



1-14-1971

## Edith Milhous and Philip Hunter Timberlake (January 14, 1971)

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### Recommended Citation

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Oral History Interview

with

MRS. EDITH MILHOUS TIMBERLAKE  
MR. PHILIP HUNTER TIMBERLAKE

January 14, 1971  
Riverside, California

By Dr. C. Richard Arena

For the Richard Nixon Oral History Project

ARENA: Did you go to Whittier College?

E. TIMBERLAKE: I started going there in 1897. My beginning year, really, and what we have now is high school. I had done that year's work in Plainfield, Indiana--first year, where I had Latin and regular first-year studies and Algebra.

ARENA: Did you get to go to college like your other sisters, Hannah [Milhous Nixon] and Mrs. [Rose Olive Milhous] Marshburn?

E. TIMBERLAKE: I went just one year there at Whittier after it was called a college, and then I went to business college for three years in Los Angeles [California]. It was Brownsburger Business College, which is no more. Those two dear ladies gave it up after my time. It was a good business college, gave us a thorough understanding of some of the necessities of getting a job and holding a job.

ARENA: It was very common in your family for people to get a college education, I notice.

E. TIMBERLAKE: It was very what?

ARENA: It was very common. Your sisters also went to college, either full time or part time, like you.

E. TIMBERLAKE: Yes, they did.

ARENA: Do you think most of that encouragement came from your father or from your mother, or both?

E. TIMBERLAKE: Both in our case. They were both teachers. My father [Franklin Milhous] taught in the public school, and my mother [Almira Burdg Milhous] did also for years. And they . . .

ARENA: You were recalling about your father and mother both being very interested in seeing that you children all got an education.

E. TIMBERLAKE: Yes, my father came to California from Indiana, where we lived out in the country, and it was hard to get the children to college--I mean, more expensive than some places.

ARENA: Excuse me, you mean that it was more expensive in Indiana than in California, or both the same at that time?

E. TIMBERLAKE: Well, we found it much the same after we got here. But we knew Whittier College was a community of education. Whittier College with its preparatory school had been established and was going pretty well. And we also were just incorporated as a little town. Nothing like it is now--very small.

ARENA: Did you happen to know the people who founded the prep school and the college also? Were they still living when you came, those who established it?

E. TIMBERLAKE: Yes, they were living when we came. William Coffin was one of the establishers.

ARENA: I see. Do you remember about your nephews, either President Nixon or Edward [Calvert Nixon], and their attitude toward school? Do you remember any of that?

E. TIMBERLAKE: Do I remember? I remember Donald [Francis Donald Nixon]. Donald didn't want to go on to college and he had quite a struggle, I think, with his parents, and he won out. They finally sent him back to North Carolina to a Friends boarding school for one year to finish him off in prep education. But that was Donald. Now you probably haven't met Donald yet.

ARENA: I have not met him but I hope to. Ed said to be sure to meet him and [Clinton O.] Clint

Harris. These are all people who knew President Nixon very well. Mr. Harris owns Harris Oldsmobile in Whittier [California]. He is a very old friend.

E. TIMBERLAKE: I guess I don't know him. He's of the younger set. See, we haven't lived in Whittier. We have just gone back and forth as friends of friends.

ARENA: Even though you lived here and the other members lived elsewhere, did you get together, though, I wonder? Did you have . . .

E. TIMBERLAKE: Oh, yes, we do, as often as most families, I think--Christmases and birthdays and reunion occasions.

ARENA: When Richard was a little boy, did he live in Whittier? You were living here at that time, or were you all living in Whittier at that time?

E. TIMBERLAKE: We lived here in this house since 54 or 55 years ago. We came in 1924. Lived in the same house here on Grand Avenue with orange orchards on both sides. Now the orchards are gone and houses are built.

ARENA: Any particular reason why you decided to come here, I wonder, rather than in Whittier?

