



4-22-1971

Carl F. and Martha Stambaugh (April 22, 1971)

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Oral History Interview

with

MR. CARL F. STAMBAUGH
and
MRS. MARTHA STAMBAUGH

April 22, 1971
Menges Mills, Pennsylvania

By Mr. Edward Nixon

For the Richard Nixon Oral History Program

NIXON: Today is Thursday, April 22, 1971, in Menges Mills, Pennsylvania, and we will be talking with Carl Stambaugh and his wife, Martha. Carl was the postmaster in Menges Mills, during the years that the Nixons lived here, on a farm about one mile to the west. He owned a grocery store and the post office was fourth class in the back of the store. No rural delivery was available, so everyone in the community came in to pick up his mail each day.

Richard Nixon visited Menges Mills on many occasions during those years. He has since returned occasionally to revisit the Stambaughs and others in the community.

Carl, you were Postmaster for how many years in Menges Mills?

C. STAMBAUGH: Since 1931. I completed forty years on April 1st.

NIXON: In '31. And the Nixons moved there in 1946--no, it wasn't. It was '47. They first came here in '46 and that's when they saw the place and Dad decided to buy it. And then we moved in the spring of '47. [Francis Anthony] Frank Nixon came first and then when school was out I drove Mother [Hannah Milhous Nixon] back, and starting in the summer of '47 we lived there through that year. The following year I attended West York High School, '47 and '48, and during the summer of--let's see, no, it was the spring of

'48 rather my brother, Dick Nixon, came up to Menges Mills, and talking about where I might be going to college next year, he asked if I didn't think I should go and look at Duke University before I made my decision. So he took me down there--it was Easter vacation time at high school--so off we went to Duke and I was quite impressed with it and, of course, there was a legacy there, so I opt for Duke instead of Stanford [University] and went south instead of west in the fall of '48.

Now, Dick was in Congress from January of '47 on through 1950. His swearing in ceremony in January of that year, '47, was really the reason for the Nixons to come back here to Pennsylvania. They had retired from the grocery store in California. My father was a little bit out of sorts. He was not well because he didn't have enough to do really, so coming here to the farm was about the best thing that ever happened to him, and he told my mother several times later on, after being here awhile, that this was the nicest part of his life he could ever remember. He had a natural identity with grocers, and I think that's why they had such a close friendship with the Stambaughs.

What do you first remember of Nixons coming to Menges Mills, Carl?

C. STAMBAUGH: Mr. James D. Critchfield, who was a local realtor, brought Mr. Frank Nixon into the store one day and said that he had sold him his farm and introduced us. And then a few weeks afterward, Mrs. Nixon accompanied Frank into the store. And they were real fine people.

NIXON: What did the store look like in those days? Can you put it back together the way it was?

C. STAMBAUGH: We had two rows of benches in the store, an old counter with a lot of the dry vegetables under the counter in bins. We weighed the sugar out from a sugar bin into five pound sacks and sold it loose. Beans and coffee came in one hundred pound bags in those days.

NIXON: Sold that by the pound too?

C. STAMBAUGH: Sold that by the pound too. The post office was in the rear of the store.

NIXON: And as I remember it, only half of the first floor of the building was the store.

C. STAMBAUGH: That's right. The other half was our home.

NIXON: And the post office portion of it was back in the back part of it really, except that it was not all the way back as it is today, or was a few years ago. It's gone through several stages, I guess. Well, I can remember my first impressions of it. I know that when my dad came back there, the farmhouse had no inside plumbing, except that there was a sink--I think a sink and a pump in the basement and so forth, but there was no bathroom facility upstairs. So he put that in, in those few weeks that he was here alone, and then I finished my junior year in high school and drove back East with my mother. When we got here, he had to show us everything the next morning. We went up to the store and looked around some more, and I guess that's where I first met you and thought about what the school situation was and so on. I thought at that time I would probably go back to California to high school. And then you and Paul Diehl and I don't remember all of them now Bob Lockman, wasn't it? Wasn't he one of the boys there?

M. STAMBAUGH: That went to high school?

NIXON: He was one that went with me to high school, I think.

C. STAMBAUGH: Lockman.

NIXON: Robert Lockman, that's the one. And your daughters, also. But when we moved to this area were you living in the store building--you were, just for a little while. And then you moved into York [Pennsylvania], didn't you?

C. STAMBAUGH: We remodeled the store.

NIXON: That's right. Well, what do you remember of my brother coming to Menges Mills? When do you first recall ever meeting him?

C. STAMBAUGH: The weekends were the first time I remember him coming. The girls [Tricia & Julie Nixon] would come up maybe for a week or two.

NIXON: You probably saw them before you saw any of the rest of them.

C. STAMBAUGH: Yes, before I met Dick and Pat [Patricia Ryan Nixon].

NIXON: That's probably true. We used to go down to Washington about ninety miles and bring the girls back and give them a vacation. I remember that.

M. STAMBAUGH: Do you remember the time we were at your house for dinner?

NIXON: When you were up at the house?

