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Charles L. Milhous (September 22, 1971)

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Whittier College

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Second Oral History Interview

with

MR. CHARLES L. MILHOUS

September 22, 1971
Whittier, California

By Dr. C. Richard Arena

For the Richard Nixon Oral History Project

ARENA: This is interview #2 with Charles L. Milhous of Whittier, California. The interview is being held in Whittier and the date is September 22, 1971, Arena interviewing. Chuck, you'll call me Dick of course, if you will, getting back to where we left off. I believe we had covered your own personal family background but we haven't gone at all into where you came into contact with the President and his folks. Let me ask you, what do you recall at the very earliest time your contact with any of the Nixons, that is the President, Don [Francis Donald Nixon], Ed [Edward Calvert Nixon], Frank [Francis Anthony Nixon] and Hannah [Milhous Nixon]. What is the earliest experience with any of that family you can recall?

MILHOUS: Actually, the first experience that I can remember is right when I got out of the Navy in 1946. I had been in the service for three years and my folks had traded at a little store on the boulevard. I had been working on the ranch before I had gone in the Navy.

ARENA: By the ranch, whose ranch?

MILHOUS: That was my grandfather, father and uncle's ranch on Whittier Boulevard. My folks traded at the store. Don at the time was looking for some help so he asked me if I would like to go to work in the store and learn the business there. First I waited on customers and stocked shelves and he was working

in the meat department at the time by himself. His mother and dad were in charge of the store, so he asked me if I'd like to learn the butcher business. So he taught me what I know about that.

ARENA: This would have been Donald himself?

MILHOUS: This was Don.

ARENA: Although you were under Frank and Hannah at the store, of course, the one you had the most contact with would have been Donald.

MILHOUS: Right, Don. I worked with him.

ARENA: That was strictly in the butcher department, or did you help out in other departments?

MILHOUS: To begin with I worked in the grocery too, stocking shelves and pricing the merchandise.

ARENA: How about making deliveries to anyone?

MILHOUS: To begin with they had a small delivery truck and we would take groceries, people would call in, we would take groceries to their homes up in La Habra Heights or out on the boulevard.

ARENA: Would it be people who would come to the store and order and have you follow them, so to speak, or would it be people who would call in orders by phone?

MILHOUS: Primarily they would call in on the phone, give us their name and address and tell us what they wanted, and we would fill these orders at the store, put them in the small truck and deliver them to the homes.

ARENA: Was that an important part of business, would you say? Was an awful lot of this done?

MILHOUS: There was quite a bit of that and also quite a few of the people came in and shopped at the store too.

ARENA: You mentioned La Habra [California]. How about Whittier itself, people from Whittier?

- MILHOUS: I think there were a few that came out from right in town. Primarily it was out in the country and also in La Habra. Quite a few came from La Habra. The store actually was closer to La Habra than it was Whittier.
- ARENA: How about the Leffingwell Ranch itself, were they a frequent customer? Did you deliver for them as well?
- MILHOUS: We delivered there. They had quite a few Spanish people that were working picking the oranges and a lot of them lived right on the ranch in little houses there. I think we delivered a lot of flour and beans and things like that down there.
- ARENA: Would this be to the individual families or to the ranch?
- MILHOUS: I think it went to the commissary more or less there. Then it was given out to the people who worked there.
- ARENA: Was the Leffingwell Ranch a fairly steady customer?
- MILHOUS: Yes, it was. They had a pretty good sized operation there.
- ARENA: During the same period of '46 you got to see, of course, quite a bit of Donald and his parents, Frank and Hannah. Do you recall how often the President tended to get in because he was serving in Congress at this time? Do you recall his coming in though?
- MILHOUS: He didn't get in too much, maybe two or three times a year he stopped by when he had time.
- ARENA: When he did, did he actually sleep over there in the store or did he maintain his own apartment, say, somewhere else in Whittier?
- MILHOUS: I think he had his own place or he might have stayed with his folks there. They had a home right there on Whittier Boulevard which wasn't too far. In fact they had a house right behind the store there.

ARENA: In that house Hannah and Frank, your aunt and uncle, lived?

MILHOUS: Right.

ARENA: You did mention the idea of the gasoline pumps being taken out. Were these, do you recall, in operation or not in operation when you were there?

