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## Gail M. Jobe and Ola Florence Jobe (February 20, 1972)

C. Richard Arena

Oral History Interview

with

MRS. OLA FLORENCE JOBE

and

MR. GAIL M. JOBE

February 20, 1972

Sedona, Arizona

By Dr. C. Richard Arena

For the Richard Nixon Oral History Project

ARENA: This is interview #1 with Mr. and Mrs. Gail M. (Merritt) Jobe. Mrs. Jobe's maiden name is Ola Florence Welch. We are in Sedona, Arizona. Today's date is February 20th, 1972, Arena interviewing. Mrs. Jobe, may we begin by my asking you where and when you were born?

MRS. JOBE: I was born in Naco, Arizona, December 26, 1912.

ARENA: Would you indicate about where it is located?

MRS. JOBE: It is a little border town near Bisbee, Arizona. I should have been born in Tombstone [Arizona], that was my home. My mother was born there. But, it was Christmastime and we went to my uncle's house, he was a doctor. I was born there and my own uncle delivered me.

ARENA: Would you mind giving a brief biographical sketch of your educational background, when you were married and if you did any teaching, or if your college education was used in a career way, in any way? Just a brief biographical rundown of your life.

MRS. JOBE: My first ten years were spent in Tombstone, Arizona. I went to school there. We moved to Long Beach [California]. I was in school there about a year. Then we moved to Whittier, California, and I completed my education from the sixth grade through college there. From the time I was four years old I knew I was going to be a teacher. There was never any other idea in my mind. So, very fortunately, I was able to get a position at the East Whittier School in 1934 during the depression, and I taught music two years. I was married in 1936 to Gail Jobe.

ARENA: Had you majored in music at Whittier College or was it a combination education and music?

MRS. JOBE: Yes. Education and music.

ARENA: Had you ever any idea that possibly you might be interested in a personal career in music, not just teach but, say, on a concert stage or anything like that?

MRS. JOBE: No. I would loved to have, but even then I realized I didn't have the talent. But I did have a feel for teaching.

ARENA: I believe we were mentioning off the tape, and this might be a good time to mention it on the tape if you will, your contact with one of the President's relatives, his Uncle Griffith Milhous, in connection with music. Would you mind going over that, about when you met him and what your contact with him was?

MRS. JOBE: Mr. [Griffith William] Milhous was the music teacher in the junior high school, John Muir Junior High School in Whittier. The thing I can remember about him is that he had us write stories on the great musicians. I was taking piano at the time and was very interested in music, but I did not try out for piano in the orchestra--he also taught the orchestra--and I don't know why I didn't. Probably he felt that I couldn't play well enough. But we had to write these biographical scripts on these musicians. I loved to do that kind of thing so I wrote on ten different musicians, I believe, and I remember I had very good grades. He singled me out. That's why I remember him, just from that one incident.

ARENA: As a matter of fact, did you ever bring this contact up with the President when you were to meet him later on, and members of his family? Did you maintain your association with Mr. Griffith Milhous, maybe meeting him in the President's home or in any of the other relatives' homes, say, the [Oscar O.] Marshburns, if you visited them with the President or anything like that?

MRS. JOBE: No. I can remember asking the President, asking Dick Nixon at that time, if he were any relation to Mr. Milhous, that I'd had him in school and he was my teacher. He said, "Oh, yes, that's my uncle." And at that time he was living near there and as I recall he was giving violin lessons. I knew that, but I don't recall that I ever met him afterwards.

ARENA: Did you by any chance have any private lessons with him? He did teach at home.

MRS. JOBE: No. My sister had cello lessons, I think, from him. She was rather close with him, my younger sister.

ARENA: Would you mind giving your sister's complete name and if she's married, what her single name was, and then her married name?

MRS. JOBE: Dorothy Welch, and it is now Dorothy Ashby.

ARENA: Did you possibly ever have a piano tuned by Mr. Griffith Milhous, who also engaged in that activity?

MRS. JOBE: No. I remember that he did. We probably would have, but we were on a contract with an Ampico man. We had an electric player piano which was quite a treat in those days. My family was very good in having music around the home. This piano tuner came from Los Angeles [California] and tuned our piano every four months.

ARENA: You did mention the word Ampico. Would you spell that and explain that please?

MRS. JOBE: A M P I C O. It was a company that put out the Ampico records. The piano we had, as I remember, was a Hanes piano. About 1924, 1925, these records were very

popular. If you bought the piano through them, and we got our records through the company in Los Angeles, then the piano tuner serviced our piano.

ARENA: You said, I believe, that music was popular in the home. Did your mother or father have any musical training themselves before, or did they just enjoy it and wanted to be sure that you had musical training?

MRS. JOBE: They just wanted us to enjoy it. My mother did play when she was young, but she trained to be a doctor, so she had nothing in that.

ARENA: If I may ask, how much formal education did your mother have towards this interest in medicine; she trained to be a doctor?

MRS. JOBE: Yes. She graduated from the University of California, which at that time was in the southern part of California; it was not called U.C.L.A. [University of California at Los Angeles]. She did not do any internship; she did not take her exam to become a doctor, but she had her M.D. [Doctor of Medicine].

