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Raymond C. Black (January 28, 1972)

C. Richard Arena

Oral History Interview

with

MR. RAYMOND C. BLACK

January 28, 1972
Whittier, California

By Dr. C. Richard Arena

For the Richard Nixon Oral History Project

- ARENA: This is interview #1 with Mr. Raymond C. Black. C. stands for Clark, of Whittier, California, Arena interviewing, January 28, 1972. Ray, do you mind if I call you Ray?
- BLACK: That's fine. That's what everybody does.
- ARENA: Please call me Dick. Ray, do you mind if I ask you where and when you were born, and how is it that you are in California, if you were not born and raised in California?
- BLACK: I was born and raised in Stewartsville, Missouri. I was born in 1909. I came to California in 1935.
- ARENA: How is Stewartsville spelled?
- BLACK: It was supposed to be a captain's stewart, from what I was told, back in early history.
- ARENA: And how did that stewart get spelled?
- BLACK: S T E W A R T.
- ARENA: And the town would just be Stewart?
- BLACK: Stewartsville, S V I L L E.

ARENA: And how is it that you came to California in 1935?

BLACK: 1935.

ARENA: And do you recall the reason for your moving out here? Did your family come, your father, did you come on your own?

BLACK: My wife and I came out and her brother at the same time. In fact we drove a Ford to be sold out here, so we had transportation to get out here. We took it down on South Vermont, or south someplace there and turned it in after we drove out.

ARENA: By South Vermont, would that be right here in Whittier?

BLACK: No, on South Figueroa Street in Los Angeles [California].

ARENA: Any particular reason why you chose California rather than any other place?

BLACK: It was at that time right after the depression when everything was pretty rough to get a job. We just decided we wanted to look for greener pastures, so we came to California.

ARENA: At the present time--correct me if I'm wrong--you are a Certified Public Accountant?

BLACK: No, a Public Accountant.

ARENA: In 1935 were you a Public Accountant as well?

BLACK: I was studying accounting. I had never actually done any public accounting before I came to California because I was working for a bank. I had to do a lot of accounting work for the bank and with an accounting firm that was doing work for the bank.

ARENA: Do you mind if I ask you your educational background?

BLACK: I was a graduate from Stewartsville High School. I took several correspondence courses in banking. I don't know what they called it. I can't remember the name of it. There were about four different certificates we all had to go to classes to earn; it was commercial banking, negotiable instruments,

public speaking--I can't remember the rest of them. It covered five or six years. Each year we had to take that type of training.

ARENA: As a part of your position with the bank?

BLACK: It was required by anybody that wanted to stay with the bank. You had to each year progress. Then I took the LaSalle Extension University course on accounting.

ARENA: How long did it take you to reach the status of Public Accountant through this correspondence method?

BLACK: Quite a while, because it's pretty tough to study like that on your own. It takes a lot of time and accounting work, is a lot of detail and you get a little disgusted and you quit it for a period of time, then you go back to it.

ARENA: Basically, how does the system work? Is it all literally through correspondence?

BLACK: It's all correspondence.

ARENA: How about the testing? How is that handled?

BLACK: All the lessons go in and are graded. They send you lessons as you complete them, and they only send you the material as you complete your course.

ARENA: I was wondering about the check. In other words, how do they know it's you sending the answers to the tests?

BLACK: That I wouldn't know. I never even gave that a thought, because I was the one doing the work and sending them in.

ARENA: And they ended up grading you.

BLACK: They grade your papers and return them.

ARENA: Do they end up giving you the diploma or the certificate?

BLACK: They would have if I had finished it. I never completed it all the way through. Then when I came to California I started working for Arthur Young & Company, that I mentioned once before here, Arthur Young & Company, a CPA [Certified Public Accountant] firm in Los Angeles. When I first came out here

that was one of my first jobs and I worked with them for a couple of years.

ARENA: Did you ever do any subsequent either full or part-time studying after the correspondence course?

