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## Ralph C. Shook (January 14, 1972)

C. Richard Arena

Oral History Interview

with

MR. RALPH C. SHOOK

January 14, 1972  
Whittier, California

By Dr. C. Richard Arena

For the Richard Nixon Oral History Project

- ARENA: This is interview #1 with Mr. Ralph Charles Shook, in Yorba Linda, California, January 14, 1972, Arena interviewing. Mr. Shook, do you mind if I begin by asking you where and when you were born?
- SHOOK: I was born March 7th, 1890, in Newell, Buena Vista County, Iowa. The next parallel street to this is Buena Vista, because my brother and I named it.
- ARENA: Would you mind stating what your father's occupation was back in Iowa?
- SHOOK: Just a plain corn farmer.
- ARENA: Did you come here on your own or move with the family; how did you find your way to Yorba Linda and about when?
- SHOOK: I came to Whittier, California, I think it was December 1909 with my older brother, Roy [Shook].
- ARENA: And not with any other members of the family?
- SHOOK: No.
- ARENA: Would you mind saying what brought you to Whittier, you and your brother?
- SHOOK: Quite a number of neighbors in Iowa had located there.
- ARENA: And were you in farming yourself? You were almost nineteen at that time, and what was your occupation?

SHOOK: In Iowa?

ARENA: Well, when you came here to Whittier, what were you going to do to earn a living?

SHOOK: Well, nineteen-year-old boys, they do what there is to do in order to have an income.

ARENA: Do you mind if I ask you what your education was up to that point?

SHOOK: I had a high school diploma and one year at Morningside College in Sioux City, Iowa.

ARENA: What were you interested in pursuing on the college level?

SHOOK: Well.

ARENA: I'm wondering, for example, if that was an agricultural school?

SHOOK: No, it was liberal arts. A Methodist liberal arts school. My dad thought that he would like to have a minister for a son. I couldn't see it wholly that way. And I was a farmer by blood, a dirt farmer. I liked the good black Iowa soil and growing produce and corn appealed to me.

ARENA: And when you did come here, did you go right into farming in Whittier?

SHOOK: No. I went into citrus packing house work. Because they got me acquainted with the produce. Of course, citrus was the main product around Whittier and I knew many of the ranchers there who were old neighbors in Iowa.

ARENA: Do you recall some of the names of those Iowa ranchers?

SHOOK: There was C. D. Post and Arthur Allison.

ARENA: And were these gentlemen farmers as well?

SHOOK: Yes.

ARENA: Of course, the main subject of this interview is your direct contact with President Nixon, but we are equally interested in his family and your contact with them, and I believe you mentioned just before we started taping that you knew the President's family before he was born. Would you mind stating how and when and where you met some of the members of the family, as much as you can recall?

- SHOOK: We attended the original Friends church, which was built by local labor with the help of the Friends church in Whittier and the Janss Investment Company, the subdividers of Yorba Linda. It is still in operation in Westwood [California].
- ARENA: Please continue. You were in Whittier; you had this interest with the--would I be correct in assuming this is the First Friends Church in Whittier and not East Whittier?
- SHOOK: The First Friends. There was no East Whittier.
- ARENA: At that point the First Friends Church of Whittier, California.
- SHOOK: The area where the East Friends Church was just grass hay-fields extending out to La Habra [California]. After a year and a half of being employed, my brother and I heard of Yorba Linda and that they had suitable land for citrus at reasonable prices, and that was very appealing. We contacted the sales agent and made a trip out here by way of the old Pacific Electric [Railway] big red cars which ran clear through Yorba Linda at that time.
- ARENA: While you were in Whittier did you by any chance meet any of the Milhous family--as you know that's the President's mother's family. There was his grandfather, for example, Franklin Milhous, and the sisters of the President's mother including Mrs. [Rose Olive] Marshburn, whom I believe we mentioned off the tape a moment ago. I was just wondering if you came across any members of that family before the President was born, while you were in the Whittier area?
- SHOOK: There was a Milhous, a middle-aged man, working at this same citrus packing house, and I became acquainted with him just being a fellow employee. My recollection is not too vivid. I remember him saying that Abraham Lincoln's name had no sweet savor in his mouth because his family had slaves and that knocked them out.
- ARENA: You don't remember his first name or recall anything else about him?
- SHOOK: Not particularly, no.
- ARENA: Do you happen to know if he might be related to Mr. [H. Hurless] Barton who did come originally from the South, who is in a way related to the Milhouses--from Dennison, Texas to be precise, and there is some relationship with the Milhouses of Indiana.

