

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Democratic Party Project

Mahoning County Experience

O.H. 208

THOMAS J. CARNEY JR.

Interviewed

by

Mark Connelly

on

March 10, 1975

THOMAS J. CARNEY JR.

Thomas J. Carney Jr. was born February 17, 1934 in Youngstown, Ohio, the son of Thomas J. and Loretta A. Carney. He attended Ursuline High School in Youngstown, Ohio graduating in 1952. He then went on to Youngstown State University receiving his B.S. in 1956.

Mr. Carney was employed by the McNicholas Transportation Company and subsequently the Ohio House of Representatives from 1971 to the present (1975).

On January 28, 1956 he married Mary Rita and they have three children. Tom attends St. Charles Church of Boardman, Ohio. He is a member of Trumbull County Trustees Association, Youngstown Traffic Club, Boardman Civic Association, Boardman Lions Club, Boardman Youth Center Board, Newton Falls Chamber of Commerce and Struthers Athletic Club.

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INTERVIEWEE: THOMAS J. CARNEY JR.

INTERVIEWER: Mark Connelly

SUBJECT:

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CO: This is an interview with Mr. Thomas J. Carney Jr. for the Youngstown State University Oral History Project dealing with the Mahoning County Democratic Party. It is being done in the Liberal Arts Building, Youngstown State University. The date is March 10, 1975. It's approximately 10:20 a.m.

Okay Mr. Carney, would you please talk a little bit about your background: family, neighborhood, education, occupation?

CA: All right. Well, first of all, I was born on the south side on Hudson Drive, 3131 Hudson Drive, which was about two doors from Sheridan Grade School. So, I started my first three years in Sheridan School in Youngstown and then I went to Saint Dominic's, graduating from there in 1948. Then I went on to Ursuline High School, graduating from there in 1952.

My dad, at the time--from about 1942 until he passed away in 1965--was Mahoning County Commissioner. So, during those early years, even before I became a teenager, and then as a teenager, government anyhow--not so much politics--but government was sort of something that we lived with because it really was bread and butter to our family. Like you said your uncle was in the grocery business, well, my father was in the business of politics and government.

My father came from an Irish section of Youngstown. They used to call it Kilkinny. All the Irish, when they came over, they settled in a place called Kilkinny, which is really around Williamson Avenue. And most of the men, like my grandfather was a puddler in the mill, and he died at a relatively young age. My father started working in the mill, I think, around thirteen in order to help sustain the rest of the members of the family. So, that's the kind of beginning. And I suppose that we all have to start from some cultural point to find out what makes us tick and where we start.

CO: Did your father ever talk about how he got involved in politics?

CA: My father was active in sports. He was promoted to Golden Glove. Prior to Golden Glove, now that started back right after the end of World War I. My father was a Marine in World War I. And boxing in those days, around World War I, prior to World War I, was a pretty good sport. I suppose it's because you could put a lot of people in it. Everybody had to compete with one another and it's a one on one. It was a kind of competitive sport that most anybody could participate in. And so, my father was active in that.

The story is that my father came home from World War I: he used to do a little bit of boxing and his claim to fame was he was being a second for a fighter and the fighter failed to show and he was fighting a pretty good contender. So, my father jumped in the ring to take his place. The fellow was a fighter by the name of Kid Solomon. My father beat Kid Solomon. I guess he knocked Kid Solomon out. But my grandmother objected to boxing as a sport and so, she made him give her his word that he would not continue to box. So, he didn't box, but he got in the business of training fighters and that from winning the Golden Gloves and this kind of thing.

So, the Golden Gloves and sports gave him the name, recognition that helped him when he ran for office. Now, he had run for sheriff back in the late 1930's. He ran for Clerk of Courts and was defeated. There was probably, at that time, maybe ten candidates running for sheriff. He ran for Clerk of Courts in the late 1930's and he lost by just a handful of votes in the primary. Both of these were primary contests. But then, I think the third race that he was involved in was County Commissioner, and he won

that. I think that was around 1942 and he kept that until he died in 1965. So, that was the kind of background that he had.

My mother was born in Niles, Ohio in a place called Weathersfield and she was raised in her early days on a farm. My grandfather used to sell sand and gravel to contractors. They came from a rather farm kind of life and then they moved into the City of Niles and lived across the street from the McKinley Memorial, but they had really no political background of any kind. My grandfather, he owned a couple houses and he would fix them up and rent them. I suppose in those days collecting rent and odd types of ways of making a living prevailed. I don't know what else my grandfather did, except that sand and gravel thing and owned some property. But ultimately, he was not a wealthy man. So, neither side of my family really had any financial wealth at all.

CO: Okay, what was your first actual venture into politics?

CA: My own personal venture, I suppose came after my father died in 1965. My father made a statement when I expressed to him an interest in politics. He said, "I don't know anybody with a college education that would want to get into politics." I kind of really felt bad about that because I was looking at it from the point of view that we really need professional people in this kind of thing. But I suppose he had seen politics in Youngstown from the 1930's through, and there was probably a lot of things in it that he didn't particularly want for his son. But in any case, it was too late, because I had probably been bitten by the bug.

I remember as a little kid, I was going out and putting up signs on telephone poles, as we did in those days. And I did a lot of work to try and get him elected. And so, I ran for State Central Committeeman, which was part of the old congressional district that was represented by Frank Bow, which had the southern part of Mahoning County, and then we went down in Canton. And I ran third in that Democratic primary. And I really did get a good vote from the Mahoning County section. Of course, I didn't get a big enough vote to overcome Canton and Stark County. I was a newcomer down there. So, that encouraged me to run for Township Trustee, which I did do in, I think, 1969. And I ran for that office and was elected. Then I decided that I should try for the legislature. The district that was the old 83rd

District had been changed a little bit to give it a few more Democrat votes. So, I felt that I had a fifty-fifty chance of being elected. I ran for the office and was elected.

