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Charles L. Milhous (August 25, 1971)

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Whittier College

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Oral History Interview

with

MR. CHARLES L. MILHOUS

August 25, 1971
Whittier, California

By Dr. C. Richard Arena

For the Richard Nixon Oral History Project

ARENA: This is #1 interview with Charles Leonard Milhous. Mr. Milhous is a resident of Whittier, California. The tape is being made in Whittier, California. The date is Wednesday, August 25, 1971. Dr. Arena is the interviewer. Shall we begin, Mr. Milhous, by asking you about the Chuck. Is that what most of your friends know you by and call you?

MILHOUS: That's what I've been called most of my life. I had a nickname when I was younger. They called me Bud.

ARENA: And would you mind explaining what your relationship to the President is?

MILHOUS: Well, my relationship is a third cousin. My father and Mrs. Hannah Nixon's mother [Almira Burdg Milhous] were first cousins. She was a Milhous before she married [Francis Anthony] Frank Nixon.

ARENA: And your father's name?

MILHOUS: My father's name was Frank [McClure] Milhous. He was from Indiana, the same as my mother [Frances Hibner McClure]. They came to Whittier [California] here right before the first World War. My dad was in the Army in the first World War.

ARENA: Does that mean, therefore, that your dad was one of the children of Grandfather Franklin Milhous who built the home at the Quad section?

MILHOUS: No, his father's name was Charles [Wright] Milhous, and he was a druggist in Seymour, Indiana, and he came to California here and they had citrus out in East Whittier.

ARENA: What was his relationship, Charles, to Franklin [Milhous] if you know by any chance. As far as we know, Franklin Milhous was the first of the Milhouses to come out here, I think. And you correct me if I'm wrong.

MILHOUS: I believe you are correct.

ARENA: Right, and he is the one who put the furnishings and items on a freight car and when he came out here built the home, and it is still standing. I don't know if you have seen it recently or not.

MILHOUS: Is that the home that was on Painter [Avenue]?

ARENA: On Painter and Whittier Boulevard. Right. I was wondering about his relationship to your father's father. Your father's father was the Seymour [Indiana] Milhous. Are you clear on that?

MILHOUS: I'm not too clear on that.

ARENA: You don't know if they were brothers. Do you think they might have been?

MILHOUS: They might have been brothers or maybe a first cousin.

ARENA: But it was this Charles [Wright Milhous] who did come out here and not your father. He had come first.

MILHOUS: He came first.

ARENA: And do you have any idea when he came out?

MILHOUS: The early 1900's.

ARENA: Very possibly about the same time as Franklin [Milhous] himself, and we do know from the books that Franklin Milhous came in 1897, just before the turn of the century. Do you recall your grandfather, Charles, by the way? Do you recall him as a youngster?

MILHOUS: Yes, I do. He passed away when I was about thirteen. I do remember him. He lived right across the street from us out in East Whittier. His home is still standing out there.

ARENA: Oh, it is still standing. Do you know the precise address?

MILHOUS: It's right across the Orange county line, about in the 9000 block in Orange County.

ARENA: I see. I am trying to place it in connection with some of the famous East Whittier landmarks like the East Whittier Friends Church. Would it be near that?

MILHOUS: About a mile east of there approximately, on the other side of the street.

ARENA: I see. And you recall visiting it too while your grandfather was still there?

MILHOUS: Right. We lived in a little frame house directly across the street, which is still on Whittier Boulevard. It's an antique house now--they sell antiques--a little white stucco house.

ARENA: Could you locate that a little more precisely--that home where you lived?

MILHOUS: It's about 400 feet east of the Los Angeles-Orange County line on Whittier Boulevard.

ARENA: Well, that is precise.

MILHOUS: I went to Lowell Grammar School which is right around the corner.

ARENA: Were you aware that Edward Nixon, the President's youngest brother, went there for a while? Did you know that?

MILHOUS: I think he did. He's a little younger than I am, but I believe he went there.

ARENA: Yes, I believe he did for a short period.

MILHOUS: He lived on Whittier Boulevard too.

ARENA: That's right. Would you mind describing as much as you can about Grandfather Charles Wright Milhous?

MILHOUS: Well, as much as I know. He was a hard-working man there on the ranch.

ARENA: He did operate a ranch?

MILHOUS: Yes.

ARENA: And did he have any specialization?

MILHOUS: He had about 120 acres of oranges and lemons.