ARENA: That's very interesting.

MRS. JOBE: It is very interesting. She was born in Tombstone and brought to California to complete her education.

ARENA: Was it the marriage that ended that series of hopes, I'll say, or plans?

MRS. JOBE: Yes. Her brother was a doctor.

ARENA: Would you mind explaining what your father's [Guy Welch] occupation was?

MRS. JOBE: He was always in police work of some kind. He was Sheriff of Cochise County [Arizona] at one time, County Treasurer, and then in Whittier he was Sergeant, then was Assistant Chief, then Chief of Police.

ARENA: Are your parents still living?

MRS. JOBE: No.

ARENA: Getting back to the encounter with the Milhouses, do you think, as far as you know, that that was the first time that you had met anyone in the President's family, either a direct relative or indirect relative such as Uncle Griffith Milhous; had you ever met any others before then?

MRS. JOBE: No, I hadn't.

ARENA: Did you possibly meet the other member of the family who is also quite interested in music and taught; I think you know whom I mean, Mrs. Jane Beeson, the President's aunt?

MRS. JOBE: Yes. I had met her when we were in the Glee Club in Whittier College. We took trips during spring vacation. When we stopped in Lindsay [California] we usually sang in different churches. When we stopped in Lindsay we stayed with Mrs. Beeson and she played the piano and some of us played. That was probably the first time I remember meeting her.

ARENA: When you say we, would that be members of the school choir?

MRS. JOBE: Yes. I was very close friends with Edith Gibbons, the daughter of another sister, another Milhous sister.

ARENA: The sister who was a nurse, I believe, too, Mrs. Martha Gibbons. I believe she was the nurse.

MRS. JOBE: Yes. That's true.

ARENA: Do you recall when you first met Edith, and this would be Edith Nunes now, Mrs. [Edith Gibbons] Nunes.

MRS. JOBE: I believe I met her mother at that time. I'm quite sure I met Mrs. Gibbons and Mrs. [Jane Milhous] Beeson.

ARENA: And you met Edith the same time too, about that time, and then remained friends with her?

MRS. JOBE: I met Edith when she first came to Whittier. She's younger than I, and I must have been about a junior, and I just have gotten acquainted with her because she was a cousin of Dick's, became closer to her.

ARENA: Do you mind if I ask you if you are a member of the Quaker Church as the Milhouses overwhelmingly are, as you know?

MRS. JOBE: No, I'm an Episcopalian.

ARENA: Do you recall that before you met the President there were any complications or you were ever uncomfortable in any way--I'm thinking for example when you knew Mr. Griffith Milhous, when you met Mrs. Beeson--because of this difference in religion?

MRS. JOBE: No.

ARENA: They never made you feel in any way uncomfortable either?

MRS. JOBE: Not at all.

ARENA: How would you describe--again from the best of your recollection--the personality of Mrs. Jane Beeson, the President's piano music teacher?

MRS. JOBE: She reminded me very much of Hannah Nixon in that she was quiet and serene, where Mrs. Gibbons was more active and had more pep to her. Mrs. Beeson, as I recall looking back on it, her whole interest was music. There were two pianos in her home and at the time I thought that woman was really interested in music if they have two pianos in their home.

ARENA: She would teach mainly in her home, were you aware of that?

MRS. JOBE: That sounds familiar to me.

ARENA: She would have people coming to her home. And you might be interested in knowing that she still has about twenty-five students a day at this stage.

MRS. JOBE: Marvelous.

ARENA: Did she ever mention to you the fact that the President had come as a youngster during his elementary life, or maybe he mentioned this to you himself, but I am just wondering what you recall about the affair where he stayed with Aunt Jane Beeson for about six months. He left his school back in Southern California and enrolled in the school in that area. It was called Strathmore [California]. The main idea was that he was going to learn to play the piano.

MRS. JOBE I just recall that he took lessons from her and that is it. I didn't realize he stayed with her, but I can see he would have had to.

ARENA: I was just wondering if in any way that came up or she might have mentioned that to you?

MRS. JOBE: I think she did. I think that's where I first heard it. It just seems as though I teased Richard about it.

ARENA: Do you recall that at the time you visited her, Mrs. Beeson, she was living on the farm outside of Lindsay [California], or at this point was she inside the city itself?

MRS. JOBE: No. This was out of Lindsay, or out of the city.

ARENA: Did it strike you in any way, and how if it did, that here was a lady who had studied music very seriously at the Indianapolis Music Conservatory and was living literally on a farm and taking in children on her farm and teaching them music? Did that arouse your curiosity, or did that come up in any way, or did you find that unusual in any way?

MRS. JOBE: I don't recall anything about that. All I can remember is that her great interest was music. All the Milhous family was interested in music. My family also had a lot of music, so Mrs. Beeson living on a farm and teaching was the natural thing to do. Of course, at that time I was interested in music, so I thought that was wonderful.

ARENA: Do you recall possibly that she was holding recitals? You didn't happen to witness one of her recitals by any chance?



