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Douglas W. Ferguson (August 19,1971)

C. Richard Arena
Whittier College

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Oral History Interview

with

MR. DOUGLAS W. FERGUSON

August 19, 1971
Whittier, California

By Dr. C. Richard Arena

For the Richard Nixon Oral History Project

ARENA: This is August 19, 1971. This is an interview with Mr. Douglas W. Ferguson. And the place is Whittier, California. Doug, when and where were you born?

FERGUSON: I was born in December, 1915, in Smyrna, Turkey.

ARENA: And what were you doing in Smyrna, Turkey? Was your mother just traveling, or were your folks missionaries?

FERGUSON: No, my father was employed by a British concern, a hardware concern out in Turkey. He went there from Scotland in the early 1900's. He met my mother there. My mother's parents were living in Greece; her parents were from Boston. They were married in Turkey and five boys were born there.

ARENA: That's fascinating. You and four other brothers.

FERGUSON: Right.

ARENA: How late did you live there--your age, more or less?

FERGUSON: I was seven when I came to Whittier [California], and it took us about seven or eight months to get here from Turkey. We came by way of the Island of Malta. We spent six weeks there in a prison camp as refugees from Smyrna. Then we went to Scotland and spent about six months until we could come to California, and we came directly

to Whittier. It was suggested we come here by some friends in Turkey. In fact, it was the president of the International College out there who had a mother in Whittier and thought this would be a fine place for my parents to bring up five boys. And it turned out that he was absolutely right.

ARENA: Fascinating. Where was your mother born?

FERGUSON: My mother was born in Salonika, Greece. As I said, her parents were from Boston.

ARENA: And what were her parents doing in Greece, if I may ask?

FERGUSON: Yes. My maternal grandfather was in the rug importing business in Greece, importing rugs and exporting them to the United States and Britain.

ARENA: Although American citizens, were they of Greek descent?

FERGUSON: No, no. I don't know too much about my maternal grandfather. He died when I was very young, but my maternal grandmother I knew quite well. She had relatives in London, I recall, and she had nothing but an Anglican background--no Greek in her background.

ARENA: You mention being in a prison camp at the time. Was that in connection with World War I?

FERGUSON: No, this was after World War I, Dick. The Greeks and the Turks used to have biannual uprisings in Smyrna, and those in power in Smyrna would dominate the scene while they were there. Then the losers would go back up in the hills and recoup their forces and get enough ammunition to take it away from the "ins". In other words, the "outs" would come in and the "ins" would be out. And about two years later we would go through it all again. This uprising in 1922 got pretty serious. We lived on the International College campus just out of Smyrna, and during this uprising we could see the bombs dropping on the hills around our little village, which was called Paradise, interestingly enough. But the bombs were dropping around there, and we could hear the firing from the soldiers' guns. They finally advised us to get out.

We had British Marines guarding our home, and I remember we packed on very, very short notice. In fact, my dad had to stay. At that time he was British General Postmaster in Smyrna. Mother and the five boys left, like on an hour's notice. We had the clothes on our backs and my youngest brother, John [Ferguson], was a babe in arms. Mother had a couple of changes of diapers for him and that was it. We left as refugees on a British hospital ship and went to the island of Malta, where they put us in

this prison camp. There were quite a few of us. I wouldn't have any idea how many now. But our family was put up in a little cell and we used to be fed out of the soup kitchens, and it was exciting, but I have forgotten practically everything. I have a recollection of seeing the soup kitchens come by, the traveling food carts as it were. During that time we got word that my father had been killed in Smyrna, which fortunately proved to be a wrong report. He joined us after about six weeks. The thing I remember best was that we went to Tunis in North Africa, and we all got a bath, which was quite a treat after six weeks of kind of washing out of a hand basin.

ARENA: How about your early schooling? Had you started school in Turkey?

FERGUSON: Yes, we went to school. We had a one-room school in the back part of the church on the college campus there, which was just across the street from our home, and interestingly enough, the only teacher I can remember was a lady from Whittier, a Miss [Janet] Craig. And as I recall, she was related to Mrs. Orville [Janet] Espolt. And Mrs. Espolt, of course, is still active in Whittier and Orville Espolt is very active in community affairs.