MILHOUS: I think they were taken out.

ARENA: When you were there you had nothing to do with pumping gasoline?

MILHOUS: No.

ARENA: Had you ever, even as a kid, done any of that part-time?

MILHOUS: We had a gasoline pump on the ranch, we'd pump our own gas there. I didn't work in a gas station; I've never worked in a gas station.

ARENA: Do you recall Uncle Frank Nixon's gasoline pump?

MILHOUS: I believe I do when I was younger. My folks traded at the store, and when we were younger we would go down there with them. I'm real sure that's the station that they had there.

ARENA: If I may get personal now. Remember, anything you don't want to answer why just say you'll pass on the question. How many hours a day and what days a week, and how much did you make when you worked for Uncle Frank Nixon?

MILHOUS: When I first started there I only worked after school. I was going back to Fullerton Junior College. I wanted to graduate from there and I still had two years to go. So I attended school during the day and then I would go from 2 'til 6 o'clock when the store closed. We closed at 6 o'clock in the evening during the week. I think they stayed open maybe 'til 8 o'clock on Friday and they weren't open Sundays. I'd work about four hours and then on Saturdays we would work all day there. Wages, I'd say maybe \$1.25 or \$1.35 to start with. As we were there longer why the pay was better because we learned more what to do and I learned how

to cut up beef and things. We were paid the Union scale actually. We weren't Union there, Don wasn't Union, but he paid the Union scale. We were treated wonderfully.

ARENA: Were you the only other person working in the butcher department, by the way, or was there someone else besides you?

MILHOUS: To begin with Don and I were there and then as the market grew why several more people were hired.

ARENA: To get the whole picture, Chuck, how many years did you work there on that basis?

MILHOUS: I worked there about ten years.

ARENA: That would be from '46 to '56. During that period the store did progress, get larger?

MILHOUS: We had frozen food lockers that were added. Also a small restaurant was added on to the west side of the building.

ARENA: You say it was added. Did they actually add additional lumber, additional space to the building or did they just make room in the building as it always was?

MILHOUS: They added on, actually added on. They had five hundred frozen food lockers. They had this enormous freezer which was built to contain all that plus a quick freeze where we kept the beef. It was put in this freezer to freeze, then it was transferred into the people's lockers.

ARENA: In other words during this period of frozen food, wasn't that just about the time it was beginning in the country as a whole? Do you think Frank was ahead of some of the other stores in the fact that he did have frozen food and he had a very large amount for a store that size, would you say?

MILHOUS: I would say he did. I think there were other frozen food plants, but a lot of those were started a little bit after this.

ARENA: Do you attribute that to Donald, possibly, or would you know for sure or guess that it was mainly Donald or mainly Frank that had this idea?

MILHOUS: Don probably had the idea. He contacted all the people who would like to buy beef and have it cut up the way they wanted it cut, and a lot of them had freezers at home too, small freezers, but they could rent these lockers and come there as they shopped and if they needed a certain cut of beef they could go to the locker and take it home with them.

ARENA: In other words, he not only sold the frozen meat to a customer but in a way stored it for his convenience. I wonder and do you know if there was an extra charge for that or was it just part of the service of selling the meat?

MILHOUS: They charged so much a pound to have the beef cut up and the locker rental would rent for a year or three years at a time. It was fairly inexpensive. A lot of people would grow their own vegetables and fruit and they would bring that in there and we would process it and put it in containers and have it frozen for them in their locker. They could take that home too. Also we had specials on frozen vegetables and things from frozen food companies; they could buy that in lots and put it in their locker at a discount and have it for home.

ARENA: As there was a fresh fruit and vegetable stand as well, in addition the frozen one, but you had nothing to do once you were with the meat department with the fruit and vegetables?

MILHOUS: To begin with we did everything.

ARENA: Did you enjoy working for your cousins, if I may ask?

MILHOUS: Yes, I did.

ARENA: Don was an easy boss to get along with?

MILHOUS: Very nice, he treated us very nice. It was a good experience for me to try to learn a trade like that--something you can possibly go back to.

ARENA: You have given us your age on your first tape. Just to set the record straight about what difference is there in your ages between you and Donald by the way?

MILHOUS: He's older, say, probably eight years, seven or eight.