MRS. JOBE: No. I knew she was having recitals, but no, I didn't attend. I was only there for an overnight stay.

ARENA: While we're still on this personal biographical sketch, may I ask you if you ever had any part-time chores on a regular basis either at home or at any time during your education? And what this part-time work consisted of?

MRS. JOBE: When I was in college . . .

ARENA: I was thinking of both personally at home and I presume you were living in the city, maybe you had regular chores as some of the youngsters did on the farms in the area, or maybe you didn't? I was just wondering about that part. Then the other, if you received any compensation for part-time work while you were going through any part of your education, even through college?

MRS. JOBE: My parents were most anxious that we have a wonderful education and they were very kind and very good to us. I had my little chores around the house that I did. We, my sisters and I, did the dishes and that kind of thing. We were never paid for it. I don't know why that didn't come up. I don't ever remember arguing over it, or even asking for pay.

ARENA: By pay, that means no allowance either?

MRS. JOBE: No allowance. Nothing of that kind. Of course, there wasn't any money, but even people in those days had allowances. We were expected to do duties, but I had a marvelous childhood. The only demands made of us were that we never bring shame to our family, that we study hard in school. I was most conscientious. When we were in college, the first two years, my father footed all the bills. It was the first part of the depression, and I even took music lessons from Miss [Margaretha] Lohmann. Then the bottom dropped out in 1933. My father could not help with tuition, and I was able to get a job in the treasurer's office at Whittier College and I worked there for two years. One summer I worked there a whole month. I didn't realize what serious condition the school was in.

But I was assistant to the controller who was Mr. Howard Hockett. I was assistant to his assistant, Miss Martha Rudder, and she went away for a month in the summer, and I worked there alone and almost completed getting enough money for the next year. I

borrowed money from the Knights of Templar to finish. I taught summer school one time, a church youth school summer school one time and received a small salary.

ARENA: Do you recall where this summer school was? You say this was a church summer school. Would this be your own church?

MRS. JOBE: No. It was a general one held in a school room. A teacher that I had had in the eighth grade was the principal and I felt very pleased to think I earned, I believe it was two weeks or three weeks, and I think I earned twenty dollars.

ARENA: As a matter of fact did you, either before or after that particular job, ever teach Sunday School in your own church?

MRS. JOBE: Yes. I taught Sunday School five years in my church.

ARENA: Would you mind describing what that consisted of?

MRS. JOBE: I usually had, as I recall, fourth or fifth grade boys and girls.

ARENA: And it was just on Sundays too?

MRS. JOBE: Yes. And I did that while I was in college and after I was out of college. I went to church Sunday School all my life. My parents were not active at all, but my sisters and I went.

ARENA: Do you recall if your classes were coed?

MRS. JOBE: Yes.

ARENA: And do you recall if you had any particular method or were your Sunday School classes more or less prescribed by some general overseer who had workbooks and had a particular format for you to use, or were you completely on your own and you could teach them as you wished?

MRS. JOBE: We were given a book each fall to teach out of, but we could supplement or implement that in any way we wished, which I did.

ARENA: Did you enjoy it?

MRS. JOBE: Yes, I did. I liked teaching.

ARENA: Did you have the opportunity to take advantage of your musical background? Was there a piano in your class, we'll say?

MRS. JOBE: No. They were just little cubbyhole classrooms. Occasionally I would play hymns as necessary for Sunday School in general.

ARENA: Might I ask the precise name of the church and where it was located, and if the building is still the one in use today?

MRS. JOBE: It was the St. Matthias [Episcopal] Church on South Washington [Avenue] and it was right next to the YMCA [Young Men's Christian Association], and it was a tiny little church. It has since been torn down and there's a big new church on the corner of Washington and College [Avenue], at that time. I understand that street has had its name changed [Wardman Avenue].

ARENA: This present church is one in Spanish style, if I'm not mistaken, too.

MRS. JOBE: Yes.

ARENA: Do you mind if I ask you if there was a particular minister or a particular sermon, including maybe a distinguished visitor, or maybe not distinguished, but a dynamic speaker that comes to mind?

MRS. JOBE: The thing that comes to mind is this marvelous Rector that we had, Mr. E. T. Lewis.

ARENA: When you say E. T., they are his two initials?

MRS. JOBE: I hope I have that right. I'm sure that's Edwin Tuttle Lewis. He was a marvelous man, who was the father and mother and everything to the church when I was there and had a lot to do with my interest in the church.

ARENA:            Would you say that he was effective with young people or was he effective just about with everyone? It wasn't just that he had a particular appeal to young people?

MRS. JOBE:        He was very effective. I should qualify this and say that I had a marvelous Sunday School teacher, Mrs. Clara Tunison, who had the high school girls' class. I had more fun. We had very little money in those days and we didn't go many places and in high school I was very shy and reserved. Mrs. Tunison was just marvelous with us--a little woman from England that I always pictured as though, if I wanted to picture the Queen of England I would picture this little woman--a very beautiful stance, a beautiful English complexion. We always had a lot of fun. We had a club and at Christmastime we always put on a big play. It was one of the highlights of my high school years.

