sounds like*) and others, and the Jews, which was Teddy Shiro, and they knew no different blood, it was all one blood, it was all purple. That was the color of Waterville High School. And that team, and the way they got along with each other, they still write about it today, they brought the community together, they brought the churches together, they brought the religions together, and it was so good for the time, it was just tremendous. And it just, it sort of worked its way up into the '50s, the '60s, the '70s, the '80s.

MH: That would of been, the Senator would have been a couple of years, he would have been in junior high school then, right, In '44?

TN: George would have been, yes, in junior high school.

MH: He graduated, I think, in 1950 from Waterville High School.

TN: From Waterville High School, yes. His brother Johnny, I played on the '44 team, but Johnny graduated I believe in '45.

MH: Okay.

TN: Now, Paulie may have graduated earlier than that, but George was younger than all the boys, older than his sister, Barbara was the youngest. But George, in my mind, although athletics was very big in my family, and it is today, and it was back when I was growing up in the '50s, I admired his brothers, they were tremendous athletes. But whenever I saw George, I saw him differently than the rest of the boys. I saw him as a scholar, I saw him having something that the others probably didn't have, but they were the ones that were getting the write-ups with the basketball and with the football and with everything else. Even though George wasn't getting those headlines, there was something inside of me that I just felt that this was, this was the special one. That education was something that I felt was more important, in my family, than the athletics. Not that the other brothers weren't educated, they were, they had a fine education. But it was the sports I think was so important to them, and George respected them for that, but I respected George for the direction that he was heading in. Just that education was going to get me somewhere different than -

MH: Now, you've got two other brothers, two older brothers, or two other brothers?

TN: I have one older brother and I have, John's younger, Richard is younger, and Mark is younger, there are five boys in my family and one girl. She's the, she's the oldest, Carol.

MH: She's the oldest, I see. As a family, did you ever get together, I mean did, was this, I suppose you were together in church anyway?

TN: We were always in church, always together in school, and after Sunday Mass the Lebanese community would head out to Bang's Beach, that B-A-N-G-S, that's on Messalonskee Lake, in Oakland. And we would all be there with our picnic baskets, filled with zahr, filled with mushtah, filled with kibbeh, filled with cabbage rolls, grape leaves, potato salad, whatever it is that the Lebanese grandmothers and mothers would make, and we would all picnic together near the lake. I can, as I close my eyes I can see all the tables, all of us together, and the men would have a softball game. That was the big thing after the Sunday Mass, would be the picnic, the swimming, and the softball game that we would have out there.

MH: Now, cycle back a little bit, why did, what brought the Lebanese community to Waterville? You said that they were the only Maronite parish in the state.

TN: I think what brought them here, when my grandmother and grandfather landed on Ellis Island, she was known as Mary, he was known as Tanous. When they left Ellis Island, she was still known as Mary, he was known as Thomas, and their last name went from Harfouch to

Bolous, to Boles, before they left the island.

MH: Really.

TN: And they traveled to, some of them ended up in Fall River, Lawrence, Mass., Lowell, Massachusetts, because of textile industries, the shoe industry, and in Maine, Waterville, word got back to Lebanon that we had a garment industry, a leather industry, the steel industry and the paper products over at (*unintelligible*), and that's why they came was because of the jobs.

MH: Okay. Now tell me, I think many people are not very familiar with the Maronite Church, how does it differ from the main stream Catholic Church?

TN: Well, there are some beliefs that we have that we draw from Saint Charbel in Lebanon. And we still have the same belief in God, that there is a heaven, that there is a hell. But our Mass is done in Arabic, and it's not any different than the French Catholics or the Irish Catholics. It's just that our Mass is done in Arabic, and we use a specific Arabic dialect which is something that other churches certainly don't have. And I don't know if the Mass is so different, but it's just that, and I don't know if I can explain it either, Mike, that it's just that the ethnicity of the Jews, the Italians, and the Lebanese, there's something, and I don't want to exclude any nationalities here, but this was the group that, other than the Italians, that we were so close with each other, and we just simply value family, we always have, and that's what's always held everyone together here.

