



12-12-1972

Edward A. Breitkreutz (December 12, 1972)

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Whittier College

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Oral History Interview

with

MR. EDWARD A. BREITKREUTZ

December 12, 1972
San Francisco, California

By Dr. C. Richard Arena

For the Richard Nixon Oral History Project

ARENA: This is interview #1 with Mr. Edward A. Breitkreutz. We are now in San Francisco [California]. The date is December 12, 1972, Arena interviewing. From the standpoint of getting some background information on you, would you mind stating where and when you were born?

BREITKREUTZ: I was born in San Marino, California, at 1404 Wilson Avenue, on August 15, 1912. At the time I was born, it was a South Pasadena post office address, because San Marino was not incorporated until a few weeks after I was born--not by design. My mother still lives there, in the same house where I was born. My father and mother were married in that house sixty-two and a half years ago; also, two aunts and uncles were married in that house. My brother was born there, and I was born in that house. My father passed away last May 3 at the age of eighty-eight. He was the oldest living Olympic medal winner in the United States at the time of his death.

ARENA: Would you mind giving his full name?

BREITKREUTZ: Emil William Breitkreutz.

ARENA: Do you recall, just to get right to your direct contact with President Nixon, that that ever came up with him? Did your father, for example, ever meet the President?

BREITKREUTZ: Yes, he did. My dad was an official in the broad (long) jump and the hop, step and jump events for the dual meet between the United States and Russia July 18 and 19, 1959, and the Pan-American Games at Chicago [Illinois], August 27 through September 7, 1959. He always wanted to go down, made it a point if President Nixon was around, to find him and tell him that his son went to Whittier College and knew him. He was proud of the fact that I went to Whittier College when Dick Nixon went there.

ARENA: How about your schooling before Whittier College?

BREITKRUUTZ: I went to Marengo Avenue Grammar School in South Pasadena [California], about a mile from where I lived, before school buses. We had to walk or ride a bicycle. And then I went to South Pasadena High School, where I graduated in February of 1930.

ARENA: Excuse me. That year, 1930, happens to be the same year the President graduated, although, as you know, he graduated from Whittier High School.

BREITKREUTZ: Yes. I was a mid-termer. I graduated in February rather than June, and I went to Pasadena Junior College for one-half year and then came back to South Pasadena for the formal graduation ceremonies. And I started in Whittier the year following the year that Mr. Nixon went to school, because I lost that half year at junior college, and then half a year I went in the Merchant Marine so that I could start in June, which was the normal time to go to school.

ARENA: In other words, you started in the fall of 1931
. . .

BREITKREUTZ: Yes.

ARENA: . . . fall of 1931, because of that year in between. And your graduating class, then, was the spring of 1935.

BREITKREUTZ: Right.

ARENA: As you know, that was one year after the President, which was the spring of 1934. Do you mind if I ask you if there was anything unusual that happened to you before you entered college? You did mention this idea of going to a different school first. I'm not sure about the Merchant Marine. Did you say you were in that for a while?

BREITKREUTZ: In those days you didn't have to belong to the union. You would just go to the hiring hall and they'd holler out a trip, a certain job on a

certain vessel, and the rage in those days was for students to go on passenger vessels and work as elevator operators or waiters, and so forth. I thought I'd do something different, not tell anybody, go down to San Pedro [California] and go as a seaman; so I went as an ordinary seaman on a Texas Company tanker to South America and to the Gulf. I spent about five months doing that.

ARENA: Do you recall how far south you went to South America?

BREITKREUTZ: Just to the Panama Canal and Aruba, that was the farthest south. There was a refinery of the Pan-American Oil Company at Sint Nicolaas, Aruba, in those days. It's a Dutch island.

ARENA: It may be called Curaçao.

BREITKREUTZ: No, it's west of Curaçao. Aruba is a separate island. I think Sint Nicolaas and Oranjestad are the principal towns. Aruba is on many of the air routes and tours of the Caribbean now. There are high-rise apartments and it's a resort area now, but then it was only a refinery for the Pan-American Oil Company.

ARENA: Do you mind if I ask you, what effect do you think that experience had on you later on and over the years, taking a kind of venturesome trip like that so young in life, right out of high school?

BREITKREUTZ: It gave me a lot of insight into people of different parts of the country. There were college fellows, crew members, who were doing the same thing I was doing. There was a Turk, there were a couple of Greeks, fellows from all over the world, and they were regular guys. It wasn't actually the strange world that I thought it would be when I sailed out of San Pedro at all. People were friendly, would help you, and just regular guys, provided you listened and learned and kept fairly quiet.

ARENA: Mr. Breitkreutz, would you give your position now, the name of your company, as well as your position in that company; again, from the standpoint of positioning your remarks.

BREITKREUTZ: My title is supervisor in the Ocean Marine Division of the Travelers' Indemnity Company. The Ocean Marine Division was formerly an organization which was started by Mr. Walter B. Brandt in 1904 in San Francisco [California]. He passed away in 1951, and his company, W. B. Brandt and Company, was sold to Sayre and Toso, who were Lloyd's underwriters in San Francisco. They ultimately

went public under the name of Mission Insurance Company, and later Mission Equities Corporation, which has it's home office in Los Angeles, and W. B. Brandt and Company still remained a separate entity within that organization as an ocean marine operation, dealing only with commercial vessels, ocean cargo, pleasure craft, ocean marine liabilities, and so forth. And then in December, 1966, the Ocean Marine Division or W. B. Brandt and Company, which were one and the same, was sold by the Mission Insurance Company to the Travelers' Indemnity Company.

