



1-18-1972

Ellen Cochran (January 18, 1972)

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Oral History Interview

with

MRS. ELLEN COCHRAN

January 18, 1972
Yorba Linda, California

By Dr. C. Richard Arena

For the Richard Nixon Oral History Project

ARENA: This is interview #1 with Mrs. Ellen Cochran, maiden name Ellen Christine Anderson, of Yorba Linda, California. Today's date is January 18, 1972, Arena interviewing. Mrs. Cochran, may I begin by asking you where and when you were born?

COCHRAN: I was born in North Carolina in 1898, March 12.

ARENA: And what part of North Carolina, if I may ask?

COCHRAN: It's Greensboro.

ARENA: I don't know if you are aware of it, but Greensboro, I've been told, is a leading Quaker community, and I was wondering if you had any connection or any contact with Quakers in Greensboro, yourself, or your family?

COCHRAN: No. We were there just a few years when I was born, and we weren't acquainted with any.

ARENA: And none of the members of your family, as far as you know, from Greensboro had any connection with the Quaker community.

COCHRAN: No, we didn't.

ARENA: And do you mind if I ask you how it was that you came to Yorba Linda, and when was it that you did come here?

COCHRAN: I came here in the fall of 1920. I had been teaching in Arizona for two years, and I wanted to apply for a position in California, so I went to the Normal School [Los Angeles State Normal School] where I had graduated, and she recommended me for this position.

ARENA: Would you mind giving a brief resume of your own educational experience; that is, both the formal school work and your teaching experience before you came to Yorba Linda, and how many years you had been teaching here before you taught in the third grade when President Nixon was one of your pupils?

COCHRAN: I graduated from the Los Angeles State Normal School, and then I taught two years near Prescott, Arizona.

ARENA: Do you happen to know if this Los Angeles Normal School eventually became UCLA, University of California at Los Angeles?

COCHRAN: Yes. A few years later the Los Angeles State Normal School became UCLA university.

ARENA: And how many years had you been teaching altogether before you became President Nixon's third grade teacher?

COCHRAN: I had taught just the two years, and this was my third year of teaching when I had him in the second grade and in the third grade.

ARENA: And do you happen to know if you ever came into Prescott, Arizona while Mrs. Nixon [Hannah Milhous Nixon] visited that area with her sick oldest boy, Harold [Samuel Nixon], who went there for health purposes while he was suffering from tuberculosis?

COCHRAN: No, I did not meet her there, at all.

ARENA: Do you happen to recall if ever when you did meet her that question came up, of her going to that climate, or that she was thinking of going there with her oldest boy, Harold?

COCHRAN: No, I didn't know anything about that until several years later. I heard about it while I was in Yorba Linda.

ARENA: Mrs. Cochran, what do you recall of the very first time of meeting President Nixon as one of your students? Was this during the regular course, his coming in the class,

or was there some previous meeting, or maybe the teachers met with the parents in some special way? And, under any circumstances, what do you recall as the earliest time--by time I mean year--that you recall meeting with President Nixon as a student?

COCHRAN: The first time I ever met him was when he was in my class in the fall of 1920. I had not met the family before.

ARENA: Was there any special procedure for the fall, or for the first day? Was the first day, for example, a full day of classes? Do you recall anything in particular about this first meeting, especially if the President himself did anything in particular?

COCHRAN: No, I don't remember. There were just so many children, I didn't remember one from the other right the first day.

ARENA: Were you a teacher where you had more than one group of students in one classroom? For example, did you have more than one grade when the President was in the second grade?

COCHRAN: Yes, I had the two grades in my room, the second grade and the third grade.

ARENA: And at that particular time, was the room part of a building in which there were how many other rooms? For example, was that a separate building, the first and second grades, or not?

COCHRAN: No, I believe there were three other rooms in the same building with my room.

ARENA: And did all of the teachers have two grades at the same time, as you did?

COCHRAN: No, most of them had just the one grade. The third and fourth grades were together.

ARENA: Do you recall about how many students there were in your two grades at the same time, roughly? How many were in that one room?

COCHRAN: Well, I think that to start with there were more than forty, and there were too many for my room, and so part of the third grade was sent in to the fourth grade room.