ARENA: Obviously much younger, of course, than having a boss like Frank who would have been a lot older. You think that made a difference that Donald was closer to your age? You more or less saw things together in a light?

MILHOUS: Yes, it did.

ARENA: Did you have any contact with Frank at all? Obviously you saw him in the store. Did you have any contact with him besides seeing him in the store from time to time?

MILHOUS: We worked together there when his locker plant was put together. He was helping in there. We put all these lockers together. He didn't work too much longer in the store after that. I'd say maybe two years before he semi-retired.

ARENA: Let's see. You were there until about '56. Frank retired about two years after you left, not during the period you were there?

MILHOUS: During the period I was there, yes. They still lived there and came around from time to time.

ARENA: In other words Donald really ran the store, completely.

MILHOUS: Yes, he took over.

ARENA: And during this period the store kept progressing and increasing.

MILHOUS: Right. Then he got into the restaurant business. He had several restaurants. At that time we started a commissary and we cut up all the meat and handled all the vegetables and things which they needed for their restaurants. We had several trucks.

ARENA: This was during your ten year period. Let's look at that very first restaurant. That was the first time he set one up while you were there.

MILHOUS: It was in the market.

ARENA: Who were the customers, ordinary shoppers who just wanted a snack?

MILHOUS: A lot of shoppers. They would come from Whittier and the surrounding area.

ARENA: Would a complete meal be served or would it be just a lunch, or breakfast too?

MILHOUS: They had almost a complete meal. They could get breakfast, lunch and dinner in the evening.

ARENA: Who was in charge of that, the restaurant part?

MILHOUS: We had several fellows there. Some of the names I can't recall.

ARENA: It wasn't Donald. He wasn't in the restaurant.

MILHOUS: He was partially involved with it.

ARENA: His main interest was still the meat part?

MILHOUS: Yes. But a few years after that he got more involved with the restaurants. We had several other fellows that were butchering with us.

ARENA: Where were these restaurants located?

MILHOUS: The first one was in the market. I believe the second one which he built was called Nixon's Drive In. It was one of the first of its kind where cars could come up and call through a loud speaker. They had a large menu which they could read and they would drive up to the window and pick up their food.

ARENA: Was that something like a Jack-In-The-Box idea?

MILHOUS: Yes. It was located right next to the Elks Club on Whittier Boulevard. I believe there is a car agency in there now. Frank Elliott, I believe, has the property now.

ARENA: Any idea where that idea of the loud speaker came? Do you recall, for example, Donald talking about opening that type of a restaurant?

MILHOUS: I'm not sure where he got the idea. It was the first one I'd ever seen.

ARENA: How was business there?

MILHOUS: It did very good.

ARENA: While maintaining the one in the store itself in the market?

MILHOUS: Then, probably two years later, he built what he called a family restaurant which is almost directly across from the East Whittier Grammar School. Now it is a Chinese restaurant. It was on a much larger scale.

ARENA: Do you recall if he hired Chinese cooks for that?

MILHOUS: No. It wasn't a Chinese restaurant at all; it's a Chinese restaurant now.

ARENA: Did Donald, in the running of these restaurants, have any special food for example or was it just an overall variety?

MILHOUS: Overall variety: meat, fish.

ARENA: Since he knew meat, I imagine that meat would have been one of the main things.

MILHOUS: Right. Then at that time when the family restaurant was built they also constructed a bakery in the family restaurant and he did all the baking--his own baking of pies, cake and cookies, everything for the restaurant--and they also had an outlet where people could go in there and purchase these things for their own use at home.

ARENA: When you say family restaurant, was that the name of it or you mean . . .

MILHOUS: Nixon's Family Restaurant, that was the name of it. He catered primarily to families with young children. That was located across from the East Whittier Grammar School.

ARENA: And that's the one that is now the Chinese restaurant, Nixon's Family Restaurant. And it included a bakery shop. Who did the baking?

MILHOUS: He hired other bakers. There was a fellow whose last name was [James] Graue. He worked in there. Of course, he had his own helpers in there too. There were so many people who worked there that I couldn't recall all their names.

ARENA: And that was a successful restaurant.

MILHOUS: It was very good.

ARENA: Do you recall if he did any of the cooking himself in these other restaurants?