ARENA: And you've been with all these companies how many years? When did you first start?

BREITKREUTZ: Well, I first started in the ocean marine field in 1946 when I left the service in San Francisco and worked for the Board of Marine Underwriters for three years. Then I went to W. B. Brandt and Company, who were insurance general agents, specializing in ocean marine. I worked there for two and a half years and then went to the Marine Office of America, a marine underwriting organization in San Francisco, where I worked for eight years. While I was at the Marine Office of America, Mr. Brandt passed away and his company was sold to Sayre and Toso, so I went back to that company again, and have followed them through to the Travelers' Ocean Marine Division; so I have fifteen years altogether, counting the time in the late forties and early fifties, and since I came back.

ARENA: Do you recall, while you were in college, while you knew the President, that you and he ever discussed foreign travel, including your own personal experiences, any conversations in which he indicated he would someday like to do that sort of thing, or that he would like to travel? Do you recall that ever taking place?

BREITKREUTZ: I can't recall any specific conversations like that.

ARENA: One thing I had in mind was the fact that he did choose to go to a Latin American country for his honeymoon, which was Mexico. He drove there from Whittier, and I was wondering if that might have been an outgrowth of something he may have discussed with you, that he would like some day to go to Mexico City or South America.

BREITKREUTZ: No, I can't recall anything along those lines of conversation.

ARENA: From the standpoint of getting first an overall picture of your firsthand contact with President Nixon, his family and relatives; for example,

maybe you met such relatives of his as Merle West or Jessamyn West or any of the Oscar Marshburn family. There's some four children, the Russell Harrison family. Before we go into that, specifically, I'd like to ask you the general question, when did you first meet the President? Was it actually at the college? Then, did you know him all during that time? And then, did you come into any direct contact with him afterwards? Without going into any detail, but just giving a summary picture. Then we'll go back and pick this up in detail.

BREITKREUTZ: Well, my personal contact with him was because of my having the physical disability of a "trick" knee. I was on the freshman basketball team the first year but had to forego athletics because of my knee. Then I went into managerial work because I wanted to be associated with athletics. I was sophomore and junior manager for the football team for two years, and I was senior basketball manager for the last two years. And I knew Dick Nixon as manager, because I worked in the locker room and around the bench all the time, but I never participated in any sports because I was unable to. But I knew him first as a sophomore when I was assistant to Morris Richardson, who was the senior manager.

ARENA: By 'senior', you mean senior class?

BREITKREUTZ: No, he was the senior football manager.

ARENA: I see. And then after the college years? Have you come into any contact with him?

BREITKREUTZ: No, only when I was editor of the Quaker Campus my last year, and he had already gone to Duke [University]. We would always keep the past student body presidents for some seven or eight years on the mailing list for Quaker Campus issues, so they would know how things were going. In 1934, I received a Christmas card from him.

ARENA: Would you mind reading the personal message on that Christmas card from the President to you, and if you have it, the date? Is the postmark date clear, or did he write a date?

BREITKREUTZ: This is a brown envelope and brown card, with a very loud inside lining of the envelope, and it's dated Durham, North Carolina, December 5, 1934, Duke Station. It's addressed to Mr. Ed Breitkreutz, Whittier College, Whittier, California. It was addressed to me at the time as editor of the Quaker Campus. On the card, two people sitting at the fireplace, it says, "Best wishes for a real old-fashioned Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year;" with this writing, "Keep putting out that snappy paper, and I shall not embarrass you with any more gaudy cards!" Signed, "Dick Nixon."

ARENA: Was there any follow-up to that? In other words, did you respond to that, or did you send him back a card, by any chance, before or after?

BREITKREUTZ: I can't recall whether I ever did or not.

ARENA: And even though, as I did mention off the tape, we're not going into the political period, but again, was there any contact between you and him during the political years, without going into detail?

BREITKREUTZ: No, no personal contact, except when he was in San Francisco campaigning for [Dwight David] Eisenhower in the 1950's. I've followed him very closely, because during our college years I admired him because he was in many activities, and he once told me that he felt that you only got out of something what you put into it, and he was putting everything into his college that he could, was participating in as many things as he could, and he always impressed me as a fellow that wasn't trying to do it to further his own interest, but just to participate in things to help organizations, help move things along. He was likable; he just didn't impress you as a status-seeker, as a politician in the terms that we see nowadays, stepping on people to get places. He just put into things because he wanted to get something out of it and he knew that that was the only way that he could.

ARENA: I just want to be sure about this contact outside of the school. In post-graduation years, reunions or any get-togethers like that, are you sure, say homecoming games, no meetings on these occasions? You might bear in mind, although he was away in Duke for the period '34 through '37, he did come back in 1937 and was, of course, interested in the college. Was there no opportunity there, even briefly, to run across him at any of the homecoming events or games?

BREITKREUTZ: No, I didn't go to homecoming until after the war, and I think the first one that I actually went to was the twenty-fifth, and I've been going at five-year intervals since then.

ARENA: Oh, I see, the twenty-fifth class reunion . . .

BREITKREUTZ: . . . of the class of '35.

ARENA: Then I'll zero in now on those years when you knew him directly. Let me begin by asking you, Mr. Breitkreutz, when was the first time, if that stands out in any way, that you actually met him, either face to face, or at a distance, where he was maybe on a platform or performing in some special manner?

BREITKREUTZ: Well, I think as a place, that no particular instance stands out in my mind, simply football practice.

ARENA: That is, his turning out for football practice.

