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**Rose Olive Marshburn and Oscar O. Marshburn (January 20, 1971,
second interview)**

C. Richard Arena

Second Oral History Interview

with

MRS. ROSE OLIVE MARSHBURN
MR. OSCAR O. MARSHBURN

January 20, 1971
En route to Riverside, California

By Dr. C. Richard Arena

For the Richard Nixon Oral History Project

ARENA: Has this particular way to Riverside from Whittier [California] always been here, too?

O. MARSHBURN: No. Colima Road wasn't put through until a year and a half ago. You would have had to go around and come over the hills by Hacienda [Boulevard] or some other way--Fullerton Road. Now you get to the freeway right here, so get to the right. See, it's only a short distance from Colima Road to the freeway here. No, these are new roads.

ARENA: When you did go to Riverside from Whittier, what was your most frequent path, say before the war?

O. MARSHBURN: Our usual way would have been through Santa Ana Canyon, through Yorba Linda and the way we will come back, generally, which is Santa Ana Canyon to Corona and Arlington and Riverside. That was our usual way. If we had come over this way we would have gotten over to Valley Boulevard, which runs nearly parallel with this but about a mile and a half north of us now. The old road was Valley Boulevard, and that's the way we would have gone through Pomona and Ontario and on to Riverside. Now back in our college days they had automobile road races from Los Angeles [California] to Phoenix [Arizona], and people like Barney Oldfield and Teddy Tetzlaff and some of those racing drivers would enter the races. It was purely a road race from Los Angeles to Phoenix, and we would go and sit by the side of the road in the middle of the night, because they usually started from Los Angeles at 11 o'clock. I don't know how many years they were held, but two or three of the years they came along Whittier Boulevard, so we were right there.

ARENA: Well, everyone seems to say in the family--I haven't read this anywhere--that Ed [Edward Calvert Nixon] likes to put his foot on the gas pedal, and Don [Francis Donald Nixon] also. I was just wondering, were they interested in racing when they were youngsters? Were they always there watching these races?

O. MARSHBURN: No, in fact they weren't born yet. Well, Don may have been born, by no, this was. . . . I don't think that they have any special interest in racing. I think it's just a case of where we think they're up and ready to go, so let's get there. That would be my answer to that. Well, some other years this Los Angeles to Phoenix road race would come along Valley Boulevard. So, a time or two we went over there to watch it go by. But the roads were really rough and all. They got into sand in the desert--that was a race for endurance.

ARENA: Where was the cutoff year, more or less, when the people gave up horses and started on cars? For example, I recall reading that [Francis Anthony] Frank Nixon, President Nixon's father, had a very beautiful horse back in McArthur, Ohio. That was his pride and joy. But I don't know at what point he started using machines--automobiles--when he came. Probably after he got to California.

O. MARSHBURN: Yes, and he had horses in California at first. He took care of a grove in Yorba Linda [California] with a team and the cultivator and plow and things that they used with a team when he first went there. But I suspect that was about 1915; now this is a guess, give or take a little. He probably bought a tractor, in partnership with a neighbor, and they not only took care of their own groves but they took care of other people's groves some. Do you think that's too early, [Rosel Olive, to say that they may have gotten a tractor in 1915?

R. MARSHBURN: No, I don't think so.

ARENA: He liked to have the latest in machinery--latest inventions. (I'll keep straight ahead?)

O. MARSHBURN: (Yes.)

ARENA: I got the impression Frank was an alert man. He liked to read the newspapers and keep up with things, so to speak. That would make a lot of sense. He got a tractor just as they were coming out.

O. MARSHBURN: Yes, he did. I'm sure that's true. Well, he would be interested right away, but I . . .

ARENA: I wonder why they say the lemon grove failed-- he didn't make out well. Was that a general failure around that time, or was it just he who didn't make out well with his lemon grove?