BLACK: Once I got into public accounting work I had to do considerable studying for the training courses. We're constantly having to do that now. The professional program is being upgraded. I took the examination for the first enrolled agent when they put it out in 1959 and I was one of the seventeen hundred that passed the first examination put out by the Director of Practice in Washington for people to be enrolled to practice for the Treasury. I am a Treasury card holder now. That was in '59 when they first did that. In 1945 is when I got my Public Accountant's license, after I left Mr. [Victor H.] York's office. What I did then was to make application and demonstrate my ability to do public accounting work.

ARENA: That was the nature of the test in order to receive the Public Accountant's license.

BLACK: That's when they blanketed in. Prior to that there was nobody licensed as a public accountant, as such. That's the year when they blanketed in.

ARENA: What is the difference between Certified Public Accountant and Public Accountant?

BLACK: There is no difference. We're both controlled by the same State Board. The only difference really is that a Certified Public Accountant has to sit for an examination and he has passed that--at the time way back when I was involved in that phase of it, you had to have a certain amount of education to sit for the examination. In other words, you had to have some college grades, which I never had.

ARENA: But the testing for examinations was the same.

BLACK: I don't know what you mean there.

ARENA: From the standpoint of all the public accounting being tested in order to receive the title of Public Accountant?

BLACK: No. Not in that degree. When they changed the law and blanketed in all the people that were doing business as accounting work for the public is when the Public Accountant was first started. I was working for Mr. York and you had to be in public practice before you were blanketed in. I made my application in 1945, I think '44, when the Public Accounting Law came into being that anybody that was not a Certified Public Accountant that was doing work for the public was supposed to have a license. And then you had to demonstrate by back references and some of them were called in for examinations and a lot of them did not get their certificate issued because they still had to demonstrate that they were capable of that type of work before you got your original license issued.

ARENA: I see. Ray, how would you summarize your direct contact with President Nixon and his family from the very beginning to the present time? You need not go into detail from the standpoint of explaining what things you did with the President and the different members of the family, just the earliest date when you met him and whether or not you knew his parents, whether or not you knew the brothers and possibly even other close relatives, an aunt and uncle, Oscar Marshburn, whom I think you might know, and so forth? Just give a summary of information, and then with the remaining time we'll look at these contacts in detail.

BLACK: I think my first recollection of Dick was when I was working for--should I say? Anyway, where I was working we had a legal problem and the attorneys were [Jefferson G.] Wingerter and [Thomas W.] Bewley, and I had contacted them about a problem that existed where we needed some legal help. And Dick was the man that came down.

ARENA: Excuse me, would you give me the date?

BLACK: That has to be about 1938, right in that vicinity, because I hadn't been working for Mr. York very long before this particular thing came up. We had to go out of town a ways and neither one of us had actually much money, as far as that was concerned, in our pockets, and we were trying to get by.

ARENA: By either one here, you mean the President and yourself?

BLACK: Yes. And we went in his car and just before we got to our destination it ran out of gas and he was determined to get

there. We pushed the car up to the top of a hill and coasted on down into the place where we were supposed to go to get the job done, which was an emergency situation.

ARENA: How did he seem to react under those emergency conditions? Did he lose his cool? Did he use any strong language? Did he berate you in any way, and so forth?

BLACK: No. He didn't lose his cool. He stuck his chin out and took off his coat and said, "If we push the car to the top of the hill, we'll get there in time yet."

ARENA: Do you remember what type of a car it was that he had?

BLACK: No. It was an old black probably Chevy or Ford, I don't know.

ARENA: That was actually the very first time you met him when that took place?

BLACK: I called and talked to Mr. Bewley and he said he would send Dick down, and we'd go down and put a holding order or something on this particular situation.

ARENA: Over the years have you had any contact with him?

BLACK: In the community and around. Not too much individually. I knew his father and I knew his mother, and I knew [Francis Donald Nixon] Don and Dick pretty well as far as I was concerned.

ARENA: How about his wife, Mrs. Patricia Nixon, Mrs. Richard Nixon?

BLACK: I never knew her too much except at the various political meetings where I would see them at, and newspapers.