MH: I read something somewhere in a Maine history book that, I mean like in the, really up until the '40s, that they were called Syrians and not Lebanese. Is that accurate?

TN: Yes, it is accurate, and from my understanding, they were offended, the Lebanese would be offended because they were called Syrians, because the Syrians were Protestants.

MH: Right.

TN: And the Lebanese were the Catholics.

MH: I see.

TN: Even today, when I go into the Lebanese bakery here in Waterville and I mistake sometimes and ask if they have some Syrian bread that I could have with my cabbage rolls, I'm corrected very quickly. That is Lebanese bread.

MH: Okay, okay. You said that the ethnic communities that were in Waterville often didn't see eye to eye, what kind of issues divided them?

TN: Well I think what issues divided them here were the same issues that would of divided

them in the old country, with the Lebanese, the Palestinians, the Syrians, and the Jews. So whatever differences they had over there, they probably carried them here today, you know, back in the '40s and the '50s. Whatever they may have been it was, when I was growing up you never really knew what the issues were. Just that they were Jews, and they were Syrians, and we're Lebanese, and there was something there, there was something there that made everybody a little bit different and made them, they're the French, they're the Jews and we're the Lebanese, whatever that was. You know, I don't think we were ever told: this is what it is with them, it's just that we just grew up feeling that there was something there. But athletics, we just, it just went away, whatever it was, it just went away, because when you were all on the same team, wearing the same uniform, you were the same people. And that was the beauty of it all; I mean that there was a story in itself.

MH: So, I'm curious about this 1944 team that you mention, back then they classified, did they, I know in the 1950s and '60s they had Double L, Double Large, Large, Medium and Small. Was that the same kind of division back then and -?

TN: You are correct, that's what it was in the '60s, when I played. I'm not familiar or aware as to whether or not there was any different classification.

MH: Did they go on to win things outside of Maine or -?

TN: Oh gracious, yes, they were undefeated for a couple of years, and they went on to defeat every high school that made the New England tournament, and they were the underdogs. They were the underdogs. What caused us to win was the talent. Each player had something specific, I mean Swisher, Georgie's older brother, was a tremendous ball handler. He was the only player in college history to hold Bob Cousy to under double figures. And Johnny will tell you that today, he'll repeat that story, even though it's over fifty years old. He loves to tell that story. But it was the talent, and it was the speed. Waterville, under the coach of Wally Donovan, came up with this man-to-man press, this fast break offense which people never saw, you just dribbled the ball and passed it around, Waterville didn't do it, Waterville was all speed and it was just something that was just novel to the other teams.

MH: Now, I see on your, there's a mug on your, that is basketball, it says -

TN: Basketball.

MH: "To Coach Nale," it says on your mug, here.

TN: In the earlier days when I got out of college, I was a teacher up at MCI in Pittsfield for four years and coached basketball. And [I] coached some tremendous basketball players that were sent to us out of Harlem and out of different schools in Massachusetts on scholarship, because they were such tremendous athletes. But yes, no, I did, that's where I, I mean that was my first love.

MH: So you graduated from high school?

TN: Nineteen seventy, and 1966 high school.

MH: Okay, all right. And did you, you went on where to school?

TN: I went on, up to MCI, Maine Central Institute, that's where I taught for four years.

MH: And where did you go to college?

TN: I went to Waterville High School, went to Thomas College, 1970, and went to MCI for four years, took a year off, sold everything I had, worked fifty, sixty hours a week, earned enough money to pay my first year of law school. And I was there as a first-year law student, my brother John was a second-year law student, my brother Richard was a third-year law student.

MH: So all three of you were there?

TN: Yes, all at the same time, yes '76, '77 and '78.

MH: And what law school was that?

TN: Pierce Law in Concord, New Hampshire.

MH: Okay, Okay.

TN: And then our youngest brother, Mark, graduated I think five or six years after we did.

MH: Also from Franklin Pierce?

TN: Franklin Pierce.

MH: Yes, great. Do they all, do all the brothers live here in Waterville now?

TN: We all live in Water -, John lives in Winslow.