ARENA: I see. Do you know if he was a nurseryman like Franklin Milhous also?

MILHOUS: I would say he was. I think he planted most of the trees that were planted there. My uncle and my father also worked there on the ranch too. It was in several different sections--say maybe twenty acres in a section.

ARENA: How about yourself. Did you work on the ranch as a youngster?

MILHOUS: I worked there until I went into the service.

ARENA: I see, you continued right on the farm.

MILHOUS: I irrigated and picked oranges and pruned and hoed weeds and everything like that.

ARENA: Is your father still living there, Chuck?

MILHOUS: No, he passed away in 1960.

ARENA: I see. How about your grandmother, do you recall her? Did she live longer?

MILHOUS: She lived longer than my grandfather. She passed away right after the second World War.

ARENA: How would you describe her from your best recollection, say, temperamentwise, educationwise?

MILHOUS: I don't think she had too much education.

ARENA: Had she also come from the same town, by the way, Seymour, Indiana?

MILHOUS: I believe she did, right nearby there.

ARENA: And is Seymour in the area, if you know, where the President's mother and his Grandfather Franklin are from, that is near Butlerville [Indiana]?

MILHOUS: Yes, I think that's within a few miles. Those are towns just south of Indianapolis [Indiana] about sixty miles.

ARENA: Have you ever been in that area yourself, by any chance?

MILHOUS: When I was a lot younger our parents took us back there one summer. I also went back there when I was a year old, but I didn't remember any of that.

ARENA: What do you recall of the area and the people you visited when you went back there, when you were young but not a year old?

MILHOUS: Well, most of them back there had farms and the ones that I met grew corn and all kinds of vegetables.

ARENA: Do you recall who was with you at the time? Had you gone with both your father and mother?

MILHOUS: My father and mother and my cousin, Tom Seulke, went back. [Thomas T. Seulke]

ARENA: And how is he related?

MILHOUS: Tom is a first cousin.

ARENA: Who would his parents be?

MILHOUS: His mother passed away not too long ago. And her husband passed away and I don't even remember him.

ARENA: And when you did travel back as a youngster, do you remember the means, was it by car?

MILHOUS: Yes, by car.

ARENA: And how long a time did you spend visiting?

MILHOUS: We were probably there about a week.

ARENA: Were you going just for that purpose or were your folks traveling all around?

MILHOUS: We just went back there for a vacation and to see their town, where they were born.

ARENA: Did you recall that the original building, say, where your grandfather lived before coming out here--this would be Grandfather Charles [Milhous]--do you recall if that building was still standing?

MILHOUS: I think it was still there. He used to be a druggist. He was a druggist in Seymour [Indiana]. I believe his home was still there at that time.

ARENA: And when he came out here, did he continue in the druggist business?

MILHOUS: No, he didn't. He got into the citrus industry here. I don't believe he followed that any more.

ARENA: I see. And getting back to your father, did he always live in East Whittier itself?

MILHOUS: Yes, he did. He lived in the same house all his life.

ARENA: And I don't recall, did I ask you if your father was born here or born in Indiana?

MILHOUS: No, he was born in Indiana and came out here.

ARENA: Do you recall how old he was at the time or his mentioning how old he was when he came out?

MILHOUS: He came here, I would say in about 1915. He was born in 1884. So that would make him about thirty-one years old at the time.

ARENA: I see.

MILHOUS: He and my mother weren't married until they were about forty. They were forty years old before they were married, so there is a big age difference between my mother and father and myself. I am the oldest of the two boys in the family. My brother is about three years younger than I am.

ARENA: Your brother's name, Chuck?

MILHOUS: Ted--Claude Theodore.

ARENA: Where is Claude now?

MILHOUS: He lives in Oakland [California]. He is an architect there. He's made his home there about fifteen years now, I believe. He was born here in Whittier but he went to school at [University of California], Berkeley and he liked it real well up there and that's where he made his home.

ARENA: From your own personal recollection, have there been regular family reunions and especially in one particular home, say, your Grandfather Charles or one of your relatives like President Nixon's grandparents, Almira and Franklin Milhous? Do you recall if there was a particular annual reunion like that?

MILHOUS: We had reunions in my grandfather's home I remember as a child.

ARENA: How long did these continue? How long did you participate in these family reunions with your grandfather?

MILHOUS: Well, up until about 1939.

ARENA: What would the occasion be--Christmas Day or a set day of the year when these reunions would have taken place?

