



12-4-1971

**Calvin Burdg Milhous with Phillip L. Milhous and Oliver G. Milhous  
(December 4, 1971)**

C. Richard Arena

Oral History Interview

with

MR. CALVIN BURDG MILHOUS  
MR. PHILLIP L. MILHOUS  
MR. OLIVER G. MILHOUS

December 4, 1971  
Nevada City, California

By Dr. C. Richard Arena

For the Richard Nixon Oral History Project

ARENA: This is interview #1 with Mr. Calvin Burdg Milhous. Mr. Milhous lives in Nevada City [California]. The exact address is Tyler Star Route. Today's date is December 4, 1971, Arena interviewing. Mr. Milhous, do you mind if I begin by asking you where and when you were born?

C. MILHOUS: Well, I was born in Whittier [California]. I was born in my grandmother's house in 1926, August 29.

ARENA: And just to be sure, when you say your grandmother, this is Grandmother Almira Milhous, the wife of the President's grandfather, Franklin Milhous?

C. MILHOUS: Right.

ARENA: And this is the home that is still standing in Whittier, and I believe occupied by another relative, a daughter of Uncle Oscar Marshburn and your aunt, Rose Olive Marshburn.

C. MILHOUS: Right.

ARENA: And what is your precise relationship to the President?

C. MILHOUS: He's my first cousin.

ARENA: And how does this come about?

C. MILHOUS: My father and his mother are brother and sister.

ARENA: And your father's name?

C. MILHOUS: Ezra Charles Milhous.

ARENA: Now how long did you live in this home in which you were born?

C. MILHOUS: Well, to my knowledge, I suppose just a week or two after I was born. As the best I know, my mother went to my grandmother's house so that I could be born, and shortly after--I don't even recall where we lived at the time, Imperial Valley [California], I suppose, Antelope Valley --and then, after I was a couple weeks old we went back to the ranch in Antelope Valley.

ARENA: Would you mind giving your mother's full name, including her maiden name?

C. MILHOUS: Anna Lima Hudson Milhous.

ARENA: Do you mind if I ask you what your educational background was, in a general sort of way? You don't have to mention the name of any particular school, but just if you did get through elementary, if you got through high, if you went to college, and so forth.

C. MILHOUS: I went to several elementary schools, and graduated from Panama Elementary School at Bakersfield [California], and then went four years to Strathmore High School and graduated from Strathmore High School.

ARENA: Do you remember the year, by any chance?

C. MILHOUS: 1944.

ARENA: Did you go on any further?

C. MILHOUS: I went right in the service right after that, into the Army. I was graduated from high school in June and was eighteen the 29th of August, and went in the Army the 18th of December.

ARENA: Where did you serve?

C. MILHOUS: In the Asiatic, in the Philippine Islands, and then when the war was over, I went to Japan and served in occupation for a while there.

ARENA: Did you possibly ever run into President Nixon, who was in the South Pacific for a while?

C. MILHOUS: No, I didn't. Not at that time when I was in service.

ARENA: Do you mind if I ask you, in view of the Quaker background of the family, the home in which you were born was a Quaker home through and through, as you know, I know, was there ever any discouragement or ever any criticism by your aunts or uncles because of your decision to enter military service?

C. MILHOUS: No. I had been told that I could have probably got a--what do you call it . . .

ARENA: Conscientious objector status.

C. MILHOUS: . . . conscientious objector status, but I didn't want one, so it wasn't pursued any farther. When I was drafted, I went in.

ARENA: Did you attend any schools under the GI Bill when you came back?

C. MILHOUS: No, I didn't.

ARENA: Did you get any further special training, say, maybe lived with an uncle, or anything like that, at any time since you graduated from high school? I'm thinking of, you know, maybe learning a particular business or a particular trade.

C. MILHOUS: No. I spent two years in the service, came home, and more or less stayed with the folks for about a year, and I was married and went into business for myself. I owned a dairy for about a year, and then I sold it and moved to Los Angeles [California] area for three years. I worked on a dairy, and then I moved up into this area, where I worked in construction and mills, and trained horses and had a ranch since.

ARENA: And your present occupation, Mr. Milhous?

C. MILHOUS: I suppose you would call it horse trainer now, rancher and horse trainer.

ARENA: Do you do this on your own ranch, or someone else's ranch?

C. MILHOUS: No, it's our own ranch.

ARENA: From whom did you get most of your training, if I may ask, to perform this present job?

C. MILHOUS: Well, of course, everyone knows my dad was quite a lover of horses and had horses all of his life, that I know of and I had a lot of training from him as far as handling horses and knowing horses. And then, of course, from my older brothers, as far as more on the saddle horse part of it, because my dad, of course, was strictly a work horse [owner]. He didn't do much riding. He did ride, but he preferred the big draft animal, the work horse, and they're kind of outdated now. It's saddle horses, and so I picked up a lot from my older brothers, Oliver [Griffith Milhous] in particular. And I learned the rest on my own, I guess.

ARENA: As you were growing up and going to school, were you performing the chores on a regular basis that dealt with horses, too?

C. MILHOUS: Well, yes, we always had horses. We did the farm work with horses. And of course we had cattle. All the time when I went to school, I milked cows in the morning before I went to school and after I came home. We always had a small dairy and had horses in conjunction with it to do the ranch work, mostly draft horses.

ARENA: Did you personally have anything to do with race horses?

C. MILHOUS: Yes, I've had two race horses on the track for a short time.

ARENA: You might recollect that one of your cousins, the famous author, Jessamyn West, refers to a horse racing incident in her book, Friendly Persuasion, and the point there is that the Quakers in general frowned upon this sort of thing. Did you ever come into any difficulty with any of your relatives because of engaging in this part of the horse racing yourself?

C. MILHOUS: No, I think that they're a little more broad-minded along those lines now.

ARENA: Did you recall, for example, your Grandmother Almira under any circumstance ever bringing this up to you, the idea of horse racing?

C. MILHOUS: No, I stayed with my grandmother a couple of summers when I was four and five years old, and then I, well, I think she died when I was possibly fifteen years old or something like that. And, of course, I don't recall ever having any conversations along that line. No, but I think the horse racing part itself, they weren't so much against that, it was the wagering on the races which they didn't believe in.

ARENA: Do you mind if I ask you if you are a member of the Quaker faith yourself now?

C. MILHOUS: Yes, I am.

ARENA: And where would the church be located in this area or are you, as the President, who is miles and miles away from his church? You might know he's officially enrolled in the East Whittier Friends Church.

C. MILHOUS: Well as far as I know I am still enrolled in the Lindsay Friends Church.

ARENA: Regarding that particular church, I know that you know that your Aunt Jane Beeson, Mrs. Jane Beeson, lives right across the street from it. Were you aware that your uncle, [Francis Anthony] Frank Nixon, the President's father, the President's mother, Hannah [Milhous Nixon], and his oldest brother who is now deceased, Harold [Samuel Nixon], were listed as founding charter members of that church? That was brought out in an interview with Mrs. Beeson, who showed me a pamphlet in which that was printed. I was just wondering if you were aware that that was the case?

C. MILHOUS: No, I didn't know that.

ARENA: Would your name possibly be in any connection with that church also? Maybe, for example, as the President's name, because he lived with your aunt, Mrs. Beeson, and was a member of the Christian Endeavor, therefore, his name is listed in this pamphlet for that purpose.

C. MILHOUS: I really wouldn't know.

ARENA: Did you attend the Sunday School classes while you were living in the Lindsay [California] area?

C. MILHOUS: Yes, I did.

ARENA: And did you think that your name might be listed there for that reason possibly?

C. MILHOUS: I'm sure it was, yes, probably at least seven, eight years.

ARENA: Would it be accurate to say that you are a birth-right Quaker, as well?