MH: Okay.

TN: And the rest of the Nale family all live in Waterville.

MH: Okay. And you've been active in politics?

TN: We have been active in politics in that we have supported George Mitchell when he ran for governor, ran for senator, but on a personal level I, for whatever reason, decided to run for mayor of the city of Waterville in 1986, and I ran unopposed for a good part of the term, and then Senator Kany decided to run against me.

MH: Judy Kany?

TN: Judy Kany, and she was a Democrat, and I was just really puzzled as to why she decided to jump into the race and, well I defeated her, it was the first election she ever lost. And after I defeated her in the Democratic Caucus, the Republicans decided not to put anyone up to run against me. So I was mayor, and I went into it knowing very well that I was going to be a one-term mayor.

MH: Is that a two-year term?

TN: Two years, but I mean I had private practice here that I needed to run. I took two years off from my practice essentially, and went to work for the city of Waterville.

MH: What were the issues when you were mayor?

TN: Well, the biggest issue was a zone change up on Kennedy Memorial Drive for a large shopping center. And it was in area where I lived, it was in my back yard. And I was criticized by all of my neighbors that this shopping center shouldn't be there, it's going to ruin the neighborhood, they're not going to be able to raise their children in a safe environment. And it was a difficult issue for me, because it was my home, I had a child at the time too, but I knew, in my heart, what I felt was best for the city of Waterville. And ironically I did confer with George Mitchell, at this time, as to what it is that he thought that I should do, knowing very well, I mean in my heart I knew what I wanted to do. And he says, "Tom, I'm going to give you the best advice that I can, if you believe that it is the right thing to do, then it's the right thing to do, regardless of your neighbors." And I moved forward with it, and they sued the city after it was passed by the council, it was taken to the Superior Court, they supported my position, went to the Law Court, they supported my position, and it's up there now. It's a tremendous tax payer for the city of Waterville.

MH: Now, this is the one that's near -

TN: It's the Shaw's -

MH: The Shaw's, okay, I imagine that brings in a fair amount of corporate revenue for the -?

TN: Absolutely.

MH: For the, in property taxes?

TN: Yes, and all the neighbors up there use the shopping center to this day, so all forgotten and all forgiven.

MH: Let me ask, I want to go back to the family again. Do you know what part of Lebanon the family came from?

TN: The Mitchells and the Harfouch, my side, came from the Bkassim and that's spelled with a B, B-K-A-S-S-I-M, and the Jabar family came from the Sabbagh (*sounds like*), and I can't give you a spelling.

MH: Now are those cousins as well, Jabars, cousins?

TN: No, no.

MH: But another prominent family.

TN: The Jabars, although come from the neighboring community, where the Mitchells, the Boles, the Ferrises, the Coreys, and the Josephs, we are all somehow related, but the Jabars aren't related to any of the Josephs, the Boleses, the Mitchells, but we were all within I would say, I think the communities were maybe two or three miles from each other.

MH: So it's word of mouth, obviously, that brought everybody together.

TN: Now, I just want to mention one thing, is that you mentioned earlier on, you asked me my father's full name. My mother and my father were divorced when we were infants, we were all very, very young. I just wanted to make that point, you know, God bless my mother, she was a single parent and did -

MH: Five kids?

TN: Six.

MH: Six, okay.

TN: Did a tremendous job, bringing us up.

MH: I see. Is she still living?

TN: No, my mother passed away December 8th of last year, at 9:29 in the morning, in my arms.

MH: How old was she?

TN: Ninety-two.

MH: Wow. Do you have good recollections of the Senator's father and mother?

TN: Oh gosh, yes.

MH: Can you tell me a little bit about what you remember about the father?

TN: Yes, yes. George [Mitchell, Sr.] was, as you know, an orphan, and spoke fluent French, English, and Arabic. Hard worker, I remember him being on the maintenance staff up at Colby, as a janitor, always home for his wife, always home for his children, always remember him wearing a felt hat, always had a hat on.

MH: Wide-brimmed, felt hat?