- ARENA: When you first came to Yorba Linda were you aware that you were going to have that type of situation? Had you been prepared to teach two grade levels at the same time in the same room, say, or was this something that you had to teach yourself, so to speak?
- COCHRAN: Oh, well, I don't remember if I was told that I would have two grades. When I taught in Arizona I had six grades in one room, and the next year I had four grades in one room, so the two grades just seemed real good.
- ARENA: Do you recall that the school ended--I'm thinking now of when you were teaching at Yorba Linda in 1920--that the elementary school ended with the sixth grade, or did it go up through the eighth grade?
- COCHRAN: No. It went through the eighth grade in those days.
- ARENA: And were all of those students up through the eighth grade in the same building?
- COCHRAN: No, they were not in the same building. There were about three buildings, and one had the kindergarten and one had the first grade, and the other grades were in the other building.
- ARENA: What was the actual school day for the pupils themselves? Again, when President Nixon was in that period, 1920, what were the hours, if you recall, for the school day? When did the bell ring to open up the day, and when were the students dismissed at the end?
- COCHRAN: Well, all of the grades opened at 9 o'clock in the morning. I believe the second grade was out around 2 o'clock and the third grade a little later, maybe 2:30, and the upper grades were later.
- ARENA: Do you recall when the school year began; the month, and around the day? Would it be like the first Monday after Labor Day, so to speak? When did the school year open, and when did it finish?
- COCHRAN: It opened, it must have been close to the second week of September, and it was around the first week of June when we closed.
- ARENA: And did the children have any special problems as the children of ranchers who had to work on the ranch, some of them? Were there any special problems, that they would be dismissed from school, or was there a high degree of absenteeism because of their obligations to work on their

parents' ranch? And, of course, I'm thinking particularly of President Nixon, but I'm thinking of the students as a whole, as well.

COCHRAN: No. We didn't have that problem in Yorba Linda. Most of the ranches were either lemon groves or orange groves, and many of the parents worked in the oil well, oil fields.

ARENA: In other words, as far as the needs of the lemon growers, those who were citrus growers, they did not have to pull their students out of classes after they began and before they ended for any particular harvest season, or any particular work.

COCHRAN: No, the children didn't have to be excused for any of the work to help their parents that way.

ARENA: Do you recall if there was any disaster--a flood or any unusual event--especially during the President's year, 1920 (when it began), that school was closed for any reason?

COCHRAN: I don't think we were closed for any reason at all during 1920-21.

ARENA: What were the living conditions for you teachers around that time, in the sense that, were there any special living quarters provided by the education department of the area, or was every teacher on her own, or was the tendency to live with private families? What do you recall about your own living conditions around 1920?

COCHRAN: Well, there weren't any particular places to live, but I lived and boarded with a private family the two years that I was there. And some of the teachers rented a house, and three of them lived there.

ARENA: Do you recall what your rent was, and if it was a separate sum, what you paid for your meals, if you ate with a private family, as well?

COCHRAN: Well, they charged me forty dollars a month for my meals and living room, to live there.

ARENA: Were the meals three times a day?

COCHRAN: Yes. Of course, the lady packed a lunch for me to eat at school at noon. I ate breakfast and dinner with the family.

ARENA: Were you the only teacher and only boarder living with this family?

COCHRAN: The first year I was the only one. The next year I boarded with another family and another teacher, two of us boarded there.

ARENA: Did you find, if I may be so blunt, that you were getting your money's worth? Were the accommodations, the room and the meals, satisfying at that time?

COCHRAN: Yes, I was always very happy. I had people who were good cooks, and everything was nice and clean and comfortable, so I was very fortunate.

ARENA: If it isn't too personal, did you have a private bath or did you have to use one that was shared by the members of the family?

COCHRAN: In those days homes usually had just the one bathroom. I had a private bedroom all my own. But not having large families there, it wasn't much of a problem that way.

ARENA: Although you were teaching and living in Yorba Linda, did you have relatives in nearby cities, such as Los Angeles [California], for instance, whom you could visit from time to time?

COCHRAN: Well, it happened that my sister, who was younger than I was, was in Los Angeles, and my father was living at a distance, so that was all the family I had. I was almost by myself.