SHOOK: No recollection of that.

ARENA: You mentioned this Pacific Electric railway, the red cars. Did you happen to know Mr. [Francis Anthony] Frank Nixon, the President's father, when he was working for that company?

SHOOK: No, I can't remember that. I knew some of the other conductors but I don't recollect Nixon.

ARENA: You don't recall his ever bringing it up either in a discussion that he was a motorman with that company?

SHOOK: Yes.

ARENA: You do recall him mentioning that?

SHOOK: Yes.

ARENA: But he was not working for them when you knew him?

SHOOK: No.

ARENA: How would you compare the Whittier that you saw in 1909 with this new community of Yorba Linda that you moved to a little later, if I may ask?

SHOOK: Whittier was structured on a gentle slope and we came out here and some of the Whittier ranchers scoffed at the idea that we could irrigate this rolling land. But we went ahead. We had one advantage. We were freer from frost on account of the contour of the land. The irrigation was a problem and did result in many cases of extreme erosion.

ARENA: Was the soil good if the irrigation problem was handled? In other words, you not only had a better climate but did you, in your view, have even better or equal soil to what there was in the Whittier area?

SHOOK: Equal soil. I presume it is a factor in most areas, but we had the east wind that's known as the Santa Anas and the east slope of any hill had thin reddish soil. The west slope was wonderful black loam. I presume this was on account of the winds blowing over, the easterly Santa Ana winds. This is an almost invariable factor in the hills.

ARENA: Around this time Mr. Frank Nixon was moving into this area too. As you know, the President was born here in 1913 and he had come out here a little earlier. Did you know him before he actually bought and began to start farming his ranch? In other words, do you recall the land before he came? Was it unused land at that point? Was he buying land that had been cultivated before? Anything you recall about it would be most helpful.

SHOOK: My recollection is that he bought the five-plus acres where the present Richard Nixon School is and that it already had some lemon trees on it.

ARENA: Did he spend all of his time in farming, or did he have any other occupation while he was living here in Yorba Linda until 1922, when he left for Whittier?

SHOOK: Like almost all of us, you had to have an additional occupation because your small trees would not give you any income to survive. He took care of ranches for non-residents. That was the life saver of most of us. People in Whittier, many in Ohio and all over, I think there was less than one third of the land that was owned by people in the exact area.

ARENA: I'd like to be sure about that again. You're saying that a third or less was actually tilled by the people who owned the land. A great many of the land owners were those who were non-residents.

SHOOK: Yes.

ARENA: And they included people from Iowa itself, that far away, these non-residents?

SHOOK: Ohio. Many from Ohio.

ARENA: Did you do that yourself, Mr. Shook?

SHOOK: Yes, I did on a fairly large scale.

ARENA: Would you explain how that was done. In other words, how you managed to look after the land; how you were compensated; if there were any problems with this long distance contact, especially if you dealt with someone as far away as Ohio or Iowa?

SHOOK: Of course, the cultivation was by teams, horses and mules. All the hauling was done by teams. As a whole the relationship with the non-residents was very pleasant, and as I indicated, it was a life saver for us fellows living here and gave us cash income to help us out until our trees began to bear fruit.

ARENA: Does that mean that those who did the ranching for the non-resident owner were paid on a regular basis rather than wait for the harvesting of the crop and the sale on the market?

SHOOK: Oh, yes. Because the non-resident owners had no income whatever from their property and we could not exist by carrying them. Sometimes I carried folks for a while up to a year but they finally paid me.