C. MILHOUS: Yes, I am.

ARENA: Do you mind if I ask you if both your father and mother were birthright Quakers?

C. MILHOUS: My father was. I don't believe my mother was.

ARENA: Do you happen to know what faith she did have?

C. MILHOUS: Baptist.

ARENA: And you don't know if she ever became a convinced Quaker or not?

C. MILHOUS: She did.

ARENA: She did. When is the very first time you came into contact with President Richard Nixon, in your life?

C. MILHOUS: I suppose it was, that I can remember, on one of the visits when I stayed with my grandmother in Whittier. She lived, I guess, four or five miles from the Nixon store and occasionally I would go over and spend a day at the Nixon store. Now I don't remember Richard near as well as I do Donald [Francis Donald Nixon]. It seems like Richard wasn't around very much. I vaguely remember seeing him in the store, but I do remember Donald as running the meat department, being the butcher in the store all the time. And, of course, Aunt Hannah. She was a wonderful person. I always liked her very much.

ARENA: How would you describe your Aunt Hannah? When you say that she was a wonderful person, what comes to mind about her, about what she did as well as what she said, that makes you say that?

C. MILHOUS: Well, she got along with people so well, and she seemed to know the right thing to say at the right time, all the time. I mean, now, as I remember, in her own family if there was any problems between, say, Uncle Frank and somebody in the store, she was kind of the negotiator that came in between and settled everything. You know, she had a wonderful gift with words and people's feelings and whatnot.

ARENA: Looking back, now--because maybe at the time, because of your youth, you didn't study her so carefully--but looking back now, how would you say she was as a mother? How was she as a mother that, you know, you're looking back at her and thinking, of all the mothers that you've seen and read about, how was she as an aunt to you, personally? How was she as a wife to her husband, Frank Nixon? In those three categories, how would you describe her?

C. MILHOUS: Well, first, I would know more about how she was to me as an aunt. I don't believe she could have been better. Of course, I liked all my aunts. She was

probably the favorite of my dad's sisters; one of the favorites, anyway.

ARENA: To be sure, here, she was your dad's favorite sister or your favorite aunt?

C. MILHOUS: My favorite aunt, I would say. I couldn't say about my dad. Like I say, I liked them all, but I remember her as being, you know, real kind and nice. And at the time I stayed with them, of course, I was pretty small, you know. And as a mother, she sure seemed like she handled the kids real well and they all liked her.

ARENA: Did you ever see her exercise any discipline on the boys?

C. MILHOUS: No, I never saw the time that she needed to.

ARENA: Did you ever see her lose control of herself under any circumstances?

C. MILHOUS: No. I never heard her ever raise her voice, as a matter of fact, over just the normal sound.

ARENA: Do you think that she ever showed favoritism to any of her children?

C. MILHOUS: No, I don't think so. Not to my knowledge, anyway. I sure couldn't see it if she did.

ARENA: From the standpoint of Mrs. Hannah Nixon as a wife, how would you describe her there, in her relations with her husband, Frank?

C. MILHOUS: Well, now, I'm probably not too qualified there, because like I say, I was pretty small at the time. I think Uncle Frank probably passed away shortly after. Say I was four years old when I was there, five years old, maybe, and then I didn't know him any more till he passed away, which was probably a few years afterwards, but she sure seemed to handle the situation real well. I know at the time Uncle Frank had had an accident of some type, and so he handled the baking out in the kitchen with the pies and cakes and whatnot, which they sold in the store.

ARENA: Excuse me, you say then, that your Uncle Frank did some of the cooking, some of the baking, himself.

MILHOUS: Right.

ARENA: So, you recall that.



C. MILHOUS: He baked the pies and whatnot that they sold in the store, and Aunt Hannah did the work in the store while he was doing this.

ARENA: If it's not too personal, whose pies did you prefer, Uncle Frank's or Aunt Hannah's?

C. MILHOUS: Well, I really don't know.

ARENA: The difference doesn't come to mind.

C. MILHOUS: No. [Laughter]

ARENA: Uncle Frank didn't have anything special, or in particular, he didn't add something to his pies, we'll say, or anything like that?

C. MILHOUS: No. But I do think that he must have baked a pretty good pie. I know he baked a lot of 'em, anyway.

ARENA: These pies that were baked were for sale, I take it, as well.

C. MILHOUS: Right. They sold 'em in the store, I believe, because I know he baked, oh, twenty at a time it seems like.

ARENA: Do you recall the hardships that the family endured because of illness and death? I'm thinking now, of course, of the two sons that died, first Harold, then Arthur [Burdg Nixon]. Do you recall anything about that part of their lives?

C. MILHOUS: No, I didn't know either one of those boys. I'm not sure if they were dead before I was born. I guess they weren't, but I don't recall either one of them.

ARENA: You don't recall them personally.

C. MILHOUS: No.

ARENA: Or problems in connection with them.

C. MILHOUS: No. No. See, Eddie [Edward Calvert Nixon] is a few years younger than I am, and I remember Eddie and Donald real well, when I stayed there in the summertime, and vaguely remember Richard, but I don't remember any of the others.

ARENA: Is there anything that I have not brought out, any questions that I have not asked that maybe you would like to raise, or you would like to discuss yourself, from your own personal experience? For example, have you ever had any contact with the President since that time, now, coming right up to the present? Any experiences like that you'd like to recount?

C. MILHOUS: I talked to President Nixon for a few minutes when he was running for governor. I believe that was in 1960.

ARENA: Right after that election that he lost, 1960.

C. MILHOUS: Yes. He was giving a political speech in Yuba City [California], and we went down to listen to it. After an hour or so, I fought my way up to shake hands with him, and got the chance to talk to him for a couple of minutes. Then he did recognize me, which I was very surprised, because I hadn't seen him in years, you know.

ARENA: You didn't mention your name first?

C. MILHOUS: No.

ARENA: He recognized you and your name first.

C. MILHOUS: There was people shaking hands with him on all sides, by the dozens, and I reached up and got ahold of his hand, and as he looked over at my face, he recognized me, not exactly my first name, but he says, "Now, wait a minute. You're Ezra's boy, you're the youngest one." I said, "Calvin." He said, "Yes." And we talked for a couple of minutes, but people were firing questions at him from all sides. I don't know how the man can answer 'em, so I got away and . . .

ARENA: Is there anything else you'd like to add, Mr. Milhous?

C. MILHOUS: No, that's about all that I can think of, only that it is quite an honor to be a cousin to the President, and I would sure help him in any way I could in his career.

ARENA: I'm very grateful for your consenting to this interview. As you know, you'll get a typed copy. This will, when completed, be a part of the papers that will be lodged in the Presidential Library for future people to study. And I'm particularly grateful because I know you're not feeling well, and you went out of your way to visit us at your brother Oliver's ranch. Thank you very much, Mr. Milhous.

ARENA: This is a continuation of the interview with the other sons of Mr. Ezra Milhous. These are the sons known as Mr. Phillip Lawerence Milhous and Mr. Oliver Griffith Milhous. Arena continuing the interview, same date, December 4, 1971, the same place, the residence of Mr. Oliver Milhous.

Would you mind, so that we know who's talking, if I refer to you as Phillip . . .

P. MILHOUS: I don't mind.

ARENA: . . . during this interview. And Mr. Oliver Milhous, do you mind if I refer to you as Oliver?

O. MILHOUS: All right.

ARENA: Thank you. Phillip, would you mind stating where and when you were born?

P. MILHOUS: I was born in Lindsay, California, in 1915, on the El Mirador Highway, Lindsay, California.

ARENA: I'd like to ask you at this point, how come you were born on the highway?