BREITKREUTZ: Yes, I think he was trying for a tackle position with a squad of about thirty-five. He was playing hard, but I don't believe he made a letter. That's probably in the record, but this was where I saw him face to face, at football practice when I was sophomore manager.

ARENA: Could I ask you, so we get a clear understanding of your role as manager, was that an elected post, was that an appointed post? Were you paid in any way for it? Did you go out to all of the practices, as well as the main games, as a result? In other words, fill us in. Don't take for granted we know anything at all about that position as manager. And what would the full title actually be?

BREITKREUTZ: Well, there was a senior manager, there was a junior manager and a sophomore manager of each varsity team. And I volunteered for this because I wanted to be as close to athletics as I could, probably a carry-over from my dad's athletic career. There was no remuneration for it. It was just because I wanted to get in and do something athleticwise, and I couldn't play so I volunteered. And I was sophomore football manager and then junior and senior manager for basketball. It was during sophomore practice season that I first had any connection with Dick.

ARENA: And you did mention the fact that he turned out for practice. How would you describe him as an athlete, and take as much time as you like and recount as many experiences as you like.

BREITKREUTZ: Well, I don't think I can recount any specific ones, because I was working hard, collecting towels and getting gear together, running in and out, helping push the water wagon in and out, and I was more dedicated to my job as such, probably, than brushing up with the players, because I wanted to do something in athletics to help the team and be out there.

ARENA: You were not concentrating on individual players.

BREITKREUTZ: No.

ARENA: However--except for your senior year, when the President was not there, of course--were there names that really stood out, fellow students of yours and the President's? What names stood out in your day, and therefore the President's day, in the way of sports,

regardless of what the sport was, football or basketball? Were there certain names that every student knew, including yourself?

BREITKREUTZ: Well, in football there was Byron Netzley and [Vincent] Vince Sinatra, [Clinton O.] Clint Harris, [Robert] Bob Halliday, John Arrambide, Ralph Rich.

ARENA: May I ask if you have been in touch with any of these gentlemen since that period?

BREITKREUTZ: Well, only in the service. [Eldred] Eddie Warner, who was a varsity basketball player of that era, I met him in San Pedro when I first went in the service in 1942. He was in another branch there; but that's the only contact I've had with any of these people up until the first reunion, which was the class of '35 in 1960. That's the first time I went back.

ARENA: How about the coaching staff itself, and whatever recollection you have about THE coach, of course, "Chief" Wallace Newman?

BREITKREUTZ: I was well acquainted with Chief Newman, because in my junior year as manager we used to vie with each other on the sideline on days there was no practice, but we were out there anyway, seeing who could pass the furthest, and we both got up to about fifty-five yards. He and I used to have quite a contest to see who could pass the football the furthest.

ARENA: How can you account for the fact that the President, in his book, Six Crises, refers to Chief Newman as a "remarkable" coach? Why was he remarkable? And do you agree with that?

BREITKREUTZ: Yes, he was. He was one of the most dedicated people I ever saw. He was very bullish about things. I remember one specific instance where a player was on the field with his wind knocked out, and he said to him, "What's the matter with you? I can't feel anything over here. Why don't you get up?" I'll never forget that remark. I thought at the time it was rather brutal, but he was a hard driver. And I always admired him for his work. He was one of the most dedicated people I ever knew.

ARENA: From the standpoint of Whittier people, would you say that he was a member of the community outside of the college and outside of football, as well, and in what way?

BREITKREUTZ: Yes. Well, I don't know his club activities or anything, because I was in the little pod of the campus, where I lived at Wardman [Hall] for one year and then at the Earlham Apartments behind the stadium for the next three years, and that was just the community between there, classes, the drugstore where I ate most of my meals, and the women's clubhouse and the society dances in town a couple of times a year. I never had any relation with the Lions Club or Rotary [Club], or anything like that. I know he was active in those things, because he was a loyal Whittier man every day of his life.

ARENA: Were you a member of any of the school organizations yourself? I'm thinking in particular of the President's fraternity, the Orthogonian Society, for example?

BREITKREUTZ: No, I was a member of the rival one. The Orthogonians always had the open shirts. I was a member of the Franklin Society, and we were the men who had our pictures taken in tuxedos, so there was always a little verbal feud going on between the two organizations. The Orthogonians we called the roughnecks, and the Franklins were the gentlemen, because of their dress in the annual.

ARENA: Is there any particular reason that would account for why the President would have belonged to the Orthogonians rather than the Franklins, which would have been the more formal, rather than the less formal type? Anything that could account for that? Or would you just want to give your own views as to why you think he belonged to that?

BREITKREUTZ: Well, my own views are, probably the one that put the most pressure on him to join their club. He would go to that organization that he believed had the type of members who impressed him most favorably. And I knew some fellows in the Franklins but I didn't know anyone too well in the Orthogonians. They were more the athletic people or those who participated more in athletics than the Franklins did. It seemed to be the reputation that at least that's the way they leaned. I know of no other reason why he should have gone to the Orthogonians instead of the Franklins, except that he probably liked the people who induced him to join.

ARENA: While we're still on the subject of athletics and sports, do you mind if I ask you, what do you think the value of the time you spent in athletics has meant to your own education? Some day, of course, I'd like to put that question to the President directly. But since you were there at the time and you were exposed to the same athletic environment, I'd like to see what it did mean to you.

BREITKREUTZ: Well, I don't know about the value. I liked to be out in the open, and I still do, more than dramatics or debating or probably a little studying I should have been doing at the time, but I just liked to be out in the open, playing basketball, volleyball, football, something out in the open, and since my dad was an athlete from Wausau, Wisconsin, from the time he could first run, and ran in the Drake and Penn relays, the Wisconsin state meets and the 1904 Olympics, I just had some kind of a love for athletics. That's why I got into it, but I couldn't participate so I got into the managerial end.