O. MARSHBURN: No, I'll tell you. Farm land in Yorba Linda [Californial] was quite spotted; that is, what it had underneath. When I say spotted, it was a rolling country and over the ages and the years the rains and all washed some of the dirt off of the hills--like these hills, only they weren't as high as these. And that went down into the valley part and that left little soil on top of the hills. Well, that wasn't apparent when the Janss Investment Company opened up the tract in Yorba Linda, and they sold five acres here and ten acres there--cut it up--and it all looked like it might grow the same. Anyway, under the piece that Frank Nixon bought the soil was not good very far down, very deep. The lemon trees would grow and look nice for the first few years, and maybe in better soil the trees would be taking off and putting out large fruit-bearing limbs. His didn't do so well. It wasn't because he wasn't a good farmer and put the work on it. The only thing, if he had it to do over again, I suspect he would get soil tests. (We just stay on this until you have to turn really, and then we will turn left when we get over here another mile or so.)

R. MARSHBURN: I wondered when you made such a point of this lemon grove not doing anything and being such a failure, I wonder if it was much different--of course, it probably was just like you say, the country was spotty and the kind of soil there was, but also Frank was impatient. It took lemons a long time to come into bearing, and they didn't do anything very fast and he didn't get money from them fast, and he wasn't essentially a farmer anyway. He was a builder, a doer, a goer, and I think that he wanted to get into something that would make the money a little faster.

ARENA: He certainly did a lot of things, according to different books I've read. He was a potter, I understand. He was a foreman for Grandfather [Franklin] Milhous' farm for a while. I don't know how long he stayed on the farm and acted as foreman.

O. MARSHBURN: That would be up at Lindsay [Californial]. He was there probably less than two years. He came from there to Yorba Linda.

ARENA: He moved around a bit. It said he went to San Joaquin for a while.

O. MARSHBURN: Well, that's the same place. Lindsay is a town in the San Joaquin Valley.

ARENA: Did the other members of the Nixon family get out this way? I understand Frank has a brother [Ernest Leland Nixon] who might still be living-- a Penn State [Pennsylvania State University] professor, I believe?

O. MARSHBURN: No, he died. There are no more of Frank's brothers living.

ARENA: There is a picture of President Nixon, I think, when he was Vice President, his Uncle Ernest Nixon and Mrs. Patricia [Ryan] Nixon, at the Gettysburg [Pennsylvania] cemetery, where an ancestor was killed in that battlefield. I think it was George Nixon III. So there really wasn't too much contact in a way between the Nixon boys here and the Nixon side of the family. It was mainly the Milhous side, or is that right?

O. MARSHBURN: No. One of Frank's sisters, Carrie Nixon Wildermuth, moved out here from Ohio after her husband died. She lived in Fullerton [California], and she has a son, Floyd [E. Wildermuth], still living there, who would be a first cousin of Richard. And a brother, Walter [Wadsworth Nixon], came out here more or less about retirement age, but he didn't retire. He worked. He stayed with Frank a little while, but lived in Fullerton later. And then he had a half brother that was out here.

ARENA: When you say here, right here in Whittier, or in California?

O. MARSHBURN: In California. No, I guess none of them lived in Whittier for any length of time anyway. And here is something that isn't of any particular value, I don't think, but Frank Nixon's stepmother, Lutheria Nixon, came to California when Frank and Hannah lived in Yorba Linda. She stayed with them a little while. She was a widow and wanted to do a little practical nursing or something to be self-sufficient. My father lived in Yorba Linda, and he was a retired doctor. But at any rate he got a job or two for her. It was more common in those years for someone sick in the home to maybe have someone come in and help in the home for a month or two or three. But at any rate, Frank Nixon's stepmother, Lutheria Nixon, and my father, William V. Marshburn, were married. So in that way, I suppose, Frank and I are stepbrothers, but actually no relation.

ARENA: Related by marriage.

O. MARSHBURN: Well, my stepmother and his stepmother. But she had been married before she married my father to Frank's father, and there was one son by that marriage, Hugh Nixon, who was a half brother of Frank. And he was out here as a young man and lived in California the rest of

his life. He died about six or seven years ago.

ARENA: When did Frank himself retire, or did he? Did he always keep the business until his last days, or did he just drop everything? From what I have seen, he didn't seem to be the type of man who would drop things and retire, but maybe he did.

