

Recorded Wednesday, November 9, 1998

Interviewer: Shannon Yust, a graduate student of the Elliott School of Communication at Wichita State University.

Yust: Today is Wednesday, November 9, 1998. The time is about 12:35. I am a graduate student of the Elliott School of Communications. My name is Shannon Yust. This afternoon I am interviewing Mrs. Mary Clark, a resident of Larksfield Place. Larksfield Place is retirement community in Wichita, Kansas. The interview is taking place in Mrs. Clark's apartment, E-230. This interview is being conducted as part of the *I, Witness to History* Program.

Yust: Mrs. Clark, why don't you begin by telling me about your childhood-- wherever you'd like to begin--the earliest memory on, if that's what you like.

Clark: I was born in 1911 in Tonganoxie, Kansas, and that is about 40 miles from Kansas City, and I was in many different schools, almost a different school every, every year I went to school, and no school teacher ever knew how to spell Tonganoxie (laughter). It being an Indian name, they weren't familiar with that. So, we only lived there a year. My father and grandfather had a and a in the town of Tonganoxie. When I was a year old they moved to northern Missouri--, and we always lived on . And of course they grew corn there, and my little brother was born. I had a sister born, just younger than I, in Tonganoxie, and then my brother was born in Oregon. And we lived there a year and a half, and we moved to Forrest City, Missouri, another town not far from Oregon. It was a hilly place, and I remember by that time I was about three years-old and saw my first car. And that was such a great thing because it was going up the hill very slowly, and we thought it was just a miracle to see something like that on the road. After we left Forrest City and the hills, my sister was just three weeks-old, and my father and the rest of the family had gone ahead and my mother had four small children. I was about four and maybe a little older, and the baby was three weeks old. So we took the train to Kansas City, and the Union Station there was new, and the ladies' waiting room was filled, and there was no place for my mother and four little kids to sit down. So finally they made a lady take her bird cage off a big round place they had built for women and children so my mother could sit down with the baby. So, we spent all night in the station in Kansas City, and that's where I learned to skip on one foot. It was a great night for me (laughter).

So, we took the train the next morning and started out for western Kansas. We stopped in Newton, and the station there was they were having trouble with the restroom, and the water was coming out into the street. And my mother with the luggage and the four kids, we had a little trouble getting those little children taken care of. So, we got the train and went onto Holcomb, Kansas, to a ranch. It was on the border. There was just a barbed-wire fence between the city of Holcomb and our ranch, which was a long, narrow ranch between the Arkansas River and the Santa Fe Railroad track. And just on the other side of the railroad track the land started going up a little more, we called it a plateau, toward Colorado. And, that's where the -- the people who lived there were the Russians, that we called them, that brought the sugar beets to Kansas. So they couldn't speak any English, and we couldn't speak any Russian. But we knew they were there, and they didn't go to school -- I started to school and in the first grade I was the only one that would talk to these -- it was little brother and sister, and they wore funny clothes, long black

skirts and strange clothes to us, but they could talk a little bit. And I was the only one that would talk to them, and I remember first time I tried to talk, the little girl said her mother, the day before, had gone to the fields to hoe sugar beets. They cut handles of hoes off to about two feet, and they were on their knees with long black skirts hoeing sugar beets, that long rows of sugar beets out on that plain. And she said, "my mama went at noon and cooked dinner and then we went back to the field and it wasn't long until she went home and didn't come back until four o'clock. And the reason she had been gone that long was that she had a baby and then came back to finish hoeing sugar beets."

So, anyway, I found that much out about the children. Well, to get to school, the children who lived farther out from school – I don't know how many miles they lived out, but we had a kid wagon. And they fixed a little bit – they had a top over it, and they had boards on each side of the wagon. And that was for the children, and they would go out on the ranch farther and pick them up. We lived adjoining the town, so in the summer time, in warm weather we always walked back and forth to school except in the winter we would take the wheels off the wagons, put sleigh-runners on there, and we would be taken to school by a team of horses and the wagon beds. And we'd go right over the fences because it seemed like we would always have deep snows, and the tumbleweeds would catch against the fence, and snow drifts would come over the fences, and we'd go right over the fences to school. So that was the way that we got to school when the snow was deep. But these children-- I don't know how far they would go out in the country with the kid wagon--and they had to get up, they would tell us they would get up at four o'clock in the morning and milk the cows, and then they would walk to where the kid wagon picked them up. I don't know how far that was. Then, they would be brought to school, and in the evening, they would be taken home, and when they got off the kid wagon the road, they would walk home, and it would be lots of times nine o'clock by the time they got to their home. That's the way they went to school. And I'd often wondered whatever happened to those people. Anyway, we didn't live there long – we lived there four years. I was in the fourth grade when we left. While we were there, our parents had to winter the longhorn steers from Texas, so the cowboys would drive the cattle up from Texas, those long horned, wild cattle, and we would feed them. And, going out in the winter time, we'd feed them alfalfa pellets, and then they would eat the straw from the hay stacks, and we had big stacks, and that was their food. Well, it was fun going out in the winter time to see the cattle feed because they would drive the wagons out, throw the pellets on the ground, and the cows would come and start eating the pellets. And then, would come the jack rabbits, and they like to eat the pellets too, and they were hungry. So, they and the cows would start eating the pellets. Then, the coyotes would come. That's when the excitement started. And the cowboys always had their guns there. And so the cattle and the jack rabbits and the coyotes were all having their dinner, and it was quite exciting. So, when the cattle would be fattened on the food over the winter, they would drive them to Garden City, Kansas, eight miles away and put them on railroad cars and ship them to Kansas City to be butchered and sent to the packing house.