MILHOUS: No, I don't think Don did too much.

ARENA: He just left that to others.

MILHOUS: Right.

ARENA: All of these other restaurants and the market place were all under his supervision. What would you estimate would be the number of employees he had all together during this period?

MILHOUS: I would say several hundred, because after this he went to Fullerton and opened another restaurant there. He didn't actually open it, it was a restaurant to begin with. He took it over; it was on West Commonwealth [Avenue].

ARENA: Do you recall the name?

MILHOUS: Just Nixon's I believe they called it there.

ARENA: And was this during the ten-year period still, '46 to '56?

MILHOUS: Yes. After this one he went to Disneyland on the corner of Katella [Avenue] and Harbor [Boulevard]. They put in another drive-in restaurant over there.

ARENA: Was there a Disneyland at that time?

MILHOUS: Yes, there was.

ARENA: He was right near Disneyland at the time?

MILHOUS: Yes, it was maybe two blocks from Disneyland proper. They had a gift shop there. He built a gift shop in this drive-in. They had a small train that went through an orange grove on a track and young people could take rides on this small miniature train while they were there.

ARENA: Do you recall that Donald would take time off for a vacation, say, and get away from it, or is he a type of fellow who is at the business twenty-four hours a day?

MILHOUS: He stayed around pretty long. He didn't take off very much. He had quite an operation. It was a big undertaking, because he had so many things to look after.

ARENA: He would visit these things personally. Any particular reason why you yourself did not want to stick with that business and start either your own place or continue to work with that kind of a setup? Did you find you didn't like the strain or . . .

MILHOUS: Well, it was a strain eventually. Standing on cement, I worked in this freezer for about ten years at about 35 below. In the summer it was quite a strain. You would be cold and you'd come outside in the hot day after day. And I got to where I liked to be outdoors a little more for one thing. But it was a very good occupation. I enjoyed it.

ARENA: Do you find the experience handy ever since too?

MILHOUS: Yes, it really has been.

- ARENA: Going back to your idea of working part time and going to school, what happened there, Chuck? Did you find that you just couldn't continue the school or you just preferred to work full time?
- MILHOUS: I had been out of school for about four years and it had been hard to get back, but I did finish my two years and graduated from Fullerton Junior College. After the two years I worked full time then for Don.
- ARENA: What were you taking up at Fullerton?
- MILHOUS: I was taking agriculture. I had always thought I wanted to get interested in that, but as a result here in Whittier everything was taken away and there was no agriculture any more. You'd have to specialize in something else.
- ARENA: How did you make out commutingwise, was it much of a problem, home to school to work?
- MILHOUS: Not too bad. I purchased an old car after I got out of the service and got to school that way and would drive to work. We lived right close to where I worked. I lived about a mile from the store, which was very handy, convenient.
- ARENA: You say your own folks helped from time to time.
- MILHOUS: My mother worked in the store during the second World War as a checker. She worked with Hannah. She was working with Hannah and Frank more than I did.
- ARENA: When you say as a checker, was it being run like a small supermarket where people serve themselves or not?
- MILHOUS: They served themselves in baskets and I believe they had about two cash registers where they would bring their groceries up and be checked out there.
- ARENA: Your mother was one of the checkers. Would Hannah be the other checker?
- MILHOUS: She worked there too, right. They probably had other help in there too, I don't recall.

ARENA: I believe we were looking not too long ago at some of the pictures of family reunions. Do you recall any of these large family reunions in which you participated, say, the Milhouses all getting together at maybe Grandmother Almira's [Burdg Milhous] home?

MILHOUS: I recall the one Frank and Hannah had. They lived on Beach Boulevard, they had a large two-story home there. They had several reunions there. I believe Dick, the President, came to one or two of those.

ARENA: Those reunions were held by Frank and Hannah Nixon?

MILHOUS: Those were the ones we had gone to in those years.

ARENA: Do you recall any by Grandmother Almira Milhous who lived in the original Quad in the original Franklin Milhous ranch?

MILHOUS: I don't recall too many of those. I recall the house there.

ARENA: Do you recall it before it was moved to its present location?

MILHOUS: Yes. We visited there a few times but I was pretty young. I remember there were a lot of orange trees around the house. It even had a circular driveway.