TN: Yes, that's it, yes. Always outside doing some yard work, and always pushing education for his children. I get that from my mother, my mother would always tell me that George is always having his children read, always having them do something for education. But I remember going over to the house from time to time and they would have newspapers from Lebanon that they would read. But I remember one time George and Mintaha had me come into the house during the television program, *The Price is Right*, and I sat on the couch with them, and at the time, they would have several items that the television viewers could write in on and say what they thought the prices were, and here I am, Mike, nine years old, they're asking me to write down what I think a Maytag dishwasher would cost, hoping that they would win. So I would come up with some kind of a price for the dishwasher, for the stove, for the refrigerator, and I would give it to my aunt and uncle. Whatever would happen to it after that, I would have no idea. But they were in hopes of winning a washer or a dryer or something from *The Price is Right*.

MH: Was the Senator's mother, during those years, was she still working as a weaver?

TN: No, my Aunt Mintaha would be at home. But even though she was not working as a weaver, I can assure you, many times I would be over at the house and she'd be cooking for all of them, even though they weren't living there at the time. I mean the zitr, the kibbeh, the Syrian bread and, but they, after Sunday Mass, I can recall just all kinds of cars and people being over at their mother's house.

MH: The softball game at the beach interests me, I mean I wonder if that's where the Senator got his love of baseball. There seems to be, everyone I talk with in these interviews talks about the Senator's love for baseball and the Red Sox.

TN: Yes. I couldn't tell you. I wouldn't know, even if he played baseball in high school, but

maybe it was the fact that his brothers were football and basketball players that George was -

MH: Paul was a very good baseball player.

TN: George was?

MH: Paul.

TN: Paul?

MH: Yes, at Maine. He was an All Star baseball player at Maine, yes.

TN: Oh, really.

MH: And I don't know about the others, but.

TN: I know the brothers have always been and are very, very close, they really are. I absolutely respect George for everything he's done, and I admired Johnny for the stories that I hear about basketball and Paulie, but Robbie Mitchell has a special place in my heart, because he took a special interest in my family. As they, I mean they all, we were relatives, Robbie I guess really understood the struggle that my mother had. But not only understood it, as the others probably did, but acknowledged it, and that meant an awful lot, meant an awful lot to my family.

MH: Now, he lived here in Waterville as well.

TN: Robbie, did, yes.

MH: Even when he was working elsewhere, I guess.

TN: Yes, yes. He was in the banking business.

MH: Did he live near you?

TN: No, we still lived on Front Street and he was up on Lloyd Road, off Mayflower Hill. And my mother, her name was Caroline, but she was known years ago as, as K, just the letter K, and I asked her one day, I said Ma, I said, "Where did you get K from?" And she says, "From your Aunt Janet," which is Robbie's wife.

MH: Oh, okay.

TN: However that ever came to be, but called her 'K.'

MH: I see, I see. Now who is, who's Aunt Jean? Somebody's referred to Aunt Jean.

TN: Jean is my mother's oldest sister.

MH: Okay.

TN: And when my grandmother and grandfather came here from Lebanon, they left Jean in Beirut, or in the Bkassim. They wanted to see what Waterville was going to be like, or where they were going to end up, but they knew most likely it was Waterville, because they heard of the jobs. And then it was time for them to have Jean to come to America, so they sent word to family back in the Bkassim, and I would believe it would be my great grandmother who, her last name was Saad, S-A-A-D, and her husband, my great grandfather is, was named A-M-I-N, Amin Saad, that they wanted Jean to come home, come to America. And they wrote back and said, "She's coming over, but she's not going to come by herself. We're going to send someone to escort her, and I'll send her aunt with her," which was Mintaha.

MH: Okay.

TN: And you'll hear Mintaha referred to as Mary, that was the name that they used for her. I mean it was also Mintaha, but it was Mary. So Mintaha brought Jean over here and was supposed to return back home. Well, she ended up meeting and falling in love with George and stayed here and never went back home.

MH: I see. Now did you, I've heard a story about the Senator's father's adoption, that he was in an orphanage in Boston and then was actually adopted in Bangor by an older couple, who were Lebanese.