Well, we lived there four years, and one year the grasshoppers came and ate everything. We planted kaffir corn – I think they call it maize now – and, a little corn, not much, and we had alfalfa. And, that was about all the crops we had; we never grew wheat. I knew there was one other disaster that caused us to leave. They had the grasshoppers that one year killed everything, and then they skipped a year, and then we had the army worms. And, they came in, and they ate

everything, the leaves off the trees and everything. They were so thick, they crawled all over the house; you couldn't keep them out of the house. And, they even stopped the train on the tracks. It was so slick with those worms that the train wouldn't move. So we had irrigation ditches that we irrigated the crops that we did had. Of course, the streams were all filled with the worms, and my father and grandfather decided that was enough of coping with the weather in western Kansas.

So we moved again to Arkansas. And we lived several different places. I was in a different school almost every year because in Arkansas we moved two or three different places and out of the county. So that meant another school. Sometimes it would be two schools in one year because in the summer they would, when the crops laid by, the cotton was chopped and waited until fall until it was ready to be picked, why then they would have two months of summer school. And there was a couple of times that we moved during that time, so we were in another school. And it never bothered me. When they said move, I immediately just left all my friends mentally, and I was ready to meet new friends. So, I never had any trouble in leaving one school and going to another. And somehow or another, I always thought, well, you're born with your relatives, and the good friends you make at each school you keep in touch with, and then when you leave, you get rid of dead wood. So, the people you didn't particularly care for – you didn't miss anything anyway.

So, we lived in a hill country in Arkansas near Paragould. It was in the country, and it was a horrible little country school. In fact, the schools were all terrible. Anyway, we grew mostly just corn and alfalfa, and that about the same year.

So then we moved to Cardwell, Missouri, and my father had a little saw mill, and we lived in the swamps. And that was fun because he had this small saw mill, and we lived on the farm, of course. We had cotton there, and we hoed lots of cotton, and then when the cotton was laid by, we ran the saw mill. So I was about, I guess, ten years-old then, so I worked on the carriage on the saw mill. My father and I ran the mill. And, I was the one that would set whether the board was going to be an inch or two inches, and it then it would saw it off, and we'd move back and set it again. And that's the way we got rid of the logs. That was the area where there was that great earthquake about 1800 that passed through, and many a cypress forests--huge cypress trees--were all knocked down in that earthquake, and much of our lumber came from thise. Where we lived in the swamps there were big cypress trees growing there, but we didn't saw them down. Mostly in the dry weather when the water would go down, we would dig these cypress trees out of the mud and that it where we got our timber to saw. Cypress never rots, so that's where we got our wood.

That was a fun time because we children – my mother used to say "you're like top seed – you just grow"--and we were free to do anything we wanted. We played in the swamps; lots of times we'd be gone in the morning. And we had a little team of mules that would run away with us every day, and they were hard to manage, but we always were with them, and they were with us. And we'd go out in the swamps, and maybe be gone all day long. We would live on whatever was available then--blackberries or dewberries or wild plums--and if we'd get somewhere or near a neighbor's field, we always took a little pan along and we'd get roasting ears and build a little fire and have roasting ears. Or, we'd catch crawdads in the streams, and we'd cook our crawdads. They're something like shrimp (laughter).

Yust: They're not quite the delicatessen.

Clark: No, that's right. (Laughter) So we lived very well in the swamps, and we knew how to protect ourselves. We had two big collie dogs and they were wonderful. And we'd be picking blackberries, and we'd go into the blackberry bushes, and we knew all the dogs' barks. If there was a snake in there, we knew the bark. And if it was a turtle, we knew it was a turtle, so we didn't rush in after every bark. And then there were times that the dogs would do some barking, and they would come running back to us with their tails kind of between their legs and we would know there was a bobcat nearby. And then again, about the same thing would happen, and they'd come running back, and with a different bark, we'd know they were near a moonshiner's place for some of the native men were making moonshine. And they always kept a gun around, so we never went close to them; we stayed very clear of them because they may be our neighbors, but if we got too close, why we might tell where they were making whiskey. And we stayed out of the way, so we never did get to tangle with the moon shiners.