M. STAMBAUGH: You were a little fellow and the girls were up at the house. It must have been while you were going to high school. And that's the only time we were there for dinner.

NIXON: I do remember that.

M. STAMBAUGH: And we had leg of lamb.

NIXON: I don't remember what we had, but I do remember your coming up there.

C. STAMBAUGH: That's the first time I ever ate lamb.

M. STAMBAUGH: He doesn't care for it, that's why I don't fix it very often.

NIXON: It's a risky thing to prepare for guests because sometimes they're not in favor of it. Then I remember the time when I graduated from high school and Don [Francis Donald Nixon] and his family were back here and we went to your place in York for dinner.

M. STAMBAUGH: That's right. That was in strawberry season. We had great big strawberries, remember?

NIXON: Early June or middle June or so.

M. STAMBAUGH: I imagine it was the beginning of June.

NIXON: Then the following year, the graduating class of '49, I think Dick came up and spoke, didn't he?

M. STAMBAUGH: Right.

NIXON: Wasn't he the graduation speaker at West York [High School]? I had already gone.

M. STAMBAUGH: You graduated in 1948?

NIXON: My year was '48.

M. STAMBAUGH: In '49 we had one of our girls graduating.

C. STAMBAUGH: Didn't Dick speak at graduation ceremonies at Spring Grove [High School] one time too? I'm not sure, but I think so.

NIXON: He may have, I don't know. A lot of things happened while I was at Duke. I was away at college and life went on, of course. And I didn't know much about it except what I heard through your post office, and a couple of telephone calls once in a while.

C. STAMBAUGH: Well, your mother wrote you a lot of letters.

NIXON: She wrote a lot of letters and I was a very bad correspondent. After we moved back to California she told me how she--when the weather was really bad--she would get on the old railroad track and walk up to the store and just get the mail, because she couldn't get out of the driveway with the snow, and walk the mile and check the mail. And I thought, why didn't I write more often. That's hindsight.

C. STAMBAUGH: Yes, I made many and many a trip up there for phone calls from Richard for your parents and I enjoyed every one of them. Sometimes we do things over the years for people that is a bore and a chore, but it was always a pleasant thing to take a message up to your mother.

NIXON: In fact, there was no telephone at the farm all the time they lived there, and you were the communicator for the whole valley. In fact, you brought the mail a few times when it was bad.

C. STAMBAUGH: Yes, that's right.

NIXON: You didn't have to though. There wasn't any delivery.

C. STAMBAUGH: And I can well remember the morning that Richard called to say they had a little girl. And she didn't have a name then, you know.

NIXON: Yes. That must have been Julie. Yes, 1948.

C. STAMBAUGH: And Rosemary Woods and the girls used to come up and they had a picnic up there in the picnic grounds along the creek. Do you remember that?

NIXON: Yes.

C. STAMBAUGH: At the place you had there.

M. STAMBAUGH: And the two girls were here at that time, weren't they?

NIXON: That's right, they were across from the place.

C. STAMBAUGH: And I hope some day Tricia and Julie will come through here because I would just like to ask them some questions, if they can remember how they came over to the store.

NIXON: You know if you had that old bench reconstructed in that place and a few other memory jogs like that, some of it would come back. It might anyway. I don't know. Julie, I think, has come back here with David [Dwight David Eisenhower II] one time on a Sunday, but not knowing where to look for anybody or find anything, they just looked around and went on. But maybe we ought to invite them to come back to Menges Mills and look at what's happened to the place, huh--early childhood.

C. STAMBAUGH: Because I know when I was in Washington, everything was so excitable that you really don't think. . . .

M. STAMBAUGH: Did you look around over there when you were out?

NIXON: Not in the new building. Is there anything in it?

C. STAMBAUGH: Well, we do have a flea market--Saturday night auction--but they are going to move that auction to another building and use this for a restaurant.

M. STAMBAUGH: And over in the valley you have a lot of history.

C. STAMBAUGH: Yes.

NIXON: I'll have to go take a look at that when I get back.

C. STAMBAUGH: Yes, I'll take you through.

NIXON: Good. Well, We're adding another aspect to this thing now, to the store because not only did the Stambaughs have this store, the post office, the telephone service and everything else, now we have to add that when you come to Menges Mills you have to taste the peach pie or the fresh trout--find out how to eat it--really good. Always good every time and really the best part of it is to see you folks whom I haven't seen for a while.

You came down to Washington on another inauguration. '57 was it? Was that the one you came down on? Not '53.

C. STAMBAUGH: Your mother one day asked me when she came up from Washington. See, she used to come down here and stay with the children a lot.

NIXON: Yes.

C. STAMBAUGH: When they were on the road or for instance when they went to Europe, you remember. When he was Vice President, South America and so on, and she used to come here and take care of the children lots of times.. So then one day she was up here. I don't remember the time any more but in just of an out-of-the-way remark she said, "Would you and Martha come to the Inauguration--to the next Inauguration?" And I said that we would be happy to. And, of course, we have a hand-engraved invitation some place here from Dick.

NIXON: I think on the first ones like that you don't know how to do it.