ARENA:            Do you mind if I ask you if the question I asked you concerning your contact with the Milhouses, your being an Episcopalian, they being old-line Quakers in the sense that they were convinced Quakers and they were among the early settlers and all that, did this hold pretty true with all of your other Quaker friends and associates, whether they were Friends or not? Did you ever feel, as an Episcopalian, in a town founded by Quakers, that you were at a disadvantage or that you were the victim of prejudice, either conscious or unconscious on their part? Were you ever embarrassed with any of the Quakers, would you say?

MRS. JOBE:        No. In fact, when I look back on it I felt very fortunate because our church believed in dancing and going to a picture show and, of course, with grownups there was smoking allowed and that kind of thing. Camilla [Vincent Simmons] and I, my friend and I, always felt very fortunate in going to this church because they believed in all this. All the other churches, including the Quaker Church, did not believe in dancing and going to picture shows, but many of the young people were going. We used to say how lucky that we don't have to disobey a law or a rule because of that. And I never felt any prejudice, even though Whittier was a Quaker town. I never had that feeling at all.

ARENA:            On the question of dancing, although we might be going a little bit ahead of ourselves in a way, as you know there has been published accounts of President Nixon's

efforts to bring dancing on the Whittier College campus. What do you recall of any of that and, if anything, if you played a direct or particular role in that whole episode?

MRS. JOBE: No. I didn't play any role in that. It's been made such a big issue. I can't recall that it was that big an issue at all.

ARENA: If this is any help, from the persons I've interviewed-- and I have not had the pleasure of interviewing Mr. Nixon himself, of course--he made this a campaign promise, in a way a campaign pledge, in the junior year when he ran for [student body] president, and then the following year, why, he did serve as president his senior year. But it became a big thing when he was campaigning for the presidency in his junior year, which would have been the spring of 1933.

MRS. JOBE: I was working for him in his campaign when he was running for the presidency and I know when this came out I was sort of surprised; now I could forget. But I don't recall it was the big issue that everyone says it was.

ARENA: In other words, it wasn't that big an issue at that time?

MRS. JOBE: We were always arguing more or less about having dancing on the campus and we wanted it and all. Probably that was one of the issues, but I can't recall that it was the big issue, and certainly it couldn't have been too big an issue because Mr. Thomson, Dick Thomson, who ran against Richard Nixon was certainly not against dancing. He was a good dancer and danced a lot, where Mr. Nixon learned just when he was in college. So I don't understand that.

ARENA: I'm glad that you are helping to clarify it because that is one of the purposes of these interviews, not only to shed new light but to clarify a point such as that. Is there anything else about your pre-Nixon period, before you first met the President you'd like to go into in the way of this biographical sketch that we are painting here, that you would like to bring up yourself?

MRS. JOBE: I think you've covered it very well. I lived a rather uneventful life, a very happy life.

ARENA: Was there any unusual emergency--I'm thinking of the earthquake of 1930, I think, that took place and hurt the high school and some of the other buildings--was there either that emergency or any other unusual event that I might awaken in you? Do you think of anything that took place, including that one? Do you recall where you were at the time of the 1930 earthquake?

MRS. JOBE: 1932 or 1933. Yes. I can remember rather definitely. It really was rather a catastrophe in our family because my grandfather had left a mortgaged-ridden apartment house in Long Beach. It was in the evening and we were just ready to sit down to eat. I can remember all of us running into the street, my mother, in fact, taking the birdcage with the bird. We had company. I can remember the tomato juice being spilled on the table.

But the thing that concerned us was this apartment that was in Long Beach. It was a large apartment. When my father found he was able to get through--because he was with the Police Department--we found that it was still standing. However, because of the depression and cracks caused by the earthquake, it was a terrible financial disaster and my parents lost the apartment house.

ARENA: Did you happen to know at that same time of that earthquake the Beesons were in Long Beach?

MRS. JOBE: That's right.

ARENA: And at the same time the President's father ran out there in a great huff and a puff to see how they were doing. Did that come up in any way?

MRS. JOBE: I don't remember that. But I remember the Beesons were living over there, because I went to church over there with Richard one time. Isn't that funny I can't remember what church it was; it must have been a Quaker church.

ARENA: Do you recall if it was damaged?

MRS. JOBE: No, I don't.

ARENA: Was it Long Beach that suffered more than the Whittier area, do you recall?

MRS. JOBE: Oh, yes. The reason I remember that so well is that I had lived in Long Beach and knew some of the schools that were hit and realized it, and the fact that we had this apartment house. So I know that it was there, and I remember my father getting through.

ARENA: Do you recall that you would travel, especially back to the relatives or friends that you had known in Arizona as you were growing up and all the way through your college years?

MRS. JOBE: We'd take occasional trips back to Tombstone and Naco in 1928, and the early thirties we went back and we used these old plank roads. It took us two days to get there, seven hundred miles.

ARENA: Do you recall the car that was used?