Anyway, we left the saw mill and left the swamps and moved to Paragould, Arkansas. And we had a small farm near there, and it was close to school. And that's where I started to high school. And we lived there, and it was within walking distance. And it was a small farm, and we had a great big spring where we got all of our water. And there was a woods there that – I've forgotten how many acres, but it was a nice woods and lots of trees. Well, in the fall when the persimmons were ripe, all of the kids from high school or in the school grades there – our neighbor boy had a good dog – and when the persimmons were ripe, then all the kids would come from town, and we'd go possum hunting. We were never allowed to kill the possum, but we would shake them out of the tree when the dog would tree them. And our parents told us we could cut the tip of the ear off and slit the other one, and we'd know if we'd catch it the next year (laughter). So, that was a fun place to live. We a nice little stream that had a good swimming hole, and a big tree with a grapevine. And it was lots of fun for all of us. All the town kids would come out, and we would swing out over the creek and drop in the swimming hole, so we had lots of fun--our own swimming pool right there with us. So, we moved into town at Paragould, and my father in the summer time--he a job there in town at Paragould. I don't remember now what he did there, but then his folks at moved to St. Louis, so he would go to St. Louis and work in the winter time. So, he wanted us to finish school there in Paragould, and then move to St. Louis. The last year I was in high school, our high school burned. So, then we moved My folks to St. Louis and my sister and I went to St. Joe, Missouri, where I went to business school. And I did house work and worked my way through business school, and my sister had some other jobs. I don't remember what they were.

Anyway, when I finished business school, then I went to St. Louis where my folks were living. And my father was working a packing house there, and the whole family was there together again. And we worked – it was during the depression. I got out of business school in '29, and of course, the crash had come, and everybody was out of work, and it was pretty bad. But, we had jobs in St. Louis; my father had a job, and even though sometimes our jobs wouldn't last long, we always seemed to get a job in factories or something. St. Louis had a lot of manufacturing places. My first job there was working in one of the largest hat manufacturing plants in the country. It was a six story building, and I loved that work.

So, there was another girl my age, and a colored man and then our boss that worked together on the top floor, and we were the ones that brought all the materials in to make the hats to the top floor. Just the three of us were there, and the boss was gone a lot of the times, so the trucks would bring all the ribbons and the straw they made the hats out of, and it was mostly imported stuff--beautiful materials they used in hats then, and we loved it. Well, the colored man that worked with us, he was Muslim. And he would tell us about his religion, and I think he had a little voodoo mixed in with Muslim (laughter). So, us two nineteen year-old girls, we would play tricks on him. We knew that with the voodoo part of his religion that if you made a circle around him--if he was standing still and you made a circle around his feet--that he couldn't move until that circle was broken. Now what that had to do with his religion or whatever it was, I don't know. But the boss would come up, and he'd say, "Oh, here comes the boss." Or, we would see the boss, and he'd say, "Come on, kids, break that circle" because he wouldn't move. He wouldn't move at all. And then just at the last minute, one or the other of us would run our finger through the chalk bar and break the circle, and then he was free to go. And another thing we did to Arthur was we would get a string or a ribbon or something and measure his feet. And one or the other of us would innocently say, "here's a measure of Arthur's feet. Tell that truck driver to drop it in the Mississippi River as they go across the bridge." And he would beg us to please not give that ribbon to that driver because he didn't want to drown in that river. (Laughter) So, that was mixture of Arthur's religions. We had a lot of fun there, and we were good to Arthur because when the boss was gone, and we weren't too busy, why we would watch for the boss and protect Arthur. He'd go back in one of the bends and go to sleep. So, we guarded his nap-time, and (laughter) were good for doing all the tricks we played on him. So, anyway I don't remember -- oh, yes, the hat business began getting less and less, and they had many different companies in that big building. And the mostly Jewish merchants, and they would have different names to the different companies. And the people from Arkansas, we always sent them, after they had looked at higher price hat, why we would send them to a different name of a store downstairs or another floor, and the people from Arkansas, we would always send them to the cheapest place because that was cheapest materials and everything, and we knew we could sell those old cheap hats to them. So, it was quite a merchandizing setup they had there. So now in St. Louis I don't think there is a hat manufacturer as far as I know there anymore.

So then I worked in several different shoe factories. And at one of them we got nine dollars a week and we were happy with that. Well, then they began unionizing all of the stores there, all of the businesses they could, so they came into our place, and we had no choice. They just came and said "We are going to unionize you." And they told the boss, "If you don't, we'll blow up your place." So we had to start paying union dues. And so they told us to have a meeting, and they were having the meeting for us to come to, so I went and sat on the front row. And they were telling how they were going to give us lots of money. And I said, "What if we are not getting orders? Now, they let us work here sometimes no more than two hours a day and pay us full time, and we are satisfied with the wages we are getting. How are you going to raise our wages when the company is not making any more than that?" I was fired the next day. So, that's the way the unions started in St. Louis, and I think now there is one shoe factory there, and it used to be filled with shoe factories.

So, I went to another shoe factory and got a job there. And right across the street, they were was a big garment factory--they were making uniforms there--six stories tall. So, we would get there

early when they were starting to unionize the garment district and we'd watch the garment workers come in. And after the guns from New York got there to start unionizing, the unionizers would pile bricks on every corner around that place-- cold winter weather and dirty snow--and there'd be a policeman standing there with the union people. And as the streetcars would come and let people off the streetcars, we would all watch, and as they would get off, they would throw bricks at the workers. And they would have to run to get inside to keep from being hit by the bricks of the unionizers. And one woman got off there one day, and they hit her in head with a brick, and she fell on the ground. They tore her clothes off of her, and we watched her laying there on that dirty snow bank on that old cold icy sidewalk, and people just walked around her. Finally another streetcar came, and the workers got off and took her inside. Policemen never said a thing, and that's the way the garment industry was organized in St. Louis.