M. STAMBAUGH: I have it back here.

NIXON: From '57? Do you remember where you stayed when you went down there?

M. STAMBAUGH: Where did we stay?

C. STAMBAUGH: Well, the first time we went, they said you couldn't get reservations in Washington. We made reservations in Alexandria [Virginia]--in that old hotel down there. Somebody from Glen Mills [Pennsylvania] the postmaster--not the postmaster--the storekeeper from Glen Mills, one of his relatives run this hotel. We got down there and it was such a dirty place, actually filthy. And we paid our reservation for a night and we came back into Washington and got a place in a little hotel right near the railroad station. And Jeff [Jeffery Stambaugh] was along then.

NIXON: And so you found a place in spite of their being no reservations in Washington.

C. STAMBAUGH: That's right and we had no trouble.

M. STAMBAUGH: And it was nice too, very nice.

C. STAMBAUGH: It wasn't a very large hotel.

NIXON: Just over there by the Capitol, just north of the Capitol then.

C. STAMBAUGH: Well as I remember, it was only a street or two away from the railroad station.

NIXON: And you were telling me about the situation where Pat was wanting to meet your wife. What was the situation? Where was it?

C. STAMBAUGH: We were at the Inaugural Concert. They said at that time that you couldn't get tickets and the lineup was a couple blocks long to get into the concert. And we were rather bashful, I guess you would call it. So I said to Martha--she said, "Well, we'll never get in there." And I walked by the line and I walked up to the window, and I said, "Do you have three reservations for Mr. and Mrs. Stambaugh?" She said, "Yes, I do." So we got them and we got in and we sat sorta--if I remember right, that's the same box he was in when he was Vice President, where he was in this year when he was President--the same side anyway.

NIXON: I think it was, yes.

C. STAMBAUGH: I think it was the same box. And I told Martha, "I'm going over to say hello to the Nixons." And Jeff said, "You'll never get in there." So I goes around and went underneath the--whatever you call it--and went up to the door, and of course there were Secret Service men. And I said, "I wonder if I could say hello to the Nixons." And he said, "Do you know the Nixons?" And he wanted to know where I lived, and I told him that I was a postmaster and at one time his parents lived near me, and of course he took me right in. And then he talked to somebody in the box, I don't know who, and then he asked me to sit down and this is where you said, "This is my intended wife."

NIXON: Oh, yes.

C. STAMBAUGH: Something like that--Miss Gay Woods, right?

NIXON: Yes.

C. STAMBAUGH: And of course, I knew Pat and Dick, and your mother was in the box, and Donald I believe was there.

NIXON: Yes, he was there.

C. STAMBAUGH: I believe he was in that same box. So then Pat said that she wanted to meet Martha. We didn't have any ticket for Jeff for the Inauguration--for the ball. He stayed in the hotel room that night. And Donald said, "Well, gee, if we only knew it, we would have brought you a television so you could see it." But anyway, then we went to the Inaugural Ball, and as I remember it, all these boxes had their big champagne bottles and ice cup, but in the Presidential box there was none. Right?

NIXON: Yes, that's the way it would have been.

C. STAMBAUGH: And then Pat said, "Well, when the ball is going and the President and I can leave, then we will be occupying that box and you come up and bring your wife along, we want to meet her." So, of course, we was in the crowd and people was reaching their hands out and you just couldn't buck the crowd. I don't know, maybe two hundred people were draped so tight you couldn't get through. Pat looked out and waved and the next thing a Secret Service man came out and got me by the hand and I held on to Martha's and he took us right up to the box.

M. STAMBAUGH: We got separated though. Carl got in and I didn't get in.

C. STAMBAUGH: The fellow said she couldn't get in and I said that was my wife. And then, of course, he said something to your mother. And while this was going on, Pat and Richard went to another ball. And so your mother was sitting in there, and she asked us to sit down and Sandy Olin and I forget the other--who was the guy--[Edmund G.] Pat Brown--no, he wouldn't have been there. Another Republican from Washington or from California was in the box and they made a couple of political speeches from the box after that. And that's when I told your mother, "Oh, gee, we don't belong up here." And she said, "Well, there's nobody in this world I would rather have sit beside me right now."

NIXON: Well that was nice. That was the Inaugural Ball now.

C. STAMBAUGH: Yes, that was at the ball.

NIXON: At night. Well, I guess all those functions were at night--the concert too, but it was the preceding night. Well, those parties in Washington, D.C., go on and on. Big state dinners are going on now. Those are some fancy things. You will have to come back and see the White House when it's not so full of people as it was.

M. STAMBAUGH: Well, that would be nice.

NIXON: See it set up for the various kinds of things. Any time you want to do it, I can tell you how to do it so--in fact, I'll leave you a little card here to show you what to do.

M. STAMBAUGH: I would like to go to church.

NIXON: Say, that would be good. All right, we'll see if we can arrange that. I'm thinking of how many other times--really after the folks moved away

from here Mother came back occasionally with the girls, and then later on Dick came through one time or two, didn't he?