ARENA: That was unusual. The regular thing was to be paid on a regular basis. Would it be about a month? Then you would receive a check or cash, in that manner?

SHOOK: Yes.

ARENA: And were the crops citrus crops in every case, or was there any dairying or any livestock use of the land?

SHOOK: No. Except that some of the land was not put into trees for some little while and was used for potatoes, cabbage, tomatoes, etc. The fellows living here would have that as a farming project besides their income for the non-residents also.

ARENA: Were the non-residents usually relatives, would you say?

SHOOK: No.

ARENA: Was there any other means of obtaining income besides managing land for non-residents, in the case of Mr. Frank Nixon in particular, and Yorba Linda in general?

SHOOK: Very shortly, I mean within five or six years, oil was discovered in the surrounding area and many of the ranch owners got employment in the oil fields.

ARENA: Do you happen to know if Mr. Frank Nixon in particular did any work for the oil people?

SHOOK: I'm not sure, but I think he did.

ARENA: Did you, yourself, Mr. Shook?

SHOOK: I was fully occupied with the things that I had built up my caretaking business, and I never worked one day for the oil people, except digging what they call sump holes for the mud.

ARENA: Would you explain that please?

SHOOK: With a team and scrapers to dig out a hole, approximately thirty feet wide and one hundred feet long to contain the mud and fluid.

ARENA: This was a by-product, an offshoot of the oil industry you mean?

SHOOK: It was in conjunction with the actual work of the drilling. They had to have a place for the liquid and the mud without letting it contaminate the adjoining land.

ARENA: Would this be also during that period that President Nixon lived here as a youngster, mainly 1913 to 1922? Do you think that this oil industry was in operation at that time?

SHOOK: The latter part of that time.

ARENA: Just to be sure in your coming into contact with some of the Milhous relatives, did you ever come into contact with an Ezra Milhous who was the President's uncle? His mother, Hannah Milhous' brother. And I'll tell you what he did, that's why I'm particularly interested. A person like you might have known him. He cleared land, and I believe a person who did that was called a leveler. He cleared land for agricultural purposes at that time, around the state and sometimes in neighboring states. And he was a great admirer of horses and took control of them. Sometimes teams that involved as many as nineteen horses. I'm just wondering if along the way you might have come into contact with him, Ezra Milhous?

SHOOK: I'm not sure. I knew several Milhouses. One did have teams and wagons and did hauling. He hauled the trees that I originally bought--he hauled them by wagon from Orange over to Yorba Linda, and his name was Milhous.

ARENA: Do you recall that he had children? A goodly number. As a matter of fact he ended up having eleven. I was wondering if that might ring a bell?

SHOOK: No, it don't. Another, Griffith Milhous, I believe was a musician, the way I remember it.

ARENA: That's right. And what was your contact with him?

SHOOK: Not very much.

ARENA: Just that you knew him and that he was a musician.

SHOOK: Yes. And he did have land here with trees on it.

ARENA: Do you recall the aunt of the President who was also a musician and taught music? Her name was Jane Milhous and she married a [Harold C.] Beeson and became Mrs. Jane Beeson and moved on to Lindsay [California]. Do you recall coming into contact with her?

SHOOK: I just recall the name is all.

ARENA: Do you recall that Frank Nixon, the President's father did carpentry labor?

SHOOK: Yes. I recall later, he and another man bought one of the early caterpillar tractors and used that in the orchards, but I don't think too successfully.

ARENA: Was that considered unusual? Was this one of the first caterpillar tractors in Yorba Linda, is that why you recall it?

SHOOK: Yes.

ARENA: Does that mean then, especially during President Nixon's youth, 1913 to 1922, that there was very little farm machinery in use, it was mainly horsepower?

SHOOK: Oh, yes.

ARENA: What about automobiles, trucks and passenger cars during this same period?

SHOOK: There was very few automobiles. Of course, there were as far as that goes very few people. I bought a Maxwell car in 1915, the same model that Jack Benny had.

ARENA: How long did you have it?

SHOOK: Five years.