MILHOUS: Ordinarily we had them I think in the summer. We'd all get together. Everybody would bring food and we'd have homemade ice cream and have it outside in the back yard of his home there on the boulevard.

ARENA: Excuse me--go ahead.

MILHOUS: About once a year I think is about when we got together.

ARENA: Do you recall the extent of the relatives that would show up? I was just wondering, for example, would it have included Grandfather Milhous and would it have included the President's parents, Hannah and Frank Nixon?

MILHOUS: I'm not sure if they were there or not.

ARENA: Are you sure if it might have included any of the Wests, say, Jessamyn West's parents or Jessamyn West herself?

MILHOUS: It's possible they could have been there.

ARENA: You don't recall for sure but you say it's possible. And there were quite a few, because as you say in your own case, there were only two sons and if there are a great number of people, there must have been a lot more outsiders than your own immediate family. Is there anything in particular about your grandfather, before we leave him, that you would like to mention that I haven't raised? Did he have any unusual habit or hobby? Did he teach, we'll say, Sunday School? Did he teach at all? Did he participate in any particular civic affairs? Was he ever in politics or anything like that about your grandfather that comes to mind?

MILHOUS: I believe he taught a Sunday School class. I know he used to take us to Sunday School as children. He was involved in the La Habra Citrus Growers. I believe he was an officer of some kind in La Habra [California] where they had their packing houses.

ARENA: Do you recall if that particular church and Sunday School was the East Whittier Friends Church that is there now?

MILHOUS: Yes it was and it is still there.

ARENA: Do you recall if that original building that he attended was the one that was purchased later by Mr. Frank Nixon, the President's father, for his market?

MILHOUS: Yes, I believe that is the one.

ARENA: But he had attended it before it had been sold. Do you recall his mentioning that--your grandfather or father? Do you ever recall being in the vicinity when they would talk about the fact that this was originally the church?

MILHOUS: I've heard that. In fact we have some pictures at home of the building which were taken.

ARENA: And you said that your grandfather did participate in the Citrus Growers Association. Do you recall the precise name of it? Was it called Citrus Growers Association?

MILHOUS: No, it was La Habra Citrus Growers.

ARENA: La Habra Citrus Growers. Would that be a separate one completely on its own? Did it cooperate or merge with something like the Sunkist one which is also very famous and national, do you know by any chance?

MILHOUS: I think they were related because they did have Sunkist label on their fruit.

ARENA: Do you know also, Chuck, if there was any connection, say, with the Leffingwell Ranch or any of the large ranches that also made up that area? If your father's ranch bordered on the Leffingwell Ranch. Did he buy land, as did President Nixon's father, from the Leffingwell people? Do you know anything about the history of the land that your grandfather had? Maybe you've done some of your own personal research.

MILHOUS: I don't know too much about that.

- ARENA: You never heard it referred to as any particular ranch before your grandfather got it?
- MILHOUS: No, I didn't.
- ARENA: Do you mind if I ask you if the land is still held by members of your family--descendants?
- MILHOUS: Most of the land has been sold. We do have a little acreage on Whittier Boulevard and it's in the process of being sold now.
- ARENA: Would this be a part of the original land your Grandfather Charles [Milhous] had?
- MILHOUS: That's right.
- ARENA: Do you mind if I ask you your present address now?
- MILHOUS: I live at 810 Bassetdale. It's in the north part of Whittier beyond the cemetery. It's adjacent to the California Country Club.
- ARENA: Finally before I leave your grandfather, do you recall ever hearing him speak, say, on a public occasion? Do you know if he had any tendencies toward, say, being a 4th of July speaker? Do you recall him in Sunday School yourself and how would you describe him as a speaker? Was he a calm-spoken man, did he have a loud booming voice, if you recall anything like that?
- MILHOUS: I would say he was pretty calm to my knowledge.
- ARENA: And as far as his wife, your grandmother [Rose McClure Milhous] do you recall her being an active member, maybe? As you know some of the relatives of the President were preaching Quaker ladies as Miss West has pointed out. I was wondering if maybe that could be applied to your grandmother?
- MILHOUS: I think she was kind of quiet. She liked to work in the garden outdoors.
- ARENA: Did your grandfather, by the way, run a store on his ranch himself, as did Frank Nixon himself?

MILHOUS: No, he didn't.

ARENA: There was nothing in the way of selling--it was just growing, and then would he take care of the harvesting and collecting of the fruit or would that be done by outsiders--say the association?