TN: Well, there's a Kilroy family.

MH: Right, I think that's his real first name, I mean, I think that's his biological name.

TN: Oh, is that, okay, (*unintelligible*). But as far as the Lebanese family that may have adopted him, I'm not familiar with, I'm not familiar with that.

MH: The name Mitchell is interesting in Maine because, of course, we have a lot of Native Americans who have the name Mitchell. A very popular name in the Penobscot and Passamaquoddy tribes, and I am sure that, and I have no idea why, because it's obviously not a Native American name that was, but it's interesting to me that you have this kind of Lebanese group of Mitchells. Because there's an Irish group of Mitchells, and you also have the Native American one.

TN: Yes, I think when I was, I went to the legislature a while back to speak on behalf of Joe Jabar, who was asked to be on the Law Court as a judge.

MH: That's just recently, wasn't it or last year?

TN: Yes, no, I think it was last month.

MH: Last month, okay.

TN: And one of the people on the panel was from the Penobscot Nation, I think it was, Mitchell.

MH: Right, right, Wayne, Wayne Mitchell.

TN: Yes, that's right, yes.

MH: Who's the Penobscot representative, the tribal representative to the legislature.

TN: Yes, nice fellow, and he grilled Joe Jabar pretty hard.

MH: Did he? Now tell me about the Jabar family, because I've heard that, I'm impressed by how many of the Waterville Lebanese community seemed to end up as lawyers.

TN: The Jabar family, if there's one word that will define all of them, is competitive. Oh, my gosh, very, very competitive, whether it's a pie eating contest, or whether it's basketball or whether it's practicing law. But the patriarch, George Jabar, the father of all the boys and the girls, was a big union man here in Waterville. And it was very important at the time for my grandfather, because all of the mills were not very excited about hiring and putting to work and money in the pocket of these immigrants, as I guess all of New England was really, it was a tough time for them, because of the immigrants coming from Ireland, Lebanon, wherever they may be coming from. They just found it very, very difficult to find jobs. George Jabar fought very hard for these immigrants, one of them being my grandfather, and as you can see, as the time would go on and all of these Jabars started coming forward and remaining in Waterville they were loved and respected by many, many people because of what George Jabar did for their parents and grandparents to get them work.

And most of the boys, if not all of them, ended up here, graduated from Colby College. Paul Jabar is an M.D. in Augusta; John Jabar, retired attorney from Waterville; Herbie Jabar, retired school teacher; Normie Jabar, retired school teacher; Joe Jabar is a practicing attorney, and Tony Jabar was a retired school teacher. But I don't think either one of them left, I don't think anyone left Waterville, I think they all stayed right here.

MH: Do you think that the, was education a more important value to the Lebanese community than some of the other ethnic communities here?

TN: It was the number one priority for the Lebanese people. Whether it was not as high on

the level of the priorities for the other nationalities, I can't answer that. All I can tell you is that, if you take a look at where everyone ended up, you would have to say that for the Lebanese people, it was a very, very high priority for us. I'm just surprised that there weren't more Lebanese that went into sort of retail, because that's what our ancestors did over in Lebanon, we were traders.

MH: That's right. Tradesmen, yes, yes.

TN: But Al Corey, Corey's Music, what an icon he is throughout the country. He was from – I'll probably think of it as I go on here. Again, he was across the bridge from the Bkassim, where his community was, but he ended up in retail here in Waterville, and I can't think of, to be honest with you, I really can't think of another one that went into retail. Most of them went into the professions.

MH: Yes, yes, interesting. Now the, was there one, were there a series of priests at the Maronite Church here, or was there one that was here a long time?

TN: Well, before my time, there was a Father Awad, A-W-A-D. And after the first Father Awad, there was a second Father Awad, and he was the priest when I was here, for a very brief period of time. And then Father Corey, Paul Corey, came from Beirut.

MH: Oh, really. Okay.