CO: Let's go back a little bit there. When you attempted to come out Democratic State Central Committeeman, was there a type of campaign you had to run for this position?

CA: Not really, the State Central Committeeman would represent that county or that congressional district at the state level in maybe setting some state policy. Whether state policy is really set by State Central Committeemen, I think, is dubious. I really don't think that they do. But it was my idea to get started and get something rolling and it happened to be a position that was available and where I wouldn't step on anybody locally, on any local toes.

CO: Before this, you were Mahoning County Committeeman, right?

CA: Well, I started as a precinct committeeman, right. I don't know. I suppose I had been a precinct committeeman since 1960 I would suppose, maybe a little bit later than that.

CO: How did this come about?

CA: Well, the person who had the job wasn't going to run anymore and I got the word. And someone said to me--I can't recall who--"Why don't you run for precinct committeeman?" I said, "Oh, all right." So, I went on the ballot and nobody else went on. So, I really had it to myself. There was no competition.

CO: Is that the way it usually is?

CA: Yes, probably, unfortunately.

CO: What do you attribute this to? That there's so little interest?

CA: I think that we have a lot of people that get interested in politics, in and out. It's a flash interest that comes and goes. And there's a lot of impatience with the party routine of precinct committeeman--being elected to that and then doing your job in the precinct level. But they overlook the fact

that the precinct committeemen--their accumulated votes determines the policy of the local Democrat Party. And so, when there's no interest in precinct politics--no interest in terms of people getting involved and wanting to take a part in it--then there's no interest in making any change, because it's very easy for a county chairman, as an example . . . You really have to kind of beg people to get involved at the precinct level. And so, the county chairman who is elected by precinct committeemen, can almost pick people who he wants in the precincts so that, really, he sets himself in, locks himself in as county chairman. And he really has no threat unless someone would launch a campaign to change a significant number of committeemen, in terms of changing the structure of the local party.

CO: So, that's what has happened here?

CA: So, that's what has happened here, and that's why you really don't see change.

CO: You personally, how do you view this?

CA: There's probably two schools about it. Sometimes you think a vital party would be one where there's a lot of people participating, where nothing is cut and dry, where the party has to respond to a lot of people. And sometimes that school of thought leads you to the ultimate conclusion, though, that when it comes time to making decisions, that the decision that's made comes through a lot of bitterness and argument and controversy and ends up with a fractured kind of party, versus one that's dominated by, maybe, one person who really can generate unity and strength and the things that are necessary to keep a unified party together to win a November election. So, ultimately, you get to the point: Is the thrust of strong part leadership better politically? And it probably is.

Just like as an example, you say if you're judging it on success, then you have to look at Mayor Daly's operation in Chicago and how he get's re-elected. He has a strong political organization and he is the key man. And they keep winning elections and they do it because they have a structure, which even local precinct committeemen can respond to local problems, fixing streets or providing services to people.

We don't have that kind of a structure here to that extent, but we do have a pretty strong party, but it really doesn't have very broad participation.

CO: You point out this strength in the party, this type of operation, but what does it do for the constituents?

CA: One of the problems is that if it isolates itself and becomes . . . It's restricted not so much by choice, but because of apathy. In other words, nobody is fighting to get in. Nobody really wants to join it, so it's left to go pretty much by itself. And what happens then, I think, is because there's no competition, there's nobody really looking for the job, that it brings about an apathy within the organization, too, among the participants there. Probably that's the biggest problem that we have right now is that the city has changed; many of the people have moved away and it's very difficult to get those that are remaining to be very enthusiastic, I think.

CO: So, you think a competitive body at this point would be good for the party in this area?

CA: I think that competition at the precinct committee level would be an advantage. I think that, where if we had more people that were interested enough in politics that that interest would be shown by running for precinct committeeman, and getting involved at the precinct level would be a good thing for the party because then it shows interest and enthusiasm and all the rest.

The Democratic Party has much less a problem than the Republican Party. The Republican Party, I don't know if they had fifty percent of their precincts where people even wanted to run for the job, even uncontested. They had to appoint precinct committee people. I suppose that's an example of the political system being turned off by people. I think that one of the things is that Americans don't have time for politics. I think that's one of the big problems, that they just won't take the time.

CO: Well, you held a job at McNicholas. Did you find it being sort of like a burden to be involved with politics and also to hold a job?

CA: Being involved in politics is not a burden. It becomes a burden when you take a public office and try and to do two at the same time. When I was Presi-

dent of Mass Transit Authority, as an example, and I worked full-time at McNicholas, I received no check from Mass Transit Authority and I was working full-time at McNicholas. And I found myself doing things for the Mass Transit Authority, spending time on that at no cost to the taxpayer, not collecting a salary, and I was taking time away from the job, which was not a fair thing.

And a lot of times you find that people that are engaged in other areas are subsidizing government because they are giving up time from things they should be doing to make a living; and they're giving it to government because they're interested in government and it's a challenge and this kind of thing. But you find a good, dedicated city councilman and he has a job doing something else--schoolteacher or whatever it might be--you find he has to make a lot of sacrifice of personal time to do both of those things and do them well.

So, we have a lot of dedicated people in government. Even today, as much as you hear how bad it is, I've been around a long time in business and then in government and a little bit of both at the same time, and the quality of people in politics, by and large, I've found to be extremely high. Now, we have some places where we have weak public officials. There's no question about that, but overall, and by and large, I've found them to be pretty strong people or they wouldn't be able to jump out of society and assume the responsibilities that they do in government.