MILHOUS: That was done by the association at La Habra. They had two packing houses there and they sent these crews of men out who would do the picking. And we did most of the hauling of it. Of course, it was taken to the packing house then.

ARENA: Did he continue to do that all the time that he was alive? For example, did he ever change his business in any way--change out of the farming business--or did he retire and just not do anything after a certain period of time?

MILHOUS: He stayed right in the citrus business.

ARENA: Right to the end. And did he retire?

MILHOUS: Yes, he did retire.

ARENA: Did he have many years of retirement or was it only a brief period?

MILHOUS: It was only a brief period. I think he worked most of his life.

ARENA: Do you recall how old he was or you think when he did pass away--your grandfather?

MILHOUS: I would say about eighty.

ARENA: Do you recall his personally ever mentioning Indiana and his recollections of it with fondness, or did this just not come up in discussions?

MILHOUS: Well, I don't think he cared too much for the cold weather was one of the reasons he came to California.

ARENA: You don't ever recall hearing him say he wished he had gone back, or he was sorry he came to California?

MILHOUS: No, I think he liked it out here.

ARENA: How about your grandmother, was she ever sorry she had left the area where she grew up by the way?

MILHOUS: I don't think so. I think she was happy to be out here too.

ARENA: Did your grandfather, by the way, drive automobiles and drive right up to his old age? Was he mechanically inclined, for example?

MILHOUS: He was somewhat. They had an old Winton, I can recall. It was an old touring car and they could take the top off of it. And we have some pictures of that.

ARENA: I believe you do know Russell Harrison, Jr., who is mechanically inclined.

MILHOUS: I do.

ARENA: Do you recall his ever working on that car or having any contact with it?

MILHOUS: I don't recall.

ARENA: Again, is there anything about your grandfather that I haven't brought up, that I haven't mentioned, and you think you would like to bring up yourself about him?

MILHOUS: I think that's about all I know.

ARENA: For example, one thing comes to mind. Do you recall possibly his meeting Frank Nixon and his contacts with him in any way? Do you recall Frank maybe coming out to the ranch sometime discussing common farm problems or anything like that?

MILHOUS: I would probably think they did because they all traded at the store there where Frank and Hannah [Nixon] worked.

ARENA: Well your grandfather was still living when Frank had the Nixon market there at Santa Gertrudes [Avenue] and Whittier Boulevard.

MILHOUS: Yes, we all traded there at the store.

ARENA: I see. Do you recall your grandfather mentioning anything about Frank? Did he refer to him as a hard worker? Did he refer to him as a man that liked to discuss politics or anything like that?

MILHOUS: I think he did.

ARENA: Do you recall their ever getting into any political arguments, by any chance?

MILHOUS: I don't recall that.

ARENA: There is a pretty commonly held view that Frank liked to argue politics, that he did it rather often and did it with just about everyone. Aside from that, speaking of politics again, do you recall if your grandfather did engage actively in politics or actively in discussing politics in any way? Do you recall his having arguments with the neighbors or anything unusual about his interest in politics one way or the other?

MILHOUS: I don't recall.

ARENA: Well, we'll leave your grandfather, unless something comes to mind. Don't hesitate to bring it up. Maybe as we go on something might trigger your memory about your grandfather you might think would be of interest. And we'll get on to your father. You say that your father did marry when he was forty?

MILHOUS: Forty years old.

ARENA: And you were the first-born son. Do you think that created--or were there any problems because of that as far as you and your father were concerned, in the sense that you were a youngster and your father really didn't understand your problems, or was there a close relationship with your father?

MILHOUS: We had a close relationship, even though there was quite a bit of an age difference.

- ARENA: That didn't present any problems?
- MILHOUS: We didn't do too many things like going fishing together and things like that.
- ARENA: Did he do that with anyone? Did your father go fishing or hunting or camping?
- MILHOUS: Yes, he did, I think in his earlier life. They had pictures taken.
- ARENA: But not with you--not during your period. That meant though that he worked constantly--what was the reason?
- MILHOUS: He was pretty busy on the ranch every day.
- ARENA: And to what extent do you recall or know of your father's formal education? How many years had he gone through elementary, high school?
- MILHOUS: He went through high school and that was the extent of his schooling, and that was in Indiana. He went to school there before he came out here.
- ARENA: Had he ever shown any inclination, say, for going into the drug business himself or going on to college as possibly your grandfather had done to become a druggist?
- MILHOUS: I don't believe he did. At one time he worked for the railroad in Chicago [Illinois]. He was a telegraph operator.
- ARENA: Do you know where he learned that, to become a telegraph operator? Had he learned that back in Indiana do you think?
- MILHOUS: That's where he was taught it. I'm not sure if it was in high school or whether he picked it up when he was with the railroad. He did work in Chicago a few years before he came to California.
- ARENA: Do you recall the name of the railroad by any chance that he worked for?