C. STAMBAUGH: And he always asked me how the store was. When Jeff was quite small, when he was Vice President we went out to his office, I forget the name of the building, and Rosemary Woods was his secretary then. She said that Dick was very busy but that he would see us over the noon hour. We waited and he took us in his office and little Jeff sat on his chair, he signed a lot of autographs for him and gave him a pencil. I don't know what all, but quite a few little gadgets.

And the next day we were going to see the White House on an early tour before they let the public in. At that time they would take roughly fifty people on a tour half hour before the grounds opened. So we stayed at the hotel, and we thought that we couldn't park down there so we walked up to the gate. And the fellow looked at the list and said, "Where is your car?" And I told him we had walked over, so we could have drove right in the gate but we didn't know it, and here our name was at the top of the list that time. And at that time the [Dwight D.] Eisenhower grandchildren were riding their bikes, just before we got in, through the hallway.

NIXON: Well, a house that big is well-suited to grandchildren like that, isn't it?

M. STAMBAUGH: I guess it would be.

NIXON: They can play around in there without really bothering too many people. I know my children sure enjoyed it. They just went from one end to the other of that place and, of course, they told them they could without touching anything. He didn't tell them that but I did.

C. STAMBAUGH: I don't know whether you remember--that was after you moved to California--I sent two bushels of apples to you in California and the express took them and when they got out there somewhere, next to California, they stopped and wouldn't let them go into California. So I got a letter back that they would have to destroy them or I should pay the express to get them back. Well, the express to ship them one way was more than the apples cost, so I told them to destroy them. Of course, I don't think they destroyed them.

NIXON: No, they had a good apple fest that night.

C. STAMBAUGH: I still have that telegram somewhere.

NIXON: You wonder sometimes what they do with all that produce. They don't let anything in there hardly. They haven't for years. It isn't as strict as it

used to be. But they try to protect the California agriculture. I don't know, I guess it has stopped a few bugs.

C. STAMBAUGH: We have loads of people who really take a delight in picking fruit. You tell them who you want it for and they take delight in picking the best, but I just couldn't get it down to Richard. We have one fellow in particular, he would pick out of twenty bushels to get one bushel of apples when they knew they were going to the President or the Vice President. We get the best strawberries up here. You get good strawberries in California, but I think ours are better. The biggest strawberries I ever seen were the ones down there that evening after the Inauguration. Remember that big strawberry they had with a toothpick in it.

NIXON: The kind of thing you have to eat with a fork.

C. STAMBAUGH: You couldn't eat it with one bite.

NIXON: Well, the produce is good here. It's good apple country.

C. STAMBAUGH: It's good peach country.

NIXON: The thing about that is, my dad always used to say that you have to go where the ground freezes in the winter to get good-flavored fruit.

C. STAMBAUGH: That's right.

NIXON: Of course, that's not true of oranges now.

C. STAMBAUGH: You know, your uncle . . .

NIXON: Ernest Nixon.

C. STAMBAUGH: Did I ever tell you when we were at the Governor's Ball, or was it the Governor's Reception, we were sitting in the Pennsylvania box, and I asked him, "Do you remember us and the store at Menges Mills?" And he said, "I sure do." And he got up and he said, "And I'm gonna kiss your pretty wife." And he came out of the box and he gave her a kiss. And then he introduced us to [Arthur G.] Art Linkletter and his wife, and he autographed some things for us.

NIXON: He was a character; almost as much a character as my dad.

C. STAMBAUGH: He got into the store pretty often.

NIXON: He was my dad's chief consultant, of course you know. Always telling him how to farm because he had been farming for years and years upstate.

C. STAMBAUGH: Eddie, do you remember when your dad came here the first year, how he grew potatoes?

NIXON: Oh, yes.

C. STAMBAUGH: Tell me how.

NIXON: Why, he threw out the seed potatoes and just covered it up with straw.

C. STAMBAUGH: Right.

NIXON: He was always proud that he could just go out there with a pitchfork and throw the straw and pick up his harvest.

STAMBAUGH: And I told that to some folks and they didn't believe me you could grow potatoes like that.

NIXON: Yes, he did it.

C. STAMBAUGH: They thought I was pulling their leg.

NIXON: He had some corn I remember, too, that was a lot higher than I could reach--about elephant's eye I guess, something like that.

M. STAMBAUGH: That's pretty high.

NIXON: This country will grow it. It was always impressive to me when I first got here to see the neatness of the farms, how they are laid out edge to edge, and hardly any space between and everything was cultivated right up to the edge of the road and no waste of soil anywhere--efficiency.

M. STAMBAUGH: That's Pennsylvania.

NIXON: Yes, it really is.

C. STAMBAUGH: Well, if I could get this elephant by any chance loosened up, I would like to give that to Richard sometime--that I knew nobody else would get ahold of it before he got it.

NIXON: You would just about have to deliver it in person in order to do that, you know. But it could be done--sure.

C. STAMBAUGH: I would be glad . . .

NIXON: The elephant collection has grown now to where
. . .