ARENA: That is an interesting coincidence. By the way, did I not see you with your parents on the street the other day? Are they both living?

FERGUSON: Yes, my father and mother are both living, still in the same house they have lived in since 1925 at 6042 Painter Avenue here in Whittier.

ARENA: Do you recall what he did when he first came here?

FERGUSON: Very well. It was very hard to find work in Whittier in 1923. The oil boom was on in Santa Fe Springs [California], and my father was quite good with figures and had something of a bookkeeping background and accounting. He went to work originally down at Pacific Clay Products in Los Nietos [California], and was putting bricks in the oven and taking them out and getting twenty-five cents an hour. But that was the only job he could get and he had five boys to feed. And as I recall, we did pretty well at the dinner table. We never had a day when we didn't have food on the table. Then from that he went to work painting walnut trees with whitewash to keep the ants from getting up into the walnut trees. And then he was able to obtain a job at what was then known as the Whittier Sanitary Dairy and is now the Quaker Maid Dairy. He got a job in the office there, keeping books and in later years became office manager of the dairy, and then when all the boys were through high school--the five of us all completed high school in Whittier--Dad went to work for a CPA [Certified Public Accountant] firm in Whittier and worked there for several years. He

then worked at Whittier College in the comptroller's office for a number of years before he retired. Now he's been retired about twelve years.

ARENA: I notice he still gets around on his own, without a wheel chair.

FERGUSON: Dad has got all faculties, getting a little forgetful and is legally blind. Although he can see to walk, he cannot read or watch television, or anything of that sort.

ARENA: Did he ever return to Scotland, his home country?

FERGUSON: Yes, Dad was back in Scotland probably the last time about twenty years ago, maybe fifteen, and was able to visit with his brother, who has since passed on. He had a very good trip, but the last few years he has not done any traveling.

ARENA: Have you ever done that yourself? Have you seen your father's home town and area?

FERGUSON: Oh, yes. I was back in 1966. My wife and I took a trip. We visited my uncle just before he died. He was still able to get around a little bit. It's thirty miles or so from Glasgow, Scotland. It's on the west coast of Scotland, quite an industrial city. We visited my father's home. We visited the home we lived in in Troon, which is famous for its golf course and it's on the seashore on the west coast of Scotland.

ARENA: Was Dad's home and area a farm community?

FERGUSON: No, not acutally. Well, the only thing I can think of that they make in Kilmarnock is Scotch Whiskey, but it's what I would call more an industrial area, very little farming in the area.

ARENA: How much formal education had Dad received in Scotland, if you recall?

FERGUSON: Dad, to the best of my knowledge. . . . They didn't call it high school. It would have been comparable to our high school. They called it the academy.

ARENA: Do you know if it was free or private? Did he receive a scholarship?

FERGUSON: Well, I remember everything was the reverse of what we think. The public schools were private and the private schools were public in those days. You had

to pay to go to the public schools and the private schools everybody could go to. It seemed a little incongruous to me at the time, but this is the way he explained it to me. But Dad did a lot of work at night on his own, correspondence courses and the like. I know when he came to this country he took a course from one of the mail order accounting courses and that got him an advancement in his job at the dairy. I remember when he completed that.

ARENA: Did he continue to go to school while he was here? Do you know if he did anything like that when he was in Turkey?

FERGUSON: I have no recollection of that.

ARENA: Do you recall how long he had been in Turkey before you left in 1922?

FERGUSON: Well, let's see. He's been married, this will be his 59th year next month. My older brother is 58, so Dad must have gone there in about 1910 or 1911, I would guess. So he would have been there about 11 years, 11 or 12 years, before we left in 1922.

ARENA: Are all of the boys college-educated?

FERGUSON: No, just the younger two are college-educated. My older brother and I both went to Fullerton Junior College [Fullerton, California] after graduating from Whittier High School in 1931. He stayed out a year. I went to school for two years at Fullerton. He followed me and went for two years. He was determined to learn to fly. He enlisted in the Army at March Field [California] and got a transfer to what was then known as the Army Air Corps and was fortunate enough to get an appointment to Randolph Field down in San Antonio, Texas, and went through Randolph and Kelly [Texas] Fields, and graduated about 1934 or '35. Got his wings as a flying cadet and then was appointed a 2nd lieutenant and gradually worked his way up and was in World War II and was in some major campaigns.