MRS. JOBE: Yes, a Studebaker. We had an open car, sedan, about a 1922 that we used up to about 1928. Then we got that old blue one that we had. It was a Buick, a blue sedan. We must have bought that about 1930 secondhand.

ARENA: This involved driving across the desert; was there ever any problem or any emergency?

MRS. JOBE: Yes. We had thirteen flat tires one time. My father was driving and it was very, very warm. It would take us hours to go just a few miles, especially in the Yuma [Arizona] area up toward Gila Bend [Arizona] because of the terrible sand. We'd get stuck all the time.

ARENA: That was not paved.

MRS. JOBE: I remember I couldn't stand the heat too well, and I'd get ill. I was always a worrier and they'd let me sit in the front seat with my father, so I thought I had to watch the road, and I think that was another reason I was ill.

ARENA: Do you recall when you first started to drive yourself? Did you drive, say, during your high school or college years?

MRS. JOBE: When I was sixteen my folks said I could learn to drive. My mother taught me and I was very terrible. They thought I never would be able to learn to drive, I jerked the car all the way. I had to be very careful because my father was in the Police Department and I had two small wrecks, then no more. I wasn't watching one time and I--this was just after I learned to drive . . .

ARENA: Would this have been the family car, by the way?

MRS. JOBE: Family car, and a car stopped suddenly in front of me and I banged into him and didn't hurt anything. The other one, I was right about a block from a police station and we came to an intersection. I was going through it and this other man was too, and we hit right in the middle. And the first one down there was my father. [Laughter] He was very good. We were shook up. No one was hurt. I had my sister and a friend in the car in the front seat. Evidently the insurance and everything took care of both of them.

ARENA: Do you recall how long it was after that that you drove?

MRS. JOBE: As soon as the car was fixed up they let me drive again. My folks were very very good with their car. Of course, we never used it unless we had to. I walked to school over a mile--it must have been two miles to school. I was never taken to school unless it was raining hard. I would have loved to have gone away to school but I couldn't. My folks would always allow me to take the car--even though it was difficult for them to afford it--to take the girls to different concerts around. They were very generous, and they trusted me in my driving even though I'd had those few wrecks.

ARENA: What was the longest trip, if you recall, that you ever took on your own with the car, say, up to the time you graduated from college, which I believe was 1934, your class?

MRS. JOBE: I can remember even after I learned to drive, our Sunday School class sometimes would go into Hollywood [California] and that was a lot of traffic for us in those days. My parents let me go into the Egyptian Theater and the Chinese Theater.



ARENA: Grauman's Chinese Theater?

MRS. JOBE: Yes. I drove in there. As far as difficult driving, I don't recall any other. We went to Sequoia [National Park], and my father always drove, and I don't recall ever driving when he was driving.

ARENA: You didn't spell him out? He didn't want anyone, including your mother possibly, to share with the driving?

MRS. JOBE: No. I don't recall that he shared. He drove all the way. We didn't take very many trips. There wasn't money to travel.

ARENA: Now, shall we move into your meeting with President Nixon, and may I ask you when it was that you first met Richard Nixon, whatever you recall about the occasion?

MRS. JOBE: I've been asked this before and it's not very easy. All I can remember first being aware of him must have been 1929 when he was in the oratorical contests, and I thought he was very bright and very smart and I would go to these contests. He didn't know me.

ARENA: This would have been on the college level?

MRS. JOBE: High school.

ARENA: 1933 possibly?

MRS. JOBE: Oh, '29, pardon me.

ARENA: In your junior year, then, in high school?

MRS. JOBE: I don't remember when he first came, except that I think it was the first part of his junior year that he transferred, and I have no idea why he transferred. I thought of that the other day. I don't ever recall asking him why he transferred or even remember his telling me why. And I was aware of him that spring, but I didn't go with him at all. Then in the senior year we were in the same Latin class and I was aware of him then because he always had his translations and he was very

good in Latin. In the spring of 1930 was the two thousandth anniversary of Virgil's death or birth, one of the two, and the Latin Department decided to put on a play. We were rather unusual because usually they did not have four years of Latin. There weren't enough students that wanted the fourth year. But it so happened that we had had especially good teachers, I believe, and there was enough interest. There was quite a class to study Virgil. We studied the Aenid. No . . .

ARENA: He wrote the Aenid.

MRS. JOBE: I'm sure that's what it was. I'm confused because then they decided to put this play on, it was Dido and Aeneas, that's why I'm confused on that. And then I keep thinking of Homer and the Greeks. Didn't he have something to do with it?

ARENA: Aeneas in a way was the Trojan who, with the destruction of Troy by the Greeks, went on and helped to found Rome. And, of course, Virgil is the Roman, so they do tie in in that way. I had three years of Latin myself. I wanted a fourth but I had to take science instead.

MRS. JOBE: I don't know how much good four years of Latin did. [Laughter] Anyway, then we had this play. It was put on not by the drama class but by the Latin Department.

ARENA: Do you recall if the play was in Latin too?