O. MARSHBURN: No, he didn't intend to retire but the store seemed not to be his love by the time he got along so many years, and by that time Don, the son, had learned to be a good meat cutter and was well liked by everybody. So Don took over the meat department and I think before long he took over the whole market.

ARENA: Did it always keep the name Nixon's Market?

O. MARSHBURN: Yes, it was Nixon's Market. I don't know whether Frank thought he was retiring, but he wasn't too well in some ways. He had trouble with his feet. I think he thought that when he was a streetcar motorman in Columbus, Ohio, his feet got frozen or frost-bitten or something, and he had complaints about his feet from time to time and didn't want to be on them so much.

ARENA: Some books say, as a matter of fact almost everyone, that that's how he got interested in politics --Frank. He went to the legislature and tried to get them to pass a law closing that part of the trolley--the vestibule--so that wouldn't happen to the other drivers. I don't know if he got the immediate benefit or not, because then he moved to California. But they do say he always was very interested in politics. He had very strong views and I don't know if he continued this way when he was in California or not. I don't know, for example, if he ever ran for office himself or not. He wasn't active in politics but very interested in them.

O. MARSHBURN: That's about it. (Now it's through here that we miss the freeway for the next three or four miles. Of course, we got on the Pomona freeway then, but through Pomona is the worst we get on the road this way to Riverside--right in here.)

ARENA: Well, with company like this, I don't mind it a bit, to tell the truth. You let me know when you have to be back and where and so forth, because I'm free the rest of the day. My last class was today and really the last class of the semester. We start final exams today. This is Wednesday and tomorrow at Whittier we have what is known as Reading Day. Any student who has any last minute worry or problems, we professors will be in our office and not console them, but just be around for any last minute questions, and they

call it Reading Day. And then the final examinations will begin Friday--three hours long now. I don't know how long they were in President Nixon's day.

O. MARSHBURN: They were two hours in our day.

ARENA: Two hours. Most places they are. I am surprised that they are three hours.

O. MARSHBURN: Well, they don't have to stay that long.

ARENA: No, no, that's right. In my case I have told them they don't have to. If they want the time I let them have it. I will stay there the full time, if the student feels as though he needs the time. I recall one of President Nixon's professors, as a matter of fact the last president, Dr. [Paul S.] Smith, commenting on President Nixon's history answers. He knew how to get right to the heart of the matter. He didn't waste words. He got right to it and would get good grades because of that. One thing I found very interesting, too, was that Frank Nixon did teach Sunday school, and I got the impression from one author that he liked to tie in present day problems in his Sunday school--he made it come to life. And my own reaction was that he had not always been a Quaker, and there is that saying that the converts tend to be the most zealous. I don't know if there is any particular truth in that in his case. But he was a very interesting Sunday school teacher, they say. Jessamyn West, I think, is the one who is quoted by another author for saying that. His classes always got bigger and bigger.

O. MARSHBURN: You've heard the story. That is a true story that Jessamyn tells about Frank Nixon being her Sunday school teacher, and her father having been Richard's Sunday school teacher.

ARENA: No, I didn't hear that. That's very interesting.

O. MARSHBURN: Well, we've heard her tell it.

ARENA: I want to visit her sometime.

O. MARSHBURN: Well, Jessamyn was in New York at one of her publisher's offices. I don't know who it was but someone connected with the business of her publishing books, and visiting with him. And she told him--this man was a strong Democrat, didn't think too much of Richard and his politics, at least--and Jessamyn told this man that her father, Eldo West, was at one time Richard's Sunday school teacher. And she quotes by saying that this man said, "Well, all I can say is that Frank Nixon was a hell of a lot

better Sunday school teacher than your father." That's the quote. Of course, he was complimenting what Jessamyn was a product of, and he didn't think much of her father's product. Well, anyway, that's the story.

ARENA: Just how are they related? Most people do refer to the fact that they are cousins. What is their actual connection?