ARENA: If it isn't too personal, again, were you lonely and homesick because of the distance between you and your family, and the fact that you were in a new community and living with a strange family, so to speak? Did you find that you had a difficult year of personal adjustment?

COCHRAN: No. I was never homesick. I was always made to feel at home, and so I was very happy.

ARENA: Did you have a chance, either before or right around this time, 1920, of traveling around the country or in foreign countries?

COCHRAN: No, I didn't get around very much then. We didn't have our own automobiles. Once in awhile we'd take the streetcar and go into Los Angeles for a day.

ARENA: Do you remember the name of the company that operated those streetcars, by any chance? Were these the red cars, for example?

COCHRAN: The Pacific Electric cars.

ARENA: And this would take you into Los Angeles, and places in between?

COCHRAN: Yes.

ARENA: How often did you travel to Los Angeles during these school years?

COCHRAN: Oh, I think sometimes we went, maybe, once a month.

ARENA: And what could one do in Los Angeles?

COCHRAN: Well, we could just shop and have lunch, and that was about all. [Laughter]

ARENA: How long did it take, if I may ask, to go from here to Los Angeles? Was it a long trip at that time?

COCHRAN: It took less than an hour. I can't remember exactly how long.

ARENA: Did you usually return the same day?

COCHRAN: Yes.

ARENA: Did you continue your education during this period, in the way of college courses or anything like that?

COCHRAN: No.

ARENA: And there was no demand on the part of the Board of Education that you do so, that you had to take courses during the summer, for example? There was no such demand as that?

COCHRAN: No, at that time there were not.

ARENA: Now I'd like to return to the actual school conditions and the actual school day. Would you mind describing what a typical second grade school day was like, from the standpoint of an hour-by-hour description: what was being done the very first thing in the morning; about when did the students leave for lunch; when did they come back; and how was the subject matter spread over the day, to the best of your recollection?

COCHRAN: We, of course, started at 9 o'clock in the morning, and we had the salute to the flag--not every day--and I think usually we had arithmetic the first thing, and usually about twenty minutes. And then, while I was teaching the third grade class, I would have written work for the second grade to do. And we had reading another--like a half hour. Then around 10:30 they had a recess, they went outside and played for about twenty minutes. Then we'd have a spelling period. I usually helped them study their spelling, and then they would study it by themselves; the same with the reading. Lunch time was from 12:00 till 1:00, they had an hour. All of us brought our lunches, the children and the teachers. There was a period for penmanship which I usually combined with both grades. In the afternoon we had reading again, and we had drill on arithmetic, and of course, what we would call language, and geography, and those subjects kind of came in between, too.

ARENA: I notice that you did mention that you had the pledge of allegiance. Do you recall if there was any reading from the Bible, or any prayer, or anything in that regard?

COCHRAN: No, there wasn't anything scheduled on subjects like that. Of course, in reading, if anything was brought up, any poetry or any stories, anything like that, it just all came in naturally. There wasn't any emphasis on any religion.

ARENA: Were there any special subjects in the sense of music or art that would allow, maybe, teachers to come in from the outside, not regular teachers, for example? Was there anything like that, especially around this period when the President was attending?

COCHRAN: Well, that year we didn't have the special art teachers or special music teachers, but some years later there were special teachers from the county who came to the different schools and taught some of those subjects. In my case, the kindergarten teacher came in and taught music to my group while I taught sewing to the upper grade girls, so everything was just done within our own school area.

ARENA: Do you recall how she went about doing this? I'm just thinking, would this be teaching the students to read notes? Did she take some aside and attempt to teach them the reading of music, as well as musical instruments? Do you think that might have taken place?

COCHRAN: Well, no. In those days we didn't have the musical instruments. They weren't taught. And of course in the lower grades, my grades, it was mostly the singing of songs.

ARENA: Choir work, that sort of thing?

COCHRAN: Probably, and I don't think there was so much detail. She may have given a little instruction in the notes, music, something like that.

ARENA: Would you happen to know, as a matter of fact, if President Nixon at that time was studying music from anyone in the community, as well as from the teacher who came in occasionally? And when I say occasionally, was there a special time every week that she would come?

COCHRAN: Yes, there was. I think she came in twice every week because I taught sewing two afternoons a week to the upper grade girls.

ARENA: And that was for the entire afternoon when she did come in twice a week?