ARENA: Did it give you as rough a time as it seems to have given him and, of course, some of that might have been imagination on his part and got a lot of laughs? What did you think of the car?

SHOOK: It was a good car. I didn't have any doors fall off of it.

ARENA: Do you recall that the carpentry efforts of Frank Nixon involved building that house where the President was born? And do you recall his building it or adding to it?

SHOOK: My recollection is there was an original small house on the opposite corner, diagonally across there was a small house that was on the property when he bought it, just a wood California-type house. They moved in there and then. I think while they were living there they did keep this place and build on the other corner. I don't have any real sharp memory of the circumstances.

ARENA: Do you recall that he did some building for a packing house company in the area?

SHOOK: Yes. That is, he worked on the project, I did myself, on the Yorba Linda Citrus Association's first packing house. Two carpenters, [Watson] Walker and [Evan J.] Herbert were the carpenters on that job.

ARENA: Did this Yorba Linda Citrus Association make a difference in the economic returns of the ranchers? Do you recall that the packinghouse itself made a difference?

SHOOK: Yes, very much. They fellows that were able to get employment on the construction, it gave us quite a boost and, then later, the produce from our trees, it gave employment to many of the members of the ranchers' families. Besides they were packed locally and saved shipping expense.

ARENA: Was the association your association, in the sense that it was a cooperative or something that you ranchers yourself ran and had representatives accountable to you? Was that the way it operated?

SHOOK: Yes. It was the Sunkist organization. Nobody could be a member of the Sunkist organization without coordinating with the other packing houses in other towns.

ARENA: Do you happen to know if the Sunkist organization was organized at that time and maybe right in this city? Do you happen to know anything about its immediate history?

SHOOK: Oh, no. It was a going concern before that time.

ARENA: The number one concern of its type in California, would you say?

SHOOK: They had, I believe, a walnut association and a raisin.

ARENA: Would the walnut one be called the Diamond?

SHOOK: Yes.

ARENA: And these were separate, Diamond and Sunkist were separate?

SHOOK: Oh, yes.

BEGIN SIDE II TAPE I

ARENA: I believe we were discussing the idea that Frank Nixon and others worked in building the packing house buildings for the citrus association. From that, I'd like to move to another fairly large scale project which we were just discussing off the tape. That canal or irrigation system that Yorba Linda depended upon for water and that included, of course, the Nixons as well. Would you mind explaining when that was built if it was built during your time, and any of the people connected with the building of it, its use and any special problems that come to mind about it, Mr. Shook?

SHOOK: A correction please. It was only probably one sixth of Yorba Linda that depended on the canal for water, and not the Nixon ranch.

ARENA: The canal that ran right by the ranch was not the canal that he made use of himself, is that correct?

SHOOK: Not that he secured his water from. Except the way that I did to go down with a team and a sled and barrels and fill it from the canal without any right whatever, but it watered the trees just as well as if I had a right to it.

ARENA: What did you use for your source of water?

SHOOK: The Yorba Linda Water Company, it was originally built by the Janss [Investment] Company as promised in our buying contracts with them.

ARENA: And the canal company was owned by whom, the one that ran along the Nixon ranch?

SHOOK: The Anaheim Union Water Company. It goes back a full one hundred years. I think it was about 1885 that there was an actual canal there. They had a canal lower down that served the lower area. The Anaheim Union was from three separate canal companies that merged and carried water over to the Anaheim [California] and Fullerton [California] areas, going clear back to the old grape industry, wine. A little old winemaker lived in Anaheim.

ARENA: Is it possible that that would have been originally constructed by the Mexicans themselves, that is before the coming of the U.S. government in California?

SHOOK: No.

ARENA: Was there anything in the way of a grape industry here when you moved into Yorba Linda still in operation?

SHOOK: Up the Santa Ana canyon a couple of miles there was considerable acreage of table grapes.

ARENA: Do you think that the lack of an important grape industry was due to the fact that there were Quakers and Methodists who did not look kindly upon that industry, to be frank? Do you think that might have had any influence?