O. MARSHBURN: They are second cousins. Their mothers were first cousins. They were just like my wife. Jessamyn's mother, Grace Milhous West, was Olive's first cousin. She was a Milhous before she married Eldo West. Her father and Olive's and Hannah Nixon's father were brothers.

ARENA: I see. So its on the Milhous side rather than the Nixon side.

O. MARSHBURN: The Milhous side; that's right.

ARENA: Were they there--do you recall, possibly--first? Did the West side of the family come there first?

O. MARSHBURN? To Yorba Linda?

ARENA: Well, to this area. Did they come more or less around the same time?

O. MARSHBURN: No, they came rather early. But Father Milhous, Franklin Milhous, was the first of the Milhous family to come to California.

ARENA: With Almira. How was that pronounced? Almira-- is that right?

O. MARSHBURN: That is right.

ARENA: There is a town in New York called Elmira, a very important town--Mark Twain.

O. MARSHBURN: That is spelled with an E and this is spelled with an A.

ARENA: Right. And wasn't there also her mother, Grandmother Elizabeth [Griffith Milhous], who came?

O. MARSHBURN: That was his mother--Grandmother Milhous--on the father's side.

ARENA: I understand she was a very distinguished minister--or can you use that term with Quakers?

O. MARSHBURN: Yes, it's all right; you can use it.

ARENA: But she was a preacher--she would preach, I understand.

O. MARSHBURN: The difference between the Friends. . . . The only difference is that Quakers do not ordain their ministers, they record them. They feel they have a gift for speaking and spiritual background of enough significance, and so through their meeting they take it under committee advisement and go up through the channels, and finally they record them as having a gift in the ministry. And they're recorded as a minister. The only significant difference, I suppose, is that the word ordained, the Friends have stayed away from it because they hold to the feeling that a lay person --God may ordain a lay person to as deep a religious experience and value, and so forth. They don't feel that they. . . . Of course, the ordination you might say is handed down like in Catholicism. I don't know if we should bring that into it, except . . .

ARENA: Well, it helps to make a contrast and comparison.

O. MARSHBURN: There the priests are ordained.

ARENA: That's true.

O. MARSHBURN: And when they are ordained they can lay hands on and ordain another one.

ARENA: That's true.

O. MARSHBURN: Well, Friends don't believe that that gift is given to humans or individuals--it is something that is attained.

ARENA: Do you mind if I ask you this: There are differences among Quakers, I imagine--are there differences along those lines, or is that something that is common among all Quakers, this question of ministers and that area?

O. MARSHBURN: Through most of the history of Friends it was common that the ministers were recorded until about forty or fifty years ago, when the Philadelphia Friends and the General Conference of Friends decided that they would no longer recognize ministers as such, so they haven't recorded any new ministers in years in that branch of Friends. Our branch of Friends is still recording ministers. Still, they are making it a little different now in that they ask young men, or it could be a young woman in California--I don't know if we have any--to do a certain amount of preparation

work. Seminary work would be part of it. In other words, it's not the person who is out plowing corn in the Middle West through the week and going to church on Sunday and maybe having a gift for speaking and spiritual background to give a short message or whatever to a group, to be recorded.

ARENA: I have attended Quaker services. On one occasion I went abroad as a student from Temple University and everyone on board ship was invited to attend the Quaker service, and I recall sitting in the circle. I never forgot it. I was just fresh out of first year in college, and the idea that if someone had something to say he would say it, and that's different from the idea of a formal presentation, or is it? When you attend your religious services now--and I don't imagine it's changed since President Nixon's day as a youngster, where he attended services three times on Sunday and once on Wednesday--if that's accurate, but that's what some of the books say--would that be this idea of gathering together in a circle, or would it be the idea of a formal sermon? Or is that book incorrect?

O. MARSHBURN: No, it's not entirely wrong, but they act like he never missed. Maybe he didn't, I don't know. But I don't doubt that he missed some. Well, in President Nixon's day and where he lived here in California, I think the church always had a minister--a hired minister as head of the meeting--and they had more or less of a program service, not unlike Methodists or some other . . .