MILHOUS: I'm not sure of that.

ARENA: You don't think it might have been for Western Union itself, with the railroad itself?

MILHOUS: It could have been.

ARENA: Possibly with one of their telegraph companies. He never did anything like that after he got here, never any connection with the railroads. He was strictly on the farm.

MILHOUS: When he was in the service I believe he did some of that though.

ARENA: When was he in the service?

MILHOUS: In the first World War.

ARENA: What was his rank and where did he serve?

MILHOUS: He was a sergeant and he was in Europe. He was in Paris and he went through some training at Camp Kearney in San Diego [California] before he went over seas.

ARENA: Was he in the Infantry, do you think?

MILHOUS: He was in the Infantry, right.

ARENA: Did he volunteer or was he drafted?

MILHOUS: I think he was drafted.

ARENA: Wasn't he at that time--I'm assuming--a Quaker? Do you recall any special problems in view of the fact that he could have claimed the status of a conscientious objector?

MILHOUS: I don't think so.

ARENA: In other words, no problems that you know of.

MILHOUS: No.

ARENA: And he didn't raise any. And I believe you said that you were also in the service.

MILHOUS: Yes sir.

ARENA: Do you mind telling when and where and your status?

MILHOUS: I was in the Navy in the second World War for three years. I went to boot camp in San Diego and we were in the South Pacific for a year and a half.

ARENA: And Navy means volunteer also.

MILHOUS: I was going to school at the time and I was drafted.

ARENA: Did the question again of being a conscientious objector come up in any way?

MILHOUS: No, it didn't. That was no problem.

ARENA: You didn't raise it at all. Do you recall if any of your parents or friends or members of your church--and by the way do you mind if I ask you if you are a member now of the First Friends Church here in Whittier?

MILHOUS: I belong to the East Whittier Friends Church.

ARENA: You belong to the East Whittier Friends Church even though you live here in Whittier--you have that choice?

MILHOUS: That's the one I attend. I don't go quite as much any more but that's where I'm a member. That's where we went to Sunday School and church.

ARENA: I see. Would that make you, by the way, also a birth-right Quaker?

MILHOUS: Yes it would.

ARENA: As distinct from the convinced?

MILHOUS: Yes.

ARENA: But did anyone try to dissuade you that you recall, including your pastor, at the time you went in the service from entering the service or anyone try to persuade you to raise a point so you wouldn't have to go into the military service?

MILHOUS: I had no problems with the pastor. I recall he gave me a Bible which I still have, which I carried with me all during the service.

ARENA: Since this is a rather key point--as you know the President is a Quaker and still a member of that church and some writers have referred to him as a "fighting Quaker," and there is that historical position of the Quakers against military service and so forth, and everyone has his own reasons and everyone has his own position. Would you mind explaining or discussing, as far as you recollect, what went on in your mind, because I'm sure you knew yourself about this heritage of the Quakers about not participating in wars, pro and con, and what made you decide to enter military service--the example of your father himself?

MILHOUS: I would say that would be, he had been in the Army.

ARENA: Had he been in before you, by the way, before you entered the Navy?

MILHOUS: Yes, sir. I thought it was my duty as long as we were at war that we should go.

ARENA: Do you mind if I ask you--you don't have to mention any names--to what extent your buddies who were also, say in your same Sunday School class, those who attended church with you, to what extent that was the average thing that was done or it was not the normal thing? Was it unusual that you attended or did you find that that was common with all of your friends too who were Quakers and who were your age more or less at that time?

MILHOUS: I think they all attended.

ARENA: Getting back again to your father's period and your father's growing up in East Whittier and Whittier, did he ever talk about leaving this area to get new land

somewhere else? Was there ever anything about his picking up and going off and trying say a new business anywhere?

MILHOUS: No, he was very happy with what he was doing. He lived in the same house until he died.

ARENA: Was that house the same house that he built himself?