CO: Back to the precincts for a second--you mentioned that you think that competition at the precinct level would be good. What about the other party leaders? Do you think they would approve of this sort of action?

CA: It doesn't make any difference whether they approve or not. I think that party leaders feel more successful when they have activity and when they can generate activity because they get concerned when there isn't any because then it's much more difficult for them to get things worked up for a campaign. So, I would say the party leaders, although it might make it easier for them to maintain their position, by the same token, they do like to win elections, and they do like to have that enthusiasm.

We come from an old school here in politics in Youngstown. Mr. Sulligan has been chairman for a long time--

many, many years, since the 1940's I think. It comes from the school of a strong political leadership. And you don't really survive in those positions very long unless you have the ability of keeping your house in order in terms of being able to generate the support to keep that position. He has been able to do it throughout the years because of successful elections.

Now, in the last six years, I suppose, since Jack Hunter has become mayor, there has been a question as to whether or not we can generate enough enthusiasm in Mahoning County to take and become a strong political party in terms of being able to take a seat from a very capable man from the other party. It has been a lack of interest on the part of candidates to want to try someone who is a good candidate and has done a relatively good job. So, we're faced now with an inability to get candidates, facing a strong opponent.

There are many Democrats in this present administration. As an example, probably most of the cabinet, if not all of them, are Democrat. So, you have a Republican mayor and a quasi-Democratic administration, really. And you have a majority Republican city councilmen in a majority Democrat city. So, Republicans that have come into office have kind of forgotten their partisanship and have just said, "Well, we're going to call the shots the way we see it and get along with everybody," and they've done that and it has been very successful for them to do it.

I think Democrats have had difficulty in handling that because they have to go back to the same old party structure--you have a Democrat mayor, then you have all Democrat employees, and really, there's not much room for the other party in the Democrat administration.

So, I think the independent voter, now, has kind of struck-out in terms of forgetting about party labels and have gone looking at men and individuals and administrations. And it's kind of a new ballgame in the city of Youngstown. And I think that's why we have such an inability to handle this administration politically.

CO: What do you think it's going to do in the future for area politics?

CA: I don't think it will do anything different in the future here than it will do anyplace in the state. I

believe that there's a certain area for party politics in order to keep a strong political system, two-party system. So, I think that's always going to be a part of our make-up--I don't think at the local level nearly as much as the state and at the federal level.

It's kind of ironic, when the last figures came out that only eighteen percent of the people in the country are supposed to be Republicans. And Republicans just had a meeting where they were talking about whether they should broaden their base. Conservatives say, "No, don't broaden your base. Be conservative and express that." Well, the fact of the matter is that if you look at the successes of that eighteen percent, it's not too bad. You have the city of Youngstown that has a Republican mayor, Cleveland, Columbus. You can go right through the major cities in Ohio with Republican. The Governor, right now, happens to be Republican. The President is Republican. The legislative bodies are often times Democrat.

It appears the public has made a decision that maybe Republicans are better in the Executive Branch and the Democrats in the Legislative Branch. I don't know whether that's true or not, but Republicans seem to have less people. When they get into the Executive Branch, they seem to have less pressure than Democrats do. They don't seem to get the pressure from labor groups, as an example, for pay. The Democrat Party is supposed to be the party that responds to labor. Republicans get in; they don't seem to have the same kind of pressure. At least, this is my feeling. Maybe they feel that the Republican administration is an adversary and unsure and they're afraid. They don't try the Republican administration like they would the Democrat administration.

CO: You mentioned the party routine here--first a committeeman, then you move up step by step. Usually it's a fairly long process. You made it rather quickly.

CA: Yes.

CO: What do you attribute this to?

CA: Oh, my name probably had a lot to do with it. You have a political name and you don't have to go out and sell your name. It has already been sold by other people. My father, I think he was elected about ten years before Charles Carney was elected to the Ohio Senate. His name was merchandised because

of his activity in sports. So, his name in sports as his activity gave him recognition, public recognition, so that when he ultimately won in 1942, then you had the political effort on top of the sporting effort. It just makes it more recognizable. And then, for someone like me that comes along after my father, that makes it much easier because the name recognition has been there. So you have to credit that to name recognition. And certainly, you can mess that up. I can destroy that or some other Carney can destroy it, but fortunately, everybody with our name, I think, has tried to be responsive and pretty successful politically.

CO: Do you ever get the feeling like you don't want to trod on certain ground because it might hurt the name?

CA: As a kid, I remember we used to go down--not we--but the kids used to play a lot of pool in the 1940's, like in 1948, 1949 and 1950. There was always a couple of pool rooms around then. At that time, the police used to raid pool rooms--believe it or not--to get kids who were under sixteen. And I can remember I was always afraid to go in pool rooms, because I didn't want to get caught because I didn't want my father to get a bad name because of me. I was always very conscious of protecting the name. I suppose maybe that runs off, too. But I was very conscious of that. I think that just shows a little bit of pride, though, and there's nothing wrong with that.

CO: You mentioned your father said he saw a lot of things here he didn't like about politics, that's why he didn't want you into it. Have you seen anything in area politics that you especially do not like?

CA: Well, sure. I think that campaign financing is very difficult. You get your so-called super-contributors, the contributors that give extensive amounts of money, vast amounts of money to campaigns and can almost bankroll a whole candidacy. We passed some campaign financing laws in the state of Ohio last year which I played a part in. And it was my hope that we may be able to try and put an end to big contributors determining who's going to be what because of the amount of money they put into campaigns. I think this is a very difficult thing to handle.