ARENA: In Europe or Asia or the South Pacific?

FERGUSON: In Europe, originally. He commanded. . . . I think he was air controller during the Normandy invasion. Then he ran the air support for General [George Smith] Patton going across France, and made several trips, I know, over Berlin [Germany]. He was not a bomber, he was a fighter pilot. Then he served as Deputy Commander, as I recall, in Korea with the 5th Air Force, and then finally ended up in Washington [District of Columbia] in the Pentagon, and finally out at Andrews Air Force Base [District of Columbia]. He finished his career as a Four Star General in charge of the Air

Force Systems Command. He is now retired. He retired just a year ago in September, 1970, and is now Vice President of United Aircraft in Hartford, Connecticut.

ARENA: I believe you started by saying he did not finish college, but he made out pretty well without a college degree.

FERGUSON: For two years of junior college, I think he did rather well.

ARENA: Very well. Do you recall if there were any complications citizenshipwise, because you were not born here? Did your father's citizenship automatically include you?

FERGUSON: It's what is called derivative citizenship. My parents obtained their citizenship through the process of naturalization. Five boys all being under age twenty-one, we got what is called derivative citizenship. We had to appear at the Immigration Office and get naturalization papers of our own. So we are all naturalized citizens through our parents.

ARENA: Do you know if possibly there was that arrangement, which I think happens today, in some cases where under similar circumstances children had a choice up to a certain age, say twenty-one, and you could or could not have taken your U.S. citizenship? Do you recall that coming up in any way at all?

FERGUSON: No. The only thing I recall is hearing my parents talk about the problem of getting into this country. By some quirk of immigration law, they had to come in under the British quota and the five boys had to come in under the Turkish quota, and the Turkish quota was so limited that we had to be sure to be at the port of entry--we came through Boston [Massachusetts]--on the first day of the immigration year, so all five of us could get in.

ARENA: You were probably THE Turkish quota, I'll bet.

FERGUSON: It could have been that we were the Turkish quota for that year.

ARENA: Coming in by way of Boston then, do you recall seeing your mother's folks and staying in Boston during that period?

FERGUSON: No, no. We got right on the train. My recollection of Boston is nil. The only thing I remember, I only remember two incidents on the way out. We stopped

at Lincoln Park in Chicago [Illinois]. We probably had to change trains, as would be natural in those days. And I remember going some place through the southwest part of the United States, Arizona or New Mexico, and seeing some Indians on the platform. We got off and got a blackberry pie and we ate it in our berth and made an awful mess. You can imagine five boys working on a blackberry pie. But those are the only two incidents I remember.

ARENA: 1922 was before the depression years, but a person not having any relatives, your father, and really no contacts, and I just want to be sure that I am correct. There were no relatives that your father had in California?

FERGUSON: No, my father's brother and my father's nephew and their families. . . . My father's brother had two young sons younger than we were, so they would be probably three and five years old, and his nephew had two young girls, and they would be just babes in arms practically. They came over on the ship with us from Scotland; we all came out to California together. But he had no relatives, only this connection through the mother of the president of the college in Turkey who had suggested we come here. We immediately became acquainted with friends of Mrs. Reed. It was Mrs. Arthur L. Reed, whose husband was an engineer, laid out some of the original water systems in the East Whittier ditch that brought water around the hill from San Jose Creek.

ARENA: Seth Pickering, I would imagine.

FERGUSON: He probably did. But Mrs. Reed got us acquainted in the [Plymouth] Congregational Church, and it was through those affiliations that Dad got some of the positions he did, finally, into the dairy.

ARENA: Would that be the Congregational church in Whittier or East Whittier?

FERGUSON: No, it's the one in Whittier on Beverly Boulevard at Pilgrim Way.

ARENA: Is the original building still standing, by any chance?

FERGUSON: The building that we first joined and went to church in at the corner of Wardman [Street] and Bright Avenue is still standing and is used by another church [Unitarian] congregation at the present time. It's a big stone building on the southwest corner of Bright and Wardman [Now Lutheran Towers].

ARENA: Did you attend Sunday school in that particular building?