MILHOUS: My grandfather built my father's house. They all probably worked on it together. My grandfather built my uncle's house too--helped.

ARENA: And is that house still lived in--you say it is still standing and it still has occupants?

MILHOUS: They're selling antiques there now.

ARENA: But it's not in the family any longer then. The people who own it are not members of the family?

MILHOUS: No, it isn't.

ARENA: Do you mind if I ask you to describe it to the best of your ability? Does it have two floors, how many bedrooms, how many bathrooms, how much ground is involved in the home itself?

MILHOUS: It was a one-story house, we had three bedrooms and two baths.

ARENA: And this was when you were a youngster you recall that there were two baths.

MILHOUS: One bath was built on. It originally was built with just one bathroom, but an extra bedroom after my brother and I were born and another bathroom was added in the back. It had a dining room, a small kitchen and a living room.

ARENA: Is it mainly of wood too, inside and out?

MILHOUS: It is a frame house; it had a brick fireplace.

ARENA: How about the roof itself--what type of roof?

MILHOUS: It had small gravel on the roof--tar paper more or less with the oil and this thin coating of gravel on top.

ARENA: Did your father continue to do mechanical work like that, for example, not only in keeping the house, but did he make the plumbing repairs or any carpentry repairs?

MILHOUS: Well, he did as much as he could. When I was about six years old, he lost his right hand in a brush cutter, which kind of held him down a little. He had to learn to write with his left hand again. He was right-handed.

ARENA: When you were six. This would have been after his military service too.

MILHOUS: Yes.

ARENA: Do you think that changed his personality any after that accident?

MILHOUS: He was pretty self-set.

ARENA: He wasn't as easygoing as he had been before?

MILHOUS: Right.

ARENA: Was there pain always in that hand?

MILHOUS: No, not too much.

ARENA: It was just the idea that it made him an invalid and he . . .

MILHOUS: Yes, and he couldn't do as much as he did.

ARENA: He had to depend on others to help him a lot too.

MILHOUS: Some. He was able to drive though.

ARENA: He was able to. Did he have a mechanical hand?

MILHOUS: No, he had the stub and he wore a glove over it.

ARENA: I see. From what you know though, could he have gotten a mechanical hand?

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ossible he could have.

veterans were trained to use them. Any reason
didn't do you know?

know. See, he would have been close to fifty
at happened.

someone's fault or purely an accident?

Putting some brush in this grinder and I guess
got caught in the brush and it pulled it right
in.

ARENA: For those like myself who have never seen a brush grinder,
would you describe what the brush grinder is?

MILHOUS: Well, it had the big cutter blades with the engine and
a big scoop in the back and the brush from the trees
was pushed in there and it would grind it all up and
spread it out on the ground and then they would cultivate it under.

ARENA: And does that have any use at all?

MILHOUS: It's kind of a mulch for the ground.

ARENA: Would the motor be gasoline, by the way?

MILHOUS: I think it was.

ARENA: Before that accident had your father been very mechanically
inclined? Did you have irrigation machinery on your land
and did he keep it going or did he have to depend on
others?

MILHOUS: Well, he belonged to this water company and the water
was all furnished underground, and he really didn't have
any big machinery to work on there.

ARENA: Do you know the name of the company by any chance?

MILHOUS: It was the Murphy Ranch Water Company.

ARENA: Oh, that original water company.

MILHOUS: Yes, that's who we got water from.

ARENA: Would that be true also of your grandfather?

MILHOUS: Yes.

ARENA: Do you know what the case is today? Would that be, say, the Whittier Water Works today?

MILHOUS: I think that water company is still out there on Whittier Boulevard, right there near the Whittwood Shopping Center on the north side of Whittier Boulevard.

ARENA: Was there anything like a ditch or so-called canal that was true, say, of the President's farm, when the President lived at Yorba Linda [California]? Was there anything like that where there was an open canal?

MILHOUS: We had a small creek that ran by the house.

ARENA: This was a natural creek.

MILHOUS: Which came out of La Habra Heights. There was generally a little water in that but . . .

ARENA: But that wasn't man made, that was a natural creek.

MILHOUS: Right. All the main water was pumped underground in big pipes underneath the ground.

ARENA: Do you ever recall any shortage of water for any reason when you were growing up?

MILHOUS: No, we always had plenty of water.

ARENA: You say your father taught Sunday School classes?

MILHOUS: My grandfather--my father didn't.

ARENA: I see. Did your father attend the services would you say as regularly as your grandfather by the way?