ARENA: Anything else you recall about it or about, was Franklin Milhous himself still living at all? There is a story-- it's not a story I think it is pretty accurate--that he wore a wig, for example. Do you recall anyone ever talking about that or anything like that standing out in your mind?

MILHOUS: I'm not sure that he was living. I had some aunts, Aunt Allie was one aunt that was there. I'm not sure how I am related to her.

ARENA: You don't think Aunt Allie could be Almira Milhous? Was she a quite elderly person by the way, which would make sense too, of course?

MILHOUS: I think it was. Yes, she was elderly.

ARENA: I think we'll check that out and find out and I think I've heard others refer to Almira Milhous as Allie. Aunt Allie would make sense because technically she was not your grandmother, and aunt would be a kind of familiar family catchall word. What can you recall about her? You do recall her. Some of the things that stand out in your mind about her. For example, descriptionwise she was a slight thin woman.

MILHOUS: She wasn't too large of a woman. I think she was pretty active as much as I can remember for her age.

ARENA: She lived there in the home.

MILHOUS: Yes, she did.

ARENA: It must have been Almira. I believe she lived there even after she was a widow. She preferred to live in that home.

MILHOUS: Yes, she did.

ARENA: Chuck, just out of curiosity when was the last time you were in that home? I believe there is now another relative living there, the daughter of Uncle Oscar Marshburn.

MILHOUS: It's been twenty years I believe.

ARENA: You wouldn't be conscious, for example, of the changes because you don't recall precisely what it looked like when you were there as a youngster, so you wouldn't recall the change that took place over the years or anything like that. It would be interesting to know if there have been any basic changes. Were you aware, by the way, that it was built by Uncle Franklin Milhous? Had you been told that?

MILHOUS: I was.

ARENA: Is there anything that you recall from your mother or your father concerning the early years in Indiana where the President's parents, of course, were born, where his mother, Hannah, was born. His father was born in Ohio. Do you recall the stories or any incidents about the early years in Indiana, either with fondness, with regret, or they didn't discuss it very often?

MILHOUS: They didn't discuss it too much. I know they worked hard back there. When they came out to California though they were very happy to be here.

ARENA: You got the impression they left Indiana because they thought things would be better.

MILHOUS: Yes, they did. There was so much cold weather back there. I know my folks talked about that. They were glad to be out here where it was a little bit warmer. They had no desire to go back there and live anymore.

ARENA: Do you recall their having contact, while they were living, with the relatives back in Indiana? Talking about letters from Indiana, maybe some of the letters were read in your presence.

MILHOUS: Yes, they wrote quite a bit.

ARENA: Do you recall what they discussed in them? What were the things; for instance, so-and-so got through high school, so-and-so was in the Army? What some of the subject matter was?

MILHOUS: They talked just about the happenings in the town, I believe, wrote about the news.

ARENA: What was the town, precisely?

MILHOUS: Seymour, Indiana.

ARENA: We might have brought this up last time, but just to tie it in again, since I'll be going there in a couple of weeks and want to get as much fresh information as possible. How far do you think Seymour, Indiana, is from Vernon where Hannah Milhous lived?

MILHOUS: I think it's around eight or ten miles. Those towns were about sixty miles south of Indianapolis [Indiana].

ARENA: In other words a short distance. They would commute back and forth all the time and visit one another back and forth. And you say you have visited there yourself over the years. When was the last time?

MILHOUS: When I was about fifteen years old was the last time we were back.

ARENA: What do you recall of it at that time? When you were fifteen, about what year was that, before World War II of course?

MILHOUS: 1939, just before the war, we visited one summer. They still had a lot of farms and things back there. I remember they grew a lot of good corn, tomatoes and a lot of vegetables.

ARENA: Flat country by the way?

MILHOUS: Quite a bit of flat country, yes, there was.

ARENA: Do you recall anything to the effect that these are original homes that they had built, or these were homes they had bought when they moved into that area? Anything like that?

MILHOUS: I think a lot of them were probably built by the people.

ARENA: Do you recall anything like why these relatives did not want to leave? Do you recall some discussions where you were bragging so to say in a kidding sort of way, you were bragging about the life in California and why they didn't want to follow the example of the other relatives?