P. MILHOUS: Well, I was born in a house beside the highway. And I was born at Aunt Martha's house.

ARENA: This would be Mrs. Martha [Milhous] Gibbons. And her husband's name?

P. MILHOUS: Lawrence Gibbons. Uncle Lawrence's place. And I don't know why I happened to be there but I suppose Father was away from home. He was grading and leveling land at the time, and Mother went there to have the child born.

ARENA: To set your age among the children, of course, you're older between you and your brother Oliver, but where do you fall in the line of, I believe, eleven children altogether? Where do you come in that picture?

P. MILHOUS: Fourth down. Actually, I have a sister that passed away when she was three days old. But I am the third down of the boys.

ARENA: Who would be the oldest boy?

P. MILHOUS: Robert Franklin Milhous.

ARENA: Of course, he's still living, in Bakersfield [California].

P. MILHOUS: Yes. And then Charles Eric Milhous, he lives in Turlock. And then I live here in Grass Valley [California].

ARENA: As a matter of fact, since you're the older of the two right now, would you mind giving all the names of all the children, and if they are girls who are married, would you mind giving the married names, and if you do remember the exact date of birth, do so, or if you're guessing, say you're guessing, and then give what you think the age is, because I don't think I have that at one point. Mr. Phillip Milhous, would you mind reading the title of the book that you have in your hand now, which lists the genealogy of the Milhous family, please.

P. MILHOUS: "The descendants of William Milhous, Jr. and Martha Vickers."

ARENA: And what's underneath? Every word there.

P. MILHOUS: "1971, by Dorothy Z. Milhous and Hazel A. Stewart."

ARENA: Who do you think will have a copy of that, in the city of Whittier, that same book you're holding?

P. MILHOUS: Mrs. [Rose] Olive Marshburn.

ARENA: Thank you. Would you mind listing the names of your brothers and sisters from the book? And even though you don't give the dates, we can always find the dates. Would you now list the names of your brothers and sisters, Phillip, and approximately the dates? If you're absolutely certain, say you're sure; if you're guessing, say "A guess."

P. MILHOUS: Robert Franklin Milhous, eldest, and he was born approximately 1909. [November 9, 1910]  
Charles Eric Milhous was born approximately in 1913. [January 16, 1912]  
Almira Valina Milhous. That name Valina was Pauline. And her birth was about 1914. She died three days after birth, or something like that.  
Phillip Lawrence Milhous, which is I, and I was born in 1915. [December 2, 1915] at Lindsay, California.  
Oliver Griffith Milhous. I don't know where you were born.

O. MILHOUS: I was born at Woodville [California], between Woodville and Tulare [California], May 6, 1917.

P. MILHOUS: Jane Bernice Milhous was born between Woodville and Tulare in approximately 1919. [November 19, 1918]

She is Mrs. Jane Bernice Milhous Barr.  
Alice May Milhous, born May 22, 1920. She lives  
in Fortuna, California. Her married name is Alice  
Needham.

William Theodore Milhous. Gee, I don't know when  
he was hatched. He was born in September about  
the 11th [September 11, 1921.

ARENA: And would he be younger than you?

P. MILHOUS: Yes. He is younger than Alice. He's about two  
years younger than her, so his approximate birth  
date is along in 1923 or '24.

ARENA: And he lives now in Lindsay.

P. MILHOUS: He lives in Lindsay, California, yes.  
Jesse Calvin Milhous, deceased. And Calvin is the  
wrong middle name. They have it listed here as  
Calvin, and it was Gordon. And he was killed in  
an accident when he was approximately twelve  
years old, in 1933, so there we could go back and  
find out when he was born exactly. He was killed  
in the spring of 1933.  
Calvin Burdug Milhous, who has been interviewed,  
and he lives in Nevada City area. And I don't  
know what his age is, really.

ARENA: His birth date year is 1926.

P. MILHOUS: '26. We're pretty well on schedule, then. They  
came about two years apart.

BEGIN SIDE II TAPE I

P. MILHOUS: Hannah Elizabeth Milhous, the youngest daughter,  
and she is married to a Reeves. And she goes by  
the name of Elizabeth more than Hannah. Now,  
she was born in approximately 1928. [November 20,  
1928] Yes, down at Westmoreland, California.  
Oh, pardon me. Jesse was born in Whittier  
[California].

ARENA: He was the youngster who was killed.

P. MILHOUS: Yes, I'm sure of that. And that's about as far  
as . . .

ARENA: Excuse me, for Elizabeth, her married name and her  
present location?

P. MILHOUS: Her present location is in Manteca, California, and  
she is married to Truman Reeves.

- ARENA: Thank you. Now can I ask you, Phillip, to explain something about the type of work that your father did? You were discussing this off the tape a little while ago, and I'm going to ask you to go over some of that again, in the same way, just as you were explaining to me. What type of work did your father do?
- P. MILHOUS: My father, Ezra Charles Milhous, leveled land, graded land for the farmers and ranchers up and down the San Joaquin Valley [California], the lower San Joaquin Valley, and was a rancher as a sideline. His biggest business was in the '17's, '18's, and through the '20's, leveling land.
- ARENA: You have shown me some pictures in which he used horsepower.
- P. MILHOUS: Yes.
- ARENA: Did he ever get into the use of machinery while he was doing this?
- P. MILHOUS: In later years, just before the depression of the thirties, he had a truck, but that was a sideline, also. He had his horses yet. And then he lost a great number of horses.
- O. MILHOUS: May I cut in on this?
- ARENA: Please do.
- O. MILHOUS: That was just AFTER the depression.
- P. MILHOUS: Right.
- O. MILHOUS: In '32, '33, along to '35 was when he had the truck. '29 was during the depression, right?
- ARENA: The depression started in 1929, the crash of 1929.
- O. MILHOUS: He had horses and hay balers then.
- P. MILHOUS: Yes, he lost most of his horses and hay balers during the depression, the early part of it.
- ARENA: Then would it be correct to say that throughout most of his life when he did this work of leveling land, practically all of it was done with horses?
- P. MILHOUS: Yes.

ARENA: Would you also mind describing how extensive was the use of these horses? You mentioned some of the size teams he used, for example. Would you go over that again, please?

P. MILHOUS: Teams all the way up to twenty head of horses in the harness in the same team, and a quantity of horses up to 150 at once.

ARENA: At one time, for a particular job, he would use as many as 150 horses?

P. MILHOUS: Yes, by having his reserves. I think the biggest number I ever saw in one field operation was 70 head. That was when I was about seven years old.

ARENA: And also, I believe you said he captured wild horses that he himself would tame?

P. MILHOUS: No. He never did that.

ARENA: But he broke horses.

P. MILHOUS: Yes.

ARENA: In other words, he would buy . . .

P. MILHOUS: No, he bought very few horses. He had his own breeding stock.

ARENA: I see.

P. MILHOUS: He bought a few nice horses, just before the depression; he bought a few breeding animals from the bank. That would be along in about 1926.

ARENA: These horses that he used for the leveling jobs, where did they come from?

P. MILHOUS: He raised the biggest part.

O. MILHOUS: May I add to that?

ARENA: Please do.

O. MILHOUS: He did break horses for other people, the horses that someone would start to break and couldn't control the horse. [If] the horse was unmanageable for the man that was breaking it, he would then break it for other people. He did a very good job of it.

ARENA: Would these horses that he broke be used mainly for work or riding or both?