BEGIN SIDE II TAPE I

O. MARSHBURN: It was quite a little silence and people felt the freedom to speak, if they were called on to speak. Now that's the kind of a Friends meeting that my father grew up in, so we're not too far removed from it, except according to the Philadelphia Friends, we maybe got a little worldly when we came West. Worldly probably isn't the proper word there, but . . .

ARENA: Well, I think it's natural that you became a little different in certain respects merely by separation of distance, you know.

O. MARSHBURN: Now then, when Olive and I are in the East we'll go to a Friends meeting. Or we're in Europe, or wherever we are, we'll go to a Friends meeting that may be like the one you attended. In fact, in 1969 when we were in Africa and different places where there were some Friends groups that were led mostly by English Friends who had gone there, we attended just those kinds of services.

ARENA: Speaking of the English and Friends, the Milhouses are originally mostly German, I understand.

O. MARSHBURN: Well, that's what Olive's German teacher, Mrs. Mabel Douglas, told her, that even before they went to Ireland they were from Germany.

ARENA: Milhousen--were they Friends at that time, or is that unknown, or maybe you personally don't know? I was just wondering. Are there genealogical records in the family? Was there a direct connection to the Milhouses and were they Quakers back in Germany?

O. MARSHBURN: I don't know that they were in Germany because

ARENA: . . .
Before George Fox's time.

O. MARSHBURN: Before George Fox. Now you see, her ancestors left Ireland about 1729 which was only a generation or two removed from George Fox's day. Now how long before that--maybe your ancestors came from Germany--but there weren't any Friends in Germany as such, probably, when her ancestors left Germany. So they probably accepted Quakerism in Ireland in the early part of the 18th century or latter part of the 17th century.

ARENA: Are there Bibles among any members of the Milhouses? I know there are Bibles, but who would have the one with the oldest date? Who would have the one that Grandmother Almira [Milhous] had, I wonder? Aunt Edith [Timberlake]?

O. MARSHBURN: No, probably not.

R. MARSHBURN: On Papa's side, that would be what we have, and that doesn't go back too far. That only belonged to Grandmother Jane Burdg. But the Milhous one Richard has--I suppose, though, it's back to Don's now though, isn't it--the one that Richard actually held his hand on?

ARENA: Oh, during the inauguration--oh, he used the family Bible. That's right, I recall reading about that. I wonder to what extent President Nixon as a youngster was aware of the family history. Was he aware when he was a youngster. . . . Now, of course, everyone talks about it, of the ancestors who participated and lived during the Colonial Period, lived during the [American] Revolution, and so forth. He was a major in history at Whittier College, and I wonder if that was because of the interest he got from his own family. Is there any connection there that

you recall? Did he particularly like to get out history books, for example, from the library as a youngster? Did he get his best grades in history in elementary school and high school before college? Did that have something to do with it?

R. MARSHBURN: I wouldn't know what subjects he got his best grades in. I suppose you can find out. I know that he was always interested in history, but to what extent exactly, I really don't know anything too definite that way.

O. MARSHBURN: I am not able to say whether I think he had any special interest in his heritage ancestors other than a casual one.

ARENA: Coming up in family reunions and that sort of thing.

O. MARSHBURN: Yes, he knew. He was knowledgeable, of course, but I don't know whether he was or he wasn't especially interested. As a matter of fact, it seems that most young people, until we get rather mature in life don't begin to take an interest in that sort of thing.

ARENA: He seems to be the only one that majored in history in college. I am thinking of Edward [Calvert] Nixon, who is in geology now. Don [Francis Donald Nixon], economics--I don't know what Don did in college, if he went to college, as a matter of fact.

O. MARSHBURN: Don didn't really go to college. As any family has three, four or five children, the chances are that not any two of them are going to be alike--they are different. Well, they are different in different ways. Don's interest may be more with people and things, and he was certainly popular and well-liked by all the kids and young people, and all that.

ARENA: The emphasis on college, even in my day, was not as great as it has been since World War II, and of course, all of the Nixons belonged to the pre-World War II generation. Now it's considered almost as important as a high school education used to be. You just had to get a high school education before the war if you wanted to get a decent job. Now it seems as though that's college.