C. STAMBAUGH: I'll bet.

BEGIN SIDE II TAPE I

NIXON: Now, you mentioned something and I can't remember what it was. You were saying Dick did come back to York.

C. STAMBAUGH: He landed at Thomasville airport and Mr. Dooley, our Congressman, met him there and my wife and I went over and we spoke to Dick and shook hands with him before he went to York to give a speech.

NIXON: Thomasville--oh, that's the new airstrip over here. George Dooley?

C. STAMBAUGH: George Dooley and Barry Piper and my wife and I were, I think, the only four who were out at the plane at the beginning and, of course, more folks came, and we drove Dick to York. He flew around the country at that time in a little two-motored job.

NIXON: Yes, it must have been the '66 campaign when the congressional effort against the '64 flood tide That was certainly a switch around, wasn't it--'64 to '66. Whatever it was that took place, it didn't set too well somewhere. Who knows where we are today though. The problems upon us are so great--they always have been for the President. I guess it was like [Harry S.] Truman said, "The buck stops here." And [Theodore] Teddy Roosevelt who said, "You never have an easy decision to make, because all the easy ones will be settled down the line someplace." You never hear about some of the problems.

Well, when you get closer to this Postmaster Convention now, I want you to communicate with Don [Nixon] out there and we'll figure out a way to get Martha there one way or the other.

C. STAMBAUGH: Okay.

NIXON: Maybe you ought to go down to Washington and fly to Los Angeles [California] in one of those 747's. They're so big, it's like not even knowing you're in the air. It's unbelievable.

C. STAMBAUGH: Well, Martha says she doesn't want to fly anymore, and I can appreciate that.

NIXON: Oh, yes, I know. I never was for little flights though. I just don't believe in them.

C. STAMBAUGH: And the sad part about this Allegheny outfit is, I am sure Jeff never knew how inadequate that airport was prepared for blind landing, or he wouldn't have flew that line. He could have flew into Washington on Mohawk and then up.

NIXON: Pennsylvania is a rough country, it really is. You think back through history of the blockade it was to westward movement. For years and years they couldn't figure out a way to get out there easily. You had to go through just one or two trails--Cumberland Gap
. . .

C. STAMBAUGH: Indian trails.

NIXON: Yes. It's hard to imagine that it changed this much in just a few generations--super highways now and people zipping over the top of it in planes and so forth--unbelievable.

C. STAMBAUGH: You know Dick is making a lot of friends with this welfare program--people that know you are going to have to make some of these people work. We had a postmasters' meeting at Littlestown [Pennsylvania] last night. There were ten men sitting there at the table and we were all ten in agreement as to just what should be done. And we said, "Well, we're sitting here talking about, why don't we get on the job and write letters to our congressmen and tell them how we stand." And we all agreed there are a lot of elderly folks who maybe didn't get enough, but then there was a lot of families whose grandfather, son and grandchildren are all living on welfare and always will as long as they live so well.

NIXON: As long as they can live together and pool their resources, they're doing pretty well. Well, it's a shame--it's just not right.

C. STAMBAUGH: These folks of ours who lost a son the same year we did, he is a principal in the school and he said they have a family, the man works at a menial job but he earns five thousand dollars a year; he gets three thousand dollars public assistance or welfare, and they have three automobiles and they applied for free school lunches for the children. They didn't give them free school lunches, but they didn't give up yet trying--three cars.

NIXON: Automobiles. This is one of the thieves in my view. It takes an awful lot to keep one. If you don't add it all up you think, well, just a

couple or three thousand dollars and you can have a new car or four or five hundred dollars and you can buy a used one, but boy when you start adding on what it takes from month to month, day to day--maintenance on top of the fuel and oil and taxes and buy your license plates. I don't know how it is in Pennsylvania--how much does it take to get license plates here every year?

C. STAMBAUGH: \$14.

NIXON: \$14, is that just any vehicle?

C. STAMBAUGH: No, that is a pleasure vehicle.

NIXON: Trucks or commercial vehicles . . .

C. STAMBAUGH: Yes, they are much more.

NIXON: Would a pickup truck be considered a commercial vehicle even if you declared it for pleasure?

C. STAMBAUGH: Uh huh.

NIXON: Have to get a truck license.

C. STAMBAUGH: I don't know what they are now. I believe they are \$20 or \$21. They were \$16.50 and pleasure cars were \$10.

NIXON: Well, I have a Mercury stationwagon and it costs me \$89 for the registration on it, and a '65 Rambler costs \$29. They go down as the car gets older. But a new one, a brand new heavy weight such as a Chrysler or a Cadillac or something like that would be probably over \$100 every year. And California is even worse than that. It's well over \$100. And then commercial vehicles, they just can hardly stay in business.

M. STAMBAUGH: How are the roads out there?

NIXON: They're good.

M. STAMBAUGH: Well, ours aren't too good in Pennsylvania right now, I'll tell you. They're in bad shape.

NIXON: Do you happen to know what the gasoline tax is--state tax on gasoline?

STAMBAUGH: 11 cents

NIXON: 11 cents altogether.