FERGUSON: Yes, I attended Sunday school all the years I was going to Sunday school and I've belonged to that church I think since 1927. I'm still active in the church. I've held various offices in the church through the years. I was active in the building finance campaign when we built our new church out on Beverly Boulevard. I headed up our building finance committee for many years.

ARENA: Is that the church with the unusual architecture around the dip on Beverly Boulevard?

FERGUSON: Right.

ARENA: Oh, yes. It looks quite new. How old is it, actually?

FERGUSON: We built the church in 1955 and we just completed the recreation hall and social hall just this past year, 1969.

ARENA: I get the impression it's a community-minded church group. I recall having attended some three or four of the open meetings where it dealt with the minority problems, and Mr. [Arthur] Franco represented the Chicanos and Rabbi Joe Smith represented the Jews. And would you say that is typical and has been typical of your church all along, that it identifies with the community and has that sort of closeness?

FERGUSON: We have been rather liberal-minded, I think, by and large, through the years. During the time when the first Jewish people came to Whittier and had no place to meet, we offered them the facilities of our church, and they used the old church down at Bright and Wardman.

ARENA: Do you recall about what the date of that would be?

FERGUSON: That would be, I would guess, around 1950, because this was an era when the social action group in our church got rather active, and it was just the very beginning, I would say, of minority problems as we knew them then, and which have turned out to be rather larger problems as we've gone along. But I know we had a little rift in our church. Some people thought some of us were too liberal in acknowledging that these people were here and that we should try to do something about them. We, as a church, sponsored several families coming over here from Europe, people who had been chased from their homes and displaced, and it was the result of this and other problems which turned out to be for the betterment of the whole church; that one group split off and started the Hillcrest

Congregational Church [East Whittier], which has turned out to be a very strong church, and I think the Plymouth Congregational, which is the one on Beverly Boulevard, the one I still belong to, has turned out to be a better church for it. When you are pulling apart, nobody gets any place, and it seems to me that we have both done a better job as a Christian church by being able to approach this from a little more rational standpoint, not having the divisive influence that we had for a few years there.

ARENA: For those who are not members of your church, such as myself, I would be interested in knowing more about that type of situation. When you say the church broke off, it didn't break off theologically, so to speak?

FERGUSON: No, no. I think if I had to define a specific problem, the reason for breaking off was "liberals" versus "conservatives", and those should both be in quotes, because there are many definitions of the terms, as you well know. But it was a "social action" issue that was at the base of it all, and it was how far should the church get concerned in "social action". Some thought it should be a little more involved than others, and I think basically this is the difference.

ARENA: Could I ask you now to summarize your formal educational experience, which I presume has been all the way through the Whittier schools up to college?

FERGUSON: I started in elementary school in Whittier in the second grade. It was in the old Jonathan Bailey school up now where the Alpha Beta market is on Bailey Street and Comstock [Avenue]. And then they tore that school down and built the new Jonathan Bailey school. I went to that for the fifth and sixth grades. I went to the John Muir [Junior High] School for the seventh and eighth grades, and they tore that down just a few years ago. Whittier High School from 1927 to 1931. I was a little young, probably the youngest one in my graduating class. I was only fifteen when I graduated from Whittier High School in 1931.

ARENA: That puts you one year behind the President, who graduated in 1930.

FERGUSON: President Nixon graduated in 1930, that's right. So I was in high school with him for three years. He was one year ahead of me all the time. Then I went to Fullerton Junior College for two years, 1932 and '33, and you may have read in your history books there was somewhat of a depression in 1933. I was planning to go back to school, since I was only seventeen years old, and I applied for a job in the bank one day on a Thursday. I got a letter on Friday to come

to interview on Saturday, and I went to work on Monday. That was August of 1933, and I've been in the banking community ever since.

ARENA: What was the first bank?

FERGUSON: It was what is now Security Pacific National Bank. I went to work in the Belvedere Gardens Branch at Whittier Boulevard and Arizona [Street] in East Los Angeles [California].

ARENA: Was there anything in your education that led you to think, even before you went into banking, that you would go into banking?