There are a lot of people that like to participate through their money, not necessarily that they deter-

policy or they want that much to say, but it's just that they have money and they like to get involved in politics. Like some people play the horses, I think some people like to get involved in politics. They like to make a name for themselves because they are contributors. The ordinary citizen will not contribute. I've gotten some small contributions here and there, maybe \$100 from different people that really were interested in me because they think that I can do something. By and large, campaigns are financed by large groups of people. So, if you're a politician, you have to decide to line up your constituency and your money so that your conscience, at some point in time, isn't going to come back and put you in a whiplash.

Because this is a labor community, I suppose labor participation, financial participation is a good thing because it's money that all of the working people in this community have put into their campaign funds so that the politicians that they vote for and elect and they endorse are going to go down and look after their interests as working people. When you come from a district like that, you can line that kind of a thing up without too much difficulty.

I think it's when you get into some of these other areas you would want to question it, I mean, you would have to question it. It hasn't been a problem for me at this point. But if you go higher, it becomes a concern to me as to whether or not a person would be able to raise the kind of money that he needs to get further ahead without making a compromise that he might not want to make. What I hope is that that decision does not have to be made in order to move higher, that you have to compromise and take finances to finance your campaign from sources that you don't want to take it from or to make commitments that you don't want to make.

CO: Now, as running for state representative you said you didn't really feel this sort of pressure, this willingness from great big contributors to help you out?

CA: No.

CO: Now, when you were in the House of Representatives working on this thing about campaign financing, did you feel any pressure there from these big contributors?

CA: No. Labor was involved in it and your big lobby groups--I'm talking about the manufacturer's lobby group and every group that's going--they had an interest in it, the professional lobby groups. But I don't have too much trouble with that whole group of people. Everything is published. Their names are published. It goes on record. For instance, different businesses, different group associations have a fund, like the bankers; they have a fund where they contribute and from that fund they contribute to candidates. But the names of the people that contribute to the fund have to be made public and this kind of thing.

I don't mind that kind of thing. I mean that other stuff, that cash that may flow that you can't pin down; you don't know where it's coming from, or that the public doesn't even know was involved in a campaign. It would go unreported and this kind of thing. This is the stuff that has to be stopped.

CO: No, I meant maybe a midnight visit from a certain representative of some unknown people who wouldn't be interested in this type of legislation.

CA: When you go down there and you start looking at the process, you can see, well, a person down there could sell himself without any question. The special interest group who is interested in a certain piece of legislation--your 'yes' or 'no' vote. Somebody comes down with a bag and starts handing out cash. That can happen.

CO: Does it happen? Have you seen it happen?

CA: I have never seen it happen. When I look at the people that I'm working with, I have an awful lot of confidence that if it happens, it's only happening with a very few, very, very few. Most of the people, if they have commitments, they might represent organized labor ninety percent of the time. But then there's always that time when they go against them. They buck their main course. I've seen it. It gives you confidence that these people, when they think even the people that sent them there, basically, or funded their campaign, most of them, that they do have enough nerve to say, "Well, I think you're right ninety percent of the time, but this time I think you're wrong and I can't go with you."

CO: What are usually the consequences of that sort of action?

CA: Usually the people get mad, like the labor thing, they'll get mad, but a couple weeks later, they forget about it and they go on to other issues. I have never seen it last very long.

CO: Have you ever found yourself bucking labor?

CA: Yes. When one votes regarding unemployment compensation for school people, but I felt that it was the right thing to do.

CO: Well, did they know prior to the vote which way you were going to vote?

CA: I don't know if they did or not.

CO: But they didn't contact you on the issue or anything?

CA: Well, they contacted me on the issue before.

CO: For example, who would call you and talk to you about this?

CA: When it comes to labor issues, they have a number of labor lobbyists in Columbus who are there all the time. Other teamsters have representatives. The Operating Engineers, as an example, working very hard this past week to get Governor Rhode's bond issues on the ballot. The AFL-CIO, building trades, they're all there. They have a representative.

CO: What type of pressure do they usually apply?

CA: It's just that they let you know how they stand. If a candidate is supported by organized labor, they endorse him usually based on his track record if he has been there before, in on voting for labor issues. So, the candidate is trying to find out how labor thinks and what effect it has on the working man. So, he's interested in finding out what labor's position is. So, it's kind of a two-way street.

You might find a point where the politician or the legislator, who generally supports labor issues says, "Well, I think maybe that's not really good for the working man ultimately," in that the persons doing the lobbying really might not be right and that's when you find a confrontation.

CO: Now, when you went against labor on that particular issue, did anybody from the local Democratic Party get in contact with you?

CA: No, we never have any problem from the local Democrat Party. They never interfere with the way we vote. The only time we hear is regarding rules and regulations as it relates to the board of elections. I have yet to have the county chairman come to me and tell me to vote any way at all. In other words, he has really taken a hands-off position. He lets you do your job and he stays out of it.

CO: Well then, what way would you have to continue your contact with the local Democratic Party? If it wouldn't be on issues, in what areas would you keep up with communications?

CA: Most of it is just party problems if you're a candidate--getting literature out and keeping the party strong, keep getting the committeemen up to date on issues, what's going on. They have to be your voice too. So, we try and inform the precinct committeemen so that they can inform the people in their precincts on issues, especially issues that are partisan issues. And that takes communication, so you have to go in and talk to them. You want to keep your county chairman informed on those issues also.

CO: How well informed do you think the Mahoning County Committeemen are? This wouldn't relate so much to you, but how informed do they make themselves?