ARENA: Did you ever, by any chance, see him in any of the town plays he appeared with the Community Players?

BLACK: No. That was more in his college time before I knew him.

ARENA: Did you belong to the same church he did, Whittier Friends Church?

BLACK: No.

ARENA: Did you ever meet with him socially, we'll say, in his home or he visit you in your home?

BLACK: No.

ARENA: When you did meet him after his first experience, would you say that you came into contact with him at least about once a week from 1938 on, would it be that type of a situation, even though you didn't talk with him, but did you see him on a daily basis?

BLACK: I saw him at least once or twice a week for business reasons. I'd go into the legal office where he was working, and I was bound to bump into him occasionally.

ARENA: How did he impress you during that period? What recollections do you have of him as a lawyer, a client, in view of the fact that you were meeting--and you need not mention other names, of course--with other lawyers, businessmen in Whittier and possibly Los Angeles as well? How did he impress you, or what views did you have of him at that time? It is very easy now to color everything with his importance of today. But did he impress you at that time and for what reasons?

BLACK: Well, he was extremely sincere and determined, and he seemed to carry that through to anything he was doing, wherever you'd find him or run into him.

ARENA: How was he from the personal social stand, although as you say you didn't meet with him personally, but from the standpoint of his courtesy toward you and patience, did he make you sweat, we'll say, in any way? How was the personal side, even though it was business?

BLACK: No. He was very easy to work with or talk to. We would never have any problems as far as I was concerned.

ARENA: How about humor? Did you find yourself ever laughing with him, you telling him jokes or his telling you jokes?

BLACK: No, not too much, because I was never with him individually or anything like that other than business contacts.

ARENA: The time that you knew him would have been near to the end of the depression era. Was there anything about his mother's pies that comes to mind?

BLACK: No, except that they were supposed to have had a store. My wife and I were never in the store when they were running the store.

ARENA: You were living where at the time, not East Whittier where the store was located?

BLACK: In Whittier. It was out on East Whittier Boulevard.

ARENA: But you never entered it at the time.

BLACK: No. The only thing that we ever entered was the restaurant that was opened up later by the family. We ate in there a lot.

ARENA: You don't recall that the President ever offered you some pies for sale that his mother or father had made? Did you ever know of that being done?

BLACK: I've heard a lot about it.

ARENA: Did you hear of it at that time?

BLACK: Back then we heard that they were putting out pies, but I think they used to sell them out there a lot, actually make them to sell to the public.

ARENA: You can't think of an incident where you saw him eating or someone eating the pies in the law offices?

BLACK: No.

ARENA: In your contact with the President, do you recall where you had made an appointment with him and it was broken? Did you find that there was any of this in your dealings, that he was not reliable from the standpoint of making and keeping appointments?

BLACK: No. I never had any of that because I never had any direct appointments with him.

ARENA: How would you describe his appearance physically at that time, his dress, thinking back when you used to meet with him? Is there something that stands out even now about his appearance and his dress? For example, did he have the tendency of having his tie down with collar open? Did he always have his jacket on, for example?

BLACK: I very seldom saw him without a tie in the proper place. He wasn't casual.

ARENA: How about the color of his suits? Was there a general statement you would make about that, that they tended always to be in the same particular color?

BLACK: They were more in the dark colors, nothing flashy.

ARENA: How about the color of his shirts? Do you remember, were they invariably white?

BLACK: I would say they were white always.

ARENA: Do you recall while you did meet him in his office that members of his family also were visiting or were coming or leaving? Did you ever find that to be a situation?

BLACK: No, not in my experience.

ARENA: Is there anything about him in this aspect, your business contact, that you would like to mention that I have not mentioned? Possibly your meeting with him and other businessmen? Possibly where you heard him speak at a businessmen's meeting?

BLACK: I've heard him speak a lot of times.

ARENA: During this period?

BLACK: Very possibly in Junior Chamber [of Commerce], because I was a member of Junior Chamber and he was also. But I don't recall too much specifically his connection with Junior Chamber.