E. TIMBERLAKE: Well, [Philip Hunter Timberlake] Tim had a job with the University of California. At that time they had an experimental station here in Riverside. He was an entomologist. He got this job, being transferred from the United States Department of Agriculture, under which he had been working.

ARENA: I see. Do you recall if you and your husband did missionary work abroad like Aunt Olive has done, Aunt [Rose] Olive Marshburn? I believe they were in Africa for a while.

E. TIMBERLAKE: She is more of the missionary type and has followed it more and perhaps accomplished a great deal more than we have in our quiet way. But they have gone out under the Mission Board twice now to Africa. She's quite enthusiastic about educating those African people. Of course, having been there and lived there makes it more real to her than it does to the rest of us. But we're in sympathy with it.

ARENA: Do you recall if she did that while Richard was a little boy or after he grew up? I wonder if she told Richard stories of Africa, for example?

- E. TIMBERLAKE: Well, I doubt if she did any more than to the rest of us. She may have.
- ARENA: In other words, I am wondering how old Richard was when the [Oscar] Marshburns did go to Africa?
- E. TIMBERLAKE: He was then in service with the Navy and getting interested in politics for the United States government, in California and the United States department . . .
- ARENA: I see. When Richard visited you, did he stay any long periods of time, a week, a month, when he was a little boy?
- E. TIMBERLAKE: Did he do what?
- ARENA: Did he live with you or stay with you for any length of time, besides just visits with the family?
- E. TIMBERLAKE: Just visited with us time after time but not a great deal, and not any great length of time. But some weekends they would come over on the train from Whittier and come to Riverside and we'd meet the train there. The Santa Fe [Railway] runs through Riverside.
- ARENA: Was that because they did not have a car, or did they just prefer to come by train?
- E. TIMBERLAKE: They came by train. We didn't have a car until 1924. We had a car then, such as it was. We got a car the first day we came in 1924.
- ARENA: When Richard did visit you, do you recall the foods he liked or did not like; was he a fussy eater?
- E. TIMBERLAKE: No, the boys were very easy to get along with as far as food was concerned, if that's what you mean.
- ARENA: Yes, yes. I was just wondering if they didn't like certain foods, like you hear children don't like to eat their spinach; they don't like their vegetables.
- E. TIMBERLAKE: That's right; that's a common complaint where there's a family of children. You do well if you get them over it without any conflicts. Years ago Richard didn't like so-and-so, but he eats it now. That's a common complaint with some people.

ARENA: Do you recall how he got along with his brothers? Did they tend to fight like a lot of brothers do, or did they play together and get along well together? Do you recall how they acted when they were together?

E. TIMBERLAKE: I think they acted very well compared to some families when there are more than one, but those brothers I never saw having a fight or serious contest.

ARENA: Did you ever have to discipline the boys yourself when they visited you? For example, Richard; do you ever recall when you had to discipline him?

E. TIMBERLAKE: I don't remember that I did.

ARENA: Was there ever anything like his running away from home, as a lot of boys will try to do, or run away with the circus, as they say? Was there ever anything like that?

E. TIMBERLAKE: No; if there was, they kept it pretty well under their hat. I don't know. It didn't get out much, if they had any of those secret plans that they carried out or didn't carry out.

ARENA: Do you recall that Richard liked to read certain books? Did he bring certain books with him, or did you have certain books in your home that he always liked to read in particular?

E. TIMBERLAKE: Well, he was always with his nose in a book, seemed like. If we didn't have National Geographic or something else as interesting, he found something else in our library that he wanted to see.

ARENA: I believe you said, or did you, that your husband has traveled. Has he been to other experimental stations in the country or outside the country? And I wonder if he and Richard ever talked about some of these fine experiences?

E. TIMBERLAKE: I don't know that they did. Tim and I lived in Hawaii. Tim lived there longer than I did. He lived there about eight or ten years in Honolulu, and he just visited on the island of Oahu where Honolulu is situated mostly, but somewhat on Maui and Hawaii.

