

① *General*
Same Dem (white) collects as 50% had. also (indigenous background) but diff racial makeup of district
 ② *The fact that Friedel & Mitchell vote the same but "represent" different*
1/16 Ches Field case

Interview with Parren Mitchell - December 10, 1970

How got involved. "I was the head of the anti-poverty program in Baltimore and I was spending a great deal of my time in Washington. Baltimore, like most cities needs federal money. Without federal money, we will die--that's all there is to it. It dawned on me one day that I was doing the work of a congressman anyway. The reason I had to do the work of a congressman was that the Baltimore delegation was very weak and not very helpful. They had good liberal voting records and they all voted about the same--for social welfare and things like that. But they had no gut commitment to civil rights or to helping the city with its problems. They were not cause-oriented. Sam Friedel had a liberal voting record, but he was 74 years old and he was out of the ball game. In June 1968, I quit the anti-poverty program for a lot of reasons I won't go into now. At that time I had no intention or idea of running for Congress. A few of my friends came to me and suggested that I do it. I decided I would and filed my papers in the morning on the last filing day. We started with no money and no organization and had only 5 weeks to campaign. In that time we worked to the point where we lost by only 5,000 votes. After that I became convinced it could be done. From that day we started working and pointing toward 1970."

"Let me start with a little of the geography of the district. All of the Baltimore districts are drawn so that they include some parts of the city and some parts of the surrounding county. If you start at the northern end and work your way south, the 7th district starts in Baltimore

*Mitchell M. Mitchell
 but not problem*

*1968
 primary -
 he lost*

county. The further you get from the city the more affluent are the people of the district. Most of the White area north of the city is Jewish. Those farthest out are very affluent; they can afford to be cause-oriented and they are. They are liberal and Democratic. Nearer to the city, but still in the county is another group of Jews--traditionally Democratic but more conservative. They are the small shopkeepers who made it the hard way with their stores. They are not cause-oriented. In the city, the most affluent Blacks live nearest the county and then as you move into the city you come to the heart of the ghetto, where the most abominable living conditions exist. To the south, but still in the city there is a racially mixed area of very poor Whites and poor Blacks where you have frequent shoot outs and where racial tension runs very high. Still further to the south, we pick up Baltimore county again and this is the area of the hard hats. They are ~~union~~ people who have made it from the city to the suburbs. They are union members and third generation immigrants, ~~Lithuanians~~. They have every attitude you associate with the hard hats. Racially, the district is 60% White and 40% Black. Of the 60% White, the breakdown is 40% Jewish and 20% hard hat. It was great luck for me that all the affluent Jewish voters were crammed into the 7th district--to help Sam Friedel. If that hadn't happened, I would have had a very hard time. If I was in the 4th district--Fallon's district, I could not have won."

"Given the nature of the district, much of our strategy was imposed upon us. To begin with my basic strength is in the Black community and I

had to preserve that strength at all costs. Without unity among the black people of the district I would be nowhere. Beyond that, I had to work hard to win as large a percentage in the Jewish community as possible. Circumstances dictated that I campaign in the black area in the daytime and in the white area at night. From June until November I think I must have attended 800 teas, mostly in the white area where I went and talked and just let people see me. I knew I wasn't going to get into the temples in the Jewish community. But I did have strong support from some of the Jewish leaders. I had been Chairman of the State Human Relations Board and they knew me from that. Also I had been active in the New Democratic coalition. Those people helped me by getting me around to teas and coffees--3 or 4 an evening so that I could meet as many people as possible. In my first primary, I had no time to do that because I had to concentrate my efforts at solidifying my support in the black community. But this time, in the primary and in the general election I spent a great deal of the time in the Jewish area.

"There were 3 candidates in the primary, the incumbent Sam Friedel, Friedler? and myself. Though it wasn't calculated that way, the two Jewish candidates split the Jewish vote and they took enough away from each other so that I won. Friedler ran a very emotional campaign against me. Naturally, my strength was in the black community and every time I spoke there, he cried racism. ~~Naturally~~ The election was a very emotional thing in the black area and he would twist this around at every opportunity to accuse me of inflammatory racist tactics. Actually I think I would have

won even if it had been a head to head race with Friedel. There was enough dissatisfaction with him among the younger Jewish voters so that I believe I would have won anyway. But the 3-way contest certainly helped."

"In the general election my opponent, named Parker, helped me a great deal. Early in the campaign he accused me of being financed by the Panthers and he charged that I was the number 3 Panther in the entire country. I sought every opportunity to debate him--in the White, Jewish area. When I went to the Jewish community I on so many words, challenged them ~~to~~ to show whether they really were liberal and whether they truly believed in democracy. In the end, 35% of them voted for me and the rest ~~defected~~. There was a good deal of residual bitterness after the primary. People would say 'I know Sam Friedel hasn't read a book in 18 years, but he's such a nice guy.' So there was some of that. And the others--well, they just defected. I picked up 25% of the vote in the hard hat area--more than I ever thought I would. Some New Democratic Coalition volunteers--about 100 of them under--Hickman--worked very hard and surprised me with the vote there. I also had union help--especially the Auto Workers--in that area. They opposed me in the primary, but they supported me in the general election. Then, we got 62% of the Blacks to turn out--which was fantastic considering the normal turnout of about 15%. We had upped that to about 25% in the first primary and 44% in the second primary. We had hoped for 50% in the election--but 62%, that's almost unheard of in Baltimore."

"I'm not on the best of terms with the County executive of Baltimore."

I've accused him of exporting Black people and their problems from the county into the city. And I've called Baltimore County the greatest bastion of racism in the United States, as I believe it is. This man happens also to be the leader of the County Democratic Party. When he prepared his sample ballot--with every candidate's name and picture on it, my name and picture were missing altogether. They said I didn't get the picture in on time--which just wasn't true. On another sample ballot circulated by the party, every Democratic candidate had his name circled in red. When it came to my race, the Republican was circled in red. So Party support, as you might guess, was pretty spotty in the election. No, it was worse than that, it was positively unhelpful--with the exception of \$5,000 from the Governor and a few billboards where my name appeared with the whole ticket. The whole campaign was run right out of this office here. And we didn't really have an organization. We prided ourselves that this was a new politics operation, with everyone working and everyone more or less equal. ("George (Morris?) was camp manager). We ran the campaign without any money. Not until the last two weeks did any big money start coming in--business money. It was too late to put up billboards. We had only one billboard throughout the campaign. It was all we could afford. At filing time after the primary, we had spent \$24,000. And we finally spent a total of \$50,000. As campaigns go we were poverty stricken. Father Drinan spent upwards of \$200,000 and ended \$40,000 in debt. We were ~~dn~~ in a program together and I told him that his deficit would pay for my whole campaign. Ron Dellums spent over \$100,000 and he ended \$22,000 in debt. I told him that his debt would pay for half my campaign."

NeAt time--there will surely be a primary--Friedler? has already announced--"the Republicans won't miss the opportunity again. Their candidate was not as strong as he might be. This time they'll run a strong heavily financed candidate--probably Jewish" "We'll win any primary. I'll state that flatly."

~~Warned~~^{Worried} about redistricting even more--Baltimore will lose one Congressman.

His office was in a second floor apartment over a boarded-up store.