ARENA: Did it seem unusual, or was it unusual in those days, that such an outstanding student would be interested and spend so much time in athletics? I'm thinking of the President, who did turn out for football, for these practice sessions, for the games, even though he didn't get to play, but he was also a top student. Would you say that was unusual, or were there other students you can think of who more or less also did the same thing?

BREITKREUTZ: No, I don't think offhand of any that were participating in football who were also honor students for four years. That was a little unusual, but . . .

ARENA: You do recall that he was an honor student for the full four years?

BREITKREUTZ: Oh, yes. He was a dedicated student, conscientious and sincere all the time. If he said something, he meant it.

ARENA: What was the attitude of your--and therefore the President's--fellow student athletes toward this student who was a good student and also was actively leading all the students in the student government, where he was elected so many times?

BREITKREUTZ: Well, I can't remember anybody in my recollection ever ribbing him about trying to play football and also being a top student. Some people would be in the category of saying, "Well, you're a good student. You can't be a good football player, too." But I don't remember anybody ever kidding Dick Nixon about getting good grades as against trying to play football. He just wasn't the kind of a man that they kidded because he was too sincere about it, and he knew how to react if anybody ever would. He was big enough that he'd just brush some remark off, so nobody ever got any enjoyment over kidding him about the fact that he was a good student and was trying to bruise around the football field as a tackle. He did play occasionally, although he wasn't one of the lettermen. He didn't play enough to get a letter.

ARENA: I'm sure you know now, but I don't know if you knew at the time, that he is a Quaker. He's still officially a member of the East Whittier Friends Church. Did it surprise you in any way that such a rough game could be so popular with that particular Quaker; and again, maybe you would know about other students who were Quakers as well. One that comes to mind immediately, of course, is Talbert Moorhead. Maybe there were others that you know of. But was there anything unusual about the fact that such a rough and tough game as football, and someone who was a Quaker, went hand in hand like that?

BREITKREUTZ: No, because in that area of Southern California, nearly everybody was a Quaker. Whittier was a Quaker school, like La Verne [College] was a Dunkard school and [University of] Redlands was a Baptist school, and so forth. You just assumed when you went there, though you never really knew, that most people who went there were Quakers, because the Friends church was the largest Quaker church in the West at the time, and I never related bruising athletics with pacifist Quakers, as it were, at all.

ARENA: May I ask you your religious preference?

BREITKREUTZ: I'm a Methodist, baptized in a Pasadena [California] church where I am still a member; I have never dropped my membership.

ARENA: Do you recall, if this isn't too personal, that you were discriminated against or were not treated as the other students were because you were not a Quaker?

BREITKREUTZ: No, that never came up at all. I don't think, that I can recall, it was ever mentioned.

ARENA: From the standpoint of chapel service, which I believe was required, was it your impression that the chapel services were slanted toward any particular faith, and we'll say, again, away from your own? Did you get that impression from the way you were brought up as a Methodist, as compared to what you were getting on the Whittier College campus at that time?

BREITKREUTZ: No, I was brought up as a Protestant, and to me, the way I had been taught in church and Sunday school--and my mother was a school teacher--all Protestants thought the same way and you couldn't discriminate or differentiate between one or another.

BEGIN SIDE II TAPE I

ARENA: We were discussing the question of whether or not there was discrimination among those who were not Quakers on the campus of Whittier College. I believe I was going into the fact that the President's father was a Methodist and then became a Quaker. What I want to ask you at this point is: Did that ever come up at any time? Did you ever meet the President's father, and did you and the President ever get into a religious discussion of any type?

BREITKREUTZ: No, I never met his father and never got into any discussion with him. The only religious discussions that ever came up while I was attending Whittier College were during Dr. John R. Wilkie's courses. He taught psychology, religion and philosophy, and he was quite outspoken in his remarks for that time.

ARENA: From your observations of the President and your recollections of him--I realize this is a very personal type of question, but I would appreciate your answering it to your best ability--how would you describe him as a religious young man?

BREITKREUTZ: Well, I didn't type people as religious or non-religious, because everyone seemed to be in the same group, the ones whom I knew in college. Well, there were religion classes, and you put the people that were in the YMCA [Young Men's Christian Association] and the education people in one category, and the people who belonged to the societies, perhaps, in another one. But in my group, the people I knew, and my relation with the athletes, and so forth, questions like that never came into discussions about religion or how you felt about one person being more religious than another. I just can't recall any discussions like that, because people all seemed to be going in the same general direction. As far as I remember, they didn't get into personal discussions about people who were too religious or not.

ARENA: The next area I'd like to go into, the actual student side of your association with the President, given the fact that he was a year ahead of you. Would I be correct in assuming that you didn't have many, if any, classes with him, or do you recall taking some courses with him?

BREITKREUTZ: I don't recall having any courses with him, because we were kept in classes, and not the little-red-schoolhouse type, although it was Founders Hall, but each grade was kept together, so the class of '35 took practically the same courses together throughout the whole school --English, history, philosophy, languages, chemistry, and so forth.

ARENA: We did touch on the fact that he was a good student, an honor student. I wonder if that was reflected in any way. Did he give the appearance of being an egghead, and that sort of thing? Was he a bit distant because he was a sharp student?