ARENA: Do you recall that he and the Nixon children used to talk about those experiences? Did he have time, say in the evenings and so forth, to tell about his experiences with the boys?

- E. TIMBERLAKE: Well, he didn't live in those countries as a boy. This was one of his first jobs out of college, sent by the government.
- ARENA: Do you recall if the agricultural problems of California were ever so serious that the boys themselves had to take them into account? Was there ever a very bad season and a bad crop, or something like that which caused any problems?
- E. TIMBERLAKE: Problems of what?
- ARENA: Well, as I recall, Richard used to take care of the fruits and vegetables in his father's store. Did you ever happen to visit the store and see him doing that sort of work, by any chance? Do you recall his talking about that?
- E. TIMBERLAKE: I've been in the store when I've seen them sprinkling those vegetables and fruits, trying to keep them in a cooler climate.
- ARENA: I think that was Richard's responsibility and he was supposed to pay his way through school with that part of the store, if I'm not mistaken.
- E. TIMBERLAKE: That was part of his job, running that store in those summers that he was home from college.
- ARENA: And if I'm not mistaken, he used to go to Los Angeles early in the morning and buy what he needed for the store.
- E. TIMBERLAKE: He did that, and it was quite commendable, too. We considered it so. He would start out with their vegetable wagon, before dawn sometimes, and get back before the Nixon market opened.
- ARENA: Do you think that the other people of the community were aware that he was doing this and that they praised him for it? Or is this a common thing among the young men of Whittier, do you think, working like that?
- E. TIMBERLAKE: Well, I don't think it was exactly common. There weren't very many such opportunities.
- ARENA: There weren't too many stores, possibly?
- E. TIMBERLAKE: No, not too many. Their store was out of town --what we used to call the Leffingwell Ranch. That's about three to five miles out east of Whittier where the Friends church is now on one corner. And I

don't know, maybe a bank on the other.

ARENA: I wonder what kind of people were the customers --farm people, people from the city maybe, passing through wanting to buy, or was it a regular local trade from the community itself? I am wondering if maybe Richard got an opportunity to meet out-of-community people a lot, out-of-state people a lot, in that business?

E. TIMBERLAKE: Well, it was quite a community, I think. Houses began to pop up here and there, and different ranchers considered turning part of their ranches into home sites. When they were there and had their store--first a gasoline station and then their store . . .

ARENA: Mr. Nixon, Richard's father, was able to handle several different things like that at the same time, evidently. He would run the gasoline store.

E. TIMBERLAKE: Yes, he had business ability.

ARENA: Do you recall his ever losing his temper with the boys and maybe Richard in particular?

E. TIMBERLAKE: He might have. Maybe Richard didn't step on it quite fast enough. Frank [Francis Anthony Nixon] was one who had a temper to display when he wanted to or needed to, and Richard might have gotten it more than the other boys.

ARENA: Edward [Calvert Nixon] said that he recalled that sometimes Frank Nixon, Richard's father, would take a stick to them, too. Do you recall that yourself? Edward said that he recalled that.

E. TIMBERLAKE: I never saw him do it. I think he must have done that in private, which is a good thing, because I never saw him punish the boys with a stick, but I can think that he might well have done it.

ARENA: Was he the type of person that would lose his temper for a long time, or would he just forget it the next minute--Frank Nixon?

E. TIMBERLAKE: He would forget it.

ARENA: He wouldn't keep a grudge necessarily, or keep always in the same bad frame of mind, if he did get angry?

E. TIMBERLAKE: No, he wouldn't accuse them of it later. He got it over with and it was settled, once he gave them the stick.