So, a lot of the companies began going broke, or they would call strikes, and they would not be getting orders, and they would have to lay off their people. You know, they'd take bankruptcy. And Sears was a place that was -- I trouble going to Sears yet -- they would give a small company an order for garments or hats or shoes, and they would give them a nice big order, and the people would have to borrow money to buy the materials to build these. Sears was very strict; it had to be exactly the right color, and they were always very particular. So when the order was finished, they would tell them the order finished and expect them to ship the order to them. Well, then their examiner would come, and they always found something wrong. It wasn't made right. It was the wrong color, and they'd gone to extra trouble, getting the best things for Sears. Sears would always turn them down, and then they'd say, well, we'll pay you 10 cents on the dollar. And they would lose their business. So that's the way Sears became larger, and the smaller businesses are no longer there. So when I hear people talking about the unions, I saw it; I was there. And I lost jobs, so I have an idea of what I think of the unions.

So, anyway, then I was still working in the shoe factory when my husband came to town. He was a guest and had been transferred from Kansas City to St. Louis, and he was working for a milling company. And so, some of his friends he worked with invited him. New Year's Eve was on Sunday, and we belonged to a little Presbyterian Church. So they brought him to Christian Endeavor, and after Christian Endeavor, why we all had parties to go to, it being New Year's Eve. So, my date and my sister and her date, we had a party at another place, so the people that invited my husband they said, "Oh, come to our house after your party is over." So, we did. Well, when I was introduced to my husband, he was six, six, big broad shoulders, dark hair, dark eyes, and I looked at him, and he shook hands with me, and I looked at him, and I thought, "You're the one I'm going to marry." I didn't think he was good-looking, but I looked at him, and he just looked good inside. I knew he was a good person. So right then, he didn't know what my thoughts were, so we ended up at the party where he was going that night.

Yust: Did you ever tell him that?

Clark: No. (Laughter). Never did.

Yust: And what was his name?

Clark: Russell Clark from Enterprise, Kansas.

Yust: So you went to the party...

Clark: ...I went to the party, and even though I was with another date-- he was just a casual boy in our crowd from Christian Endeavors, so he was not a real serious date at all--and he (her husband) wanted to bring me home. Well, I was with someone else, and his hostess--her young sister had gotten a divorce--well in those days a divorce was just terrible, and you know our little Presbyterian Church didn't believe in that at all, and she'd fixed him up a date with this divorced girl. Well, even though he was from Enterprise and from Kansas City, he still felt the same way. We just didn't have divorces in those days. So he was rather embarrassed to be fixed up with a girl that had been divorced, so he asked if he could take me home that night, and I said no because I was with this other boy. So, anyway, he kept coming to church. Our Christian Endeavor had a big party on George Washington's birthday, and I was in charge of the social things for the group. We had 80 in our Christian Endeavor, and our little church only had 360 members, but there were 80 teenagers, so we had a good group. And so I wanted to sell him a ticket to come to our George Washington party.

He said, "I will buy a ticket if I can bring you."

I said, "Well you'll have to come early because I am in charge of it, and I have things to do before the party."

So he came after me. Well, we had a real nice time, and he helped with the party. So, when he brought me home that night, he asked if he could see me the next night, and I said no. I had a date. Well, I was dated up every night for two solid weeks. And my date came the next night, and he (her husband) showed up, too. He was living in a rooming house and he'd eat his meal and come to our house after that. And when my date would come, why, we would leave, and he would stay there and be there when we came home. And he would leave when my date did (laughter).

Yust: Your parents didn't think that was strange?

Clark: They didn't think anything was strange that we did. (Laughter) They just had a house full of kids, and we were all into something. Anyway, for two weeks he was there every single night. Met all the boys that I was going with. Mostly it was boys that were not serious, but they all liked to dance. And I always said I'd never marry a man that didn't dance at least five nights a week. (Laughter), so I was getting all my dance dates settled. So, when the two weeks was up, I thought, well, I didn't have another date ahead after that. And, I thought there is no use making a date when he'd going to be sitting there every night. And a time or two, while he was waiting for me, he'd take one of my sisters to a ball game or a show and be there to meet my date and tell my date goodbye, and he'd leave, too. And, so I never made another date. That was the last date that I ever made with anyone. But he was still there every night, and he loved coming to our house, and my mother would be getting dinner. Well, of course, he'd already eaten and he loved to sit in the kitchen. My little sister was only two-and-a-half when I first started going with him, and he loved all these kids. He'd sit there in the kitchen with his legs stretched out, and my mother, after several months we had gone together, she said, "I wish you'd marry him. I'm so tired of jumping over his legs trying to get dinner ready." And the kids would run through the

place, and he just loved all that noise and racket and all the commotion going around our house, so he was transferred back to Kansas City. And we were getting pretty friendly then and really liking each other. Well, he was a basketball star in high school, and then he refereed. And in high school he refereed for Dr. Brinkley, the gland man, and he would get paid for that. Well, his other refereeing of the little high schools around he didn't get paid. That was when he was still living at Enterprise in high school. So, Dr. Brinkley would pay him \$50 a night to referee a basketball game, and that was big money. So, he got transferred back to Kansas City. Well, we were talking marriage then, but he was only making \$70 a month, and we just could not figure out on getting married on \$70 a month. So for about a year and half, he worked in Kansas City and got a raise to \$80 a month, and then we set a wedding date.