BREITKREUTZ: No, I didn't get that impression from him at all. At the time, I didn't think much about who was an honor student. We were dealing with our own little classes and our own sports and managing things, everybody was just another human being to you, and everybody seemed to be equal to you, and I never had any impression of Dick Nixon being an egghead or an intellectual snob, or anything like that. He was a regular fellow.

ARENA: Taking into account your experiences in other colleges, even though you went there before Whittier, and college-educated people you've met over your whole lifetime, and college teachers you've met or heard lecture or saw on TV over a whole lifetime, taking that into account, how would you evaluate your own days at college? Do you think you got a good education? How would you evaluate your professors?

BREITKREUTZ: Well, my education was a liberal arts course throughout. I didn't specialize in anything. I had a group major, with English, history and philosophy as a major, and religion and journalism as a minor. This is kind of conflicting, but I had not set in my mind just what I wanted to do in life, so I ended up with a bachelor's degree in liberal arts, which doesn't get you anything when you go out to apply for a job, but I wanted to go to a small college because I thought it would help develop my personality, which I thought needed developing, and I didn't have any special aim, and unless you're going into YMCA work or educational work or social work, Whittier didn't have any specialty where you could major in something that I could ever determine that would get you out as a top engineer, doctor or lawyer, unless you continued your education beyond the normal four years, so it was a liberal arts education throughout as far as I was concerned.

ARENA: Moving on to the extracurricular side of your contact with the President, what do you recall about his entry into school politics; for example, do you recall that campaigns were ever waged, how were they waged, and how can you account for the fact that he was repeatedly elected the head of his class and eventually the head of the student government? Whatever comes to mind about any of that side of your contact with the life of the President.

BREITKREUTZ: Well, specifically with the President, none that I can recall this late in life, because it's been quite a while; but the politics, as I wrote

some feature articles in the annual, were between the societies. The Orthogonians would put up somebody and the Franklins would put up somebody, and it was usually a battle between the man that the Franklins put up and the one the Orthogonians put up, and this was for every office that a man might possibly be elected to. It was between the societies more than anything else, and I don't remember anything that was startling about these campaigns. There were signs and campaign talks. Sometimes before chapel each candidate would get up and talk.

ARENA: Were the students pretty excited about these campaigns, or was there student apathy in your, and therefore the President's, day?

BREITKREUTZ: Well, if you were a member of an organization which was backing somebody, you became very enthused about it, and I don't recall how the freshmen or sophomores reacted. I didn't belong to the Franklins then, and I didn't think too much about it, because I hadn't participated in anything except football managing, and I didn't get into that, but the junior and senior year I did. And when I was a Franklin NOBODY was better than a Franklin, I don't care who it was. The Orthogonians felt the same way. There were no wild posters or any derogatory remarks, but it was just the positive or good side of somebody.

ARENA: During the President's junior year when he ran for president of the student body, and that would have been the spring of '33, since he graduated in '34. Do you recall that campaign? What I have in mind is the fact that I believe that at least one of the issues, if not the main one, dealt with this issue of dancing on the campus. Do you recall that that was a pretty important issue?

BREITKREUTZ: I can't remember. I can remember advertising cigarettes in the Quaker Campus, and we almost got thrown out, Ted Kennard, the business manager and I, by Dr. [Herbert E.] Harris, the dean of men, because he said, "Don't ever come in here and make that proposition again, or you won't be in this school anymore." But they were quite strict about drinking, smoking cigarettes, or anything that is conservative now. This was what stuck with me about it being a Quaker campus, that they were rather strict, and it didn't hold anybody back that I know of. If they wanted to do something, they'd go off the campus, but they weren't bothered by the fact that they couldn't do these things on the campus. There wasn't any rebellion or anything like that. People took it, just like if you were called in the draft in '40 or '41, you went.

ARENA: Correct me if I'm wrong, but the no smoking, no drinking, and possibly even no gambling applied to the entire campus, faculty and administration, as well as students?

BREITKREUTZ: Well, as far as I know it did. I never went into the sanctum sanctorum of the faculty, but there was no smoking on the campus. People would smoke anywhere else they wanted to, but people would just conform to the rules, and if they questioned them they didn't question them by picket signs or stomping or physical protests. They just conformed to the rules. "I want to go to school and I want an education and I'm going to do what I'm supposed to do while I'm here."

ARENA: Do you recall whether or not there were any radical students or a radical student group? Correct me if I'm wrong, but no national organizations were allowed, no national fraternities at that time. They are not allowed now, and I have the impression that's always been a policy, and if that made any difference.

BREITKREUTZ: As far as I know, it has. When I was the Quaker Campus editor and feature writer for the Acropolis, I did a lot of research because I made a rotogravure section and I went back and got plates from back in the early part of the century. I looked at old issues of the Quaker Campus, researched in the library and interviewed former students, to try to bring this rotogravure section history up, and I never saw any relationship to any national organization. They couldn't call them fraternities, they had to call them societies. They didn't permit Greek letter fraternities, as such, on the campus.

ARENA: While you're on that question of your own research on the newspaper, would you give a summary of the newspapers that you have in your possession? In other words, how far back, and what gaps, as far as you know, are there?

BREITKREUTZ: Well, I have all of my own, 1934 and '35, of course, including the rotogravure section. I have most of '34, and I have '31. I have boxes at home that I'm going to go into when I retire. In fact, I can do it in the next couple of weeks and see what I do have. But I have many, many of 'em, and being basketball manager for two years, I have all the programs that were ever put out in '32, '33, '34 and '35, Hadley Field football programs, basketball schedules, and so forth, I have kept.

ARENA: Does that apply to the football aspects, as well?