SHOOK: No. I don't think so. It was true that that type of citizen did not look kindly upon it. In fact, I don't think it had any connection. The original vinyard grapes got a disease and made it impossible to successfully produce in that area.

ARENA: Still sticking to this theme of the canal, does the term Anaheim ditch refer to something that was used at that time by people, and that was the canal that ran along the President's home? When we speak of the Anaheim ditch is that the name that the people used in that time and still do today?

SHOOK: Yes. Or just shorten that to canal. That was the general designation, the canal.

ARENA: How deep and how wide, especially around the Nixons' ranch, was that waterway?

SHOOK: When it was just a dirt ditch, as it was at that specific time, it had no cement lining at all.

ARENA: Which it has today, but at that time there was no cement lining.

SHOOK: No.

ARENA: Do you recall about when the cement lining was added, Mr. Shook?

SHOOK: I know exactly when it was added, because it went through my own property and it was cemented in 1929.

ARENA: Just to get this picture of your own property for a minute, how much property did you start with, and this was around the same time that Frank Nixon was coming into his area, and exactly how far are you from Frank Nixon's original ranch?

SHOOK: A mile-plus from mine by way of the canal. It would be very close to a mile.

ARENA: About how extensive was your holding, when you first came out?

SHOOK: Here, in this that I've owned continuously since 1915, it was six and a quarter acres.

ARENA: Do you still have that amount of property now?

SHOOK: No. I sold some off for residential usage.

ARENA: But this is a part of your original ranch. It was used for agricultural purposes completely?

SHOOK: Yes.

ARENA: My general observation in coming to your home here, this seems quite hilly. Am I correct that most of it was hilly?

as it is now? I'm not giving it a good farmer's critical eye, of course.

SHOOK: Yes. It is a sample of the contour of the land at that time. At present you might not believe that because where there was hills, small hills and little valleys, it has been all leveled up and now sprouts houses all over where we used to haul oranges.

ARENA: Of course, I can only see the land that the President was born on as it looks today. It's a gently rolling slope, nothing out of the way. Now, I was just wondering what it looked like from your recollection when Frank Nixon first came here, shortly before the President's birth in 1913. Was the land just about as level, with a slight rise, and I believe the home was on the highest point of that rise on his land? Was that the case even then? Now, as you know, there is this elementary school there, and I wouldn't know to what extent that had been leveled more when they built that school.

SHOOK: I do, because I was the fellow that leveled it.

ARENA: Would you mind describing the original land and how it looked just before and just after you leveled it, and how you leveled it? Did you use horsepower, or machine power? Whatever you can recollect will be most helpful.

SHOOK: We used horsepower and I had a one-wheel tractor to break up the land. It would do a better job of busting it than the horses would. Where the school is, probably nearly an acre of land, we had to take off thirty inches on the average and move it over easterly to fill up where there was quite a depression, a very low spot, it now is up about level.

ARENA: How long and how tough a job was that, Mr. Shook? In the sense of hours or days, was it a one day job do you recall? What was involved in the way of labor?

SHOOK: It was far, far more than that. It was weeks and weeks.

ARENA: Was it a full-time job or something you did part-time while you were handling other jobs during that period, which made it also last longer than it might have taken if you did it straight eight hours every day?

SHOOK: No. We worked every day, but I had, as I recall, about fifteen horses and mules of my own and I hired men, quite a little crew, and then I started the project in cooperation with another pioneer named Fred Johnson.

ARENA: At the time you were leveling it, did Frank Nixon own the land, or was just a previous owner and previous tenant?

SHOOK: No, the school district owned it.

ARENA: Even at that time?

SHOOK: Oh, yes. We had to take the trees off, the old trees. The lemon trees were very inferior.

ARENA: Let me make sure about this. Are you talking about the time when the present school was built, is that when you leveled it, or way back in the early period, around the time that Frank Nixon came into the area?

SHOOK: The present school is the successor to the original school. The first school built on that site was in 1926. The present school--I can't recall exactly--but it was a long time after it, after the 1933 earthquake and the earthquake law.