CA: I think some are well informed and some are not well informed, depending upon their interests that they have. I think you'll find a committeeman that's really interested in his job, that he's pretty informed about what is going on. And there are others that really are not to interested in their job, but somebody has to do it and they've been recruited and there's no enthusiasm on their part, they may not know. That's why I think if you can get enthusiasm with the committeemen, then they become better informed and then they can talk to other people in their precinct about issues.

CO: At this point, what would you say would be the rule--the enthusiastic committeeman who gets out and informs the people in his precinct, or would you say you have more lackadaisical [committeemen] in this particular area?

CA: I think, in talking about all of Mahoning County, you would have to say the majority of them are enthusiastic and are interested, because we really never

because we really never have a problem of filling our seats too much. I think the majority of them are enthusiastic and interested, but there's another group that they don't really relate their job as a committeeman to being informed on issues. I think they have an interest in politics, but it's more of an interest in candidates and some of the other things that are going on. But it's very difficult for anyone to sit down and really get a good fix on that.

CO: Would you say, like Mr. Sulligan would call these people up and say, "Hey, the people in your precinct aren't reacting the way we thought they should." or something like that? Do they ever get on these men?

CA: We have a system here where we have captains who have a number of precinct committeemen under them and it depends on who the committeeman might respond to or where the information is picked up from. But if we would find that a certain precinct committeeman isn't doing his job, we would respond to that. The candidates that are running for office would try and get into that somehow or other by maybe using another person to be his spokesman in that precinct as an example.

CO: You wouldn't contact him directly, usually?

CA: That would depend. I may, but then again, if I felt that he couldn't do the job for me, I would probably use some other source. It's not something that really happens though. I can't ever remember running into a problem with a precinct committeeman where I have to go to somebody else in the precinct to get the job done. You hear about things happening in certain precincts, a small number, but I have never really seen it myself.

CO: Do we have any maverick precincts--Democratic mavericks?

CA: I suppose we have a couple that don't follow the main stream all the time, but they're very far in between. And generally speaking, the committeeman might have a different philosophy than the ordinary Democrat Party or he might feel that the party apparatus is old and this is the old school and the old way of doing business. And I've seen a couple of those precinct committeemen come along, but when the campaign is on and when you really start to hustle, they put their shoulder to the wheel just like the other committeemen and they get the literature out

and they follow the same procedures that everybody else did. And eventually, I think they come to the conclusion that precinct politics is joining hands with another precinct committeeman to get the candidates and get the Democrat Party across, and that's the best way to get your philosophy across. They forget about philosophy on the precinct level because it's the candidates that express the philosophy.

CO: Would this be in the general election, say, opposed to the primary election?

CA: Well, it could be either one, but I would say in the general you would see it more. Often times you might find different precinct committeemen supporting different presidential candidates in the primary. The local party might take a stand. I can remember there were some precinct committeemen for McGovern, some for Humphrey and some for Jackson. I think the party supported Humphrey here. The party took a position, but they certainly all weren't on the bandwagon at that point in time.

CO: Do you ever recall the party in the central committee saying, "This precinct man is not good for us and let's get him out?"

CA: No, I've never heard that. I've never been around when anybody would ever try to . . . I'm not saying someone in the precinct--as an example, it might be party activists of some sort, he may not be a precinct committeeman--he might say, "Well, I'm going to run against him," or he might try and get somebody else to run against him. I'm sure that happens in some circumstances. But as far as starting from the top down, I've never heard of it at all.

I think the Executive Committee and Chariman try to stay out of precinct wars. Of there's some dissatisfaction in the precinct, I think he takes the position: let the precinct try and decide for themselves on who's going to be the committeeman.

CO: A point on when you were running for Boardman Township Trustee: originally your candidacy was disallowed by the Board of Elections. What was the involvement here? What was the story?

CA: A lot of times you think you go down to the Board of Elections and you can accept their word--one of the workers down there--their word that they're going to give you all the facts on how to be a proper can-

didate. Well, I went down and I told them that I wanted to run for trustee and that I wanted to get the petitions and I wanted to know how many signatures were required. So, they gave me the petitions and they told me the number of signatures. I can't recall what it was, but as an example, let's say they told me 125. So, I went and had the petitions typed out and notarized and everything and started circulating them. Well, I found out later that the number that they had told me that I needed of certified signatures of registered voters was incorrect and I needed more. So, I went down to the Board of Elections and picked up some more petitions and I took them back and had them typed in and everything else and I had them circulated.

Well, the girl that typed the petitions, typed the date on which she typed the petitions, you see, so that there was two separate dates on the petitions. The first set, let's say it was typed for August 5, and the second set was for August 10. Now, the law says that the petitions are supposed to all be the same because if the first petition is it, you see . . . So, when I filed my petitions, I filed my petitions, but there was two separate, different dates on it. And the Republicans and Democrats on the Board of Elections split. The Republicans said that I submitted two sets of petitions because of the different dates, neither one of which had enough. The Democrats said, "No," that the law had said that an error of this type should not rule you off the ballot, that the girl didn't put the original date on it.

So, they went to the Secretary of State, who was a Republican, Ted Brown, and he ruled in favor of the Republicans on the board, see. However, the Prosecuting Attorney was a Democrat and he told the Board that he could not defend them in a lawsuit. I went and got an attorney, and he [the Prosecuting Attorney] told the board that court precedent and everything put him in a position where he could not really defend them in their position. And so, then the Board of Elections acquiesced and allowed my name to go on the ballot. These are some of the very shabby ways that can be used to keep a person's name off the ballot. It's funny, I suppose, coming from a political family, that you can get into that.