MILHOUS: I don't believe he did. He didn't go too much. My mother went to church quite a bit but my father didn't go to church very much.

ARENA: And he also would have been a member of the East Whittier Friends Church?

MILHOUS: Right.

ARENA: Do you recall if your mother taught Sunday class by any chance and also participated in the choir or any church social activities?

MILHOUS: I don't believe she taught any classes.

ARENA: Were there things like picnics or social affairs that she participated in?

MILHOUS: I don't think she did those things or even went to church when there were church get-togethers.

ARENA: Do you recall other than your father and grandfather dealing with Frank Nixon's market place, what other contact there was between your side of the family and, say, Frank and Hannah Nixon's side of the family? Did they visit you from time to time as you recall? Did you visit with them--not just in the store but in the home?

MILHOUS: Yes, we visited them in the home when they lived on the boulevard there.

ARENA: In case I haven't, I should ask you, excuse me if I'm repeating the question, but where and when were you born yourself, Chuck?

MILHOUS: I was born at Murphy Memorial Hospital in 1924.

ARENA: That would be right here in Whittier, then?

MILHOUS: Right here in Whittier.

ARENA: And since the President was born in 1913, that would make you younger. Because I was going to ask if you recalled Yorba Linda itself, and obviously by that time the Frank Nixons had moved here to Whittier.

MILHOUS: I have been to Yorba Linda. See I went to Fullerton High School and I had a lot of friends who lived in Yorba Linda that also went to Fullerton then. And we would visit over there at some of their homes.

ARENA: Would these friends be relatives as well? For example, the Wests lived there for a while--Jessamyn West and her side of the family. Do you recall any contact with them in Yorba Linda?

MILHOUS: No, I don't recall them. I knew they lived on Russell Street here in Whittier. That's where I knew them.

ARENA: Do you know Merle [West] by the way?

MILHOUS: Yes, I do. I had a cousin who lived in Yorba Linda and his name was Milhous. I can't recall his first name.

ARENA: Do you recall when you attended Fullerton High School at your time was there any reference, do you recall any of the teachers bringing up the period when President Nixon had been a student there before you? I believe he attended there two years and then switched to Whittier High School. Do you recall, since you came later, anyone referring to him?

MILHOUS: I really don't.

ARENA: None of the teachers asking you if you were a relative of a young man who had been there previously?

MILHOUS: I don't recall.

ARENA: What do you think of Yorba Linda as a place to grow up? When you were there, did you enjoy the time you spent there?

MILHOUS: I think I would say it is a very nice town. I wouldn't mind living there.

ARENA: Is it your impression that it is growing much more slowly than East Whittier and Whittier? Of course, East Whittier is now a part of Whittier. You think there is any reason for that, why it has not grown as quickly and as widely as has Whittier in the past few years; any particular reason for that?

MILHOUS: I don't know. There was more citrus and everything out there longer. I guess people must have held onto their land more.

ARENA: What do you recall about your father's mentioning his educational experience--I believe you said he did not go beyond high school? What do you recall at all about his educational experience in the sense that he talked about it with you? Did he say, "I enjoyed high school," or "I didn't enjoy it." "I enjoyed shop," if he took shop or anything like that?

MILHOUS: I think he enjoyed it but I don't know if it came too easy--studying. That's the problem I had in school. I had to work pretty hard.

ARENA: I will get into your education in a little while. But again to get back to your father, do you recall that after school hours, he had to come home and work on the farm?

MILHOUS: I think he did when they lived in the East. Of course, this was before I was born.

ARENA: That's right and this would have been back in Indiana too, because he finished all of his education there in Indiana.

MILHOUS: That's right.

ARENA: I see.

MILHOUS: Because he came to California I think in about 1915.

ARENA: That would have been just two years after President Nixon was born in Yorba Linda.

MILHOUS: Right. He went in the Army in about 1917, I think.

ARENA: Do you recall the total length of time he spent in the Army by the way?

MILHOUS: I think he was in about two years if I remember.

ARENA: Do you have pictures of that period?

MILHOUS: Yes, we do. We have some small pictures at home that were taken in his training down in Camp Kearney, and I believe they took some while they were in Europe. We have some snapshots of him in his Army uniform.

ARENA: Do you know if your father ever traveled outside of the country, other than when he was in the military service? Did they ever get a chance to go to Europe or to Mexico?

MILHOUS: No, they didn't.