- ARENA: Was Mrs. Nixon easier going? Would she ever interfere when there was some of this disciplining by the father, do you think?
- E. TIMBERLAKE: Would she what?
- ARENA: Was Mrs. Nixon the same way, in the sense that she was also strict, or would she try to be the peacemaker?
- E. TIMBERLAKE: She was the peacemaker, I would say. That was the way it impressed me whenever I would be there and some difference was discussed. Hannah was at the kitchen sink, either peeling vegetables or keeping peace in some other way.
- ARENA: I understand also that Hannah taught Sunday school and so did Mr. [Frank] Nixon.
- E. TIMBERLAKE: Yes, they both did.
- ARENA: That would be right in the Whittier community?
- E. TIMBERLAKE: Yes, it was out at the East Whittier church.
- ARENA: Because she did study to be a teacher. I don't believe she ever taught in the regular school, though. Is that correct? She studied to be a teacher but got married and then that was the end of the teaching.
- E. TIMBERLAKE: That's right. I was disappointed very much that she didn't go on and finish college, and yet maybe if she had we wouldn't have had Richard as President. It's hard to tell. So maybe my disappointment is compensated in that way.
- ARENA: Do you think that she really loved books all her life, or do you remember that she also was interested--or did this come at a certain time like her high school years or a special teacher or minister had a special influence on her to get her so interested--in teaching and education? Do you recall, possibly?
- E. TIMBERLAKE: I don't remember that it did. There must have been, though. A Mrs. [Mabel H.] Douglas in her life was a very good influence. She was Latin, French and Greek teacher up at Whittier College. And if you are in the Language Department, you would see her picture hanging on the wall up there. I took German and French under Mrs. Douglas.
- ARENA: The question was, do you recall, Mr. Timberlake, what the boys were like when they were around

you? Do you recall telling, for example, your experiences in Hawaii to them, and things like that? Do you recall what their reaction was?

P. TIMBERLAKE: No, I don't.

E. TIMBERLAKE: I could tell you one when you finish with him. Well, when you were on Maui for instance, you rode a horse inspecting the fields. You were looking for a certain kind of insect that would work against the sugar beetles. Is that wrong or right?

P. TIMBERLAKE: No, I was just collecting insects--native insects over there. That hasn't anything to do with Nixon, though.

E. TIMBERLAKE: He asked if it would make a good story because it is out of the United States and boys are always interested in travel.

P. TIMBERLAKE: I don't remember ever telling such a story.

E. TIMBERLAKE: May not have been an occasion; he just asked the question.

ARENA: I was also wondering, you know that Richard liked--I don't know if he liked it or not-- but he did work selling produce, fruits and vegetables, and I was wondering if he was ever interested in more than just the sale. Was he interested in anything about the farming and something that went into it before he had them to sell? Did he ever show any interest in agriculture, I wonder, aside from the retail sale of it? Did he ask you, for example, how to pick out good fruit when he went to the markets in Los Angeles, so he would have better stock, possibly, or anything like that? You don't recall talking to him about it?

P. TIMBERLAKE: No.

ARENA: Do you recall ever seeing his fruits and vegetables in his store, or anything that comes to mind as to how he kept them, and that sort of thing? [No response] Let me ask you this, Mr. Timberlake, of all the things that you recall about Richard, what seems to stand out in your mind from the standpoint of how he differed from Don or how he differed from Ed? And remember, none of this information is going to be used without his permission, by the way. This is very confidential. That's why Ed wanted you to feel at ease in talking about these things. You shouldn't do it with just anyone, but he wanted you to be very frank and also to feel at ease in talking about these things.

E. TIMBERLAKE: You'll have it all edited before you publish it.

P. TIMBERLAKE: Well, I don't remember ever being particularly interested in Richard, except when we was over in Arizona. I remember he was selling tickets, was it, to the rodeo?

E. TIMBERLAKE: Yes, they had this rodeo in Prescott, Arizona, every year, I guess. And Harold [Samuel Nixon] was over there with Donald. Harold, the oldest boy, who later died from TB--you know what we called tuberculosis here--it's TB. And my mother, we drove over to visit them and see how things were. And Mr. Timberlake is always looking for a new bee or a new bug of some sort of beneficial or destructive nature. Well . . .