But that wasn't all that happened. So, I ran for office and I won. And when I filed my expense return, I filed my committee and my own on the same form. I was really trying to be super honest. Every

nickle and dime was accounted for and I really wanted to be super honest. And I took it down and I filed it, and a couple of days later, the opponent that I had beat came back and he wanted to have the job vacated because I didn't file the expense sheet properly. Evidently, I should have had one for for the committee and one for for myself. Nobody told me down there. I didn't go to a lawyer to get all these things worked out. I thought a person ought to be able to run for office without having to go to a lawyer to figure out how to do it. And that was never pursued. I had really been super careful to be honest and get all the contributions out so there would be no question. And then you have those little technicalities thrown up at you.

So, you learn by those kinds of things. You also learn, as a legislator, that you want to try and change the law to make it as easy as possible for people to run for office and to get rid of those little technicalities.

CO: Do you find it difficult to change the law in that way?

CA: Well, not so much in that, but it's very difficult to pass laws. You just don't go down there and get 99 House Members and 33 Senators and get a majority of them. First of all, take an issue that's big enough for them to spend their time on and then to talk them into voting for it. It's not an easy thing.

CO: Again, when you ran for Township Trustee, what were the expenses? How much did it cost to run?

CA: I think I spent about \$1,000. I think we raised about \$500 or \$600--we had like a card party or something, and I spent about \$600 or \$700 of my own money on that.

CO: Where would most of the expenses go?

CA: Most of them went to direct mail. I had a thing put together and mailed them direct mail.

CO: How large of a staff did you have working for you?

CA: I suppose I had about twenty-five people working on the campaign. Most of them were housewives. And a lot of volunteers on election day, went out and worked for nothing on election day.

CO: How much of this staff carried over to when you ran for district representative?

CA: Well, a sizeable amount carried over and then added on; you add on different people from different communities.

CO: And what were the expenses of this campaign?

CA: That campaign was about \$11,000, a big difference.

CO: And again, where would most of the expenses come for that?

CA: About \$3,500 of that came from the State Democrat Headquarters. The Democrat Party made an effort to gain the legislature and they did go about raising a lot of money. So, they gave us about \$3,500. I got quite a bit of money from labor and individuals that made up the difference.

CO: What would your expenses be? What would you spend on it?

CA: I didn't spend any of my own money on that election.

CO: Where did this money go, as far as purchasing what, or in what way did it help the campaign. Where did you put the money into the campaign?

CA: A lot of it went to direct mail again. A lot of it went to newspaper advertising and some radio, and you get matches and hand-outs and things like this, but probably newspaper and direct mail are the largest, single amounts.

Direct mail is expensive now. It was expensive then, but it's even more expensive now. It's almost prohibited now.

CO: That was a pretty big time of the year for you, that winter. Previous to that you were elected Chairman of the Boardman Trustees, right?

CA: Well, the chairman, you had to be elected by two Republicans and you're a Democrat. So, when I became a trustee, I tried to call it the way I saw it and not be a partisan, to be part of the solution, not part of the problem. I think that I did earn their respect and the respect of the people in the community in working with them. And so, I think they took that approach. I carried out my job the same

as they would.

Township Trustee gives you the privilege of not operating in a partisan way, to be honest about it. And it's kind of very refreshing kind of work because you just do it the way you think is best and you really don't have partisan consideration. I think the other two trustees acted pretty much the same way. They were Republicans, but I believe that they were not overly partisan at all. We really got along well. I think during that time the township had some confidence in their government and I think the people were pretty well satisfied. We did pass a levy to put some more policemen and firemen on at that time. I think when you have that, that it does show that the people have confidence in their leadership.

CO: Okay, let's get back up to when you were State Representative. In your opinion--I guess you've had some contact with county organizations throughout the state--would you say that Mahoning County is sort of representative of the State as a whole?

CA: Well, they're all different. In Cleveland they have three county chairmen and they're having difficulties up there in their party organization probably because of three leaders. It's very difficult. We don't have that kind of a problem. Toledo, a fellow by the name of Boyle, who is an ex-city policeman there is doing a good job of reforming their party, bring it up from the very low points. So, they have kind of a new thing. Columbus, there was some real confidence that went through in Columbus a couple years ago when they had a majority of the Democrats elected to the city Council. Cincinnati has become more Democrat in their council as well, I think. But by and large, I think Democrat organizations need some help in the state.

CO: Democrats don't seem to have, at the state level, someone that can go down and help at a local level. In other words, Republicans, for a number of years always had a strong state organization. Ray Bliss was the chairman and he was kind of a pinnacle of power for the State Republican Party. And it functioned very well for them. Kent McGoo, now, has taken over and it looks like he's doing a pretty good job as far as they're concerned.

The Democrat Party in Ohio, when Gilligan was Governor, he was the pinnacle of the state political power

and when he was defeated, it just left a tremendous power vacuum there. So, we now have elected a fellow by the name of Tipps, who is from Dayton, who is promising if he can put the time in to kind of put everything together and get the chairmen all working together and trying to get some enthusiasm for getting local mayors elected, local councilmen elected because that's the only way you build a good strong state party is to have strong local parties. So, I think that's the challenge of the Democrat Party today.

CO: Of course, you're working under Rhodes now.

CA: Yes.

CO: Beside the fact that Gilligan's removal left a big gap, what other changes have you noticed since Rhodes has come in?

CA: Well, they're completely different kind of people. Jack Gilligan came from the academic community. He had a lot of academic people around him and that probably was his downfall to a certain extent because it was very difficult for ordinary working people to relate to academic people for some reason. They may share some common political interests, but the communication just wasn't there. And so, we found that he had a staff that isolated him and he was not open to going out and shaking hands with people and really being . . . He kind of was pent up in his little office. Rhodes was a glad-hander, backslapper. He would shake hands with everybody. I've been in two meetings with Rhodes already as of March 10, I guess. And I can only remember one meeting with Jack Gilligan the whole time I was there--relating to Lake Milton. Rhodes has a much more active, getting around, moving kind of thing, at least with the legislature.