- O. MILHOUS: Draft horses.
- ARENA: Draft horses means work horses, for the layman such as myself.
- O. MILHOUS: Right. He was a draft horse man. He rode horses some, but he never went out to the extent of breaking saddle horses. If someone had a team of horses that was bad about running away, or something to that effect, of tearing things up, then they would get him to break them for them.
- ARENA: And Oliver, would you mind contibuing for a moment and indicate some of the areas that he leveled? And would it be correct to say that most of this land, not all, but most of this land leveling was done in California.
- O. MILHOUS: I would say practically all of it was in California. There was one operation that I know of in Yuma, Arizona. The rest was in California.
- ARENA: Would you mind indicating some of the areas, and here try to be as precise as your memory allows. Precisely what lands did he level, and if you remember the names of the people for whom he did this work, indicate that as well.
- O. MILHOUS: The names I better not try. Phil can probably do that.
- ARENA: Good.
- O. MILHOUS: As far as I know, he leveled land from Lindsay, as far as Tulare and Lindsay, California, to the Arizona border of Yuma, Arizona.
- ARENA: All right. Now I'll go over to Phillip and ask Phillip if he'll fill in this. And again, as he discussed earlier off the tape, of he'll remember now some of the names involved, as well as the exact areas of these lands.
- P. MILHOUS: He leveled a lot of land when I was small around Lindsay. I can't remember names there. I remember some of the men that worked for him and some of the men that he worked for.
- ARENA: Do you recall, Phillip, if he did this for his father, Franklin Milhous?
- P. MILHOUS: No, not when I can start remembering. He was on his own. Mr. [William] Bill Koepp of Lindsay was



a partner of his in early land-leveling days, and I think that he probably leveled Bill's land, also.

ARENA: Do you happen to know who did level your grandfather's, Franklin Milhous's land?

P. MILHOUS: No, I do not know, other than possibly my father, because before he was married he came up to that area to level land.

ARENA: Do you know if your grandfather ever did any of that himself, any land?

P. MILHOUS: I don't think so.

ARENA: All right. Now, this area around Lindsay and other areas, now would you recall some of the other areas?

P. MILHOUS: We left the Lindsay area when I was about seven years old, and worked toward Porterville [California], Delano [California], and in the Delano area we leveled large sections of land for what they called the Paul A. Mossesian ranches, and they are still operating as of this date. Mossesian is an Armenian name, and they raise grapes for wine. I believe they are still operating now. They were a few years ago.

ARENA: Although they are beginning to break some of these big ranches up, they are still around, members of the family, you think. Good. And was there something about this being a part of the Mojave Desert [California]? Just how much of this land we've mentioned so far, and that we've not mentioned, how much of this land that was leveled was a part of the Mojave?

P. MILHOUS: Right. We were still in the San Joaquin Valley at this time, working our way toward Bakersfield. Now I say working our way. When we got so many miles away from the land-leveling, well, he moved Mother and the children to that particular spot, or as near to it as he could. Sometimes he rented a ranch and leveled out in a wagon wheel effect around that. Otherwise, he had these huge cookhouses and we lived in those on the job. And then we left Delano and went through Bakersfield, over the Tehachapies in through Mojave, on the edge of the Mojave Desert, which they call Antelope Valley now. He leveled land for R. A. Recktor, approximately five miles east of Lancaster [California], the Grey ranch, nine miles west of Lancaster, and the Wilson and Moore ranch, fourteen miles east of Lancaster. This was the area where he purchased many horses from the bank.

ARENA: And it was at this area, Antelope Valley, where the President and his brothers visited you for maybe more than one summer, but sometime.

P. MILHOUS: Yes. They visited us at the Lindsay area, but I can't remember it.

ARENA: But you do recall the Antelope Valley visit?

P. MILHOUS: Right. You see, by that time I was in about the third grade, and agewise probably eight or nine, and I had a little better memory then. And Antelope Valley is desert country. It IS the Mojave Desert, the edge of it. And he leveled lots of land there, and we lived in three locations while we were there. We were there about three years, approximately. And we lived on a ranch in the western part of the valley, up next to the hills, for one year and, by the way, attended a school with sixteen kids in the school, and half of 'em were Milhouses. But then we also lived on this ranch that my older brother spoke about that had the huge reservoir on it, lived there a year and rented that property and he leveled land in the country.

ARENA: Would that ranch be the one in Lancaster?

P. MILHOUS: In Lancaster, yes. It was five miles out of Lancaster, east of Lancaster, and the one later was west, about twenty-three or -four miles.

ARENA: What do you recall of the visits of the President as a young boy on your place?

P. MILHOUS: He was not a hunter. Another cousin used to come --well, I don't know whether they came the same time, I can't remember--and they were there periodically at the same time, and the other cousin, Lyall Sutton, was a second cousin, or something. He was more of a hunter than Dick was.

ARENA: And do you recall the way in which they were related?

P. MILHOUS: I believe they are first cousins. I and Lyall are second, and I believe Dick and him could be first.

ARENA: Do you recall who the parents were of Lyall?

P. MILHOUS: I don't; I can't remember.

ARENA: Does it come to your mind, Oliver?

O. MILHOUS: No, I'd better not say. But I think he's a second cousin.

ARENA: But it could be found, possibly, in this same book that we were looking at earlier. We won't do that now, but we know it could be found in there. Do you know where Lyall Sutton is living now?

P. MILHOUS: Well, yes. He has lived most of his life in the Yorba Linda [California] district.

ARENA: I see. Any idea where he might be now?

P. MILHOUS: I think the last address that I had of him was in Fullerton [California].

ARENA: I see. Do you mind if I ask you what you boys did during this period, during the summer when the President was visiting? Did he actually perform chores, or was it mainly just having a vacation?

P. MILHOUS: No, anybody that was at our place did his share of work for the eats.

ARENA: And what was a share of work? What was done?

P. MILHOUS: There was watering horses or brushing 'em down or harnessing 'em, or anything that needed to be done. I think that at my age at that time I didn't have to milk the old family cow.

ARENA: Do you remember what the particular chores of the President, Richard Nixon, were and how he performed them?

P. MILHOUS: No, but I can guess that they wouldn't be to us boys as standard, because that was different from his line of education and work. There is some instances that I remember about Cousin Lyall, but Richard I don't, at that time, anyhow. That would be in the mid-twenties.

ARENA: While we're on this question of your personal contact with the President, besides seeing him when he came to visit your father's place out here at Lancaster, on what other occasions did you meet with the President directly over the years, right up to the present time?

P. MILHOUS: Well later, then, I met him several times at his home, or in the vicinity of his home in and around Whittier. This later years, in '35 and '36, I actually worked in the store. The year before he had gone to college back East, and I performed, more or less, his job, taking care of the vegetables and delivering groceries.

ARENA: Do you recall that you also, as he, went to the market in Los Angeles [California] to buy them?

P. MILHOUS: I never went to the market.

ARENA: Who did that?

P. MILHOUS: I'm sure that Uncle Frank did it at that time.

ARENA: But you were in charge of fruits?

P. MILHOUS: No, not the stand. The vegetables had to be cleaned and taken care of as they were put in the front. That was fresh vegetables, and they'd have to be cleaned and pruned and shaped up for the customer. /Do you recall that Mr. Frank Nixon, your uncle, or your aunt, or anyone, said to you, "Now, this is the way Richard used to do it." And they advised that you did it this or that way, at all? Does that come to mind? ARENA

P. MILHOUS: No. Cousin [Thomas T.] Tom Seulke, he's a second cousin, he was in the store at that time. And I believe it was the summer of '35 that I worked all summer, and then the summer of '34, part summer, and all summer of '35.

ARENA: Had you graduated from high school yet?

P. MILHOUS: I graduated in the spring of '34.

ARENA: Wasn't there a special connection between your graduation and President Nixon, in a way?