COCHRAN: Yes. With the little children there it was till 2:00 or 2:30.

ARENA: So I'll go back to that question, can you think whether or not President Nixon was taking music lessons from anyone in the community?

COCHRAN: No, I didn't know anything about that, if he was at that time.

ARENA: Did you happen to know if anyone in the community was tutoring, or offering music lessons, including maybe this teacher who would come in from kindergarten to teach music?

COCHRAN: Well, of course, she wasn't giving lessons. She had her own kindergarten to teach. Yes, there was one lady who gave piano lessons, I remembered. I don't know if any of the small children went to her. And there may have been others that I didn't know about.

ARENA: Could I ask you if you ever came into contact with any of the President's other members of the family: his father, Mr. [Francis Anthony] Frank Nixon, his mother, Mrs. Hannah [Milhous] Nixon, and he had two other brothers. One was Harold [Samuel Nixon], the oldest, and then one brother just a year younger by the name of Donald [Francis Donald Nixon]. I was wondering if you recall any of these relatives.

COCHRAN: Well, I met the mother and the father, and of course, Richard. And then one of the boys was a little older than Richard in another grade in school. I remember him out on the playground. But the others I hadn't met. I met Donald after Richard had become Vice President.

- ARENA: Was he not attending the earlier grade, do you re-
collect?
- COCHRAN: I just don't remember Donald in school, but he must
have been there, of course.
- ARENA: There would have been a grade difference, and if the
President was promoted ahead of time, it would have
separated them even more, as a matter of fact, which
meant that you would have less opportunity.
- COCHRAN: Yes. Then I think it was the next year when I taught
the fifth grade that I think the family moved from
Yorba Linda.
- ARENA: In 1922 they moved to East Whittier [Californial].
- COCHRAN: Yes, that's still another year.
- ARENA: Do you recall ever being in the home of the Nixon
family in Yorba Linda?
- COCHRAN: Yes, at one time, I remember going for breakfast on
a Sunday. Mr. Nixon had a Sunday School class, and I
was invited for breakfast that time.
- ARENA: Would you describe, as much as you can, that breakfast
invitation: for whom was it given, what did you eat,
and how long did you remain there?
- COCHRAN: Oh, I wouldn't remember any details like that.
- ARENA: Do you recall the occasion? Was this a normal and
routine thing for a teacher to visit the homes in a
small community like that?
- COCHRAN: Well, no, we weren't invited much to visit, but Mr.
Nixon having his Sunday School class is the reason,
probably. I went a few times to his Sunday School
class.
- ARENA: In other words, he specifically invited a teacher to
sit in on his Sunday School class of youngsters.
- COCHRAN: I don't seem to remember the details. I just remembered
that I was there.
- ARENA: And was this Sunday School class held in his home or in
the church, or in another special building?

COCHRAN: No, they had a little church over in the main part of town that they held their Sunday School classes and the church meetings.

ARENA: Do you recall, at all, the type of personality and type of teacher Mr. Frank Nixon was in his Sunday School class?

COCHRAN: Well, not particularly.

ARENA: Did it seem to be a large class, for example?

COCHRAN: No, there weren't so many people here, and it just seems like there was a very small group.

BEGIN SIDE II, TAPE I

ARENA: Let me ask you this question if you don't mind, Mrs. Cochran: Do you think, concerning this visit to Mr. Frank Nixon's Sunday School class, that he might have done that with the intention of persuading a non-Quaker to become a Quaker?

COCHRAN: No, I didn't think of it that way.

ARENA: Do you recall that he ever purposely took you aside in any way and discussed religion with you?

COCHRAN: No, he never did anything like that.

ARENA: Did you know Miss Jessamyn West at that time?

COCHRAN: No, I didn't know her.

ARENA: Did you know that she was living in the community at that time, although you didn't know her personally?

COCHRAN: I didn't know her at all, I had no contact with her.

ARENA: You had no opportunity to see her as one of his Sunday School pupils, as she said she was? You don't recall seeing her . . .

COCHRAN: No, I just don't remember a thing about her.

ARENA: Do you recall ever attending any of the services of the Quakers, and possibly meeting any of the Nixons themselves during the religious services at that same Quaker church?

COCHRAN: No, I don't remember attending the church services.