ARENA: Was he an officer, do you recall, at the time?

BLACK: I don't think he was.

ARENA: How about the 20-30 Club, if you've ever heard of that?

BLACK: I know the 20-30 Club.

ARENA: Were you a member by any chance?

BLACK: No. I was a member of Junior Chamber [of Commerce] and was president of Whittier Junior Chamber and was later State Vice President of Junior Chamber. Dick was in when I first joined. He was a member of Junior Chamber and that was before I was active in Junior Chamber, but I'd see him at the meetings, but I didn't know him very well.

ARENA: Do you recall him as a guest speaker?

BLACK: I don't think so.

ARENA: During the same period, that is to 1945, and before he became active in politics--which as you know we're not discussing the political period--did you come into contact with his parents, Mrs. Hannah Nixon and Mr. [Francis Anthony] Frank Nixon?

BLACK: I don't think during that particular time I came into contact with them to know them personally. In later years we knew his mother quite well.

ARENA: What would be the first time when you came into contact with his mother?

BLACK: I think that we belonged to the Executive Club and Mr. and Mrs. [Frank] Nixon went to that. I think that's probably where we pretty well got acquainted with Mrs. [Hannah] Nixon.

ARENA: Would you describe what the Executive Club is?

BLACK: Executive Club is a club that you join and you pay dues, but they engage outstanding speakers. I and my wife, [Melba Black], sat at the head table with Mrs. [Hannah] Nixon and attorney [Carlos P.] Romulo from the Philippines, at one particular time. One other time we sat at the head table with Mrs. [Hannah] Nixon.

ARENA: Do you recall--this was after 1945--that she addressed the gathering; did she make any comments?

BLACK: She was introduced, that's about the most.

ARENA: Without going into politics, and I don't imagine this was a political situation?

BLACK: No, this was social. This was strictly outstanding speakers that were brought in, and that's what the Executive Club was.

ARENA: Bearing that in mind, how would you describe her during this time? How would you describe Mrs. Hannah Nixon from the standpoint of personality, from the standpoint of interest, of self-reliance, conversational habits, was she a fast talker, a slow talker? Anything that comes to mind about her.

BLACK: She was an extremely nice person. She was very, very congenial. She was not overbearing. She was well versed on almost any subject that you'd want to discuss, and my wife thought she was just about "it." Always did.

ARENA: Do you recall what the President's position in politics was around that time, these meetings with her at the Executive Club?

BLACK: No.

ARENA: The decade. Would it have been in the fifties, sixties?

BLACK: It's in the fifties, yes.

ARENA: During most of the fifties you might recollect he was Vice President, '52 plus eight years to '60.

BLACK: He probably was Vice President at that time.

ARENA: The reason I bring that up, of course, she was in a position to be quite proud, the Vice President's mother and so forth. You found nothing in the way of her throwing her weight around or acting proud in any objectionable way?

BLACK: That definitely was never a part of her character.

ARENA: Do you recall that you and your wife, or simply your wife, and she got together socially; did your wife ever visit in her home or vice versa?

BLACK: Not socially. But we'd occasionally bump into her in restaurants at night and they would have quite a long discussion. She'd run into her a time or two at--I don't know whether it would be what you call garage sales or cookie sales.

ARENA: Do you recall what some of Mrs. Hannah Nixon's interests or subjects of conversation included, even though you might have been listening only while your wife and she were talking? Do you recall what some of the things were that they did talk about?

BLACK: She was quite interested in all types of hobbies. I think that's where my wife and her clicked so well.

ARENA: Did your wife have a particular hobby?

BLACK: She's always worked in handicraft and did those type of things.

ARENA: Did your wife ever do any teaching, including teaching of handicraft?

BLACK: No.

ARENA: Do you recall that Mrs. Nixon had any particular hobby or handicraft?

BLACK: Not that I know of.

ARENA: But she was definitely interested in that sort of thing?

BLACK: Oh, yes.

ARENA: Do you ever recall Mrs. Hannah Nixon bringing up the matter of skinning animal skins or any members of her family?