P. MILHOUS: Due to this moving of my father to his land-leveling operations, and so forth, he had wound up down into the Imperial Valley [California]. During the depression he lost everything and came back to Lindsay for a new start, we might call it. I went to high school in Strathmore, California, for two and a half years at Strathmore High School, and my folks decided to go to Arizona, for Mother had a cough and whatnot. And Harold Nixon, Dick's brother, had done better when they had him in Arizona, or something to that effect. So Mother and the family went. I kind of drew the line there. I didn't want to be changed in schools. I had changed so many times during grammar school days.

ARENA: Do you mind, as long as you brought that up, was there a difference of opinion, and you insisted on finishing at Strathmore?

P. MILHOUS: Yes.

ARENA: Was the argument with your father?

P. MILHOUS: With my father and mother, both. Mother wanted me more than Father to stay at one school. She could see that it would be better for me, and changing schools so much was a hardship on us, on the children growing up. My brother Robert, I believe, wouldn't have quit high school when he did if he hadn't lived so many miles away. He had to ride a horse several miles to catch a bus that went another several miles.

ARENA: On that point--I know it's interrupting the main story, your giving the connection between graduating from high school and President Nixon--but before you leave that point, how many of you brothers and sisters actually did graduate from high school, considering all these moves, as far as you can recollect? Or who did not? That might be easier.

P. MILHOUS: Bob didn't and Oliver didn't. Two didn't graduate from high school.

ARENA: Considering all of these moves.

P. MILHOUS: Yes. I know that I went to at least twelve different grammar schools, and possibly sixteen.

ARENA: Do you happen to know if any of your other brothers and sisters put up the same resistance as you did?

P. MILHOUS: No, they didn't. Not that I know of. I think that's why Oliver quit high school, that he didn't go to high school because of moving to a new location, which I objected to.

ARENA: Excuse me. As long as Oliver is here, we'll double check that with him, to make sure we get it right from him. Do you want to speak to that point, Oliver?

O. MILHOUS: I quit school in the eighth grade. The folks moved two weeks before I graduated from the eighth grade so I never graduated. I got my diploma and I never went to high school.

ARENA: And your recollection is that's the reason. You didn't like this moving around?

O. MILHOUS: Well, they just couldn't afford it. Well, I went to high school two weeks and we moved again, and I didn't go when we moved the second time, because

I just felt like I'd better work and not go to school. I did go to school in Brawley [California] for two weeks, down in the Imperial Valley.

ARENA: Now, Phillip, would you mind resuming this account of how your high school graduation ties in with President Nixon in a special way?

P. MILHOUS: Well, when the folks went to Brawley, California, where brother Oliver quit school at that time, I didn't go down there. I turned with my thumb on the road and hitchhiked back to Strathmore, where I had already spent two years in high school. I went by Aunt Edith's house, which was the first one, Aunt Edith Timberlake, in Riverside [California]. Naturally, coming from the Imperial Valley, that was the first aunt to see on my journey back to Lindsay and Strathmore.

ARENA: How were you traveling during this time?

P. MILHOUS: By my thumb and foot. And the rides were kind of scarce in those days. But I got to Aunt Edith's place in Riverside, and she took me to Whittier by car.

ARENA: Did she do the driving?

P. MILHOUS: Aunt Edith did the driving, yes. She drove me to Whittier, and Aunt Martha Gibbons was visiting in Whittier at that time, and I stopped by, of course, seeing all the aunts. About that time they were together there, including Aunt Hannah [Nixon]. Well, they was wishing me well to go back to school, so they set it up between the three aunts that I should stay at Aunt Martha's house and go to high school. Aunt Martha at that time had two daughters in high school. I was a year younger than one.

ARENA: One I have had the pleasure of interviewing, Mrs. [Mildred Rose] Fink. Would that be the one?

P. MILHOUS: That's the youngest one. No, she wasn't in high school at that time.

ARENA: Would you mind giving her full name?

P. MILHOUS: Her name was Mildred Rose Gibbons, the youngest daughter, Mrs. Fink now. And Edith Catherine was the oldest daughter. She was a senior, and Laurene [Almira Laurene Gibbons] was a junior, and I was a coming junior as I went down that year. And so, as the three aunts talked it over, I believe Aunt Edith gave me a couple of bucks, two to five dollars, and Aunt Hannah gave me a wardrobe, what she

had from my various cousins. See, all I had on was my jeans and my shirt.

ARENA: Were they all your clothes, too?

P. MILHOUS: That was all the clothes I took with me in this trip to go back to school.

ARENA: Excuse me, and where were you coming from? In case you said it before, I lost the thread. You were coming from where?

P. MILHOUS: Actually, I was coming from Beaumont [California]. My folks had stopped there for two weeks, and I refused to go on down to Imperial Valley. I remember even the road I walked out to the highway to catch a road.

ARENA: Would it be accurate to say you were running away from home, or not? Did your parents know?

P. MILHOUS: No. They knew it.

ARENA: Then you were not actually running away from home.

P. MILHOUS: No. We had a sit-down talk about it, and I just refused to go to school.

ARENA: Did your aunts try to talk you into going back home?

P. MILHOUS: No, they did not. They actually helped me on my way.

ARENA: How old were you at the time, Phillip?

P. MILHOUS: I must have been about sixteen, because I graduated from high school when I was eighteen.

ARENA: You had two more years to go.

P. MILHOUS: Right.

ARENA: All right. So, you were picking up a wardrobe from Aunt Hannah.

P. MILHOUS: Aunt Hannah gave me a wardrobe and a suitcase, and I had the suitcase for a number of years. I don't know what happened to it. It may still be around. It was a brown suitcase, I remember, and it had a strap on each end of it. And it may be still in

some of my boxes, or not, but in this she had various clothes, Harold's and Dick's. And I remember trying on Harold's suits; they were a little long for me, and she gave me one of those, and one from Dick, which I eventually graduated from high school in.

ARENA: And a moment ago, we did take a picture of you next to that picture, and that is a picture of you graduating from high school.

P. MILHOUS: From Strathmore High School.

ARENA: And the year of that graduation?

P. MILHOUS: 1934.

ARENA: And the suit you're wearing in the picture is the one that belonged to the President.

P. MILHOUS: The President, yes.

ARENA: Do you recall that Mrs. Hannah Nixon, your aunt, said anything special about that suit? Where or when she had obtained it? Was it something that the President worked for, or anything special that you recall?

P. MILHOUS: I believe she said it was a hand-me-down from Harold--Harold to Richard, and then to me.

ARENA: That picture shows you, necktie up. Would you mind describing it as much as you can, the material; how many pair of trousers did it have?

P. MILHOUS: It had one pair of trousers. It was a good blue serge. I was proud of it. I kept it for twenty years.

ARENA: Any holes or patches that had been re sewed, or anything like that?

P. MILHOUS: No, it was a very nice suit. It was just a little large for me.

ARENA: Was it altered by anyone?

P. MILHOUS: No, I didn't have the money to alter it if it needed it.

ARENA: Was it the waist, do you think, or the length that needed the alteration?



P. MILHOUS: The length of the trousers was just a little long, and it is possible that my Aunt Martha or the woman that I later got a job with might have altered the pants in the length.

BEGIN SIDE I TAPE II

ARENA: Continuing about the suit that was given to you by Aunt Hannah which you used for high school graduation purposes, could I ask you this, Phillip: How long did the suit last? Is it still around, for example?

P. MILHOUS: I don't know. It was given to another person in turn who needed a suit, but I kept it for twenty years.

ARENA: Wow!

P. MILHOUS: I had that long after my children were born. And I got money enough during the meantime to buy two other suits, one from J. C. Penney, I believe, and the other from somebody in the LA [Los Angeles] district.

ARENA: Now, that was one direct contact regarding the President. Literally, you can say you stepped into his clothes.

P. MILHOUS: I wore his coat.

ARENA: I was going to say, there wasn't the possibility of wearing his shoes, too. Did you ever step into his shoes?