TN: And he was my priest for most of the time, but somewhere between the Father Awad two, there was a Father Philip Nagem. And he was loved by all the community, and he was a tremendous pastor for us. Well, there was a scandal, if you will, if you want to call it that, and there was a young, beautiful girl in the community, her name was Jean Harfouch and, my mother's oldest sister, and in Waterville at the time it was Jean Boles.

MH: Right.

TN: And she fell in love with Father Nagem.

MH: Oh, really.

TN: Yes, and Father Nagem fell in love with her and he left the church.

MH: Okay. But Maronite priests are not allowed to marry?

TN: Oh, no.

MH: Okay, I wasn't sure of that, because there are some Eastern Rite, there are some Eastern Rite Churches that do allow their priests to marry.

TN: Yes, yes, but not ours. And it was a difficult thing for a lot of people to handle. But they lived happily in San Diego and raised three beautiful children, Priscilla (who's passed away), Philip, and Paul, all brilliant, brilliant.

MH: So there's a west coast branch of the family?

TN: Yes, I think Philip is still out there. Paul moved to Texas, he did an awful lot of work for NASA, sending a lot of these -

MH: And their last name was?

TN: Nacozy. When Father Phil left, I don't think, he did not take the name Nagem with him, it was N-A-C-O-Z-Y.

MH: This is very interesting. What do you think of the Senator's, you've obviously followed the Irish negotiations, what do you think of this current challenge?

TN: Well, I hope he speaks of it on Thursday.

MH: Now, you say he is going to speak at Colby?

TN: Up at Colby, as a Goldfarb Speaker. Annually they have a very significant person who is impacting the country, and the world currently, that they'd like to have come up and speak, and it's going to be George this Thursday.

MH: I hope somebody thinks to record it. I'll have to find out if it's possible to get a copy of that speech.

TN: I could speak with one of my brothers and they'll speak with Sandy Maisel and see if we can get that.

MH: Yes, it would be great.

TN: I think it's going to be a difficult task that he has at hand. And I think those who are closest to it, and I think George himself, deep in his heart of hearts, knows how difficult it is. Because, I've talked with Johnny and some of his other brothers about different things that their parents would communicate to them about Muslims, and nothing derogatory but it just, you're not going to change something in a year's time, five years time, or even in your lifetime, that hasn't been changed – and there has never been a talk of change for many, many years. It's just going to be difficult.

There are some people in this world that believe that life is the most precious thing you could

possibly own, and I'm one of them, and there are some people who believe that giving your life for the cause of religion, I mean killing yourself and others with you, is honorable. And you're not going to change that, you're just not going to change that. I don't know how you, I don't know, I don't know how you speak with people in those countries and ask them to believe in what, what is it you're asking us to do. Don't ask me to think like the West, because it's not going to happen. Talk about democracy, I think that that's where George is coming from, and I think he is, about being civil with each other, I think, that can happen at some point in time. But it just breaks my heart as to what's happening here. I think we picked the wrong fight.

MH: You have children?

TN: I have three children.

MH: And what are their names?

TN: Tom, and graduated from Waterville High School, Colby College and a law school, and is practicing here with me in Waterville. My daughter Tracy graduated from Waterville High School, Colby College, and is in her third year of law school.

MH: At Franklin Pierce?

TN: No, they're both at University of Maine.

MH: University of Maine.

TN: And my daughter Jennifer is a high school senior, and is applying early decision to Colby.

MH: Quite a family tradition.

TN: I think it's a tremendous school. I lived here all my life and it was someplace that I wished I could have gone to academically, and financially, but it was just out of the picture on both of them.

MH: It's so impressive, particularly when you think that it didn't exist up there on the hill until, what, the early '50s. I mean they moved up there around the time that George Mitchell, I think, went off to Bowdoin.

TN: Correct.

MH: I'm not sure of the exact year.

TN: They were building it long before then, but they left the train station, if you will, that's

where it was, you know, back in the '50s.

MH: It's such an impressive campus.

TN: Beautiful, one of the most beautiful campuses in the country.

MH: A fantastic art gallery.

TN: Yes, yes. The Lunder family, their contribution was over a hundred and ten million dollars, and can you fathom that? I will say, I want to mention one thing about my mom's family. I mentioned, you know, the girls, but her youngest brother, Joe, is a very close friend of the Mitchells today. Very close.