BLACK: No.

ARENA: Some members of the family have a coyote pelt that was skinned by some member of the Nixon family. I don't know whether it was she or her own mother, who was Almira [Milhous]. By the way, did you ever meet Mrs. Hannah Nixon's mother?

BLACK: No.

ARENA: Do you recall Mrs. Hannah Nixon or anyone ever bringing up the matter of a white bearskin rug on which she is supposed to have stood when she married Mr. Frank Nixon? Did you ever hear anything about such a rug?

BLACK: No, I can't say that I did.

ARENA: Do you recall where your wife possibly had need of someone to help her in, say, some charitable work or vice versa, a drive--Red Cross or whatever it was--and your wife and Mrs. Nixon got together in that capacity, working together for some charity?

BLACK: No.

ARENA: Do you ever recall your wife commenting or your own views concerning the dress of Mrs. Hannah Nixon, or any personable features like that of her life--her manner of dress, her manner of speech?

BLACK: No, not really. The times that I can recall on that she was always neatly dressed and never--more moderate, not flashy or anything like that. She was always nice and courteous in her speech and emotions, as I recollect.

ARENA: Do you recall that your wife and Mrs. Hannah Nixon were, we'll say, with younger women or even teen-age girls in any capacity, and how Mrs. Nixon got along with different generations? Did you ever see her in that position?

BLACK: No. Most of the times that we came in contact with Mrs. Nixon was at the Executive Club and at the Chamber of Commerce dinners that she'd be attending, or some other function like that, so it wouldn't be in a working capacity in any way or a club action of any kind.

ARENA: Did Mrs. Hannah Nixon or her husband in any way try to interest you into joining the Quakers, do you recall?

BLACK: No.

ARENA: Either directly or indirectly?

BLACK: Never.

ARENA: Did you at any time ever feel uncomfortable while you were in her presence?

BLACK: No, sir. Definitely not.

ARENA: Did you at any time ever feel uncomfortable in the city of Whittier because you are not of the Quaker faith? Did you ever feel in any way you were at a disadvantage because of that fact?

BLACK: I wouldn't say in that capacity. I remember back on some of our Junior Chamber activities, we weren't allowed to do certain things on Sunday. We couldn't get a permit. But the code or city licensing type of arrangement was changed in the fifties somewhere. What I speak of mainly there, we--the Junior Chamber--put on a horse show and we run into a lot of trouble with the city because we were holding it outside of the city limits.

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ARENA: Did you want to clarify the matter of not being able to conduct or hold certain affairs on Sunday, Ray?

BLACK: A group of the churches objected to it being held on Sunday and the city practically forbid us to have the deal on Sunday at first. But it was later changed to where we could.

ARENA: Do you recall this matter ever coming up with any of the Nixons, discussing that with any of them?

BLACK: No. It would have no bearing or nothing to do with the Nixons. Along that same line though, in Junior Chamber we did have a lot of people wanting to know if there was

anything that we could do as a civic organization for the young people to be able to dance within the city limits and have functions like that at a public place.

ARENA: About what year was this?

BLACK: That was '43, '44 and '45, because I was State Vice President in '45, and it was about '44 or '45 because it was the year when I was president when this first come up. I recollect that quite a few groups of people would say, "Is there anything that you fellows can do to help break down the barrier so that they can have something for teenagers to do rather than go out of town." They weren't allowed to have a dance.

ARENA: Were you aware that back in his college period and in the thirties, as a matter of fact 1934, the President graduated from college and in that school year, '33-'34, he had been interested in that same thing. Did that ever come up between you and the President?

BLACK: No.

ARENA: Where he had tried to allow the rule about no dancing, for example, on the campus to be changed. That never came up?

BLACK: No.

ARENA: What do you recall about your contact with Mr. Frank Nixon? For example, when you and your wife did meet with Mrs. Hannah Nixon, was Frank usually along too, always?

BLACK: That's kind of a hard one for me to answer because I don't remember him too distinct. I met him, I know that.