BEGIN SIDE II TAPE I

E. TIMBERLAKE: Were you going to tell about Mama [Almira Milhous] winning the ham?

P. TIMBERLAKE: No, no, I don't remember about that. I remember we were talking about Richard doing a good job of selling tickets, that's all.

ARENA: What kind of tickets were these in Arizona, Mr. Timberlake?

P. TIMBERLAKE: I don't know. Were they entrance tickets to the rodeo?

E. TIMBERLAKE: Yes, I guess they'd be. You did have to have tickets to the rodeo. It's a show, you know.

ARENA: Was he selling these to make money? He wasn't going to enter in the rodeo, was he?

E. TIMBERLAKE: No, but somebody in the organization of the state did, and these boys were rarin' to go to make some money, and there was a chance as a ticket agent. And Richard did sell more tickets. And then they had sort of a lottery and were raffling off different articles of merchandise. And my mother--she must have been 80 years old, she lived to be 94 almost--bought a ticket. I think they were ten cents a ticket. You don't find anything for ten cents now, not ten cents on a ham or a dress or anything. And she won a ham. We all thought that was quite a joke on Mama because she would be against lotteries in a showdown. The interesting thing, like I would have, I expect, she bought that ticket and then got a ham for it, I suppose worth up to ten dollars. Even then hams were worth money. But that was about . . .

P. TIMBERLAKE: This was during the depression, too, wasn't it?

E. TIMBERLAKE: Yes, that was probably five years before Harold died.

- ARENA: Harold was sickly like that just about his whole life, wasn't he?
- E. TIMBERLAKE: Long time. Took it when he was about sixteen. He was in high school and they sent him out to a school back in the cold country, New Hampshire, maybe, where it gets awfully cold. And he got this winter cold, and he being a Californian wasn't used to taking care of himself, and this left him with some injury to his lungs which he never recovered from.
- ARENA: Do you mind if I ask you, at that time were the children of Hannah, Richard and Harold and so forth, born of midwives or doctors?
- E. TIMBERLAKE: Regular M.D.'s [Doctors of Medicine].
- ARENA: Not in the hospital where the doctor. . . . Or were they born in hospitals, do you remember?
- E. TIMBERLAKE: They were born in the home, most of them.
- ARENA: So Richard was actually born in that home in Yorba Linda [California].
- E. TIMBERLAKE: Richard was, yes. Donald, I think, was born in the hospital in Fullerton [California], and Ed, too. But Harold and Richard no doubt were born in that home. (Don was born at his grandmother, Almira Milhous' home, Arthur in the Fullerton Hospital, and Edward in Whittier, Murphry Memorial Hospital.)
- P. TIMBERLAKE: We must have been living in Honolulu when Richard was born, weren't we?
- E. TIMBERLAKE: I don't know what you're saying, Tim.
- P. TIMBERLAKE: I think we were living in Hawaii when Harold and Richard were born.
- E. TIMBERLAKE: Not Richard, because I was there when the Harrison boy [Russell Earl Harrison, Jr.] was born, and Richard isn't very much older than Junior Harrison.
- ARENA: Richard just had a birthday, though--fifty-eight years. That would make him born in 1912.
- E. TIMBERLAKE: He was born in '13.
- ARENA: Just about the time the war was beginning in Europe, by the way, too, World War I.

E. TIMBERLAKE: That's right.

P. TIMBERLAKE: Weren't you in Berkeley [California] at that time?

E. TIMBERLAKE: I lived in Berkeley but I got home weekends occasionally, and I was home when [Russell Earl Harrison, Sr.] Russell's boy, Russell, Jr., was born.

ARENA: When you say Russell, Sr., was he a relative of the family?

E. TIMBERLAKE: Yes, his first wife was our sister [Elizabeth Milhous Harrison]. She died of cancer when she had three little children. Then in about a year he married Hilda [Lucile Hickman], whom you didn't know.