ARENA: And it was in 1926 that you did the leveling?

SHOOK: Yes.

ARENA: In other words, you leveled away what Frank Nixon had in the way of a ranch and an agricultural area.

SHOOK: Yes. The school district owned it. Nixon had sold it.

ARENA: I see. He had sold it to the school district when he left for Whittier in 1922.

SHOOK: Just a minute please. There may have been an intervening owner, I can't recall that.

ARENA: But shortly after, and definitely by 1926, it was purchased by the school district. How would you describe the value of the land when Frank Nixon owned it? Was it a choice site? Was it a mediocre site? Did he have any strikes against him in a way before he even started on the land compared to other lands in the area?

SHOOK: It was possibly two-thirds lemons and one-third oranges. He had about a strike and a half against him on the lemon acreage. The oranges were very good and prolific trees. The lemons, I think, were always red ink.

ARENA: What does good lemon land need? Why was this not good land for lemons?

SHOOK: Primarily the type of rootstock that was used. At that time they were not too careful and didn't have the knowledge to base their judgment upon stocking rootstock. Because

that is the seedling that's grown first and then the bud is introduced into that a couple of inches above the ground.

ARENA: And the fact that that was new land, they hadn't had too much experience with what rootstock could do there possibly. That was one of the problems is the lack of experience.

SHOOK: In almost all cases we bought our trees from the nurseryman. Some of them were high-grade intelligent nurserymen and others just raised trees and sell them quick.

ARENA: Do you happen to know if Mr. Franklin Milhous was one of the nurserymen who supplied the Yorba Linda area? He was a nurseryman from my recollection. This would be the father of Hannah Nixon, the President's mother.

SHOOK: I don't know.

ARENA: You don't recall his doing business, for example. You would remember whether or not he was one of the nurserymen who did business with you or any other local people.

SHOOK: I don't ever remember buying a tree from him.

ARENA: Do you happen to recall if he was one of the absent land-owners, non-resident landowners in this area?

SHOOK: I can't remember about that part of it. There was a Nixon on the upper Plumosa [Drive], I think his name was Walter [Wadsworth Nixon]. That family lived there quite a few years.

ARENA: Do you mind if I go a bit now into some of the non-farming conditions of Yorba Linda around that time, 1913 to 1922, when the President was growing up as a youngster. What was available for someone who practiced the faith of the Friends, as the President's parents were at that time? Was there a Friends church in the area?

SHOOK: Yes. That was the original church for the community. Although, starting in the late 1910, especially in 1911, they did have a building that was built as a one-room school and we used it as an assembly for church services. It is where the present office of the Yorba Linda County Water District is on Olinda Street.

ARENA: Is that the site for the actual building? Is the actual building still standing that goes back to that time?

SHOOK: Yes. The front office is presently obsolescent and is being replaced by a new office.

ARENA: And just to be sure we have the address of that building, what would this address be, or the intersection of the streets if it is on a corner?

- SHOOK: No. It's not on a corner. It's on the easterly side of Olinda Street, perhaps one hundred feet from. . . . It's intersection was the present Imperial Highway.
- ARENA: Do you happen to recall if any of the carpentry work in connection with that building was done by Frank Nixon and yourself?
- SHOOK: Yes. My brother and I cooperated, and he did too, I recollect. That was voluntary labor, not paid.
- ARENA: If it isn't too personal, your father had the dream that you would become a Methodist minister. You did come into contact with the Quakers in Whittier. Did they have any influence in changing your mind about the Methodist church while you were in Whittier?
- SHOOK: No. The Methodist are equally as strong in Whittier as the Quaker denomination at that time. The early settlement was by the Quakers at that time.
- ARENA: There were Methodist churches in Whittier?
- SHOOK: Oh, yes. The First Methodist Church was a big one. It wasn't too big a town.
- ARENA: The Methodists and the Quakers both occupied Yorba Linda and both occupied that same church building by the way for services?
- SHOOK: No.
- ARENA: How was that handled?
- SHOOK: It was just a community non-denominational effort.
- ARENA: Do you recall that Mr. Frank Nixon brought up his Methodist youth in discussions with you at any time?
- SHOOK: I don't know. He would discuss anything that you could think of at any time at great length.
- ARENA: Were you aware that he had been a Methodist, and the exact cutoff point is a question? But he had been a Methodist. His father was a Methodist. Would you want to respond to the idea about his being formerly a Methodist?
- SHOOK: That is pretty vague in my memory. After all, that's fifty-six or -seven years ago.