ARENA: On these occasions when you would meet with Mrs. Hannah Nixon, would he be there?

BLACK: Most of that I don't think that he was along. He wasn't along at the ones I've discussed previously. She was by herself. Now I don't know whether he was able to get along much then, I don't recall that. I never really knew him very well.

ARENA: You had met other members of the family such as Mr. Donald Nixon, and would you tell about your associations with

Mr. Donald Nixon? Did you belong to any of the same clubs, for example, Junior Chamber of Commerce or anything like that?

BLACK: No. I didn't know him then too well. I think I became more acquainted with him on the political side going to different functions.

ARENA: In what way did he remind you of his older brother, [Richard Nixon], and in what ways did he not?

BLACK: I don't think he reminded me of Dick, if that's what you mean. I think they're two different individuals.

ARENA: Would this be appearancewise as well as his personality?

BLACK: Appearancewise and I think personality too. They're different individuals.

ARENA: Can you put your finger on some words that would show the distinction between the two? What ways were their personalities different?

BLACK: I don't know. I don't know how you'd answer that.

ARENA: You know they're different.

BLACK: To me they are quite different. They're not the same.

ARENA: Would you say you had certain different feelings, for example, when you were in the presence of one? By a feeling, I mean did you feel more relaxed when you were with one or the other?

BLACK: Actually I was never with Don on any particular thing, other than on, like I said, going to some of the political rallies. We used to go out to the restaurant that he was running, the Nixon restaurant, and he would come around and say hello. That would be about it. To me he is a different individual than Dick. He's more of a salesman, more salesman's tactics, you might say.

ARENA: How about the youngest brother of the President? On what occasions have you met him? This would be Edward Nixon.

BLACK: I just know of him and I think I have met him; I wouldn't swear to that. But I'd know him if I see him.

ARENA: Would you say he looks more like the President than Donald, in appearance?

BLACK: In physical appearance he probably does. He's taller, I believe, although I've never seen them together. I never saw either one of them together, any of the three brothers together with one another. I couldn't enlarge upon that any.

ARENA: Is there anything that I have not mentioned, any experience that comes to mind that you would like to discuss about any aspects of the Nixons--Mother, Father, the President, the wife, Mrs. Patricia Nixon?

BLACK: No, I don't think so. Like I said, I never knew Pat too well. We all speak of her as Pat and we called her Pat when we did see them.

ARENA: Would she recognize you, do you think, if you should suddenly step into the White House, would she and the President instantly recognize you and your wife?

BLACK: I'm sure Dick would, but I doubt very much if Pat would. Only at political rallies would we ever come in contact with Pat.

ARENA: Did the President in meeting you in subsequent years, did you meet with him in the fifties, sixties, long after the incident of 1938 with the car running out of gas, have you ever met him?

BLACK: Except at the political rallies where he'd go by and we'd congratulate him or shake his hand.

ARENA: Do you recall what years were involved in some of these rallies? Would these have been the fifties?

BLACK: The 1950's, yes. It was prior to his running in California for Governor.

ARENA: How about during that period when he was running for Governor, did you come into contact with him then?

BLACK: Not any direct contact.

ARENA: What I was wondering that given that incident of 1938, when you did meet with him later did he ever recall that, did he bring up the question I'm wondering?

BLACK: No. I think all of the times that I was ever around him after that was after he got in politics, when he was in line or he was going past, like at Pomona [California], and they had one or two for him up here at the cafeteria at Whittier College.

ARENA: You did not have time to chitchat?

BLACK: There was no chitchatting because other people were involved.

ARENA: But when you did go through the line, did he know who you were?

BLACK: Oh, yes.

ARENA: Would you make an overall evaluation--and take as much time and handle it any way you like--of the President from your own personal knowledge and your own personal experience? An overall evaluation from the standpoint of honesty, integrity, humility? Humility in the sense that you could feel at ease with him regardless of what position he held. He might have been out of office or he might have been in office as President. And by humility I mean that he didn't throw his weight around. I'm asking you now to give your own estimate of the fundamental qualities of the man, regardless of politics, but the man as you knew him.