Yust: So you lived in St. Louis during that time without him?

Clark: Uh-huh. Without him, yeah.

Yust: Did you converse?

Clark: Oh, yes. He had a deal with his secretary out where he worked, and they had, well, I don't know, some hook up that they could type off a message to the office in Kansas City. So I would go out there, and I would type off a letter to him free on the office equipment. And that's the way he proposed to me on that (laughter).

Yust: Did you write back?

Clark: Oh, sure, Yeah (laughter).

Yust: What did he say in his message?

Clark: (Laughter) "I've been raised to \$80 a month; you set the date." (Laughter) So anyway, we set the date, and the thirteenth of June, 1936, we were married. I made my wedding dress and he had managed to save enough money that he could rent a \$30 a month apartment and pay train fare from St. Louis after the wedding for both of us. We had a church wedding and all of our friends were there, and then they all came to our house afterwards for the cake and the regular thing, and at midnight we took the train from St. Louis to Kansas City, and all of our friends followed us. It was big night. So, we got to Kansas City on the train in the chair, and then we hadn't been on the train very long, and he said, "How much money do you have?"

I said, "I have two dollars and forty-three cents. How much do you have?" He had two dollars and sixty some cents; he was a little wealthier than I was (laughter). So, we got to Kansas City and went up to the Harvey House. I had a cup of tea and a donut, and he had a glass of milk and a donut. That was our wedding breakfast. So, we went out to our apartment, and I was so thrilled with it. It was actually one big room, and it had a little tiny kitchen with a little dinette corner and a bath. And then we had a fairly good-sized closet, and you opened the closet doors, and you rolled out your bed, and it had a little mattress about three inches thick. And, he weighted two hundred seventy-eight pounds at that time. So anyway, the bed unfolded and we would fold it up every morning with the mattress in it. And we lived there seven months and on eight dollars a

month. He had to pay a dollar-and-a-quarter streetcar fare a week because he didn't have a car. I had five dollars a week for groceries and all the incidentals, the soap and the other things you had to have for daily living. So for the first meal I cooked, I got some spaghetti. And I think I had tomatoes with it or something, and I had a whole can of tuna. Anyway, one or two little things like that. Well, I was used to cooking for eleven people, so the first meal I cooked spaghetti for eleven people. We couldn't afford to throw it away, so we ate that spaghetti until it was all gone. (Laughter) We'd add a little bit of this and a little bit of that, but we were lucky. His boss, the man that owned the big milling company--at one time it was the fourth largest milling company in the United States--he and his wife were next door neighbors. He'd (husband's boss) been born and reared at Enterprise, Kansas, and they had been next door neighbors to my husband's mother and father. And my husband's father was a dentist there in Enterprise. So, they were all great Bridge players. My husband's father was a cripple. He was a dentist, but he practiced dentistry on crutches for sixteen years, and the only thing he could do was play Bridge. And, they were all very smart people--his mother was a school teacher--and that's all the recreation they had. So, they were good Bridge players. Well, growing up my husband was living with that all the time, so when somebody was a dummy or had to get up from the table a little bit, they'd say, "You take my hand and play it." Well, he did that from the time he was eight years-old, playing bridge with people like that. So, when his boss in Kansas City who was living in the most expensive, luxurious apartment in Kansas City, right on the Plaza, had flour buyers from New York come, they all seemed to like to play Bridge. So, they would invite us to their luxurious apartment for my husband to play Bridge, and his wife and I would just sit and visit while they played. So, that was nice and then when they would go to Enterprise where they lived in this big house in town because it was cool, and we didn't have air-conditioning then. And our little apartment didn't have a fan, so they'd say you kids come in live in our apartment.

Yust: Which was air-conditioned?

Clark: No, well, they had fans where we didn't even have a fan. They had plenty of fans, but their home in Enterprise was much more comfortable than the apartment. And they had two Road Master Buick cars. Well, they'd only need one car to go to Enterprise. We didn't have a car, so they'd say, "You kids can have our car and you can come and stay in our apartment while we're in Enterprise. Just help yourself to everything." And they had tickets to all the affairs, the symphony and all the shows and everything. Well, they were too old at that time. They were getting up near their late seventies, and they didn't want to go to those things. So we got the tickets. Well, the seats were right behind Pendergast and the mayor of Kansas City, (laughter). So, on an eighty dollar a month salary and the lowest one on the totem pole--he was just working in the bookkeeping department you know--well here were all the officers of the company, and there was a mite bit of jealousy there. (Laughter) So his boss got sick, and they thought we was going to die, and we'd been married seven months. So, the first thing they did when they thought Uncle Ralph was going to die--that was the boss because we called them aunt and uncle--they fired my husband. They were just worried because we got so much attention. Well, my husband was like a child to them. They didn't have any children, and when he was growing up, his father being crippled, why Russ and his sisters would go to school affairs at night, and they would say, "Now don't wake your father up. You just come to our house when you're party is over. You come to our house and just go to bed." So my husband had been reared that way. When they

were out late, they just went to Aunt Maple's and Uncle Ralph's and went to bed and got up the next morning and went to school. So, they had two homes there. Well, for that to be your boss, it makes for a little a jealousy in the company when they didn't even get invited to dinner. So, it made – it helped our grocery bill a lot, and we got to do a lot of things by having all their tickets and getting to go to the shows and things like that. So, there he was – one salary check of \$80, and we didn't have penny in the bank of course. So, he was without a job. And, one of our friends worked for a magazine.