ARENA: Do you recall the nature of the Nixon home from the standpoint of its physical layout and the furnishings, whether they were meager, whether they were clean; whatever you can recall about the home, both inside and outside, at the time?

COCHRAN: Well, of course, I being as young as I was, I guess I didn't think too much about the furniture they had. Everything was so neat and clean that it looked nice to me.

ARENA: Do you think it was a typical home of Yorba Linda at that time? Did it seem to be unusual in any way?

COCHRAN: No, I think maybe their home was a little nicer home than many of the little homes that were put up out on the ranches.

ARENA: Were you aware that Mr. Frank Nixon was a carpenter? Did he do any work, for example, for the school? Did you ever see him working around the school buildings?

COCHRAN: No, I didn't know anything about that at the time.

ARENA: Do you mind if I ask you, in view of the fact that you were teaching in a farming community, if you yourself grew up in a farm community, Mrs. Cochran?

COCHRAN: Through high school and in grammar school I lived in a farming community. Those were more cattle-ranch type countries. And in high school I was out where they raised strawberries and garden crops. And I did live on an orchard, too, in Riverside [California] for five years, where my father worked. I was a little familiar with that type.

ARENA: As you think back, did you feel as though you would have preferred to live in the city, rather than this ranch community? Did you feel as though you were a beginner and you had to take whatever job was offered, but if you had your own choice, you would have preferred, we'll say, San Francisco [California] or Los Angeles? Do you recall that you had any feelings like that?

COCHRAN: No, I always liked the country. I just hated the city. When I was going to school in the city, I wanted to get out, far away from the city. I liked the country.

ARENA: Did you find that, from the standpoint of opinions of people, from the standpoint of dress, that there was an appreciable difference between the people living in the city then, and the people living in the country now, or did you think that you had just about everything, obviously,

except masses of people, but that the small community offered you just about the same things that the big city offered you, including newspapers, opportunities to buy things that people could buy in the big cities, because of the trolley car and that situation?

COCHRAN: Well, of course, where I lived we usually had to go to the city to buy anything, except, of course, we had little community grocery stores maybe, but mostly we had to get material or ready-made clothes in the city.

ARENA: Now I'd like to just ask this general question, and you answer it any way you'd like and take as much time as you like: What do you remember about President Nixon, from the beginning to end while he was your pupil, whatever comes to mind?

COCHRAN: I just remember him as a quiet studious boy. I remember him much in the first part of the year when he was in the second grade.

ARENA: This was when you had the two grades at once.

COCHRAN: Yes. And then I had promoted him to the third grade during the half year, and I remember him sitting in the back seat and there were several of his friends. They were always quiet, and he was business-like, rather studious, and he took his schooling seriously.

ARENA: Excuse me for interrupting, but on that point of seating, was there any procedure that you or the school had of putting the, let's say, mischievous or active pupils [Laughter] in the front to keep your eye on them; was there anything like that pattern?

COCHRAN: Well, that was my way of doing things, sometimes.

ARENA: So that if a pupil did sit in the rear, it would be a good indication that he did not need much constant supervision.

COCHRAN: Yes.

ARENA: Was there anything like an automatic division from the standpoint of level of work; for example, those who were doing the best work, did they tend to sit in a certain part in the room?

COCHRAN: Yes, usually they were toward the back. And, of course, you supervised them, also, but the mischievous ones were those who were not quite so interested in their school work. You had them where you could watch them more closely.

- ARENA: And on the question of seating, how were the two grades divided, in the sense of those in one grade in the rear and those in another grade in the front, or was it a division of right and left?
- COCHRAN: It was more a division of right and left; one sat on one side of the room, and the other on the other half. And that way it was easier to conduct your class while the other class was doing its written work.
- ARENA: I didn't mean to interrupt other than to clarify that seating arrangement, and would you continue with whatever comes to mind about your recollections of the President as your pupil.
- COCHRAN: And then at recess time and at noon time after the lunches, I always went out in the yard to supervise their playing and games. Richard, I can remember him playing ball. He didn't give any trouble out in the yard. He was interested in his games just like he was in his studies.
- ARENA: Were there ever special students, or any students, who were designated as helpers, for example, those who maybe clapped erasers for you, or did anything in the way of supervising the other pupils, and did the President ever do any of that for you?
- COCHRAN: Well, I don't particularly remember so much of that, the children who might have helped that way. I just don't remember.
- ARENA: Is there anything else regarding either the recess or the actual school participation of the President that comes to mind? Any particular subjects, for example, in which he seemed to excel, if that comes to mind among so many pupils?
- COCHRAN: No, I don't. Of course, there isn't such a length of different subjects in the second and third grades that way as in the upper grades, so that everything we had he was good at, reading or spelling, writing and arithmetic.
- ARENA: Do you ever recall sending a note home to his mother for any reason at all; say, discipline, or pulling a student prank, or anything like that?
- COCHRAN: No, I know I never did.