R. MARSHBURN: The fact that so many young people after they got out of the service could go on to college probably did a lot more to get it started more that way. They never would have gone otherwise.

ARENA: I think that's one of the best laws that our government has ever passed of all the laws it

has passed, making it possible for people who were qualified and who wanted to go to get a college education. And the government and the nation as a whole has received benefit a thousandfold from whatever money was expended in that direction. That was supposed to replace the bonus of World War I. My father, I know, got a bonus. In the depression years when it came out, I recall, somewhere in the thirties, the money was used in part for me to get a used bicycle for \$8.50. I don't know what the bonus was altogether--maybe \$100 for him. But this is a much wiser use.

O. MARSHBURN: (Well, we're going to bear to the left down here.)

ARENA: (And this would be part of the original road, or would it, before World War II for the route between Whittier and Riverside?)

O. MARSHBURN: (Yes, this is the Union Pacific [Railroad] tracks right here; this was an old road to Riverside at that time.)

ARENA: There's some talk in one of the books that President Nixon talked about being an engineer as most boys do. Do you recall that very vividly? Was it really that emphasized?

O. MARSHBURN: I don't know.

ARENA: I think every boy likes to be an engineer and it is just natural. (I shouldn't have made a left yet--I'll keep going?)

O. MARSHBURN: (Yes, make a right.)

R. MARSHBURN: I think his acquaintance with Everett Barnum was the thing that probably gave him an idea about wanting to be on the railroad--our friends who came out here from Indiana. He and his wife, Florence, bought a farm or ranch in Yorba Linda and they were often at our family gatherings because they were good friends. He had been an engineer most all of his life and, of course, the boys looked up to him and would listen to him, and I've always had a feeling that that's where Richard thought and talked about that--why he did, as much as any reason.

O. MARSHBURN: Did you ever hear him talk about it, Olive?

R. MARSHBURN: Richard?

O. MARSHBURN: Yes.

R. MARSHBURN: I don't know that I did.

- O. MARSHBURN: Well, I think it's like most boys might at some time say, "I want to be an engineer when I grow up." I don't know, but I don't think it was of any long duration.
- ARENA: He never worked for the railroad or anything like that, did he?
- O. MARSHBURN: No.
- ARENA: But he did have quite a few jobs, I understand, helping around the farm. This job that Aunt Edith mentioned the other evening where he sold tickets at the rodeo--but one of the books said he was a barker and he sold chances. And one of the chances was bought by Grandmother Almira, I believe, and she won a ham. But she didn't realize precisely what was involved, because she did not look favorably on that sort of thing. But I don't know if that was just a No, no, Aunt Edith said that. But the books just bring out the idea that he was a barker at this rodeo in Prescott, Arizona, for a while when the sick brother, Harold [Samuel Nixon], was there. Yes.
- O. MARSHBURN: Well, I guess that's true. He was over there and I guess he was able, ready and willing to make a dollar in any way he could, and that's the way it presented itself.
- ARENA: Evidently he had a lot of good practical business sense. Well, working in the store, of course, taking charge of the fruit and vegetable counter beginning in high school--well, that's good practical business experience. You might have imagined him going into business rather than into law, but I guess there is a connection. A lawyer has to have a knowledge of business law, business practices, and so forth. Although I believe one book says that for a while, while he was practicing law here, he started one business--the idea of canning or freezing oranges or orange juice, which did not make out too well. I imagine that is true, but I don't know any of the details, why it didn't make out well. One comment was they didn't have the type of container then and he couldn't stick to that--couldn't keep investing money in something like that.
- O. MARSHBURN: I asked a man the other day about that because I was questioning about it, and I'm not sure that what I'm going to say is real authentic, but Richard didn't go into this at the very beginning. He was a young lawyer in town and I understood from this person that Frank Nixon had invested a little money with three or four people and they were starting this business. And the war came on and they couldn't get the kind of containers that they

needed. But they had a good business started. And this person I talked to the other day, Mr. [Harry] Schuyler, was in the citrus business out there at the Leffingwell Ranch. He said they had a good product and all, but they were held up because they couldn't get a container--the government had taken over all that kind of product for some of the war effort, and so forth, and they just had to have volume to make it go. Now then, he said that Frank wanted Richard to get in on it to watch out after his little interest, which wasn't big, but it was there. That's what I heard, but I hadn't heard that until the other day. But, of course, Richard came in on it and so he was one of the head men in making the decisions.