Yust: I have one question though. If Ralph was the boss, why did he let them fire him?

Clark: Well, he was in the hospital, and they thought he was going to die. So they fired him without him even knowing Russ was fired.

Yust: And his wife didn't even know?

Clark: No, they had go to... I don't know whether he was in Kansas City or Enterprise when he got sick because we left, and we didn't even get to see them, so he must have been at home in Enterprise. So, he was without a job, and one of the salesmen--we didn't have train fare--this friend worked for this trade magazine. It was a flour magazine, so there was an ad in this magazine that a man in Texas, W. Lee O'Daniel, in Texas was selling flour over the radio at Piedras Negras, Mexico. That was right across the river the Rio Grande from Eagle Pass Texas. So, my husband's friend wrote these people and said he knew somebody that would be excellent for that job. He had his business in Fort Worth, and he was buying his flour there from the mills there and then would have it sacked with his name on it: "Hillbilly Flour, W. Lee O'Daniel." And so he went to Eagle Pass, moved to Eagle Pass, and then this radio station was just across the river in Mexico. And he put on five programs a day on the radio. Well, it was illegal to put the radio up and turn on the power so it would go where it wasn't supposed to, but at midnight the Mexicans would turn the power up, and after my husband was working there, they'd get mail from Australia and the Pacific – all the western parts. So anyway, we answered the ad, and our friends recommended my husband, so they wrote right back, and he told him what a terrific bookkeeper he was and how smart he was, so he had a good recommendation. So W. Lee said, well, bring him down or send him down. Well, we didn't have train fare there, but one of the men that worked in the milling company where my husband worked was a much older fellow, and he just had a forth grade education, and all these other men in the company were all college graduates, and they were smart with their brains and education, and they looked down on Charlie. Well, poor old dumb Charlie was a terrific flour salesman. He was selling flour; he was from Caldwell, Kansas. And, they always wondered about what Charlie did with his money because he was buying that old dust bowl land that was being blown away down there in Kansas. And he was just too dumb, and so they made fun of him. Well, my husband had known Charlie all his life because Charlie had worked in Enterprise, and by my husband working and being around the company 'cause from the time he was a little kid he always wanted to be president of that milling company because he lived next door to Uncle Ralph, he just thought when he was grown he wanted to be president of that company. So, he had borrowed some money to go to school--four hundred dollars from Uncle Ralph to go to Kansas State. And he went almost up to graduation time, and he had one more thesis to write, and he said he was ready to go to work, that they wouldn't read those things anyway, and he had to make some money. So, he just quit

college and went to work for the mill, naturally. And so he had a tough time with the salary he was making – he hadn't started paying the money back. So, when it came time to go to Texas--well, before that, we hadn't been married very long until I said, "You owe Uncle Ralph that money, and every two weeks, we're going to pay five dollars on the four hundred dollars you owe." Well, he was embarrassed to take five dollars up and pay his boss off at five dollars every two weeks, and I said I'll do it (laughter). So, the next time we were invited there, we went up, and I said, "Uncle Ralph, Russ owes you this four hundred dollars for school," and of course, I know he didn't forget it. I don't know – he'd never asked him for it, and it was never mentioned. And I said, "I think we should start paying that back, so we are going to pay you back every two weeks \$five dollars." So, we started paying that back, and he thought that was really funny. So, he goes to the office, and that little old dumb girl from St. Louis that didn't even finish high school came up and said we're going to pay that money back. So, it got all over the company, and it was a gossip company, and they all knew it. And, they got a big kick out of it.

Yust: ... and your husband was all embarrassed (laughter).

Clark: Yeah, he was embarrassed, but I was determined, so they all knew that. Well, this Charlie, old dumb Charlie, he was taking that all in, so when it came time for us to go to Texas, and we didn't have money enough to go down there to take over the job, and no money at all. So, Russ said, "I wonder if I could ask Charlie to borrow some money." Charlie said, "I've never loaned anybody a penny except two old-maid school teachers at Caldwell, but I'm going to let you borrow this." It was only fifty dollars, that's all our train fare was down there then. "I'm going to let you have that money, but one thing about it, Mary has to sign for it." He said, "If she signs it, I know we'll get it back." Well, that was a big joke in the company, you know, that Charlie would lend anyone money because they were always saying, "I wonder how much money he has?" And he never told anyone.