MRS. JOBE: No. I have a copy of the play someplace even. The same copy that we had. I was put in as Dido and Richard Nixon was Aeneas. We were cast opposite one another and that's when really he was aware of me and I was aware of him. I suppose people won't believe this either, but I can't remember especially having a first date. I can remember going to a scholarship party.

ARENA: Scholastic Society?

MRS. JOBE: What they called a ditch day. I can remember the first time I met his father [Francis Anthony Nixon] and mother [Hannah Milhous Nixon] because they came to the play and the play was just fairly done. I can remember after the play Dick came up and got me. He wanted me to meet his father

and mother very much. They had come to the play. And I remember being very embarrassed because I still had all my makeup on. But I went down and met them and it was in this green Dodge. I can remember that. I can remember his mother and father very well. Then, we had this date going to the . . .

ARENA: Excuse me. Were any of the brothers around? At this point Edward [Calvert Nixon] was not born, but Donald [Francis Donald] was?

MRS. JOBE: No. I didn't know Donald then, or anyone then. Then, we went on this party for the Scholastic Society down to Santa Monica [California] and we were on the palisades and I can remember others being in his car. I can remember Roland Harker; he was the son of a Methodist minister, I believe. Then really a big date was our junior-senior banquet.

ARENA: Would you describe the nature of the junior-senior banquet, what the occasion was, and possibly did it include a dance?

MRS. JOBE: No. That's another thing. My mother had always wanted me to learn to dance. It was a way to have fun and this kind of thing. I was shy and I had dancing lessons--you know, learned to waltz and fox trot and that kind of thing. But there was never any place to dance, because . . .

ARENA: The high school did not permit them at that time?

MRS. JOBE: No. Also the blue laws were in. There were no shows on Sunday at that time. So they had what they called a banquet, and the junior class gave it for the senior class, and this is a regular date that I had with Richard Nixon who was president of the Scholastic Society and was giving a speech. So we sat at the head table. I still have the little folder that we had from that. There was a theme carried out through it. His title of his speech was something about, "When we go for berries we must not mind the thorns," or something of that kind, and he gave a talk.

ARENA: Knowing him as closely as you did, being his date, was there anything special that he ever confided in you that you do want to say now about his technique in public speaking? Do you recall that this ever came up or maybe you asked him how he achieved every distinction that he had?

Everyone agrees that he did rather well as a public speaker in high school and college. Do you recall that the method of the source of his public speaking ability ever came up in any way? Did he mention a particular uncle or a particular ideal or a book that he used to learn to speak as effectively as he did? If he didn't bring that up, what would your opinion be on that subject? Why was he an effective public speaker?

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MRS. JOBE: As I recall he never discussed with me any book that he used or any method that he used of any kind. The only thing I seem to remember is that he thought very highly of a [William] Bill Behnke who had been in the oratorical contests and I believe had won a district contest, which is higher than Richard Nixon won later on. I think Richard Nixon came in second or something. I just never thought why he spoke so well. I just was very interested in public speaking and in debating and politics because my father and mother encouraged talk and arguments(!) at the dinner table. We used to talk a lot about politics and we were encouraged to do so.

ARENA: Excuse me. You don't recall necessarily that Richard Nixon was also at these affairs, you particularly? I think you said your mother said recently he used to come and eat.

MRS. JOBE: He ate with us and I don't recall very many times.

ARENA: How about his being nervous or at ease before delivering a talk?

MRS. JOBE: As I recall, the one time we went to the junior-senior banquet he was nervous before and I'm sure that he had written his speech out, and whether he asked my opinion of it I can't remember, but I doubt it very much. He was very nervous and I remember encouraging him that he was going to do all right, that kind of thing. And then when he did get up to speak, he was always very calm and did it very well. I always figured that was part of his great success in extemporaneous speaking, he seemed to calm down when he actually had to speak.

ARENA: I think you might have mentioned off the tape or earlier that he had contact with Dr. Albert Upton. To what extent do you believe that Dr. Upton was of

assistance to the President in shaping his public stance, not only from the standpoint of acting--Dr. Upton was interested in acting, as you know, interested in drama. Do you recall specific occasions where he coached the President in standing before the public?

MRS. JOBE: All I remember is he always admired Dr. Upton very much and Dr. Upton was the type of professor at Whittier College that his reputation ran ahead of him and you knew that he was a hard man and he was an exacting critic. I'm sure in his English classes he was very critical of Richard Nixon, but Richard Nixon took it because he admired and respected the man, as he admired and respected Dr. [Paul S.] Smith, whom I also admired and respected very much. But, Dr. Smith wasn't the--should I say, excuse me Dr. Upton--harsh critic that Dr. Upton was, and I was always a little afraid of Dr. Upton and I was in his class once and I dropped it. [Laughter]

ARENA: Do you recall while you were at the college--this might have happened later--that Dr. Upton and Dr. Smith gave a joint course?

MRS. JOBE: Yes. I remember that course. I wanted to take it very badly but I had these education courses and some music courses, and I couldn't take it. I'm pretty sure, didn't Mr. Nixon take it?