ARENA: Was that at Fullerton [California]? I have a vague recollection that that was at Fullerton. I'm not certain.

O. MARSHBURN: No, it was in Pico Rivera [California]. (Olive, shall we go on? Do we take this road on to Riverside? I think we can go on this time. We have quite a little ways here. You see, there is a parallel road over there and we could go over to that.)

ARENA: (Whatever you suggest I will do.)

O. MARSHBURN: (Well, I'm going to suggest that we go on. The last time we came this way we went off here. We have two or three miles along the commercial street--quite a few signals. This way we may go a half mile farther to get to Riverside but we have this freeway and I think we'll go on. I hate to put anything on the tape for posterity that we have terrible smog today, but this is bad. This is very bad.)

ARENA: (It's making history right now.)

O. MARSHBURN: (Well, I hope they find a way to handle it. Think you will have to turn off here. Have quite a little ways through town, so I think we'll try this this time.)

ARENA: Do you recall this accident of President Nixon --the fall? It was a horsedrawn carriage as I recall, in which he got a bad gash. I believe they say he was three years old at the time.

O. MARSHBURN: Olive, do you remember that?

ARENA: It must have been pretty serious, too, I understand.

R. MARSHBURN: Yes. She was going down to Placentia [California], she and Donald. She had Ella Edson with

her. Anyway, she [Ella Edson] went along to help take care of Richard, and Hannah [Milhous Nixon] drove the horse. Richard fell out of the carriage and the back wheel actually ran over his scalp--over his head. It made quite a bad gash, and it was really a very serious accident for him. They didn't know how that was going to come out for quite a while. But they got him up to. . . . I'm not sure whether she brought him up to Whittier. Some of the books might tell the story of where he went to get this sewed up and taken care of, because we were not there, of course. We only heard about it at home, but it was a very serious thing at the time, because they couldn't get to a doctor as quickly as they did when they had cars.

ARENA: According to one account, if he had gotten there a little later, he would not have made it because he had lost so much blood. That makes sense. So it must have been quite serious, falling from a carriage like that, and the wheel did brush him. That's what caused the gash. It must have been quite serious.

R. MARSHBURN: Yes, it was a very scary time.

ARENA: One account wrote of his very nice letter about how the death of his brother, Arthur [Burdg Nixon], affected him. I believe he wrote the letter while he was in elementary school. It was a letter about the picture of Arthur and very beautiful. The pictures that the books have of Arthur show him as a very precious little boy, a very handsome little fellow.

O. MARSHBURN: (Turn right at the next off ramp.)

ARENA: So really, the oldest son and the youngest son both died.

O. MARSHBURN: Except that Edward is younger than Arthur.

ARENA: That's right. I don't believe Edward was alive, or was he, when Arthur died, though?

O. MARSHBURN: No.

ARENA: Well, death is always a sobering thing no matter what age you are, and leaves its mark on the living as well.

O. MARSHBURN: (Go around to the right.)

R. MARSHBURN: Both of those deaths were great trials for the family. Hannah had taken care of Harold so closely for all those years, and then he didn't make it.

ARENA: How many years was Hannah away there in Arizona, something like one year or more than one year, looking after Harold and the family being on its own like that?

R. MARSHBURN: Well, it was off and on. She was over there, I don't know whether it was ever more than six months at a time, and then she would come back. Then there was a woman there who took care of him while she was here, and then he would get worse and she would go back again.