P. TIMBERLAKE: He married one of the Milhous sisters.

ARENA: I haven't met all of the Milhouses yet. Ed said as soon as he comes back from Europe-- he's on reserve duty--we're going to get together upstate. Evidently there are quite a few [relatives] upstate. He's going to meet me and we're going to drive around and meet some of the others in the family. I think Ed said there are fourteen children of the Milhouses.

E. TIMBERLAKE: He found that many to visit?

ARENA: Well, no. I think he said there were fourteen children in the family, fourteen of you altogether in the family. I think that's what Ed said. That's a pretty big family.

E. TIMBERLAKE: Yes, it is. Well, the brothers are responsible for half of them and more.

P. TIMBERLAKE: No, in her family there was only six sisters and two brothers.

E. TIMBERLAKE: Six sisters and one brother. And then my father had a son and a daughter before I was born. I was their oldest and I am lingering on, for what purpose I don't know. Maybe to tell you this story.

ARENA: Maybe.

E. TIMBERLAKE: Although I haven't hit anything important yet.

ARENA: Oh, I think you have, and it's not for us to judge. Anything you say is part of the story.

E. TIMBERLAKE: I was going to tell you--we haven't come up to 1923--in 1923 we were living in Hawaii, in Honolulu, and we had two little children, younger than yours are now. They were a year and a half and two and a half years old, or something like that. And I took a notion I wanted to come home and visit my folks here. My friend was coming and we could get passage on a boat. It was during the war, too. And so I came. Started out, and our fifth day out, or fourth day out maybe, in the morning we were awakened from our berth--this was going to be a five-day trip--and [a voice] said, "The boat's on fire! Get up! Get out!" We were in our night clothes, and I grabbed some kind of an inappropriate garment for one of the children and a coat for the other one. I had only one coat for the two children that I could lay my hands on, and I didn't have proper clothing, and there we sat up on deck, waiting all day long until that boat fire was quenched, for it continued burning . . .

P. TIMBERLAKE: No, you were in a lifeboat all day.

E. TIMBERLAKE: They finally put us from the top of the boat over into a lifeboat.

ARENA: Did the lifeboat actually get lifted down to the water, or you were just in it ready to be lifted down?

E. TIMBERLAKE: They were getting them ready to be lifted down when they put us in the lifeboats. And they bumped, bumped, bumped, going down, and I thought then we would never get to the water, that we'd spill over beforehand.

ARENA: That must have been a horrible experience.

E. TIMBERLAKE: It was. And that wasn't the end of it, because we stayed in that lifeboat, and there were about thirty people they crowded into it before they filled up any other ones. And they had other lifeboats they could have filled, but they didn't. We are always seeing how something could have been done better, but we weren't there having it. And the poor captain, he sweat blood, I guess.

ARENA: Was it an American ship, do you recall?

E. TIMBERLAKE: No, it was a German ship we had taken over as part of our debt. I guess that's the way they settled things after the war. It was in '23, I am pretty sure, in October. I have records of it in my books at home and pictures, the best I could get. And all this time Mr. Timberlake was in Honolulu sweating it out, wondering what was happening to his family. You can imagine, with your wife and two little children, how you might have felt under the circumstances.