Well, we went to Texas, and it as cold. It was the first of the year in 1937, and we got on the train in Kansas City, and we changed trains at Denison, Texas, and it was getting a little warmer. And we went to San Antonio, and the man there said we had to take a cab from one station to another station, and he said, "Oh, if it wasn't so cold, I'd like to take you by my house and show you my roses." Well, anyway, we didn't get to see the roses, and he took us to the other train, and we got on a much less train. It was a pretty rickety old train from that station, and we stopped about four o'clock in the morning, and here was a train full of vegetables. We were down there I guess in Texas or somewhere, about four, and so we got off of that train and had to get on another one, and it was really a--they had one car on the back, and the car looked like the one of the old cars we used to have on the --for the old cars that ran on tracks in the towns. And, there was a Mexican woman and her little boy sitting there on this train about four in the morning, and it was desolate--far as you could see in the great big Texas sky, and there was a little old place out the side of the road, and there was that other train in worse condition--a great long one full of vegetables and things, and so we said, "How long will it be until this train will leave? "

He said, "That's alright folks. Go on in and have your cup of coffee and some eggs. I'll call ya' when we're ready." And he said, "Take your time." So we went in there, and there were a couple boys sitting there drinking coffee, and we had breakfast--a good breakfast --just that little old

dumpy place. We went and got back on the train, and he said, "You folks have a good breakfast?" Yep. Got on the train, and we left. He'd sat there and waited all that time for us (laughter). So, that was about four in the morning, so we got into Eagle Pass about eight o'clock that morning.

Eagle Pass was seventy-five percent Mexican, and they hadn't done any building all during the Depression. This was in 1937. So, there was no place to live. Well, they had a two-story hotel, so we checked into the hotel. And, we called O'Daniel's and went to see who he was going to work for. So, we lived at the hotel, oh, we lived there several months. And, the people that were at the hotel were people that were on the radio station, most of them. And they were more or less living there because they couldn't find a place to live either. And the border patrol lived there. I don't know where their homes were, but they were at the hotel all the time, and they were the ones that always going up and down the Rio Grande River, and it was just like news today: There were wetbacks, and they were always telling how many wetbacks they'd caught, what they were smuggling. And I don't know, I don't remember what they were smuggling then, I guess some kind of liquor because it was dry, the country was dry then. So, there was all this excitement going on the river then, and we had that big international bridge across from Eagle Pass to Piedras Negras. At that time, Piedras Negras was one of the biggest towns on the border. Anyway, everybody ate in the dining room, and we all kind of knew what was going on with everybody. And there was a fortune-teller that had five programs a day on the radio, and he and his mother, and his girlfriend lived there. And then there was another couple that was on the radio and they played and gave accordion lessons, and the man would say, "Learn how to play this accordion; you send in a dollar, and you get a book to learn how to play the accordion." And the fortune-teller, you send her your birthday and your address and she would tell you what the baby was going to be--a boy or a girl--or where you should drill on your farm for an oil well because they were drilling lots of oil wells then. And the fortune-teller would send them a little slip of paper and tell them what was going to happen. And of course, he never read the letters that they sent because he hired twelve girls, and they had kind of pigeon hole boxes for every date. When the people would give the date of their birth, they'd just pull out a slip, put it in the mail, and send it to them. And those people would pay a dollar for that, and a lot of times they'd strike oil and send in a good, big, lump sum of money (laughter).

Yust: A dollar was still a lot of money back then.

Clark: Yeah. Well, that was a good, good business, and both of these people that were on the radio. Oh, there were several others like W. Lee O'Daniel's band. He had really a good band and I still hear their recordings yet being played over the radio. And, a lot of them, he composed the music himself, like the *The Yellow Rose In Texas*. That was his composition. And, his band was good, and there were seventeen of them. Well, they had managed to live other places. I don't know where they lived, but anyway, every night they were all over there and on the radio. And, W. Lee was the only one that had a regular contract with the Mexican radio station. The rest of them just asked a dollar for whatever they were selling, and then they split it with the Mexicans. And you weren't allowed to hitchhike down there in those days because it was forty miles from Eagle Pass to the first...

Yust: ... town?

Clark: Not even a town. Just a little a... kind of like a place like we stopped there for coffee that night. And, everything else was just so scrub brush and flat country. Well, there were a lot of mountain lions in there, and it was too dangerous to hitchhike. But some of them slipped in, and they did hitchhike, and they didn't even have a car. So, anyway, the fortune-teller told us the first nine months-- he did have an old rickety car, and he and his mother and his girlfriend got to Eagle Pass, and he was the one that told the fortunes for a dollar --and he told us in nine months time he had cleared ninety thousand dollars and there would two trains come into Eagle Pass. One about noon, and then one later on in the afternoon. And they would put that mail in a truck and take it across to the Mexicans to Piedras Negras, and upstairs--they had a place up there--and the Mexican people that had the station, and W. Lee's people would separate the money.

Yust: Your share, my share.

Clark: Your share, my share. They'd take one dollar, and the other one would take the next one, and it wouldn't...

Yust: How did they'd keep people from stealing the mail?

Clark: I don't know. I never did hear, I never heard of any of it being stolen. I never heard of it, and it was just a plain, old mail sack. This truck bed would be full twice a day. And, those people, everyone that we talked to, they would come in there. A few of them had hitchhiked in, and the others had come in on old cars that were just barely running. The first thing they would do would be buy a white Cadillac. And if their wives or their girlfriends, mostly the doctor or the fortune-teller's girlfriends, they usually got a mink coat. And, of course, it was warm down there (laughter), but they got a white Cadillac and mink coat, but all of them, whether they hitchhiked in or came in on an old car that was just barely moving, when they got the big money, then that was the first big purchase they made.