ARENA: I'm not sure if he took it or not. I believe Dr. Upton had not been there too long, and he was about to launch some very serious curriculum changes, and these might have come a little later too. Do you recall in particular any change in the setup? For example, the use of students as coaches or teachers? This would be one important characteristic of the changes. I believe it was Dr. Upton especially who suggested that.

MRS. JOBE: I remember the different ones had coaches, but I don't recall when it was set up.

ARENA: Another thing I would like to ask you to put down for the record, as much as you care to, describe what correspondence you have between you and the President.

MRS. JOBE: That correspondence that we had?

ARENA: Yes. That you have in your possession, so that somewhere someone will know exactly what the . . .

MRS. JOBE: Well, it was between the years 1930 and 1936. The first letters were from Prescott, Arizona, when he came over to be with his mother and brother when they brought his brother over because of his tuberculosis and he worked in Slippery Gulch. And they continued on, when he would go on one of his debating trips he would write. He wrote me, I think, when I was on one of the Glee Club trips. He was in Lancaster [California] one summer and I remember I was surprised to get a letter from there. Then he wrote when he went back East to Duke Law School.

ARENA: Do you recall that he ever gave you anything while in Prescott?

MRS. JOBE: He brought home what he said was a cosmetic case as a little . . .

MR. JOBE: Cedar chest.

MRS. JOBE: Cedar chest. Small cedar chest.

ARENA: Do you still have that?

MRS. JOBE: Yes, I do. I had given it to my sister and she said I ought to have that back, so she gave it to me.

ARENA: The next area I'd like to touch upon with your permission would be the matter of dancing. What do you recall about the President, his encounter with that form of recreation or art, however you want to call it, dancing?

MRS. JOBE: He did not know how to dance, but my mother had seen to it that I had dancing lessons because she said that was a nice social way of enjoying oneself. In those days many young men did not know how to dance. The girls usually knew how. I don't know, maybe it's still that way. In those days most of them didn't. When we went to Whittier College, why, if they'd have a party or something they would dance. If you couldn't dance there was not much fun to it.

So I finally--Richard did not know how to dance--encouraged him and told him, especially when he was going to run for president of the student body, that I thought he should learn to dance. I offered to teach him, but he didn't want me to teach him. One day he came to the house and said, "I know how to dance." And he came

in and I can even remember the little library room that we had on the end of the house. And he said, "Well, I'll show you." And I said, "Well, where did you learn?" And as I remember he had taken a lesson in Los Angeles [California]. And later on I had the feeling-- then he didn't dance--he thought I had asked him to do something and he didn't like that or maybe I had pushed him in something he didn't want to do, really, that he thought was a waste of time.

ARENA: Did you ever get the impression that there was any pressure from home? Did he ever indicate, for example, that Mrs. Nixon or Mr. Nixon did not approve?

MRS. JOBE: No, I never had that feeling. The only feeling I had was his upbringing was within himself, his own feeling of having gone to the Friends Church and being brought up with the idea that one shouldn't dance, not that it was from home.

ARENA: Without mentioning any names necessarily, can you think of any Quaker young men who did dance and enjoyed it?

MRS. JOBE: I can't.

ARENA: I believe I had asked you about your recollections of Mrs. Hannah Nixon. Do you mind if I ask you to do the same with Mr. Frank Nixon, the President's father? To what extent did you have any personal contact with him?

MRS. JOBE: Yes. I used to see him quite often and he was always very, very nice to me. I had heard that he had a very strong temper. I never did see it. As far as his relationship with Dick, Dick would always quote his mother and how wonderful she was, and all this kind of thing. At the same time he always respected his father, and he wouldn't want to go against his father. [Interruption]

ARENA: You say that the President did mention his mother more often than his father.

MRS. JOBE: Yes.

ARENA: When he brought either of them up, he seemed to have mentioned her more?

- MRS. JOBE: Yes. It was more his mother. And I think he'd write something about his mother more than his father, but his father was very much a part of the family life because they were all working there together in the store. I can remember when he was very ill with the gout. I can still see him sitting in the dining room with his foot up.
- ARENA: Do you recall ever attending any religious services together with the President, of any denomination?
- MRS. JOBE: Yes. I can remember going to the East Whittier Friends Church with him, and I think I can remember some Christian Endeavor meetings or something of that kind.
- ARENA: Do you recall that he ever took a speaking role or any leading role in any religious service? I am thinking, for example, of the chapel hour that was a part of Whittier College requirements maybe.
- MRS. JOBE: I don't recall that he ever did. No, I don't think so.
- ARENA: Was there something to the effect that the president of the student government had a particular function of one of the chapels or maybe would introduce speakers at the chapel? Does that come to mind in any way? This would give him an opportunity to appear.
- MRS. JOBE: I'm sure that happened. I remember as student body president he traveled to other schools and spoke and talked to them and they came with us. I'm sure he was introducing other people on the stage at the chapel. We had chapel three times a week but the religious time was just once a week, and I believe that was Wednesday. Monday was usually a speaker and Friday was student body meeting where he always presided. When he was [student body] vice president, he was much more active, it seemed to me, because as vice president you had charge of the executive committee. He had a lot of work in that.
- ARENA: Looking back on that overall period, where you also took a role in some of student governments, although was this more on the high school than the college level, I recall your saying something about being on one of the executive boards, was that high school?