P. MILHOUS: No, I never stepped into his shoes.

ARENA: They weren't your size?

P. MILHOUS: No. At that time Aunt Hannah gave me shirts and stuff that I could wear to school, and she had the forethought of knowing that I needed a suit.

ARENA: Do you mind if I ask you this about Aunt Hannah: Did she in any way make you feel like a poor relative, when she was doing this?

P. MILHOUS: No, definitely not. Aunt Hannah--I believe on that scale, that would be the last thing she thought. I can say this: All of my aunts never treated the Milhouses, the children, as lower than themselves, or gave them a lower scale. I think that they gave Mother a little rough time. But who wouldn't, being Father was the only pampered brother?

And so, therefore, I think that Mother had a little harder time fitting in than normal. But as far as us children, I don't know of any incident that any aunt. . . . We were poor in money, but that was all.

ARENA: All the years that you have known your aunts, and of course, your uncles through marriage, was the door ever closed to you or any of the members of your family by any of them?

P. MILHOUS: DEFINITELY not.

ARENA: And the annual Christmas affairs that were held, and are still held, are you invited, can you attend these if you want to?

P. MILHOUS: Always, yes.

ARENA: Do you mind if I ask you, too, while we're on that point, speaking about relatives, have you, as the other relatives have, received invitations to the President's Inauguration ceremonies?

P. MILHOUS: In the books, yes. Somewhere in the mail, we lost it for a while. We have it now. We lost it for a while, but it was a mail fumble or something.

ARENA: But you've been invited even by the President, along with all the relatives.

P. MILHOUS: Right, all the relatives.

ARENA: Concerning, now, another incident in which you had a direct contact with the President. As you know, this project does not deal with the political side of the family. And, although an experience you had with the President might deal with the period after 1945, it's not the political side we're interested in but the personal relationship side, so would you mind going into any other experiences that you had with the President, even though it might deal with politics, but in a way leaving the direct politics out? It's the family side we're interested in.

P. MILHOUS: Well, yes, he even converted a Democrat for one season to vote Republican. But my father-in-law was a staunch Democrat. He was a Democrat, whether the man was deserving or whether he wasn't. It was the only route to go. And so, during Dick's campaigning, while he was campaigning for senator, or something, he came to the Bakersfield area where I owned a dairy at that time. I was newly-married and I had bought into a dairy at the time. He came there, and he was chiding me that the man in that category wouldn't speak to his cousins.

And so I jumped on the phone and I got him on the phone at the Bakersfield Inn. He was staying at the Bakersfield Inn. My wife didn't go. I told her everything that I knew when I got back, of course. And after we got through the guards and whatnot, the rigmarole--it took us a little while to get through--we got the message that we could get on in to see him, between speeches. My father-in-law went in and had a nice conversation with him. I stayed out of it, because he was shocked that he could talk to a man of that category so easy. And Dick put on his clothes, he finished tying his tie, pulling his shoes on while Pat put her nylon socks on and tidied up her hair while he was talking to us between interviews. And so then, of course, I went to the dinner that we had that night where he was talking, a paid political dinner, a buck or so, and my father and mother, Ezra Milhous, came from Lindsay district, and my children, they were quite small at that time and--no, I didn't take them in--the wife and I, my mother and father, and possibly my oldest brother. He was living in the vicinity. We went to the dinner, and what was so common about Dick, which we all like, he saw us. He hadn't seen my mother and father for several years, two or three or four, maybe.

Our table happened to be right in line with where he was talking, and he rose up to speak, and he just stepped over the banister, off of the counter, and told the long line of Milhouses to stand up. Yes, by the way, there was about eight there. He said, "Stand up." He says, "This is my aunt and uncle." He introduced his aunt and uncle, my father and mother, to a crowd of approximately four or five hundred people, which was just common cousins and whatnot, and he went right down the line and introduced us individually.

ARENA: Do you recall that he missed any of the names?

P. MILHOUS: No, he did not. That was one of the few times my wife [Anna Verline Pettitt Milhous] had met him. She had seen him a time or two before at these Christmas reunions and whatnot. And we had gone to his coming-out dinner. The wife had met him there. He remembered her name. We in the family call her Verline, which is a hard name to remember.

ARENA: By this coming-out dinner, was this after he was married?

P. MILHOUS: After he was married, and it was held in Whittier, at Uncle Frank's home there. At the time they owned that home. And my wife named it "Hannah's Hill", because it was on top of a hill.

ARENA: Was that the hill right behind Whittier College?

P. MILHOUS: Yes.

ARENA: And the home they had that looked like an observatory for astronomy?

P. MILHOUS: Yes. It had a dome in the top of it. It was about three levels high, I think.

ARENA: When you were in the area around that time, were you living with one of the Milhouses yourself; were you visiting?

P. MILHOUS: No. At the time that he had his coming-out deal, or whatever it was, I worked for my Uncle Russell Harrison. I milked cows on a dairy there. That's before I owned my own.

ARENA: This would be Russell Harrison, Sr.

P. MILHOUS: Yes.

ARENA: Would you mind recounting the story that a moment or so ago you mentioned, concerning the interest that your cousin Rusty, or Russell Harrison, Jr., had in building this little home-made machine? You called it something special.

P. MILHOUS: I always contended that he was the mechanic of the cousins, I believe; Rusty was. We called him Rusty. So, whenever the Milhous gang got down there for a Christmas dinner or something, we went to see Rusty or the various cousins. And this particular time he had built what they call in modern times a go-cart. And I always contend he was the first man ever to build one. Well, he doesn't say so now, but he did. He dreamed it up. It was old wagon wheels and --that's small children's play wagons--and he had a fifth wheel driven by an engine in the middle of the cart.

ARENA: There was an engine in the middle?

P. MILHOUS: Yes, it was his mother's washing machine engine, gasoline-driven washing machine engine. He had a wheel attached to that engine, so when he wanted to stop he raised the entire engine wheel up on a pivot, and that cleared the wheel, the wheel kept turning--he didn't have a clutch on it--the wheel kept turning, but he was out of gear then and he coasted. I know he didn't have brakes; he drug his feet and whatnot to stop it. After he put his bicycle wheels on it--I think it was before, I know it was--he had the small wheels on it, he took it for a shot down East Whittier Boulevard to show to the Nixon family what he had accomplished. It was quite a deal. And he run underneath the gravel truck and had to come walking home. He demolished the thing. And in later days, well, we put--I say we--HE and my brother Charles put bicycle wheels on it, I think, but I don't remember too much about it, but . . .

ARENA: I think we have been discussing that, also, in connection with the interest that the President had

in mechanical things. Would you mind recalling from your own experience the President's working with mechanical things like that?

P. MILHOUS: As far as I knew at that time--see, he was a little older than I. He was in the bracket of Rusty, Charles and Bob. And then they put brother Oliver and I down with Donald and Arthur, so we got pushed back, and we had to stand around with our little snotty noses and watch what the bigger brothers did. But Dick, and of course Harold, were there at that time. I don't remember too much about Harold. He was in his teens. He was a little older yet. But they were more careful with their hands; the dirty work they didn't do. It wasn't that they were too good for it, because when Dick used to come to our ranch he pitched the horse manure with the rest of us out of the barn and everything else, but it seemed like none of them were cut out to be--they weren't trained in that category. They were more in the grocery store, the cleaner type of work.

ARENA: Another interesting story you said that was off the tape, and I'd like to ask you to consider putting it on the record now, but maybe you better leave out the name of the city, just to protect yourself and to protect everyone from the standpoint of the legal complications. But, leaving out the name of the city, the incident involving the death of your brother, Jesse, and the role played by your uncle, Frank Nixon, the President's father, if you know what I'm referring to now.