ARENA: Do you recall that he liked to discuss, and may I even use the word argue, religion? Do you recall either with you or with others while you were present, that there would be arguments about questions in the Bible, about differences of points of theology and so forth?

SHOOK: Yes. He would debate any question and let you choose your side and then put up a pretty good debate.

ARENA: During these discussions, do you recall what the reaction of Mrs. Hannah Nixon was?

SHOOK: She was a fine lady in every sense of the word. An efficient mother and homemaker in a more quiet way.

ARENA: Were you aware that she had attended Whittier Academy when she married Mr. Frank Nixon, that she had some college training?

SHOOK: I believe so. I'm rather vague on that.

ARENA: You, having had some experience in college yourself, did you find that she was easier to discuss things with than Frank himself? Did there seem to be any difference from your standpoint in discussing things with Hannah because of this difference in formal educational background?

SHOOK: As I indicated, Frank just liked to argue and discuss. Mrs. Nixon, Hannah, liked to talk things over but not to argue, but talk things over in a deeper sense of discussion.

ARENA: Was the work for the typical ranch wife at that time pretty hard, bearing in mind that Mrs. Hannah Nixon had been a college student? From your own observation, thinking back now at that period, how did she adjust from being a college student to being what must have been a hard ranch to produce, where the husband did not make enough money from the ranch evidently, so that he had to carry on other jobs at the same time? How do you think she adjusted to such a life?

SHOOK: From my memory she adjusted very nicely. I have no recollection of her other than being a very sensible, practical-minded lady.

ARENA: Just to be clear on this too, from the standpoint of a person who was a neighbor and someone who did not know the Nixons' entire lives, of course, it would be important to get your views on their personality and I'd like to ask this question if I may: Did you find her in any way difficult to get along with? Did you find her gossipy? Did you find her having airs because she came from Whittier from your own personal observations?

SHOOK: Quite contrary.

ARENA: Can you give any evidence in the way of recollections of experiences that would illustrate the type of personality she had? Possibly if there were any community projects where members got together, or if there was any particular crisis where people got together and how she acted? If you ate at her home or if she ate at your home, if you could describe her under one of these actual circumstances, to base your conclusion that she was this type of a person that you describe.

SHOOK: We attended the Friends church in the pioneer Friends church that was built by volunteer labor and Frank and others, we'd have neighborhood parties, get-togethers and old-time entertainment like spin-the-platter and skip-to-my-Lou and so forth, pioneer pastimes.

ARENA: Who supplied the music for this, Mr. Shook, do you recall? Were they local people or people from outside with their musical instruments?

SHOOK: No, local people.

ARENA: Do you recall that the Nixons themselves, maybe Hannah herself sang or played any instrument, or Frank himself?

SHOOK: No. That's a blank to me. They have attended parties in this house and we in their house.

ARENA: And these parties would have been where there was this sort of dancing and social get-togethers?

SHOOK: Not dancing, no.

ARENA: When you say skip-to-my Lou, I assumed it was a dance.

SHOOK: It is more or less of a dance, but it would be acceptable to a Methodist.

ARENA: Would that be more like country style or what is called country-style dancing?

SHOOK: The reel type, yes.

ARENA: To be sure about that, did you find that the Quakers, such as the Nixons, and the Methodists whom you know firsthand, got along pretty well on this attitude of drinking and dancing and card playing, that your views were pretty much the same, that's what I guess I'm getting to?

SHOOK: Yes. The Methodist church came in a few years later. Actually, there was a Presbyterian church, then the Methodists took over their project.

ARENA: This concludes the tape.