MILHOUS: Some of them said they had been there too long and that's where they wanted to stay. In my parents' case they wanted to come to California. Of course, my grandfather came here first, my uncle and my father followed them.

ARENA: When you went in 1939 and you were about fifteen years old, who accompanied you?

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

ARENA: How long a visit was it, a whole summer or just short?

MILHOUS: We stayed about two weeks.

ARENA: Do you recall with what relatives you did stay?

MILHOUS: I stayed with a relative of my mother's. I believe it was her mother that we visited at the time.

ARENA: Just to refresh my memory--in case I brought it up before excuse me for asking you to repeat it--what is your mother's maiden name?

MILHOUS: It was Frances Olive Hibner. Her mother's name, I believe, was Sara Cordes.

ARENA: Your parents were married back there?

MILHOUS: No, they were married in Whittier.

ARENA: But they were both from there?

MILHOUS: From there, they went to school there. I believe my father came here first and I believe he sent for my mother to come out. They were married here in Whittier. I believe they were married in the home which is still out on Whittier Boulevard.

ARENA: They were married in that same home that Grandfather Franklin Milhous. . . . I beg your pardon, this is Charles.

MILHOUS: Grandfather Charles built. Right. He built their home. I believe they were married in the living room.

ARENA: Again I have forgotten if I have brought this up. Excuse me for repeating it. Did we establish that that home is still standing, and the precise address?

MILHOUS: It sure is. It would be 9111 East Whittier Boulevard. I believe that's still the address. It's an antique house. They sell antiques in it.

ARENA: Are those who are there now relatives, or is it a completely different family?

MILHOUS: No, I don't know the people. They are renting the home.

ARENA: Have you been in there recently to note the changes?

MILHOUS: No, I haven't. It's been ten years since I have been inside the house. We drive by there every once in a while but I really haven't stopped. I really should.

ARENA: Now to get back to your association with Frank and Hannah Nixon, the relatives there, do you recall Frank suffering from old illnesses? For example, the account was that once when he had been a trolley conductor standing out in the open in Ohio or one of the Midwestern states, he suffered from frostbite and that never quite left him. Do you recall that being a problem when you were in the store and when you knew Frank?

MILHOUS: I think he did have trouble with his legs.

ARENA: Legs as a whole, not just the feet?

MILHOUS: Yes.

ARENA: Do you recall it being arthritis by any chance?

MILHOUS: Possibly, it could have been. He was a hard worker though.

ARENA: Did you get the impression that he was an impatient man when it came to retiring, that the retirement was something more or less that he didn't agree with but someone talked him into?

MILHOUS: I would say that, correct.

ARENA: What did he do in his retirement? For instance did he help out in any time in emergencies in any of the other restaurants or the market itself?

MILHOUS: I think he would come back to the market.

ARENA: Would he come back whether there was work or not? For example, did you get the impression he just liked to be around?

MILHOUS: I think he did. He wanted to be around.

ARENA: As a young man it is frequently noted that he liked to talk and discuss politics. What do you recall of that when you knew him yourself, Chuck, this propensity and this desire of his to really get into political discussions with people? Did you find evidence of that?

MILHOUS: I believe he did. I didn't really get involved with him, but I know that he talked to other people in the area and probably talked to my father some too.

ARENA: You don't recall, or do you possibly, some of the particular items of politics that interested him, say, local politics or national politics or state politics?

MILHOUS: I'm not too well aware of it.

ARENA: How about Donald himself. You had more contact with Donald. Did you and Donald get into political discussions or did you notice that Donald himself had an interest in politics? It could be a natural interest because his brother was in Congress, was it something that was always on his mind?

MILHOUS: No, we didn't discuss it too much.

ARENA: Do you recall while you were working in the store were there any problems because the President was in Congress at the time? Was there any unpleasant experiences all the time you were in the store--'46 to '56--which would include, of course, his stay in the House of Representatives, his being a senator and actually his being the Vice President? Do you recall ever any unpleasant experiences that you personally witnessed, some character coming in looking for a fight or anything like that?

MILHOUS: No, I don't believe we had any problems.

ARENA: That would be either local or strangers. Never any incidences like that you can recall?

MILHOUS: I think a lot of people stopped by to see where the store was and they knew that he was in politics and were just interested to see the place that he came from, I believe.