ARENA: Do you think there was any problem there of a lack of financial resources, that he might have improved. . . . This is a hard thing to say, I guess, in a way, but future historians would like to know. Was poverty, the lack of money of the Nixons at that time, responsible? If he had gotten better, more expensive aid, might that have made a difference? Is that clear somewhere along the line that it would have made a difference, or is it not clear, or had it never come up, I wonder? I think people would wonder about this because there is this idea that the Nixons did grow up in poverty. Some say, well, they were not wealthy but they never really lacked. But this would be an interesting test in a way. Would money have saved one or both of those two boys, do you think?

R. MARSHBURN: I doubt that, because in Harold's case they didn't give up anything that was needed, and there were always resources some place in the family if more things were needed. But I think with Harold, if they had the medication that they have now. . . . That is what has made this great change in tuberculosis. Then they thought that if you got to the right kind of climate and all of those things, that was supposed to take care of that disease, when now it's not that at all, and that's why it has taken down the great mortality rate. With Arthur, he wasn't sick very long. It was a short time, and I don't know; I doubt if there was anything that wasn't done that could have been done.

O. MARSHBURN: They did everything that they knew to do. I suppose anybody can say, "Well, if they had this doctor or that doctor or some specialist . . ." I am sure it wasn't money that kept him from getting well.

ARENA: And if they did need money they could have gotten it, as you say, from other members of the family. It did mean for Hannah, though, from what I've gathered from the books, working long hours to make all ends meet, and obviously that was an extra burden. Because as long as she could work--I got the impression of

both Hannah and Frank--they would not go to anyone for money. You would know better than I, and although it is a personal question, again I am asking this as an historian. I imagine Frank and Hannah would not go to anyone for money unless as an absolute last resort. Or was Frank the type of guy, frankly, who would borrow? He would not hang on too long, but would try to borrow money and put it back, and that type of situation?

O. MARSHBURN: Yes. I don't think it would hurt to say that this lady [Edith Milhous Timberlake] we are going to see right now. . . . Her husband had a good position for many years.

O. MARSHBURN: He was an entomologist and she was the one who was concerned about the whole family, not only her own but her sisters' families. But I really think that they may have borrowed money from her.

R. MARSHBURN: I'm sure they did. When they went to Arizona
. . .

O. MARSHBURN: (I think the next . . .)

R. MARSHBURN: I don't think they had that much pride. They would have been reasonable in their thinking that way. They worked hard; Hannah worked hard. We all wondered how she ever stood up under it, but she seemed to be given that kind of strength, and that seemed to be her particular emphasis in life, to help people. At the store, that's where her mission seemed to lie. People would come in with all their troubles to her and . . .

ARENA: Excuse me. There's one interesting case where there was a woman accused of stealing and the family discussed it as to what should be done, and Richard is the one who kept saying, "Let's not call in the police." Hannah also felt that way. I don't know if you recall anything about that incident or not. It may have happened more than once, but the books tend to refer to this one case where this woman was shoplifting--even in that time--from the Nixon's market.

R. MARSHBURN: She told me that story right about the time, what happened, of course. Frank was willing for something to happen right then because he was impetuous and thought she should be punished and all. But they knew the family. Their children knew her children in school, and Hannah felt if there was any way at all to spare her, they should. She talked to Richard about it, I know, and he felt that way, too. There was a woman who worked for them in the store, a Mexican woman, who had really seen her.

I don't think the family had seen her so much, but she warned them and then they began to watch more closely and saw that she did shoplift at different times.

O. MARSHBURN: (Go right and then we take a left up here.)

R. MARSHBURN: Then I think, to save Frank from actually turning her in, Hannah got up her courage and followed the woman out to the car one day when they knew she had taken some things, and asked her what she had there. And of course, that would have been a very hard thing for Hannah to do, to go to this woman that she knew and speak to her about it. But she did. And then the woman broke down. It wasn't hard for her to confess it at all; she didn't know why she did it; she really didn't have to at all.

ARENA: There is such a thing as kleptomania and that might have been it, but who knows. Anyway, it was not pursued.

O. MARSHBURN: (You know where you are now, don't you? You are coming right to it, just a couple of blocks.)

R. MARSHBURN: But she had sort of kept track of what she had taken, and I think over a year she paid back what she thought she had taken.

O. MARSHBURN: (Make a left turn and right there is the home.)