C. STAMBAUGH: Federal, I think, is 5 cents or 6 cents and state is 11 cents.

NIXON: Washington state has the highest gas tax-- Washington and Alaska and one other state, at 9 cents a gallon--federal on top of that.

C. STAMBAUGH: Been to Alaska since you and your family went up?

NIXON: I have but they haven't been back. I was back up there that one day when I went up to look into the. . . .

C. STAMBAUGH: Whatever happened to [Walter J.] Hickel that he couldn't agree. . . . Is he really in Richard's corner now like you think he is? You think he is when you read the paper.

NIXON: I don't know. Who knows about these guys. They all have to have their own identity or they can't stay where they are. Well, Hickel was--he got himself in a box--he was hemmed in from the extremes of business and his loyalty was really to progress, I think, to build things, to make man part of the environment which he really is, to answer up to his pledge to Congress when he went in. They had apprehensions that he was this way but he said, "No, I really have belief in the conversationists programs and I will uphold them." So, what was he going to do? He couldn't say, "Let's go ahead and build this pipeline, issue these permits to drill on the lease lands and so on when so much of an uproar was being created from the public, on top of the pledge he had made before Congress. So he did have a hard problem. And then he got people around him more and more who, as I say, were interested in some of their own identity. I am afraid that was part of it.

C. STAMBAUGH: Isn't that what's wrong with a lot of fellows today? They're trying to put the President in a box to tell the enemy when he is going to withdraw. I don't see how they can call themselves good Americans for preaching a doctrine like that, and to try to make him come out by a certain date.

NIXON: This is the first time we have ever been up against this kind of public opinion. It just has to be coming from somewhere else. It can't be part of our own doing. I just cannot believe.

M. STAMBAUGH: I even hate to read the newspapers.

NIXON: There may be some of our own people who have been promoting it for years and claim that it's all-American, but by golly the original ideas didn't come from here.

C. STAMBAUGH: Sure didn't.

NIXON: Not from the system that made the country what it is.

C. STAMBAUGH: I question whether some of them are real true patriotic Americans, like [J. William] Fullbright and [Edmund S.] Muskie--isn't he spouty? I think he's going to spout himself out of everything.

NIXON: Well, I don't know.

C. STAMBAUGH: And that [Hubert H.] Humphrey, he has all the answers now. When he was Vice President you didn't even hear his name. You know that. Martha gets so riled at them in television. She says that she could fight for Dick.

NIXON: They're sitting in a privilege position, aren't they? They can sit there and yak, yak, yak now. But put them in the job and then see what they say.

C. STAMBAUGH: Where would we have been with Humphrey? I can't imagine.

NIXON: I can imagine what kind of staff he might have had. Pretty worrisome to me it would have been.

M. STAMBAUGH: Oh, how about Edward Kennedy?

NIXON: I don't think he can, really.

C. STAMBAUGH: What would have happened to Richard if he had gotten himself into a mess like that?

NIXON: What's that?

C. STAMBAUGH: With that girl and then smoothed it over--they think the people forgot, I think.

NIXON: Funny thing how we can overlook obvious immorality in a certain situation. We just turn our back on it. We are prone to condone. That's what it seems to be. The stories I heard up in Rhode Island and Massachusetts would just stand your hair on end if that's what really happened. But that story will never be told because it's all . . .

M. STAMBAUGH: And how it ever got in the newspapers.

C. STAMBAUGH: If one of Richard's brothers had been involved in something like that, they would have had it on the front pages.

NIXON: Well, Kennedy has his problems whether he wins it or loses it. Sure wouldn't be married to that false face he has. Beautiful as she is in proportions, she certainly is stuck on herself.

M. STAMBAUGH: And when she appears at any functions at the White House, she surely does some dressing, doesn't she?

NIXON: Yes, Gaucho pants at a formal affair.

C. STAMBAUGH: I wonder if she does that to antagonize people or if she really thinks she's really doing something.

NIXON: When an attractive person tries to make themselves more attractive, it really detracts from their attractiveness.

C. STAMBAUGH: Absolutely. And I think Richard and Pat have brought the same thing back to the White House, more dignity.

NIXON: Respect for simple things.

C. STAMBAUGH: Right.

NIXON: Well, that's a beauty that is rare here in this country, you know. We look at these people, most of them who have lived in this area, they don't care much for paintin' up and gettin' all fancy. They can have a party and have a lot of fun, but they don't have the inclinations that you see in New York [New York] or Boston [Massachusetts].

M. STAMBAUGH: Well, we're just plain ordinary folks, I guess.

NIXON: No, I think you've got an opportunity to sit back and see things in perspective. You don't put yourself in the forefront. You don't need to. Happier without it.

C. STAMBAUGH: But the tourists we had over here last summer when they saw that sign, "The President visited this post office," you'd be surprised how many

people wondered, gee, did the President really visit here? Well, I would say that more than half the Democrats you talk to are for Richard Nixon, through the country I mean--Ohio, Illinois. And when I tell them how humble the family is and I tell them the story about us being invited down there and how those relatives--there wasn't one family I said that showed off like the Kennedys or other people who try to show off at affairs like that. They were just all ordinary people like we. And Martha and I--we left here that evening and Martha said to me, "I just can't believe that Richard Nixon is President of the United States," because he made you forget when he talked to you that he was President.