FERGUSON: No, I wanted to be a forest ranger. I had ideas to be a forest ranger. I applied at Oregon State University, was accepted there when I got out of high school. I didn't have the wherewithall to go any place to college for that matter in 1931, and I was the number two boy in five boys, so there were lots of demands on what little money we didn't have. So I finally decided to go to junior college, and I tried to get into Pasadena Junior College where they had a course in Forestry, could not get a ride over there. I did not have a car and there was no public transportation. I was able to get a ride to Fullerton, so I went to Fullerton Junior College. I had an extra hour or two during the week when I had no classes and they had a bank in the school at that time, so I thought, well, I'll just fill in and take a job in the school bank to get some education on office machines and banking procedure. One thing led to another and the first thing you knew I was working in the bank.

ARENA: The fact that your father had had this long book-keeping and accounting experience, do you think that played a direct role, too? Had you observed him? Had he and you gotten together?

FERGUSON: Well, Dad was very good about spending time with the boys as much as he could, and I did like figures. I always liked arithmetic and mathematics and I was pretty good at figures, and it may have evolved just naturally, but I'm sure my parental influence had something to do with it. And in 1931 any kind of a job, even at \$65 a month, looked awfully good.

ARENA: And that's what your pay was?

FERGUSON: That was my starting pay, \$65 a month. I paid room and board at home. I paid my parents \$30 a month and I had to get a bus ticket. I took my lunch, so I saved \$10 a month, even in those days.

ARENA: Doug, would you give the full title of your present bank and your full title with that bank?

FERGUSON: I am President of Quaker City Federal Savings and Loan Association, which started in Whittier in March of 1920 as the Mutual Building and Loan Association of Whittier. In 1938 we took a federal charter and changed our name from Mutual Building and Loan to Quaker City Federal Savings and Loan.

ARENA: Would you happen to know the particular individual or group of individuals who are responsible for starting the bank? Are they tied in in any way with the original pioneer families that are associated with Whittier?

FERGUSON: The original organizer of the Mutual Building and Loan was a gentleman by the name of W. H. Kimball. He was a real estate man in Whittier, a real estate broker, and first he represented a building and loan over in Pomona [California]. He decided that it would be a good thing for Whittier to have one and he got together a group, and I am trying to think of the names of those that were in it.

ARENA: They were local people--it wasn't outsiders?

FERGUSON: Oh, no, all local people that started the Mutual Building and Loan. At the time I started in 1937, it was Mr. C. A. Carden that was president, Thomas W. Bewley, who for many years was City Attorney, and still an active attorney in town, was on the board. Lamar C. Stanley, who for many years was at the Farmers Hardware, was a director. C. E. Cole, who was a rancher down on Santa Fe Springs Road, was a director. A. E. Harris, who was from Long Beach [California], I suppose you would call him an investor. He had money in various investments in different types of properties. Mr. O. W. Maulsby, who was a long-time rancher around here, was a director, and later Dr. Raymond C. Thompson, who was a long-time physician and surgeon in the community and very active in hospital and other civic groups. His son is now a director of our association. Kenneth Ball, president of the Quaker Maid Dairy, is a director. Thomas W. Bewley is still a director. Seth Pickering is Senior Vice President of our association and a director. Seth was born in Whittier some sixty years ago and is from the Pickering family. I don't think he's directly related to Aquilla Pickering but must be a country cousin some place down the line.

ARENA: Does the bank have branches outside, or has it remained strictly a Whittier organization?

FERGUSON: We have remained strictly a Whittier organization. Last year we did open our first branch, which is on

East Whittier Boulevard across from the Whittwood Shopping Center, just a couple of miles out. It makes it a little more convenient for people in the East Whittier area. They don't have to drive into town. They can transact business at that office.

ARENA: Did the bank close down during the depression years?

FERGUSON: No, sir. No, sir. We have been in business since 1920 and we haven't missed any days of business.

ARENA: Does it have or maintain things such as special service or special character in a sense of differing from other banks?

FERGUSON: Well, a savings and loan is a specialty shop of finance, where you might call a bank a department store of finance. Savings and loan makes loans only on homes and takes only savings. We don't have checking accounts. We don't make automobile loans or business loans or inventory loans or things of that sort. So you might say from that standpoint, it's by charter and by design that we operate that way. And by choice we have been very active in community affairs through the years, active on school boards, chambers of commerce, all civic groups of all kinds, United Crusade, United Way, Salvation Army, YMCA [Young Men's Christian Association] boards, etc.