BLACK: As I knew him, I think I've already said that he was very sincere and determined, very diplomatic on any situation that you might find him in or be with him in. He was never overbearing. In my experience I would have never felt out of ease at any time that I've been with him. He wasn't overbearing and he didn't try to put on a big front or anything of that nature. To me he is just a very, very sincere individual.

ARENA: From the standpoint of seeing him at a distance--although thanks to technology it could be a close distance such as TV [television]--what features do you recognize in him today that remind you of the Richard Nixon of, say, the 1930's when you knew him and mid 1940's, 1945 when he was just leaving for politics?

BLACK: His eyes, I would say, they speak a lot.

ARENA: Do you find that the eyes call attention today, as they did at that time?

BLACK: To me they are very friendly and they strike you. I don't know whether it's his eyes, but to me that's about what it would be. And his appearance is about the same, maybe less hair.

ARENA: You mentioned the word diplomatic. Can you think of any incident when you knew him in which you would say that he acted diplomatically? Was there some touchy situation or some situation that you can relate that would exemplify this diplomatic side of Richard Nixon?

BLACK: No, not any specific instance.

ARENA: The overall quality you would definitely recall.

BLACK: Even my first meeting with him, that one particular business deal was a touchy situation that had to be handled right or you'd have a lot of problems, and he did a perfect job on that.

ARENA: Let me ask you this if I may, when you did know him as a businessman was there ever any. . . . By a businessman I mean a practicing lawyer who dealt in the business world, of course. When you knew him at that time before 1945, was there any indication that he might go into politics? Did he or any close associates indicate that?

BLACK: No. He was more or less picked and tabbed by a group of men from the area here that launched him, you might say, in his political program.

ARENA: Did you see or sense in him, without his bringing it up or anyone else, that he might be a political figure? Was there any sort of inkling, knowing businessmen, knowing politicians as you did? Unconsciously could you recall that you thought some day of his going into politics and that he would be good at it?

BLACK: No. I don't think that that ever crossed my mind or crossed his mind prior to the period of time when he got involved in it.

ARENA: Just to make sure, did you have any contact with him from the time he left Whittier to become a lawyer with the government in Washington with the Office of Price Administration, OPA, to the time when he left that in the middle of 1942 to join the Navy, and then 1945 left the Navy to return? During that period, 1942 through '45, did you ever have any contact with him in any way?

BLACK: No. Nothing.

ARENA: Not even correspondence.

BLACK: No. Never correspondence.

ARENA: Thinking back, again without going into politics, what evaluation would you make of the people who supported him in politics, and you need not mention names? But I'm thinking of your being an intimate citizen, intimate in the sense that you are a member of a Chamber of Commerce group and you knew who the leading businessmen were, it would be natural. What type of people did support him in politics, from the standpoint of their position in society, from the standpoint of their economic status? For example, was it just a rich man as you think back? Was it one particular religious group, as you think back, again without mentioning names. What type of people, as it turned out, backed this young man in a political career?

BLACK: Well, it was basically a cross section, you might say, of all types of people moneywise. I mean, it wasn't rich or it wasn't poor; it was all the way through. It was what you would call the main core of the leaders of the area, not just big business, all the way across.

ARENA: Again, from your position of being aware of what was going on in the community, how would you compare him with other young men of Whittier? Did Whittier produce other Richard Nixon's? Was it capable of producing other Richard Nixon's? Is he an unusual product of the community?

BLACK: I think he would be an unusual product anyway you look at it, because looking back on his life you almost have to say that was true. Of course, possibly a lot of people could have been brought along, but I don't think they would have had the sincerity and be as dedicated in all of their actions as he has demonstrated that he is.

ARENA: Ray, is there anything else, or any other comment that you would like to bring up as this interview comes to a close?

BLACK: No. I can't think of anything.

ARENA: I want to thank you for answering all of my questions so frankly and fully and for letting this go on the historical record. Thank you very much.

BLACK: Yes, sir. I appreciate it.