Gilligan is the kind of guy, though, where you can sit down and talk about an issue. You can sit down and have some dialogue about issues. Rhodes is the kind of guy, he comes in and sits down and tells you what he wants and then gets up and leaves. There's no dialogue at all. So, there's the difference. Rhodes is not the kind of guy that defends himself by arguing with you about an issue. He'll just ignore it. In other words, he'll come in with his proposal. He might have another proposal; he'll just ignore your proposal. He'll just go on with his thing, see. He's not going to waste his time. I'm

trying to figure out how he ticks. I believe that his approach is: "I'll tell them what I want to do and I'll work for that and ignore everyone else."

CO: He does that with everybody, Democrats, everybody?

CA: Yes. He's kind of a funny guy. We had a meeting with him, the Democrat leadership, and he said, "This is the management operation here. Everybody starts at 7:30." He said, "Slap them on the ass with turpentine and away they go."

CO: Can you get away with talking to people like that?

CA: He's talking to the legislature. When you look at his campaign and size things up, there's a guy that came out of, I think, Southeastern Ohio, which is a rather poverty part of Ohio. And he was really never much on social issues. He was always big on building things, but social issues, that wasn't where he was very heavy. And the people that he came from are people that really need--the city liberal might think the people he came from need a lot of help in education and mental health and medical, but those people supported him. They didn't support Jack Gilligan who kind of worked a lot to raise their educational standards and some of these other things. And you wonder. It really kind of does make you think that the people that Gilligan tried to support and who his administration was directed to, really didn't respond back at all. It makes you want to try and analyze why you didn't get a response back from the people you were geared to help. So, then you have to kind of think, well, maybe help comes in different ways, maybe it's not just financial help and some of these other things that they want.

CO: I think it was Jim Rhodes' campaign that said he was a coal miner; he scratched on his belly. I suppose a guy who talked like that related more than the undertaker's son that went to Notre Dame and came from a wealthy Cincinnati family could. Maybe that's more important.

CO: Almost like image than a Republican.

C: Maybe it's just that people want a candidate they can relate to more than someone that might look at their problems in a paternalistic way rather than someone that wouldn't look at them with paternalism, but would look at them as another one of them.

In other words, "I come from you. I come from the coal mines of southeastern Ohio and I know what it's like to live down there. I know how rough it is. This is how I made a success of my life."

CO: What is the feeling in the House, though? Are they prepared to relate to them in this way?

CA: The House started off with trying to do some things while Gilligan was still Governor in terms of a congressional redistricting plan to try and make the congressional districts relate more to the population, and some other pieces of legislation that we had never been able to get passed because a Republican-controlled Senate would never vote them out for the Governor to sign. So, now that we had a Democrat Senate along with a Democrat House and a Democrat Governor, we tried to get them all passed right away so Gilligan would sign them and they'd become law, which are now, of course, in the courts and someplace along the line when someone is reading this, the decision will have been made. (Laughter)

So, we started off with that issue, then we went into Rhodes' bond proposal, which is a whole new issue. I just think he's going to come out with his stuff and whatever we get up on his desk, he'll deal with, but we're going to have to get it there before he will say too much about it.

CO: Last December I got word around here about you becoming whip, Democrat majority whip. What was all involved in this?

CA: In putting it together?

CO: Yes. How do you put that together?

CA: First of all, it was funny, I was in Columbus and House was not in session, but I was invited to go to lunch. So, I was sitting there and the speaker, the House Speaker was there and a couple other fellows and they were talking about campaigns for the leadership. My name was thrown and this fellow would be this and another fellow would be something else and Tom Carney would be whip. I'm just a freshman. I had been re-elected, but I was just a freshman. Why would they want to pick me, a freshman, to be whip? So, I kind of left. Really, there wasn't any comment made by the speaker at the time so I just let it pass.

But I did support Vern Riffe to become speaker right away; sent a letter to him saying that I supported him; sent a letter to A.G. Lanzione and told him that I supported Mr. Riffe because I felt that we should have another change, not that I was dissatisfied with him, but that Riffe had some ambitions later on and I felt that he needed to be speaker now in order to get himself known throughout the state if he wanted to run for governor in four years. He couldn't do it in two years and if A.G. Lanzione wanted to be speaker, then give it up to Vern Riffe which means that Wright would only be speaker for two years and still want to, maybe, be a candidate for governor.

My particular philosophy is that we should get as many people in a position of running as possible. We should have an abundance of candidates and whoever is the strongest will surface and will be the candidate, maybe it would be Vern Riffe, maybe it would be Brown, maybe it would be Ferguson, maybe it would be somebody that we're not thinking about right now. But I felt he should have that opportunity anyway. So, I did support him, basically, for those reasons and also because he has done so much work in the last two years in getting Democrat policy and really doing a lot of the work of the Speaker.

So, I supported him. I made those opinions known to both people and I think they both respect me for it. A.G. respected me because I told him right away where I was. A lot of people are wishy-washy. So, Vern Riffe said to me, "Do you want to be whip or do you want to be chairman of the committee?" I said, "Well if I have that choice, I'll take the whip." And so that's exactly how it happened.

Now, why he picked me, I don't know. There was a couple other fellows that were interested. But sometimes you don't really know why things happen to you; you just happen to be at the right place at the right time. And I suppose, to a certain extent, that was what happened in that case.