MH: This is your mother's -?

TN: Youngest brother.

MH: Youngest brother, okay.

TN: Joe lived in California, Los Angeles.

MH: And his last name would be?

TN: Boles.

MH: Boles, okay, Boles, right. I've looked at the genealogy, but there's so many names there.

TN: Joe did a tremendous amount of business with Osama bin Laden's father, and with Osama bin Laden and did an awful lot of business with Ashland Oil Company. And very, very wealthy, to this day.

MH: So he's in the construction supply business or -?

TN: No, he is in the oil business.

MH: In the oil business.

TN: And I say about retail, other than Al Corey, my Uncle Joe was very successful in dealing with the sheiks and the kings and everyone over in the Middle East, but is a very strong supporter of George Mitchell, very big supporter of Saint Jude Hospital. He and Danny Thomas were the best of friends, Danny was best man at my Uncle Joe's wedding. If you've ever seen the *Danny Thomas Show* years ago, when you were in your teens.

MH: Yes, I remember it well, I remember it well.

TN: Well, Danny Thomas had an uncle on that show, Uncle Tanous.

MH: Yes.

TN: He was named after my grandfather.

MH: Ahh, that is a very interesting piece of trivia.

TN: Yes, he was named after my grandfather, yes.

MH: That's wonderful. We used to, when I worked for the Senator we used to kid him that if he worked really, really hard, he'd become almost as famous as Danny Thomas.

TN: Yes, that's right.

MH: I think he's probably, now, surpassed Danny Thomas.

TN: He was mentioned a couple of times, George, in Ted Kennedy's latest book, *True Compass*. Ted Kennedy thought an awful lot of George, and George has been supportive of Ted's health care reform for many, many, many years and -

MH: I've thought about him a lot in these last few weeks, when this health care, this health insurance discussion, because boy, he put a lot of work into it, the first, during the Clinton administration. And, you know, only one job that seems to harder than health insurance and that is solving the Middle East.

TN: I'd like to think something good can come out of it. I just, I can't see what can come out of it. I mean I just want, I'd like to have everybody home, safe. I'd like to see the war stop, and it breaks my heart, because I think we got into it, God bless George Bush, but the enemy does not wear a uniform. Every other war, you could shoot and kill somebody because they had a uniform. You could bomb a city, because that's where everything, you can't do that today, the enemy today has no face, has no uniform, has no clothing, and that's the hard part of it.

My mother, God bless her soul, after the Vietnam War, she says, "There'll never be another war. My boys are going to be safe forever." We were safe for one reason, because of our ages. I mean we, no one had to call us, and if we had to go, all of us would have gone to support our country. But she was so naive to think that, and so were we, to think that it would never happen, and it just happened several times after that. But if George didn't do it, I mean who would do it? It has to be done, someone has got to go and speak the word of peace, and he is one of the most eloquent speakers that I have ever heard. And, I think, I mentioned this to you early on, I thought President Kennedy had a way with words, but they have been Ted Sorenson's words but

he could really convey them to the American people, and George Mitchell is one of those, as well as Bill Clinton. Those three people right there, to me are just tremendous, tremendous speakers.

MH: This has been very nice. Thank you. Any other, I always ask people, is there any story you'd like to tell that I haven't given you an opening for with a question?

TN: The only thing I could tell you about the Mitchell family and my family and the Jabar family is, I've said it three times but it's 'family,' and it means so much to all of us. And that is, is that I think when these folks got married, as well as I did, my life ended as I knew it and the rest, and I've lived my whole marriage for my children, and I think that's what these folks did. It's a lot easier for me today than it was for these folks back then. Can you imagine working in a textile mill, and you've got all these kids to send to school, and in the meantime making sure that they knew the difference between right and wrong? That's what these families did back then, is that they knew, it was a sacrifice to bring the children up, but it was something that they were put on this earth to do. But it was our family, and that's what we work for, that's what we die for.

MH: Thank you very much.

TN: You're welcome.

End of Interview