ARENA: How about newspaper people, do you recall that they interviewed you personally during this period and was that ever a kind of natural and common thing to find newspaper people around?

MILHOUS: We didn't there. The only time that I was contacted was at the Inauguration.

ARENA: The Presidential Inauguration, not the Vice Presidential Inauguration?

MILHOUS: The Presidential. We had reporters there who talked to us.

ARENA: When you say there, you mean right there in the store?

MILHOUS: This was in Washington, D.C.

ARENA: And you attended that yourself, Chuck?

MILHOUS: Yes.

ARENA: I understand there were relatives from all over the country and were these relatives that, for the most part, you were meeting for the first time, or had you been in contact with these over the years?

MILHOUS: Most of them I've known for quite some time. There were a few that we hadn't met.

ARENA: Would these be, say, relatives in other parts of the country like Indiana, the Midwest and possibly some on the Eastern side?

MILHOUS: Yes, there were some cousins from the Midwest.

ARENA: Also would you say, Chuck, that most of your contact with relatives has been mainly with a particular branch like the Milhouses or the Nixons or the Burdges? Is there one particular family group that really stands out from the standpoint of most frequent contact, is it not that noticeable?

MILHOUS: I would say with the Milhous relatives primarily.

ARENA: Is it a fact or would you be making a good guess that as far as the Nixons on the West Coast, there aren't nearly as many as there are Milhouses? That would explain why your most common contact would be the Milhouses?

MILHOUS: Right.

ARENA: Did you ever get to meet, by any chance, Uncle Frank Nixon's brother from Pennsylvania who was a professor at Penn State. He was in agriculture too, I believe.

MILHOUS: I met him at the Inauguration.

ARENA: You did meet him there. He was quite elderly if I am not mistaken, and probably not too well.

MILHOUS: That was the first time.

ARENA: Would you describe him, what impression you had of him? You say you had an actual chance to talk with him not just meet him.

MILHOUS: Just a short time. He was a very tall fellow.

ARENA: Did he look like Frank himself, Uncle Frank?

MILHOUS: I think there was maybe a little resemblance.

ARENA: I was wondering about the height, age and the man's facial features. There was no mistake that these two were brothers, for example?

MILHOUS: As I say, I met him just the one time in the East.

ARENA: This tape is coming to a close here. Is there anything I left out during this period when you were working in the store and that you would like to mention at this point? Any incident or any. . . .

MILHOUS: I would like to say that I appreciated the chance to work there and we all helped each other out. If anyone had problems there was somebody there to help you, and if you could help someone else why everyone was glad to do it. I think we all got along real well.

ARENA: In other words, you felt that it wasn't just a job for money, but you felt as though it was a good relationship too and you enjoyed going there.

MILHOUS: I enjoyed the work there. I was interested in trying to help the people that came in to shop, and if there was anything that we could do for them, everybody was real happy to be of service. It was just a real friendly place of business.

ARENA: You probably have heard that Uncle Frank and Aunt Hannah were soft touches in general. That a lot of times they helped people and they kept an awful lot of accounts where people didn't have money and they would carry them. Was that policy carried over under the new management, namely under Donald? In other words, did Donald also keep a lot of people on account where they didn't pay cash and did he do this as much as he did on a cash basis? Or did you not have access to that information?

MILHOUS: I think it was done a little less. I believe he did help people that couldn't pay each time. They would pay when they got the money.

ARENA: Was there a regular arrangement where people would be sent say monthly bills--something like that?

MILHOUS: I think they did do that. At one time people could charge and they would be sent a statement.

ARENA: And some people, even though they could pay, they would prefer to have a monthly statement?

MILHOUS: I'm sure that was done.

ARENA: Chuck, I really can't thank you enough for these two interviews and if you don't mind, will you allow us to invite you back in case you recall something that I haven't brought up or in case I come across something that might involve you that neither one of us are thinking about now? The people sometimes say, "When do you finish interviewing a person?" In a way we never do because a person's memory plays tricks. You may think of something or I might think of something. I do appreciate your taking the trouble from your busy day at the end of the

day to come out and do this. I know the students of history will appreciate it too.

MILHOUS: Thank you very much for asking me. It's been a pleasure.