P. MILHOUS: My brother was killed in 1933 in an accident. An automobile ran over him, and the party was drunk. And he had, by the way, a load of bootleg whiskey in the back of his car. Well, it was a noted fact in that particular part of the country that this young fellow was just a hot-rodder from way back and an ornery rascal, but his father was . . .

ARENA: And as you were saying, the father was a very influential citizen, and please continue.

P. MILHOUS: Anyhow, my father being a man that was quiet and easygoing and the death of the brother had upset him no end, and they were newly moved to this location. They didn't know anybody. And my Uncle Frank and Aunt Hannah came over and took charge of the burial problems, and Uncle Frank went in to see the boy's father that run over my brother, and posed as a lawyer, representing him to get the man to help pay the expenses.

ARENA: This was the boy's father.

P. MILHOUS: The boy's father--to PAY the expenses. The boy later got out on, I think they suspended his license for six months, or something like that, and I think the man did pay for the burial. But Uncle Frank posed as a lawyer and went in and did that little chore, and that was about the time that they lost Harold.

ARENA: Oliver, a little while ago in your cafeteria where the employees on your ranch here eat, you pointed out some coyote skins. Would you give the background on how Mrs. Hannah Nixon is connected with that story of the coyotes?

O. MILHOUS: Well, we used to hunt coyotes with greyhounds, Phil and I and the boys. My grandmother wanted some skins, and we sent these two skins to her. She tanned the skins and had them in her home for a good many years, until the end of her time, and then my Aunt Mattie sent them back to me and she thought I should have them. I also have a fox fur here, which I tried to get my wife to dig out, but she said it was so far down in mothballs that she didn't want to. It's what Grandmother [Almira Milhous] used to wear around her neck, a neck piece. She will dig them out, I guess, if we insist, but you can't put a fox fur on the tape, so there's not much use of that.

ARENA: To be sure about the story with the coyote skins, was that your grandmother or Mrs. Hannah Nixon who did the actual tanning of those skins, as far as you recollect?

O. MILHOUS: Well, I could be wrong, but I think that was Grandmother Milhous.

ARENA: That would be Almira.

O. MILHOUS: Almira Milhous, had the skins tanned and kept 'em in her home until the end of her time, and then when the aunts were getting things up, why they sent the skins back, with the fox fur that Grandmother used to wear around her neck.

ARENA: You were also showing me some pictures a moment ago. I'd like to go over some of the points you mentioned concerning these photographs. In one photograph there was a picture of Grandmother Almira, and her mother, Elizabeth [Griffith Milhous]. Would you give again the account of the event that took place, where that picture recorded the event. This was when you were visiting your family in Lindsay, was that the idea? Do you recall the occasion?

O. MILHOUS: My grandmother, Almira, and great-grandmother--I can't tell you on that now.

ARENA: I believe I was talking about that with your brother, Phillip.

O. MILHOUS: That part Phil will fill you in on.

ARENA: Return to older brother, Philip.

P. MILHOUS: That picture was taken when I was about four or five. I remember the house by the picture. The fact is, the house still stands.

ARENA: Do you think that was the house of Mrs. Jane Beeson, your Aunt Jane?

P. MILHOUS: Yes.

ARENA: Now, when I say think, I like you to think of it as positively as you can. Are you absolutely certain?

P. MILHOUS: Not certain, but the porch looks like it.

ARENA: The reason I'm interested in it is this: In a recent interview, another one of your cousins, Joseph Alden Beeson, recounted on an open porch, and that picture shows an open porch, when the President learned to play the piano and was living with your Aunt Jane. So that's why that particular picture would be of interest.

P. MILHOUS: Yes, the Beesons lived at that house at one time.

ARENA: On the farm; it was out in the country.

P. MILHOUS: It was out in the country, yes.

ARENA: Do you happen to know offhand if possibly someone in Whittier, maybe the [Oscar] Marshburns, might have a copy of the same picture?

P. MILHOUS: Yes, I think they do have.

ARENA: If not, would you mind my sending to you the one of the two brothers, to see if we could have a copy made, so that we can tie it in with the story of the President sleeping on the open porch?

P. Milhous: It was my father--See, my father and mother and us children and my great-grandmother and my grandmother. . . . Elizabeth Milhous would be my great-

grandmother, and I was approximately, as I say, about five then, four or five--no older.

ARENA: But you do recall the two grandmothers very well.

P. MILHOUS: Oh, yes. I recall them very, very well. In fact, I have a picture of Almira Milhous holding my daughter when she was a baby, within a couple of miles of this picture we're talking about, at a house there.

ARENA: Do you mind if I ask you how the elderly woman traveled; was it by train, from Whittier all the way up to Lindsay, by car?

P. MILHOUS: She traveled in the early days by buggy.

ARENA: Do you recall her making that trip by horse and buggy?

P. MILHOUS: I don't, but I remember faintly of my mother saying she brought Bob, my oldest brother, when he was six years old--so that would make me two--from Whittier to Lindsay by buggy. And I believe that Aunt Jane Beeson went with her. The two women made the trip. Now that can be verified in a book that I have at home from my grandmother. Oliver, you have one, too, I believe. Of her memoirs that Aunt Olive Marshburn put together of Grandmother Milhous. And I recall Mother talking about that trip, because my mother always swore, or had the idea that Bob's freckles came from Grandmother. My brother Robert had real curly hair and he was freckle-faced. But he wasn't freckle-faced until he was seven years old, so Mother said that Grandmother Milhous, on that trip in the buggy, gave Bob his freckles. That is where that came from. And I remember her telling that as early as I can remember anything.

ARENA: Speaking about your grandparents, another thing that we were discussing before the taping session which I would like to ask you to go back now and repeat, if you will, Phillip, is the matter of your grandfather's wig, and your personal experience with that.

P. MILHOUS: Well, Grandfather Milhous wore a big collar and a toupee at that time. It wasn't called a wig. And I didn't know that he wore it. And he was in the parlor, or that little book room there in the front . . .

ARENA: Do you recall about how old you were at the time?

P. MILHOUS: No more than five, maybe four, I think I was about this time. We were down there; I don't know how we got down there, even. But we were down there,



and I crawled up on his leg and was roughhousing with him a little bit, and I managed to get his hair. And I promptly got the wig off. He was kind of reserved about that, seems as though, even though he was a gruff old grandpa, because I got punished. I got sent up to what they called the blue room--in later years they called it, and I remember the room real well, because in later years we used to stay in it once in awhile when we went down visiting. And they kept me up there all day.

ARENA: Was the room just a bedroom?

P. MILHOUS: Yes, it was a bedroom of that large house. When the relatives came from out of town and stayed overnight, we each had a kind of a room that we bedded down in.

ARENA: This was for you a punishment.

P. MILHOUS: Yes. They kept me up there. I didn't get my dinner that day, anyhow, but Mother came up and gave me a sandwich. She knew I was hungry. And then I got my whippin' when I got home.

ARENA: Do you recall precisely--of course it would be hard, you weren't more than five--how it was that you grabbed the wig? Were you just stroking his hair?

P. MILHOUS: I was roughhousing with him, and I just don't remember. I got it in my hands, anyhow, and I was as surprised as he was that it came off. I know it shocked me that I could pull his hair off. And it shocked everybody else, too, at that time.

ARENA: There were others in the room at the time.

P. MILHOUS: They were close enough that I got took care of promptly. Of course, if I remember right, at that time there was half a dozen kids around there, but I sure got tore up about that for a while.

ARENA: Do you recall if your grandfather ever referred to that again?