- ARENA: I'll say. I have traveled abroad myself quite a bit with the family. I've studied in Mexico and in Italy, and I have always had the children with me. Did the Nixons, Richard and his family, get to travel as much as you? I have a feeling they did not. They stayed pretty well in California, except when Harold was in Arizona. But they didn't travel outside as you folks did, I don't think.
- P. TIMBERLAKE: No, they stayed in Whittier and Prescott, Arizona.
- E. TIMBERLAKE: They felt they were doing the thing that would help make Harold recover from his TB. If I say something wrong I hope you will catch it.
- P. TIMBERLAKE: Harold wouldn't take care of himself.
- E. TIMBERLAKE: They got home and called him an arrested case, but he got home and he was tempted to go out with other young fellows and stay out late. We had the same weather we have now, foggy and damp, not good for TB.
- ARENA: A lot of people have had colds right now, too, as a result of this.
- E. TIMBERLAKE: And they can run into something serious if they don't take care of it.
- ARENA: Evidently that sickness, though, had an influence on the family. As you say, it got Richard into Arizona, though, and gave them the need to think about someone else in the family, and also a need to work extra.
- E. TIMBERLAKE: That's right. Oh, we did get out of that burning boat just in time, I suppose. Anyhow, we stayed anchored out so many feet. We never knew if the big ships at home or anybody had heard our S O S, as we were very . . .
- ARENA: You were not aware of it, Mr. Timberlake?
- P. TIMBERLAKE: Oh, yes, I was. It had reached Honolulu.
- ARENA: You said you had about five days left to go. See, I was stationed during the war in Honolulu --Scofield Barracks, as a matter of fact--and I know that area. And it took us, I recall, seven days from the West Coast to Honolulu. And that was the same time in your day.
- E. TIMBERLAKE: Yes, we left about the 23d of October.

- ARENA: We left about Christmastime, as I recall--the middle of the winter.
- E. TIMBERLAKE: Well, when I think back now, it doesn't seem like you're old enough to take on that responsibility. But you enlisted, I suppose.
- ARENA: I was drafted, actually. I was eighteen, fresh out of high school, and the war had been going on for a couple of years. I was eighteen in '43, and the United States entered, of course, in '41. I was stationed right here in California, right here in Riverside--Camp Hahn, which no longer exists. There used to be a Camp Hahn. Then after a year and a half, I went on to Hawaii, and then was very lucky, the war ended while I was there, and I came back. I think Richard Nixon went to the Pacific and was in Hawaii for a while, I imagine.
- E. TIMBERLAKE: Yes.
- P. TIMBERLAKE: Yes, probably visited there. He was in the Navy during the war.
- E. TIMBERLAKE: He was in that department who helped to take care of those who were in safety zones.
- ARENA: I wonder if he had a chance to come home during the war, or was he always outside the area? Did you get to see him in uniform?
- E. TIMBERLAKE: He was in uniform once when we visited Hawaii. Well, we came home to see our son graduate in '45, and he was an officer then, I know, because he was in uniform.
- P. TIMBERLAKE: We saw him in Washington at that time.
- ARENA: In '45.
- E. TIMBERLAKE: Yes, that was in '45.
- ARENA: He had graduated from school by then, I believe. I don't know, had he started the practice of law before he went into the service, or was that after that he practiced law? Had he had a chance?
- E. TIMBERLAKE: I would say before. They called him out of a law office in Whittier to run for Congress, maybe in the State of California. I'm not sure. You can check on that in his California experience. He brought it up in college when he worked with the division that puts on the plays. What do you call it?



- ARENA: The drama or the theater group, I guess.
- E. TIMBERLAKE: I don't recall as a boy until he was through grammar school that he showed much of it. I remember when he was graduating from eighth grade, he wanted Aunt Edith--that's myself--to come over and hear their program because he had this speech to make. Whoever made that speech; who was it?
- ARENA: It was a speech that he had memorized?
- E. TIMBERLAKE: The Declaration of Independence.
- ARENA: Oh, in the eighth grade he recited the Declaration of Independence by Thomas Jefferson.
- E. TIMBERLAKE: Yes, and he did a good job. We went, of course, and I was proud of him. We drove that fifty miles and got there in time for the program, and I don't remember if we stayed the rest of the night with the family or not. We probably did. Hannah probably provided some kind of a supper. She always had food around.
- ARENA: An eighth grade graduation was considered very important in those days.
- E. TIMBERLAKE: Yes, and that was his part of that graduation exercise. And he was a grade or two behind Harold.
- ARENA: Of all the children, the boys, who would you say was the best student?
- E. TIMBERLAKE: Richard, right along. Harold was smart enough but I don't think he ever showed any durability to get up and go and pound right through.
- ARENA: Do you recall Richard ever being disappointed in a subject? If he failed a test, how did he take it? Do you recall if he had any trouble in a particular subject? Would he just go right back to it again, or anything like that?
- E. TIMBERLAKE: No, I didn't have contact with him in that regard. But you might ask Olive if she did. He lived so much nearer Olive and would see her more often.
- ARENA: I will be going back to see Olive again, yes.
- E. TIMBERLAKE: I thought that was one subject that Olive might be able to answer if you can work it into your story in any way, but I don't personally remember any particular incident.