BREITKREUTZ: Yes.

ARENA: Including the years when the President was on the team?

BREITKREUTZ: Yes. I have one with me here. The programs with pictures sold for ten cents.

ARENA: How would you describe their condition, from the standpoint of their being in good or bad shape physically?

BREITKREUTZ: Well, the football programs and the basketball mimeograph programs are in excellent shape. The Quaker Campus papers, the old ones of course, have turned tan, some of them have. The ones that I have saved myself, I left some with my folks and brought them up a few months ago. The ones that I kept myself have been kept in flat cardboard and are in very good condition.

ARENA: How about the articles from the local press which may have reported on the local games at Whittier? Even today, you know, it gets quite top billing on the sports page. Was there any attempt to save those?

BREITKREUTZ: Whittier News, I don't think I saved any of those. I may have two or three of them. I was more interested right in the little pod of the campus.

ARENA: Do you recall that the President himself would be the subject of either your articles or articles by other students during this period? For example, the campaign itself. Would your newspaper have one about him, by you or other students?

BREITKREUTZ: Mine wouldn't when I was editor the last year because he wasn't there, but my junior year I was sports editor of the Quaker Campus. I can't recall any specific article. At the time you don't know what the future holds, so you don't play up certain things, otherwise I'd be at the racetrack every day, but I have papers that have articles, not specifically about him, except maybe where he was elected or won the Southern California forensics championship one year when they had it on the campus, but nothing specifically about him, just an individual article, because he was, as I say, just a regular guy, and he wasn't what you would say an outstanding man on the campus. He did more than a lot of people but it wasn't school hero-worshipping, or any such thing as that. Out of 500 or so students, it was kind of a family.

ARENA: Do you recall offhand, just for the record, that he himself wrote any articles? It doesn't mean that he did or did not, but from your own recollection, and you say you haven't gone into these recently, but you intend to. That would be an interesting question, to what

extent did he contribute some articles, including letters to the editor, this sort of thing?

BREITKREUTZ: Well, they didn't have those. They had an awful lot of people at the bottom of the mast-head who were contributors, but they very seldom used by-lines. Certain people would have a column; he didn't, that I ever recall, but oh, one year I think there were twenty-five or thirty people, including Dick Nixon, who was a contributor, but you wouldn't know which article he wrote because they didn't have by-lines. They were just so-called cub reporters, and they'd get a story and turn it in to the editor and it would be published as such, with no identity as to the author.

ARENA: During this period between '30 and '34, which would be the President's period in particular, one of the great presidential campaigns of all time took place. And in a way a local man through marriage, President [Herbert] Hoover, was voted out and [Franklin D.] Roosevelt was voted in. Do you recall anything in particular in the way of an impact that that made on the campus or on the community, and on the President himself? Do you recall that that was of particular interest in any way, including to President Nixon?

BREITKREUTZ: I don't recall being involved in national politics in any way, not at least as far as I was concerned.

ARENA: Let me ask you this, too, about that situation: As you know, professors on campuses get quite involved today. Without going into any names, was there any of that in your own classes? Did you find the teachers took any sort of a stand, or, say, outside of a classroom where there was a situation where students or faculty debated the campaign or the individuals themselves?

BREITKREUTZ: I didn't hear any debates so I don't know, but I do know that anything national seems to have been left out of the curricula of the campus and was left to the national wires, the Whittier News, the Los Angeles Times, or Vanderbilt's Illustrated Daily News, which sold for one penny a copy. And our papers and discussions were limited, as far as publications were concerned, to the campus life itself. They left the national thing out. And I can't recall there were any articles where national items were put in the local publications because they didn't feel that that was the purpose of it. It was a cohesion between students, social and athletic, but not political.

ARENA: Going to a kind of extracurricular side of the President, too, continuing on that side for a

moment, do you recall ever attending any of the debates or forensic contests in which he participated, and how would you describe him as a speaker in those days?

BREITKREUTZ: No, I didn't attend any of those. As a matter of fact, I don't know what the attendance was. I might add here that as far as I was concerned, there wasn't any great interest on the campus in forensics. It was just a study or practice of the debating class. It wasn't something that made Whittier famous, its forensics or its debating, and the only time I recall it was when Dick Nixon got the honors when the convention of Southern California Forensics was held on the Whittier College campus. He was the, in today's vernacular, most valuable player.

ARENA: How about his appearing in school plays? Did you attend any of those, and what do you recall about him in that light?

BREITKREUTZ: Well, the school plays, as far as I was concerned, were something that a lot of people liked to get into, and he was in several of them which I attended, and I can't recall. . . . Well, there were no Barrymores on the campus at the time, so no particular person stood out in my mind. They were amateur plays. They had one-act plays several times during the year, and then they had the usual "Pirates of Penzance" and the big ones each time, and he was in some of those, but I'm afraid I can't recall any one in particular.

ARENA: One may have been "The Dark Tower." I don't know if that name rings a bell.

BREITKREUTZ: That was a one-act play, wasn't it?

ARENA: I believe so.

BREITKREUTZ: Yes. He was in that one I know, and perhaps, also, "Phillip Goes Forth."

ARENA: I believe so. How about the name Herschel Daugherty?

BREITKREUTZ: Yes. He married one of the Petty girls. He was quite active on the campus. He was a playwright for quite a while; I see his name on the TV credits frequently.

ARENA: Yes, it does appear. I was just wondering if there was any direct contact between you and him.

BREITKREUTZ: No. He was an Orthogonian.