MRS. JOBE: No, I was never anything in high school. It was in college.

ARENA: That was on the college level. What do you think was the value of that?

MRS. JOBE: To him?

ARENA: To you as well as to him. Do you feel though your participating in the student government on the college level did carry over afterwards in any respect?

MRS. JOBE: Yes. I feel it really did. College did something for me, because when I tell people now that I was shy, people don't believe it. I feel that Whittier College, being small and giving the opportunity for me to know people and people to know me, opened up vistas for me. I know that it helped me, because as I went out in Covina [California] and Vista [California] I was active in outside work. I know it was the kind of thing that gave me the courage and a little bit of the know-how to take charge of a meeting. I think it did the same thing for Richard Nixon, although he even did it in high school.

Pardon me for going back, but when you think that he had only been in high school just one year before he ran for the student body president--as I recall he got quite a few votes--it's really quite remarkable that he became that well-known, because that was a large high school. We had around 230 in our own class, which is an enormous high school for that period.

ARENA: And it was the only high school at that time, wasn't it?

MRS. JOBE: Right. It encompassed, I imagine, thirty high schools that encompass the area now. It really was a large high school for those days, as Covina had about two or three hundred, didn't you, or five hundred?

MR. JOBE: Oh, no, more than that. But they were a union high school up there and took in Charter Oaks [California] and Baldwin Park [California].

ARENA: Do you recall, Mr. Jobe, that you and the President ever discussed Chief [Wallace J.] Newman? You might be aware that he had said in print that the coach

[Newman] was a remarkable man. Evidently that has been the view of others as well. So, I'll repeat the question. Do you recall ever discussing why he thought he was a remarkable man, one; and two, what do you think of Chief Newman yourself, and why former students of his have praised him?

MR. JOBE: Well, first questions first. I think that Richard Nixon thought the Chief was a remarkable man because he was. He was a good man to coach and work with young men in the physical education department, and Dick Nixon went out there and worked hard for him. I think if a person goes out and works hard for anybody that's a good recommendation. I think Chief Newman was one of the finest persons I've ever met. He was always good to me, although I didn't get to play very much on his athletic teams. I wasn't capable of putting out the kind of a job that he had to have. But I have all the respect in the world for the Chief and I've known him for quite a while.

ARENA: Do you recall, or you Mrs. Jobe, do either of you recall that the President ever served as a water boy, I'm thinking on either the college or the high school level? I had heard that, and I just wonder if you have personal knowledge of that? Maybe it might have been the freshman year in the question of college, or it could have been any time on the high school level. But do you recall it specifically?

MRS. JOBE: I don't recall it at all.

MR. JOBE: I don't either.

ARENA: Mrs. Jobe, do you recall ever hearing the President speak of his future plans, his future career, and to the extent that you want to discuss that, what would you say about that?

MRS. JOBE: All I can remember is that he always had a feeling in college that he was going on to law school. And then he used to sort of joke with me and say, "You know my mother would like me to be a minister. She thinks there should be a minister some place in the family." But seriously, he, and I with him, always thought he was going on to school. And so when he received his scholarship from Duke, which I imagine he received as a letter at home, he called me in the evening and told me immediately that he had received the scholarship to Duke and would like to come up to see me. I was thrilled for him because it was a big

scholarship and it meant a lot, because to go clear back East and to be able to afford it through the scholarship was a tremendous boost to him. He was as happy as I had ever seen him.

ARENA: Do you mind if I ask you, thinking back to that graduating class, what was considered the greatest honor that any of the graduates received? Can you think of students who won other scholarships to other big universities besides the President? I realize he was number one on your mind at the time, but can you think of--possibly on stage at commencement--was any to-do made about any other student in winning of an outstanding scholarship?

MRS. JOBE: No, I can't. It was depression time. Whether a lot of them were trying to go on I don't know, but I don't remember of any other one. And it's interesting, but I can't remember at graduation it being mentioned. It probably was mentioned that he was going on to Duke, but I don't remember that either. I don't remember anyone else.

ARENA: And just for the record, do you recall that he ever intimated that he might go in for a life of a political career?

MRS. JOBE: It could be that we might have talked about it, because I found this little place card that was given to me and it said something about the Senator on it, in 1940, so that others were evidently thinking about this. So it must have been spoken of that he might go into politics and it was sort of, even in those days, if you were a lawyer you could get into politics.

ARENA: But you don't recall his bringing that up to you in any way specifically?

MRS. JOBE: No, I don't.

ARENA: As we bring this interview to a close, do you mind if I ask you if there is anything that I have not brought up or any point that you would like to go over again or bring up for the first time?

MRS. JOBE: I think you've covered most of the facts very well. At the present time I just don't think of anything else.

ARENA: Then, let me thank you for your hospitality, both you and Mr. Jobe, and for answering all of my questions so fully and frankly for the historical record. Thank you very much.

MRS. JOBE: You're very welcome. You've been very kind.