ARENA: I know you have an institutional membership in that new historical society known as the Whittier Historical Society. Doug, when you say WE have been active, how do you differentiate from the individuals and from the organization? There is such a thing as the corporation, which is a fictitious person, but you are a good example of the individual who is involved, and is that what you really mean, individuals of the bank?

FERGUSON: Individuals. If we have a corporate policy, it would be to plow back into the community some of the benefits we have reaped from the community.

ARENA: Could you give some specific examples of that?

FERGUSON: Let me go down the board of directors. Thomas W. Bewley has been president of the Chamber of Commerce, president of the Lions Club, active in many civic groups. Kenneth Ball has been president of the Chamber of Commerce, president of the Lions Club, active on the hospital board, active in his state trade association, the dairy association. Dr. Raymond Thompson who is on our board was president of the hospital board, very active in forming the Presbyterian Intercommunity Hospital, active in civic affairs of all

kinds. Lewis A. Myers, one of the former owners of Myers Department Store, was president of the Chamber of Commerce, very active in civic affairs. Ralph Thompson, present board member, has been president of the Uptown Whittier Association, which is a group trying to improve the environment in uptown Whittier. I was on the Whittier Union High School Board of Trustees for nine years. I am still on the Salvation Army advisory board. I've been on the United Way board since its inception I believe some ten years ago or so, served in the various offices there. Seth Pickering has served on the Whittier City School Board. He has been president of the Kiwanis Club. He is active in the Uptown Whittier Association. Our comptroller, Thomas Flores, is incoming president of the East Whittier Kiwanis Club. Lee Blair is active in Whittier Lions Club. So we try to do our share in the community affairs.

We have always been active in everything good. I overlooked the Rio Hondo Symphony Association, of which I am a director and treasurer. I am director and treasurer of the Central and West Basin Water Replenishment District, which is a water management group for the whole coastal basin here from Los Angeles clear down to the Orange County line. We try to keep the underground water supply adequate to meet emergency needs. And there must have been others who have been active in the church. Mr. Pickering is right now involved in a new campaign to raise funds to build a new Friends church here in Whittier. So we've been rather active, I would say, and also have given financial support to everything that we think is for the betterment of the Whittier community.

ARENA: Getting back to your formal education and your tie-in with banking. You had not taken, or had you, a business course at Fullerton Junior College? Your experience has been, so to speak, on the job. Would that be a correct general statement?

FERGUSON: Yes, except for the fact that I went to night school, probably spent at least fifteen years in night school, taking specialized courses relating directly to banking and the savings and loan field.

ARENA: Not necessarily getting a degree?

FERGUSON: No, I have no formal degree, except through the Savings and Loan Institute, I have what is called their standard degree, five-year pin. I still go to meetings all the time as part of the educational process.

ARENA: Now it is so much easier; so many more youngsters can get a college education. I assume that you would scarcely consider new personnel unless they do have a college education, or is that the case?

FERGUSON: That is very true. I am a great believer in education. In fact, my son is just now attaining his doctorate. He is in the process of completing his dissertation for his Ph.D. at UCLA [University of California at Los Angeles]. Well, he's thirty-three years old, so I've been putting him through school for a good many years. Although the last few years he has been on grants and able to finance himself.

ARENA: What is his field?

FERGUSON: History.

ARENA: I believe he's specializing in the non-popular or the so-called critical languages.

FERGUSON: Actually, his specialty is African history. He did two years of research in Ghana [Africa]. Now he will be starting this year teaching at Humboldt State College in Arcata, California.

ARENA: Can you think of any special reason why he would have gone into Africa for his special interest?

FERGUSON: My son went to Whittier College his first two years, and in counseling with some of his professors there, he had an interest in anthropology at the time. I don't know whether this came through discussions with my parents, their life in Turkey, or just what it came from, but he developed this interest in anthropology, and we were able to get him into the American University in Beirut, Lebanon. He took his upper division work there, and in this school he met, of course, a lot of people from all around Africa and the Middle East. I think that was one thing that brought him closer into the field.

He has always been interested in sociological problems. Our family had always had foreign students in our home from the time we were first married and the children were growing up. We had a girl from the Navajo Reservation down out of Gallup, New Mexico. She was with us for a year, lived as a member of the family. We had, while my boy was overseas, a Nigerian student here who lived with us for two years while he attended Whittier College. He went on to Cornell [University] and then back to Nigeria. So our family all had exposure to ideas that color was only something you saw with your eyes, that you should really judge a person by other qualities than the color of his skin. And Ed seemed to get the idea that maybe he should broaden his horizons, and he went off into this field.