- ARENA: That's right. I was thinking of common contacts, those who palled around with the President that were Orthogonians. There was Clint Harris.
- BREITKREUTZ: Yes. A big, tall, red-headed man who was quite a football player.
- ARENA: How would you describe him, besides his physical description. And I didn't mean to cut you off. That's just as important as everything else.
- BREITKREUTZ: He was a good guy, real nice guy. And he didn't take advantage of his size, except in football games. He could have been this tall, he'd have been the same kind of a guy. I remember him. He was in a different class, of course. I had no real close contact with him that I can remember right now, but he had humility, down-to-earth, regular guy.
- ARENA: Speaking of persons the President palled around with, so to speak, what do you recall of Kenneth Ball?
- BREITKREUTZ: Very likable, and I've been to both reunions with him. A Whittier Dairy man, very likable fellow.
- ARENA: Correct me if I'm wrong, but I got the impression that he was in basketball, rather than football.
- BREITKREUTZ: I think he was, because he was very light.
- ARENA: I was wondering with your connection as the manager, does he stand out, or again, because you were so busy with the towels and the pails you couldn't pay much attention?
- BREITKREUTZ: Well, I remember he did play basketball, but I remember Bob Halliday and Eddie Warner, George Bryson, basketball players. [Interruption]
- ARENA: Now that you've had a chance to check that annual, the Acropolis for 1933, that would be the year before the President graduated, and that would be your sophomore year?
- BREITKREUTZ: Yes. George Bryson is now an official with the Bethlehem Steel Company in Northern California.

ARENA: I have mentioned some names that immediately come to mind, Mr. Ball and Mr. Harris, with whom the President palled around. I don't want to take anything for granted. How would you recall him as having a certain group of buddies that he palled around with?

BREITKREUTZ: I don't recall any of these buddy things. Most of the people that palled around together would be the group that lived in Wardman Hall, or there was a place on the alley across the campus from the college that had fellows living and boarding. The people who lived in Whittier usually went home, and the people who were born in Whittier or came locally didn't stay on campus, so the people in groups were usually those who belonged in Wardman Hall or in some house that they had rented.

ARENA: Was there much of a difference, and did that make any difference, if a person--as did the President--came from the local town, unlike yourself, for example? Did that seem to separate people in any way?

BREITKREUTZ: No, I didn't notice any difference at all, because there was John Arrambide, George Chisler. Most of the people on the campus, I think, were Whittier people, so nobody that I can ever recall looked any differently on them than they did on the people from out of town. Sometimes the people from out of town were a little different because they could afford to go away from home, but nobody looked down on them or up to them in that respect. George Chisler was student body president in 1934-35.

ARENA: Any idea where he might be now?

BREITKREUTZ: As far as I know, he's still around Whittier. I've seen him at both reunions.

ARENA: Did you ever meet the President's parents?

BREITKREUTZ: Never did, that I can recall.

ARENA: Or brothers, one brother who died, do you recall that taking place? Did you know him, or were you aware at the time that his brother had died? I believe that was in 1933. He was the oldest one, Harold [Samuel Nixon]. I just wonder if that comes to mind in any way?

BREITKREUTZ: That doesn't come to mind at all.

ARENA: How about some of his cousins? I'm thinking now of the Marshburn family.

BREITKREUTZ: Well, there were two; in my mind I'm trying to distinguish between Mashburns and Marshburns.

ARENA: They are confusing, and they're not related. They're two different families.

BREITKREUTZ: I recall Murle Mashburn. He was an athlete, but I don't recall ever having any connection with the Marshburns.

ARENA: Do you recall, just to be sure, ever seeing the President indicate in any way, either directly or indirectly--and by indirectly I mean that maybe you saw him in a pre-law club--that he wanted to go out for law? Did you have that impression when you were on campus?

BREITKREUTZ: No, I didn't, because I was in a different class and almost, I wouldn't say a different strata, but people seemed to associate generally mostly with people in their own class.

ARENA: Another teacher whom the President has singled out from time to time, and you, I'm sure, are aware of this, too, was his history mentor, Dr. Paul Smith. I'm wondering if you had him as a teacher and what your recollection is of Dr. Paul Smith, who also, was the previous president for many years of Whittier College.

BREITKREUTZ: I did have a class from him, but I can't remember anything unusual about the class. I must have taken history because I had to, but it wasn't one of my favorite courses. It wasn't because of Professor Smith, but because of the subject.

ARENA: How about--you did say something about journalism--the good Dr. Albert Upton, whom the President has mentioned also, I might add. What do you recall about his style of teaching, his personality, and just as a person?

BREITKREUTZ: Well, he was very outspoken. I remember he was quite critical of the Quaker Campus the way it was the previous year, and the first issue came out, it was my first experience with journalism, except for being associate editor of the summer Trojan at USC [University of Southern California], taking some classes in the summer to learn some more journalism after being elected editor, I beat him to the punch and said, "Here's probably the worst edition of the Quaker Campus you've ever seen. Maybe the next one will be better." And he couldn't say a thing. He was very critical of things, which served a purpose. My only courses from him were in English.

ARENA: I understand that he and Dr. Smith gave a joint course, which has been mentioned by several persons. Do you recall anything like that, or special courses involving English and history?

BREITKREUTZ: No, if it existed I didn't take the course. I remember taking his English course, which was quite a large class for Whittier, something like thirty or forty people in it. Most of the classes weren't that large.

ARENA: Now I'd like to get into the area of the President's off-campus life, which you may have had some opportunity to notice. For example, the fact that he worked in his father's grocery store, the fact that he would drive to school and used to pick up a cousin. The cousin's name was Gibbons. I don't know if that name rings a bell.