NIXON: I can still remember your long-lasting belief and I can never forget it, sitting right here when I brought my mother up here that time, do you remember that? And you sat here and told her, "Now I still believe, Mrs. Nixon, that your son is someday going to be the President." I sat over there on that stool, I think right there, and I said, "I'm glad to hear you say that, Carl, but I don't believe it."

C. STAMBAUGH: And your mother said--remember how she put her fingers to her lips and said, "Oh, Mr. Stambaugh, that is almost too much to wish for." But, secretly and inside I know that she thought the same, but she was too humble . . .

NIXON: It's almost as though she knew it.

C. STAMBAUGH: Yes.

NIXON: Almost as though she knew it but couldn't tell anyone because she knew she would never witness it, almost. I don't know. I always had a strange feeling when she was thinking about that, that she really did know.

C. STAMBAUGH: And you know that little old aunt of yours was sitting on the bus when we went into the Capitol grounds that morning of the Inauguration. I just leaned front and I said, "It's just too bad Mother [Hannah] Nixon couldn't see this."

NIXON: Edith Timberlake?

C. STAMBAUGH: Yes. And you know what she said, "She knew."

NIXON: Yes, I think Edith knew that she did, too, because Edith was the oldest of the girls--she was the oldest one.

C. STAMBAUGH: She just said, "She knew."

NIXON: Well, the way life comes together is an amazing thing--the way the Lord operates.

C. STAMBAUGH: But you know that was Dick's . . .

M. STAMBAUGH: A lot of things we don't understand.

NIXON: Yes, but they have a purpose--they have a purpose.

M. STAMBAUGH: That's right.

C. STAMBAUGH: You remember Dick ever saying--sometime I heard him say it, I don't know where it was or when--but I think it was after he was defeated and he said, "There is a time and a place--that a man's time would come." I don't know exactly the words but he meant there was a time that a man was called for the job he had to do. This was the way he wanted to. . . .

NIXON: And somehow the 1960 campaign was--in looking back on it--was telling of that philosophy. The time is not now but to show that you are of the stature we are after. Well, there he is. By golly, it is just unbelievable to me.

C. STAMBAUGH: I know up at our hunting camp I used to say to Martha, "Richard Nixon will still be President someday and he will run." And some of those big fellows, like Strofman's Bakery which is a big outfit, said, "He doesn't have a chance." And I made those boys eat their words.

NIXON: Do you remember any of them that said that?

C. STAMBAUGH: Yes.

NIXON: I'll bet you have a little fun with them.

C. STAMBAUGH: I did.

M. STAMBAUGH: They print all kinds of things in the paper. That's what worries me. You read all these newspaper articles. Oh, my.

NIXON: Well, you know Truman didn't have it easy. And everybody predicted, well, Truman will lose. [Thomas E.] Dewey's got it made. Remember that in '48? Truman said, "I'm going to bed tonight and I'll get up in the morning and read the newspaper and see who won." And he

was confident right up to the last minute. And I heard some people tell me that they thought he would make it because the people who were for him were the silent majority--that kind of people. They didn't talk about, they just know what's right and go ahead and do it. But win or lose this next time, I don't think it really matters. The point is that he made it, as far as he is concerned, I wouldn't worry about it. So far as the country is concerned, he's been President now and whether he has another four years of ordeal, I don't worry about it. In fact, I would be thankful if he didn't have to go through it anymore.

C. STAMBAUGH: Well, Eddie, ever since he's been running I've been praying morning and night for wisdom and guidance and protection.

NIXON: Well, he needs it--gosh, he needs it now if ever. There's a lot of people do.

C. STAMBAUGH: I still think in the next campaign, if he wants it, and I'm sure he's going to run, I think this silent majority has to be exploited, because there are lots of people like he has said that are silent, that don't talk enough. But I don't know how you are going to get them to talk. But there are three words that I still think would make a wonderful slogan--think, pray and vote, and I think the war is going to be over. Think what Richard Nixon did for this country and pray about it. I think we got to get God into this thing, I think. . . .

NIXON: Still a lot of strength there for this country if we just tap it. What I mean to say is that the belief here is still stronger than some of the fuzzy thinkers on campus--these gutless wonders who hide behind the Ivy Leagues. There's so many good people in universities--really smart people--who can turn on a young man and get him going on the right track, and yet on the other hand there are a handful of very loud but persuasive and bright people who will teach them one course, maybe, and will shuffle out more and more young folks onto a side track which ultimately comes to an end, and they have to come back into the main stream or are forever lost. But they're there. And Socialists, so-called, are nothing but Communists in disguise. And we just can't go on much longer taking from those who have and giving to those who haven't--not on a grand scale. You do it when people who have can be made willing to give.

C. STAMBAUGH: That's right.

NIXON: There is no such thing as solicited charity. Charity has to come from the heart.