ARENA: Or Canada?

MILHOUS: No.

ARENA: And he didn't seem to have much desire to do that anyway?

MILHOUS: Not too much, content to stay home most of the time. He worked around the ranch and they traveled around this country some. I used to go to the Grand Canyon, and I used to go to Yosemite with them.

ARENA: How about long trips, say, not only to Indiana but all the way across the country to New York City [New York] or the South, say New Orleans [Louisiana]?

MILHOUS: Never, never been that far with them. Been in Texas with them, as far as Texas.

ARENA: Do you know if he ever went that far himself?

MILHOUS: I don't believe he did. We do have some pictures that were taken at Niagara Falls [New York]. He got that far.

ARENA: Bringing up Niagara Falls, do you happen to know where your parents spent their honeymoon by the way?

MILHOUS: Well, they were married here in California.

ARENA: Do you know if they went outside the state for their honeymoon?

MILHOUS: I don't believe they did.

ARENA: As far as you know, were they married in the East Whittier Church?

MILHOUS: I think they were married at home.

ARENA: In their home. Any idea who might have performed the ceremony? It wasn't anything special--might have been the pastor?

MILHOUS: I don't recall now, but I think they were married in the front room of their home that my grandfather built. I'm not sure where they went on their honeymoon.

ARENA: Do you mind if I ask you some questions about the personality of your father? Did you ever see him lose his temper and if so, was it often and over what instances?

MILHOUS: He didn't lose it very much. I know he was fairly strict with my brother and I.

ARENA: When you say strict, would that mean that you got physical punishment along with . . .

MILHOUS: Yes, we did.

ARENA: . . . verbal discipline?

MILHOUS: Yes, we did, with the yardstick if we didn't behave.

ARENA: Would this punishment say be instantaneous; in other words, was it a question of his saying, "Now, I'm warning you," or would the tendency be to administer the punishment on the spot so to speak?

MILHOUS: Well, we were warned, and if we persisted why . . .

ARENA: What was the age difference, if I may ask, between you--not was but is--between you and your brother?

MILHOUS: We're three years apart.

ARENA: Did that tend to make you argumentative as youngsters, do you recall? Did that get you into trouble, the fact that you would fight with one another as brothers?

MILHOUS: That's right.

ARENA: And that would cause discipline?

MILHOUS: Right.

ARENA: You were born in 1924. This would put you right between the President himself and the youngest brother, [Edward Calvert] Ed Nixon. So you would be kind of close to Donald [Francis Donald Nixon]. I was just wondering if you recall palling around in any way with Donald?

MILHOUS: I worked for Donald Nixon. I was a butcher in their market.

ARENA: I see.

MILHOUS: I worked for him for about eleven years after I got out of the Navy.

ARENA: I would like to take that up in time then too, because the idea is to show as much connection between you and the President's family as you can recall.

MILHOUS: I was pretty close to Don.

ARENA: I see.

MILHOUS: . And I also worked for Frank and Hannah until Frank passed away at the store. I worked in the old store there too.

ARENA: I see. I certainly would like to go into that. Now let's see if we're at the end of this segment of our tape. We just have a few minutes left on this side of the tape and maybe we can continue on with your father and save the association with Frank and Donald Nixon for a separate taping. We will just stick to your father--getting back to his personality. How would you describe him as a father, in an overall sense? Did he have losses--I realize this is personal--did he have losses because he did not have a good all-around business sense or was he a shrewd businessman? Did he ever go bankrupt, if I may ask, while he was running his farm and anything you would like to mention about that side of your father--his business experience and business ability?

MILHOUS: Well, he had no bankruptcy.

ARENA: Did he have to borrow money and were there ever any problems that you know of when it did come to borrowing money?

MILHOUS: I don't believe to my knowledge he borrowed money.

ARENA: As far as you know he did not ever borrow money.

MILHOUS: And he paid cash for everything he bought to my knowledge.

ARENA: How about things like the car. Do you know if he would put cash down for a car?

MILHOUS: I think they paid cash--saved the money 'til they had it and could buy it.

ARENA: Did your mother contribute to the finances of the family, we'll say, by doing anything like selling pies or looking after . . .

MILHOUS: My mother also worked in the Nixon store during the war for about four or five years. She was a checker. She had no other jobs here. She was a milliner in Indiana. She made women's hats.

ARENA: I think we have just about come to the end of this side of the tape and with your permission, we will see about continuing.