P. MILHOUS: No. I don't remember him that well. Because he passed away when I was, oh, approximately twelve years old.

O. MILHOUS: Younger than that. He died in '18.

P. MILHOUS: Ten maybe--'18, see, so I had to be younger to even remember getting that hair off. I must have been no more than three years old. I was up on his knee

for some reason. I know I got punished awful, and Mother thought I was too young to get that. And I remember that as clear as day, and I couldn't have been much over three. But I remember when my sister was born, too, and I was only three then.

ARENA: Philip, is there anything else that I haven't mentioned here that you would like to bring up? Anything that I haven't asked you about that you think you'd like to put down for the record?

P. MILHOUS: No, I don't think so. Well, yes. We used to go down there and stay at Aunt Hannah's, and we'd visit the cousins when we were down there, and there's a little instance that maybe Dick wouldn't want put in, but we'd have a little party once in awhile when his folks were working in the store and they were younger, and . . .

BEGIN SIDE II TAPE II

P. MILHOUS: Well, us cousins would go down and visit the cousins, an hour or two at a time when we was in town. It happened on three or four occasions for me, and I know it happened on other cousins. Out under one of the lemon trees, or trees of a fruit-tree type, they had a few boxes strung around like a little room, and they'd have a party in there, and Dick and Donald were a little too old to be able to get into the store without being caught at it. And we had to get our drinks, our soft drinks out of the back of the wholesale room by the big meat room there, and so they sent brother Arthur in. He was younger, and well, we went in kind of pairs or groups; he was in the younger set. I was much older than he; of course, I was about two years older, I think. I was a lot older than he was then. But Arthur was the one. He'd go around behind this, well, it was a garage with a room at the top of it behind the house, and he'd sneak around the garage and the older boys would stand there at the garage, and he'd go under, I believe it was an avocado tree, or some type of deciduous tree there. He would pick up the bottles from down where the meat room was. There was a way of getting up there, and he'd get the bottles for us and we'd drink the soda pop bottles and we'd go out and have our party. And the cookies, no doubt, was obtained the same way, because we were under the tree, this particular tree. And by the way, that tank house, I called it a tank house, but it was a garage with a room above, like what we called a house, and I believe that was Dick's room when he was there, and I lived in it when I drove the delivery truck.

ARENA: Your sister, Mrs. Jane Barr, mentioned that when she visited she helped around, and one of her duties was to keep the President's room clean and dusted, and it was a room at the top.

P. MILHOUS: Right. Yes.

ARENA: That would be the same room.

P. MILHOUS: That would be the same room that I stayed in to do our duties around. See, when Jane was down there, I don't think she got any pay, or very much, but that was her little chore, of making beds and whatnot. Now that room was the one--I'm sure it was one of the boy's room--it was Dick's room.

ARENA: Do you recall anything like this: Your sister recalled that while she was helping around the store, she would find coins on window sills, different places around. Do you recall anything like that?

P. MILHOUS: I recall one time--I did the banking on one of my delivery trucks each day. I would take the money to the bank in Whittier. That was on one of my routes, or at least three times a week. And then I had clean-up chores, which everybody did. There was quite a combination there. So when they delivered the big meat racks they dumped the overhead cooling system, the ice from the cooling system, they dumped it out the back and the ice melted, and I had the job of cleaning up around the yard, keeping it raked up, all papers and litter. And so here this paper sack that was all wet and mangled in this bunch of ice. And I picked the paper sack up and there was three hundred dollars in it. And it was rolled up, three hundred dollars. And I took it in and gave it to Aunt Hannah, and she had hid it months before and forgot where she hid it. She had walked into the meat room and laid it in this ice tray. And I brought the three hundred dollars in there and handed it to her, and she had forgotten where she hid it. Of course, she remembered when I told her I got it out of the ice, out there, outside where they dumped this deal.

Of course, we all handled the money. There again, they were very close on the money, but a combination of everybody worked in there; nobody seemed to take any money. The fact is, I went down one time with Uncle Frank and tried to collect. Aunt Hannah had made a mistake and gave a man change for a hundred dollar bill and it was only a ten dollar bill. We didn't get the money. We knew the man, and everything. Aunt Hannah used to trade; say, if a farmer came in with eggs or vegetables, like green beans which were a premium, she would trade the green beans, poundwise, and she always gave the price to this customer who came in and bought his groceries, she always gave the price that she got for the green beans. Now, this is how: If she retailed the green beans at two cents a pound or three cents a pound, she gave him that price. Now, so she made her money--it seemed like the overall picture, to me, she didn't. . . . The man brought his eggs in, if the eggs was twenty cents a dozen, she gave the man valuation

in food, the twenty cents a dozen. That was always astonishing to me, as a young fellow. I would see, well, why give as much and make money on both ends, which they do nowadays, and in between, too. But I couldn't ever see Aunt Hannah do it. Well, this gentleman would bring in twenty pounds of green beans, or ten or five, she gave him the exact price that she got out of them, in trade or merchandise. And I think that she always figured that she probably made on the merchandise, and that was one way. By the way, I operated, I took that for my chain saw business in later years. I gave almost as much for the used chain saw in buying it as I got for selling it. And I had a fantastic turnover in machinery. I always figured if it cost me twelve dollars in labor tuning this piece of machinery up, I added that on to my trade-in price and sold it at that. That was one little policy that I had learned. It means bigger business. You'll have more people walking through the door. And by taking more people through the door, you get more chances to sell things. I learned that from Aunt Hannah.

ARENA: Phillip and Oliver, thank you very much. Then, Oliver, would you mind recounting this incident where you met the Nixon brothers, on one occasion?

O. MILHOUS: We were on our way to Arizona, moving to Arizona. We were crossing the desert, where gas stations weren't very close together then. We pulled into a gas station about the same time another car pulled in from the other direction. It was Dick, Donald and Harold. They had gone to Arizona where Harold was sick, and this was just before the end of his time. They pulled into the station the same time we did. And Mama says, "Well, there's the Nixon boys, and look at Harold, riding on the front of that car!" And he was either riding on the fender, I don't remember if it was the fender or the hood, or something, and apparently he was having a good time, riding on the front of that car. I guess Dick and Donald had gone over after Harold and picked him up. I was young enough that I can just barely remember it.

ARENA: Would you mind recalling something that I think was said off tape? I want to be sure that we have it on tape. It was rather interesting, about your father playing football. You know, the President played football, but never got his letter in college. How lucky was your father?

O. MILHOUS: I don't know what Papa come out with on playing football, but I can remember him telling us about playing football in college, and he always told us this: "Well, when we played football, when the line went down, they went right over the top of their backs. They never waited to have somebody buck the line for them, or anything. They ran right over the top of the other guy's back." Then, the last time I got to see Dick was down in Marysville [California].

ARENA: Would you continue with your father's experience in football.

O. MILHOUS: Well, that was about all I knew about Papa playing football.

ARENA: Was there something about his being hurt, though, in one of the games, and left him with some sort of limp, Oliver? Do you recall that?

O. MILHOUS: I don't remember that part. Phil was saying something about that he thought his leg was hurt.

P. MILHOUS: Yes.

ARENA: Do you recall this?

P. MILHOUS: No. I remember Mother saying that was what his leg was hurt from. Of course, in later years, he got his foot run over with a wagon, which helped it along, the same leg.

ARENA: How far did your father get through college? Are you sure it was the college and not the academy?

P. MILHOUS: I don't know.

ARENA: Because Whittier College, at first, was a preparatory school, called the academy.

P. MILHOUS: I think it was the preparatory; I really do.

ARENA: For one thing you're sure of, he did not graduate from Whittier College. Or, do you think that might have been possible?

P. MILHOUS: No. I'm sure he quit. I think that was one reason that he went up to the ranch in Lindsay. I think that was one reason for it. He decided to go out on his own. So, I'm sure that that's what it was.

ARENA: Thank you very much for this interview, gentlemen.