ARENA: Do you recall that there were any students, especially on this level of the second and third grade, any students who were outstanding, who really caught your eye and you still remember them today, for whatever reason? Maybe they were extra mischievous, or they were extra brilliant as students. Do you recall that there were some at that point?

COCHRAN: Yes, there was. I know one of the boys, Carl Morris, I believe it was. He sat close to Richard Nixon, and then later. . . . I hadn't met him later, but he went up northwest and was quite an artist.

ARENA: Is that what caught your attention and that you still recall, that it was his art work, or was it the overall ability and work of the young man?

COCHRAN: No, I just remember him as a good student. He was, in a way, similar, interested in his school, and always very neat, and was one of Richard Nixon's friends at school.

ARENA: And you have no idea where he may be at this moment, by the way?

COCHRAN: No, I don't. I had just heard about him. And then, of course, one or two of the mischievous ones--at that time I didn't realize they were related, but I think they must have been cousins, too. This little boy, you know I had him in the front seat and Richard Nixon in the back.

ARENA: You don't recall his name.

COCHRAN: Jesse [G.] Milhous. Jesse was quite mischievous.

ARENA: Do you recall what some of the schedules for these youngsters--maybe the typical schedule of these young farm boys--was at that time? Do you recall, for example, what time they got up in the morning to do what chores were expected of them at home? In other words, what about their non-school hours?

COCHRAN: I didn't know much about their home life or their work before and after school.

ARENA: Do you recall what was available for these youngsters in the way of recreation in the community? Were there circuses, we'll say, that ever came to town, or vaudeville, or anything along these lines?

COCHRAN: It doesn't seem that I remember any, just out here at Yorba Linda. There may have been circuses at other, larger towns.

- ARENA: Just to be sure, was there anything like a swimming pool that was operated by anyone, either a private one or a public one, or one operated by the school itself?
- COCHRAN: No, there wasn't anything in the community or school. Swimming pools hadn't come in so much then, or particularly out in the country. I think there was one over in Anaheim Park that was for the public. I'm not sure if it was operating that early, though.
- ARENA: Do you have some general idea when the first swimming pool did come to Yorba Linda, and was it a private one or a public one?
- COCHRAN: I don't know. A family out on a ranch had their own, about the only one it seems to me, about in the 1930's. I remember her mentioning about so many of the children coming up there for their swimming pool. I don't think there were so many until just the last few years, when they've become so popular for private homes all over.
- ARENA: Do you recall the youngsters, including young Richard Nixon, swimming in the Anaheim ditch, as it was called, that ran along his property?
- COCHRAN: I just would hear from others about it. They weren't supposed to swim in the ditch.
- ARENA: But you know that that actually did take place, and it was common for the youngsters to do that.
- COCHRAN: Oh, yes. It was a ditch for the orchards to get their water from. And then there was a lake that they weren't supposed to get into. I would just hear about this from others.
- ARENA: I see. You didn't actually see this, but you were pretty certain that it took place.
- COCHRAN: I wasn't out where those things happened.
- ARENA: Did you hear that there was a particular individual whose function it was to kind of supervise this and keep the youngsters out, or, if they got in trouble, help them get out? Was there some person . . .
- COCHRAN: Mr. [Raphael] Navarro was employed by the water company for a number of years who would chase the kids away.
- ARENA: There is a gentleman named Ralph [Navarro], I believe, still living.

COCHRAN: One of the Navarros just passed away not long ago. I'm not sure if he was the zanjero or not.