BREITKREUTZ: Yes, Edith Gibbons. She was in my class.

ARENA: Edith Catherine Gibbons, who is now Mrs. Nunes.

BREITKREUTZ: She lives in East Bay.

ARENA: I respectfully want to correct you. I just came back from where she is. As a matter of fact, I'll never forget it. She is now in Salmon, Idaho. So at the next reunion you'll beat her to the punch.

BREITKREUTZ: She was with one of our accounts, worked for a plywood company in Berkeley [California]. Her husband was a justice of the peace or judge in East Bay.

ARENA: I see. Well, I did meet both of them, and he is Mr. John D. Nunes. Well, that would be a close relative, of course. Do you recall that he picked her up, or I should say, dropped her off? Do you recall that he did do that, or that she mentioned that in any way?

BREITKREUTZ: No. I knew her quite well, but I didn't even know at that time that she was his cousin.

ARENA: As a matter of fact, the President had been quite solid in respectable roots in the true historic sense. I wonder if that came up in any way that the Milhous side of his family's residence in Whittier went back to 1887. Was that apparent, or was that something that came out, that he was of one of the old Whittier families?

BREITKREUTZ: I know that he was. I can't distinguish now whether I knew about it at the time or whether it's what I've read about him.

ARENA: But you wouldn't pay any particular attention to that in those days.

BREITKREUTZ: No.

ARENA: Finally, going back to that question of his working for his father. For example, did he ever appear tired because he had to get up so early in the morning, or ever complain in any way?

BREITKREUTZ: No, he looked like he had a good night's sleep any time I ever had any contact with him or conversation.

ARENA: As a matter of fact, I'd like to dwell on that for a moment, the pace that the President kept in those days, in view of what is a well-known fact, the quite rugged pace he keeps today. What do you recall of the way in which he acted during this college period, when evidently he had a lot on his mind and had a busy schedule, in sports, appearing in plays, being in the choir, which we haven't mentioned. He was in the choir, you may recall; the debating team, and worked in his father's store. How did this busy pace show itself on his actions, his personality, from your vantage point?

BREITKREUTZ: If I may correct you, it was the glee club, rather than the choir. He never showed any stress or strain from being so active in all these things. He was always cordial, friendly. Some people, I'm sure, under that strain would either drop out or be cross once in a while, but . . .

ARENA: Did he appear to be on the run, running from place to place, during this time?

BREITKREUTZ: I would say the word would be enthusiastic. He was enthusiastic about everything he participated in, and he just acted like, "Let's get going," and "I want to do this," and "I'm doing this because I want to do it," because this is going to do some good for somebody-- not necessarily himself. He never was thinking in terms of himself; at least that wasn't reflected in his outward actions. He just wanted to participate in things, and his disposition, as far as I can recall now, was always enthusiastic. I can't recall any times when he sounded like he was cross because he had so much to do or stayed up late. My recollection was that he was all exuberance and that he . . .

ARENA: As a matter of fact, did you ever see him lose his temper?

BREITKREUTZ: Not that I remember. And I would remember, I think, because I don't remember anybody in Whittier that I can recall that I had any association with that lost their temper for any reason.

ARENA: Bearing in mind the personality of the President as we all see it on TV and hear him on radio, bearing in mind your recollections of him, how is he alike, how has he changed, without going into politics per se. I'm thinking of the personality of the man. I realize that's a philosophical and subjective question, but you are the type of person, of course, who has seen him in both periods. That's why I would appreciate your thinking about it and answering it to the best of your ability.

BREITKREUTZ: Well, it's rather difficult, because the only time I've actually met him since school days was at the St. Francis Hotel [San Francisco, California] when he was campaigning for President [Dwight D.] Eisenhower. He recognized me right away. We shook hands and I introduced him to my wife, who was not a Whittier College student, and he said, "Oh, I could tell you a lot about Ed, but I don't think I better do it." He was still friendly. I didn't see any sham about him or a changed personality. It was natural, from being in his position for a few years, he was a little more dynamic than he was as a youth, but that's part of growing up that anyone would do. But I never noticed any change where he said, "Oh, I don't know you." He acted very friendly that day. I never noticed any change.

ARENA: I asked this question in part before, that of seeing him possibly at an unhappy time, and I think you did not recall that, when his older brother died. But just to broaden that and make sure I've covered all the ground, did you meet him or come across him at a time when he suffered any adversity, even just failing an exam, or anything that was bad news for him? Do you recall being in his presence at that time?

BREITKREUTZ: No, I don't recall an adverse situation like that.

ARENA: Well, to make sure I cover all the ground, Mr. Breitkreutz, is there anything I have not brought up, any question I have not raised that you want to bring up at this point, and take as much time as you like.

BREITKREUTZ: I think we've covered about every possible situation where I might have been involved with him or have an opinion on him, or anything. To the best of my knowledge, we've covered everything.

ARENA: I want to thank you for your time and being so generous with it, and for answering all of my questions so frankly and fully, and I know my

fellow historians, in spite of your attitude towards history, will be very grateful for your firsthand recollections.

BREITKREUTZ: I hope I've added some little bit. I'm behind him a thousand percent. My wife never heard of him before we were married, but she's behind him ten thousand percent. She says, "I met him." She thinks he's wonderful, everything he's doing, and I do, too.

ARENA: By the way, did you ever meet Mrs. [Patricia Ryan] Nixon?

BREITKREUTZ: Never did.

ARENA: She wasn't with him on that occasion. Thanks again.

BREITKREUTZ: Thank you.