C. STAMBAUGH: You bet. And that's the only way it means anything.

NIXON: That's the only way it can be lasting.

M. STAMBAUGH: It has come to the point where we wonder if our children should go to college.

NIXON: Yes, you worry about them. You just hope and pray that they've got enough preparation to shield themselves from

C. STAMBAUGH: But these longhairs and so on. I don't know what they're trying to prove. They're not all ignorant. A lot of them are bright. But where do you find one of them in an official capacity in a big corporation? You don't see them sitting at a desk working, do you? I don't know anywhere

M. STAMBAUGH: But Carl, you don't get around very much.

NIXON: But even those of us who do get around--I sit in board meetings and I am not seeing any members of the board of directors anywhere who are wildly eccentric in their dress, their appearance, their manner, their words or anything else.

C. STAMBAUGH: What are they trying to prove?

NIXON: The use of four-letter words and that sort of thing is strictly a diversion--an early symbol for a young man. And an older one who does it is a fool. Is that the train?

STAMBAUGH: Uh huh.

NIXON: It's still tootin' along through Hooterville. Oh, that was a picturesque time out there. As I said earlier in this tape that my dad used to enjoy the place so much. But I have to say that I was also enamored with that. I know my friends used to say, "Well, the reason you liked it so well was that you didn't have to make a living there." And I said, "If it had been 100,000 acres larger, well we'd have had the headache of managing some people to run it, but on the other hand I would still have liked living out there. I'd just have had more work to do."

M. STAMBAUGH: We really like it out here.

NIXON: It suits my temperament. Some people it doesn't and I can understand that, but I do. I like to live out like that. The place I'm in now is

something like yours. It's got some ground around it and I get out and scratch around in the dirt and plant some plants. But I have to see plants growing and a few animals.

M. STAMBAUGH: We don't have any animals anymore. We had to get rid of our dog and we didn't get another dog.

NIXON: I'll send you a little German Shepherd puppy.

M. STAMBAUGH: No, thank you.

NIXON: One thing you can say about not having a pet, you know, you can go away and leave the plants.

C. STAMBAUGH: But you can't leave your pets.

NIXON: No, the neighbors are willing to water your lawn once a week, but they won't feed your dog every day willingly for as long as you might want to be away.

M. STAMBAUGH: That's why we didn't get another dog. You always have to take them somewhere and get someone to keep them when you want to go away.

C. STAMBAUGH: Eddie would like to take a picture.

M. STAMBAUGH: Oh, don't make me have my picture taken today.

C. STAMBAUGH: Sure.

NIXON: We will just get the faces, okay? The main thing is we just want to get a record of who is recording. We just put a slide on with that tape and see who it is. It's not that we say anything here that is so significant. It's just that somebody a hundred years from now might wonder about Menges Mills--what special influence did that have on a man's life? It wasn't that he spent a great deal of time here, but his children were here and this relieved him of a lot of hours when he could contemplate and think, which is what he needed to do and always has needed. The girls could be brought away for a while. He was free to work and Pat could help him.

C. STAMBAUGH: He could take little hikes.

NIXON: He came up here, you know, at the time of the Whittaker Chambers and Alger Hiss controversy.

M. STAMBAUGH: That's what I remember of him being up here.

NIXON: Yes, he came out there and that's where he made his decision that he would have to go ahead and prosecute Alger Hiss because he knew he was guilty. So it's the kind of a setting that was needed for making those kind of decisions. The White House has it in a way, except there is always somebody around.

M. STAMBAUGH: I spoke to a fellow who was down last week on a bus tour and he said, "I can really appreciate now after seeing those crowds of people,"--they didn't get into the White House--"why Richard Nixon wants to get away from Washington. Before," he said, "I didn't think too much about it"--why he wanted to go to California--"but now I can appreciate why."

NIXON: You have to go in and see it. Then you can understand. I can remember my dad used to sit up here and--remember Truman would go down on the Chesapeake Bay in a boat--he'd say, "What's he going out there and spending all the taxpayers' money for?" And he'd grumble about it. He'd go down to his Key West [Florida] White House is where Truman went, and I can still hear him talking about it. "Why don't he stay in the White House. Bought a big house for him and he's gotta go stay in a little one."

C. STAMBAUGH: And I'll say this for your dad, if ever there was a Republican who was 100 percent Republican to the core, your daddy was.

NIXON: And it just wasn't Republican too, you know. It was also 100 percent whatever church he was going to, and he was 100 percent honest grocer, if that is what he was going to be. Whatever it was, he had to be wholehearted about it. That was the one attribute I think that stood out.

M. STAMBAUGH: It's too bad we don't have more people like that today.

C. STAMBAUGH: It's the backbone of the family and the country. Ed, tell me something, is that store and house going now where you lived before you came to this state?

NIXON: Yes, it's all gone. We have pictures of it.

C. STAMBAUGH: You know what I remember so distinctly--there was that big persimmon tree you had on the side of your house.

NIXON: Yes, that's still there; the old house and the tree.