ARENA: During the school year were there any particular events such as assemblies--I'm thinking of special assemblies in connection with the birthdays of Presidents [Abraham] Lincoln and [George] Washington, for example--that come to mind, anything special along those lines?

COCHRAN: As I remember, we didn't. Any special days like that we just had our own program in our own grades. We didn't have any large hall or any large room where the school could gather together. It was some years later when they built a new school that they had like an assembly hall.

ARENA: Do you recall that any of these programs--little skits or little plays--were put on in which the President appeared, in particular, and his role?

COCHRAN: No, I don't seem to particularly remember.

ARENA: But did that sort of skit take place? Were there little plays that were put on by the students?

COCHRAN: We didn't have so many things like that, but the school did gather together and have a large program outside someplace, sort of an Indian program, but I can't remember what Richard Nixon did in that program, or anything.

ARENA: Was it a situation, which happens in some schools, some school programs with youngsters, where there would be a place for everyone? In other words, even though they were one of the extras in a group. If it dealt with Indians, they might have been one of the little Indians. Do you think that there was that type of a situation where, regardless of the play, everyone would have some role? So, very likely, President Nixon did play some part, although you're not sure precisely which one.

COCHRAN: No, I wouldn't remember. Of course, usually to get all of the children in, then they're in one large group. In those days, you could get gunny sacks, and I remember getting gunny sacks and we unravelled them just to make their costumes. A few would have more individual parts, but to have all the children they were all in some sort of a group.

ARENA: Do you recall if anything was done specially for such important holidays as Christmas? Did the school children in any way get a Christmas tree, put on a special Christmas program?

COCHRAN: Well, I imagine the other rooms did. We would have our own. Getting out a week or so before Christmas day, I don't quite remember about having a Christmas tree. I remember just giving them a little treat of some kind, and having some kind of a little Christmas program, but each grade did their own that way.

ARENA: How about Easter? Was there anything special in the way of an Easter program or affair?

COCHRAN: I don't remember about anything special.

ARENA: Was there ever any occasion where the community and the school would get together? And in these skits, for example, that you do recall, would the community, parents and anyone be welcome as guests, or were these something that were just among the school people themselves?

COCHRAN: Well, I remember this large program. It was sort of a community affair that time. Of course, in those times everybody was so busy with their work they didn't do quite so much as far as recreational or special entertainment in our school, then, in those days.

ARENA: You did mention that the community was made up of the ranchers and their children, and also the new oil industry. Did you find that there was a difference in the way of approach and the way of learning for the children of these two different groups, or did they more or less merge as far as the classroom was concerned, and you don't recall any clear distinction between the children, we'll say, of the oil workers and the children of the ranchers?

COCHRAN: No, they all seemed to. . . . I remember just one little girl from the oil workers. I guess they had moved around quite a bit, but she finally settled down, too. They just all seemed to get along together.

ARENA: Were there any significant numbers of residents who were of Mexican background, or other nationalities from Europe; we'll say, people like the Basques or Italians, and were their children in the classroom, as well as those from Asia, such as those from Japanese ancestry?

COCHRAN: Well, there was the Basque family, and it was a large family, and their children were all very good in school. I didn't happen to have one of them in my grade, but I had a little Japanese girl in my grade.

- ARENA: Was there every any problem from the standpoint of language, especially in these early years? Did the Basque children and Japanese children present any problem from the standpoint of language?
- COCHRAN: Yes, it was a little hard for them, because their parents spoke the Japanese language, and the Basque-- their language. And it was a little hard for the children when they were first starting, but as they got older, of course, they learned the English language very well.
- ARENA: Do you recall if there was a policy in which the students were, under no circumstances, to speak their language in the school, to discourage them absolutely from maintaining the language?
- COCHRAN: We had so few children of these other nationalities that they had to learn English. It seems like I remember just the one Basque family, and there were quite a large number of children in that family.
- ARENA: Do you remember the name, by any chance?
- COCHRAN: Apalateguis, A P A L A T E G U I S. I didn't happen to have one of their children in my grade, but I knew the children later through school, even after I was out of the school.
- ARENA: I notice there is a drive called, is it Bastanchury?
- COCHRAN: Bastanchury, yes.
- ARENA: Bastanchury. Do you think that that might have been a Basque family?
- COCHRAN: I think so.