ARENA: Is Ed for Edwin, Edward?

FERGUSON: Douglas Edwin Ferguson.

ARENA: Would you think that possibly the professor at Whittier who was interesting to him and who might

have stimulated him also might have been Robert W. O'Brien?

FERGUSON: I think it was Malcolm Farmer, who is still at Whittier College.

ARENA: He is particularly interested in those of Mexican background and is in charge of the bilingual program, as you know. That's very interesting.

FERGUSON: Yes.

ARENA: How about foreign travel, both you and your son, up to the present time? Had he gone along with you on foreign trips?

FERGUSON: Well, I wasn't able to do any traveling when I was raising my family. Ed did the traveling for us. He took a trip with Dr. C. Milo Connick from Whittier College. He took one of the trips to the Near East and visited in Beirut and saw the American College. He was planning to drop off the tour and go to school there. This was about the time they had one of their uprisings in Beirut [Lebanon] and the American Marines had moved in.

ARENA: It must have been during the [Dwight D.] Eisenhower administration.

FERGUSON: It must have been eight or nine years ago, anyway, maybe ten years ago. There was a question of whether the college was going to even open that year. So my son followed through with the tour and came on home, thinking that he wouldn't be able to go to school there. And then after a few frantic phone calls to the registrar at the American College in Beirut, we found out that the school was going to open, so we had made arrangements for him to go there and sent him back. So he's done that travel. Then on his way home or while he was over there, he flew to Rome and bought a little motor scooter and traveled from Rome [Italy] up to Munich [Germany] and down to Yugoslavia, down the Dalmatian Coast, across Rumania, down through Turkey, over to Cyprus and Rhodes and back to Beirut. This was about a three-month tour he took on his motor scooter, which I think was quite an education in itself. We didn't know where he was for several months. Letters didn't come through too well, but I think that was part of his travel that helped considerably. Then after he graduated from college, he took a trip down into the Sudan [Africa] and across into Nigeria [Africa], where the boy that had lived with us in Whittier had relatives whom we had known and met before, while the older brother went to the University of Southern California, so he visited there in Lagos, Nigeria, for a few days. And then home by way of Scotland, where he visited my uncle, and by way of Washington [District of Columbia]

where my brother was stationed at the time, and then home. So I'd say he had a little more travel than any of the rest of us. My travels were all pretty much confined, until recently, to ones when I was a child.

ARENA: Did your son ever encounter any opposition from you or Mrs. Ferguson regarding these overseas jaunts?

FERGUSON: The only opposition was if I couldn't borrow the money some place or raise the money some place, we might have to delay it a while. But no, we felt it was a very good investment. There was no quibble about that. It was just a matter of, there are just so many dollars and you can do just so much with X dollars. It was just a matter of allocating the dollars to make it available, and I had the borrowing capacity to finance the trip, which I was happy to do.

ARENA: Did you say he has received his doctorate or is about to receive it?

FERGUSON: He is working on his dissertation. He has passed his oral exams and it's a matter of presenting his dissertation, getting it completed.

ARENA: Do you happen to know the subject of that dissertation?

FERGUSON: No, it's something to do with some man that lived in the northern part of Ghana [Africa].

ARENA: Based on his personal research.

FERGUSON: Based on his personal research. That is the reason he got a Ford Foundation Fellowship for two years of research in Ghana, so it must be a field that either no one knows anything about or is in demand, I am not sure which.

ARENA: Both, actually.

FERGUSON: Yes, I guess you're right, Dick, because he had to translate. . . . One of the languages he had to study was Arabic, because some of the translating he had to do was from Arabic, which had not been translated at all into English.

ARENA: Many blacks in Africa, of course, are Muslims, which would tie them in with Arabic, of course.

FERGUSON: Yes.

ARENA: Is there anything I haven't brought up that you would like to mention, especially some unusual episode or event?

FERGUSON: No, the only thing I could think of, Dick, was that probably the education we got in our home, the character-building which we're unconscious of at the time . . .