ARENA: Do you recall his reciting poetry, outside the occasion when he recited the Declaration of Independence? Were there any other occasions like that where you might recall his reciting things he had memorized or learned?

E. TIMBERLAKE: I don't remember. We should have. Mama was the poet, and it's a wonder Richard didn't carry on some of that tradition in his repertoire; I don't know.

ARENA: Do you think any of those poems of Grandmother [Almira Milhous] are still around, any poems that she had written?

E. TIMBERLAKE: Yes, those books we have there at home. We have one and Olive has one and Donald has one, I am sure. And Hannah must have had one. There must be at least one you could borrow.

ARENA: That would be nice. Do you recall Richard and Grandmother being together often?

E. TIMBERLAKE: I think they were, probably quite a bit.

ARENA: How did Richard make out with animals? Did he like to ride horses? Did he have a favorite dog, I wonder? He always seems to have a favorite dog now. Do you recall that he liked animals or had pets as a youngster--any particular pets?

E. TIMBERLAKE: They may have had a dog.

ARENA: How about keeping a cow or chickens--things like that around the house? Wasn't that pretty common, to keep spare chickens in the yard? I wonder if that was done.

E. TIMBERLAKE: Yes, I think so. And they had a dog, also. And they had a cow until somebody tried to trace down tuberculosis to that cow, and I really don't think they ever found anything positive.

ARENA: Was there ever any disaster, like a fire in the home or store that maybe put the whole family out, or anything like that which you recall?

E. TIMBERLAKE: Any what?

ARENA: Any serious disaster, like a fire or sudden accident, or anything like that that happened while Richard was small?

E. TIMBERLAKE: I guess our burning ship on the ocean affected him quite a bit.

ARENA: Is that right? He knew about that when you came back and discussed it? You talked about that when you finally arrived back home?

E. TIMBERLAKE: Yes, you know, maybe his father had Richard with him, but Richard would have been pretty young then. I don't know how young, though. Let's see, 1923--Richard was ten years old.

ARENA: Yes. Did Richard seem to be upset when sickness took place in the family? Do you remember, aside from Harold, if he had any close friends besides his brother who might have been sick and he lost? Do you recall any experiences like that, when some of his close friends got sick, or maybe even passed away when he was a young boy?

E. TIMBERLAKE: Well, I don't remember particularly. That might be another thing that Olive might revive in her memory.

ARENA: Yes, yes. You recall pretty well the rodeo business. I was just wondering if there was anything further about living in Arizona with Richard--you visited them then. Do you remember anything else that might have happened when you visited in Arizona? Did Richard seem to miss Whittier while he was living there? Did he wish he were home, do you think, or did he adjust pretty well?

E. TIMBERLAKE: I think he adjusted to what he was doing, thinking and realizing it was for the best. They took him because their sputum tests had shown that he had a slight bit of it, I think. See, she had Richard and Donald and Harold there all in bed for a while. Then Donald and Richard got up and went to work out there at the rodeo, selling tickets.

ARENA: Was Harold able to get around while he was in Arizona, or was he confined to bed, maybe, or a hospital?

E. TIMBERLAKE: Well, he was in bed at home. His mother was keeping sorta a home-hospital. And he was better, but I remember how he got up against orders.