You get down there, really, and you look at everybody, all the legislators, you start dealing with governors and governor's aides and senators, and you find out people are not any more intelligent anyplace you go, you're just operating at a different level, but they're just human beings. They have the same emotions and their intellectual ability--they're not geniuses at all. It's a very human kind of thing.

You sit back from a vantage point of here and you start looking at a guy that's the governor of the State of Ohio, boy, that's really something to be governor, but then when you get to know them, you say, "What do you know?" That guy isn't any smarter than I am. He's no more aware and he has no more talents than I do or my friends do or the people I associate with." So, then you start to realize, these people, they come right from the sidewalks of America. Sometimes the media, in a way, when it takes them and puts the camera on them and they're talking, I suppose it puts them into the same mainstream as you have some other people, TV characters and a lot of others, and that's all a big thing coming across to the public.

CO: What separates them? What makes them . . . ?

CA: They take a chance. They say, "I'm going to go for it." Jack Gilligan was a city councilman and I think he ran for congress because the district had changed and he won. Then they changed the district again and he lost, and he ran for councilman again and he won that. I guess during that time he was a councilman, he did a lot of talking against the Right to Work Law and so he made friends with labor. So then he said, "Well, I'm going to run against Frank Lauche," and he ran and beat Frank Lauche in the primaries because he had labor support. He lost in the general election. But why should a councilman from Cincinnati run against a guy like Lauche who is supposed to be super tough? So, he just took a chance, that's all. And ultimately, it made him governor because the exposure of running for senate made him better known to run for governor two years later and it happened to be a loan scandal in the Republican administration.

He probably didn't win the election, the Republicans lost it because of a loan scandal. Just like Governor Rhodes said to us when we were down in his office a couple weeks ago, he said, "I didn't win the election, the other side lost." That happens a lot of times in elections. Guys don't win, the other side loses.

CO: For example, what effect do you think the police scandal will have on Hunter's campaign?

CA: I don't think it would have any effect because I don't think the people relate that to him. I don't think they believe that he condoned it or had anything to do with it. I think, basically, they have confidence

in him, his honesty. I think he's got that, the people have confidence in him. I think they believe he's honest. I personally believe he's honest and he hasn't done anything to prove that he isn't. So, when something like that happens, it doesn't hurt him. Now, I think if people didn't trust him then an issue like that would have another effect.

CO: Could you relate that, then to the Stop 5 incident? Could you draw a parallel there and show the differences?

CA: Well, I think that at that point in time there was discontent about the administration. Then another incident happened. People say, "Well." The whole thing is a bad experience. That was kind of different. And there was violence. There were a lot of people involved in that. It was rather ugly. I think the people, sometimes, in order to get rid of something, they'd throw everything out. That was never, I don't think, ever really investigated properly. I don't think that all the problems in that area were ever put out on the front burner for everybody to see. I wasn't there. I don't know anything about it. But I have the feeling that that was never completely dealt with.

CO: I want to talk about rising up on the state level. What would it take to rise up in the Democratic Party locally? What do you see? What qualities does a person need?

CA: I think one thing is that if a person wanted to be a public official in the city of Youngstown, they would have to run for city council and get elected. And then, from that base, they would have to prove to be a person that can make a decision and also a person that has innovative ideas. I think people want someone that can come up with some ideas, not someone that responds all the time, but is creative. I think people are looking for some creative public officials. A lot of times people--especially in the legislative branch--they just want to respond all the time. That's why I try and come up with ideas. I try and present new things. I try and do the positive rather than responding what other people give me to decide on. That's how I got into this whole energy thing now.

CO: Is this appreciated by the party?

CA: Well, first of all, if you were a Democrat and you had a Republican mayor, you could come up with a lot

of ideas that would make the administration respond to you. Here's a guy who has got some ideas. He's an idea man. He's going to make government better because he's got some things to help people respond to problems. You can sit back and wait for the administration to solve all the problems and say, "Yes," or "No," but I don't think you can get anywhere that way. I don't think you can get up front. I think you have to try and sell some ideas. So I think people are looking for that kind of guy because that's the kind of person they want to be in the Executive Branch, someone that has some ideas in solving problems. When you're in the Executive Branch, whether you're a mayor or county commissioner or governor, you've got to come up with some solutions to problems and you have to know how to do that.

CO: Now, in the Democratic Party of Mahoning County, we know Mr. Sulligan is a very powerful person. Who are the other people with power within the party, the people to see about something being done?

CA: I'm not so sure that power rests like that, with one person. I think that a lot of the power has to do with people that are contributors. People are interested in who is going to fund the campaign. So, all the groups that provide funds for running for office--sphere of influence--you can't run for office unless you have the funds to do it. So, therefore, you find that there are some people that are powerful politically, business people that are powerful politically. Then you also have--Mr. Sulligan was Chairman of the Democrat Party, but by himself, I don't think he's powerful in terms of getting the Democrat organization lined up and with you and all this kind of thing. But he's not going to give you any funds to run for election. The Democrat Party does not finance candidates. So, he has to go to other people to get the funds to run. And so, because of that, other people are important, people in the labor movement in particular are important, politically.

CO: Is there anything else you would like to say about the party in the area? Are there any other comments you would like to make?

CA: No, I don't think so. I think a lot of times everybody wants to talk about reforming everything. Well, I think sometimes the best way to describe a political party at the local level is that it pretty much represents the thinking of the people, whatever that

might be. And when the thinking changes, then the party structures will change. People are pretty much used to the kind of party organization that we have here and by and large, I think, they accept it.

CO: Okay, thank you very much.

END OF INTERVIEW