So, anyway, we finally got a little one bedroom house, a small kitchen, and it was a nice little place right at the end of the international bridge. Of course, we didn't have car, so every evening, we would walk across the bridge, and at the other end of the bridge there was a beautiful club. The Mexicans had really built a beautiful building there and they had a different show every night --beautiful show, beautiful dances, good programs, lovely musical. It was really first class, and the food was wonderful. And, we'd get a five course dinner for 32 cents American. So, I never cooked there. Why cook? I couldn't even buy a pound of bacon for that price across the river. So, then we would eat dinner, and then we'd walk over-- the station wasn't very far --and we'd walk over to this great big old railroad station that they were using for a broadcasting station. And, they had the walls all lined with moving pads--those big pads they moved around the walls for acoustics. And the windows were narrow and they were low to the floor, and all during the program, W. Lee O'Daniel's seventeen- piece band would be playing, and the cowboys, they all wore cowboy boots, and the Mexicans would be coming through the windows. They never went around to a door, the Mexicans and all their kids, and sometimes they'd bring their goats and their dogs. And, they'd all be in there listening to the radio program that was being put on. And the shoe shine boys would come, and all the time that these band boys were playing, why they'd be getting their shoes shined and playing away. So, that was an entertainment every night. We went over there every night we lived there.

So, anyway, W. Lee O'Daniel lost his contract, and they wouldn't renew it because they wanted somebody that wanted (listeners) to send a dollar and have a little songbook or something to sell cause they didn't want a regular contract because they didn't make any money.

Yust: How did the fortune-teller and the other people get contracts?

Clark: Oh, you'd write in and send them a dollar, and they'd tell you your fortune.

Yust: And, the reason they got contracts was because the Mexican were making money too.

Clark: Oh, no one had a contract but W. Lee O'Daniel. All the rest of them, it was just a dollar. They'd tell your fortune for a dollar and sent a cowboy songbook for a dollar or send you a little book that printed how out you could learn to play an accordion and all kinds of junk things, you know.

So when W. Lee O'Daniel couldn't get his contracted renew, why then he went back to Fort Worth, and he had his office in his home. He kept his home there. He had a two story home there in Fort Worth, so we rented a nice apartment there, and we lived there about a year. We had our first anniversary there when we were living in this apartment with this couple. They were wonderful to us. So, W. Lee had been in business for three years at Eagle Pass, and his wife was going to be the bookkeeper, and she didn't know a thing about it. And he was getting lots of orders. He was making all kinds of money by selling flour over the radio. So she just had it piled up. She just had it in folders, and it piled clear to the ceiling. They were living there at Eagle Pass, and they had six rooms they had rented from a lady that had a store down below. And they lived in six rooms, and we rented a room after we left the hotel, we rented a room from this lady, just a bedroom, and shared the kitchen and the bath with her. She was a little hunchback Jewish lady. So we lived there until we found this little house at the end of the road. So, anyway, he worked there with W. Lee O'Daniel about a year in Fort Worth, and one day this man came in, and it was the mayor. Spent all afternoon. So when he left W. Lee's office, why W. Lee came out, and he said, "Do you know who that was?"

And Russ said, "Yeah, Mayor."

And, he said, "Well, he wants me to run for governor," and he said, "What do you think about it?"

And Russ said, "Well, I think you'll win and I'm turning in my resignation right now."

He said, "Oh, no. You can't do that. I planned on you, if I ran for you to run my business."

My husband said, "Nope. I don't want to get involved in Texas politics, and I'm turning in my resignation right now." So, we left Texas and went back to Kansas City.

So, my husband worked there for awhile. His uncle had two coal businesses, and one was in Kansas City, Kansas, and one was in Kansas City, Missouri, so my husband managed the one in Kansas City, Missouri. And, it was kind of in the north side of Kansas City, a tough area, and it

was quite hilly and woody just across the road and then up the mountain – it was real hilly there – from his office. And quite often, in those days, that was in about 1938, Pendergast was going full – he was in his prime then, and there was lots of crime going on, and so a lot of times when my husband would go to the office, why somebody had been found up in the woods, striped naked and tied to a tree and shot. So, everyone knew that somewhere along the way that that was Pendergast because it was definitely...

Yust: He ran the city?

Clark: Oh, he ran the city, yeah, uh-uh. So, it was while my husband was working for the coal people, of course it's still the depression, and lots of people would buy their coal by the bushel. And, they couldn't afford anymore, and they'd even charge the coal. You couldn't get that paid for – that dollar-bushel coal paid for – until summer when they'd have to quite burning coal and not have to buy it, you know. And, so anyway, he went in to sell coal to the purchasing man of the coal in Kansas City. Well, it was all controlled by Pendergast. He had all the public buildings, the schools and, oh, all kinds of businesses tied up that they had to buy coal through him. And, so my husband went up to sell him, I think it was... I don't know whether it was the school or the public buildings, but anyway, he went up to see the purchasing man. Well, the purchasing man was Harry Truman, and they called him a "Judge" then, but he wasn't a judge. He was just a purchasing man for Pendergast. So, he went in and introduced himself, and he said he would like to sell him some coal. And Russ' uncle, he handled the best quality coal, and it was a good price. But, they were buying this old stuff that polluted the air and the cheapest thing they had you know. So, Truman said, "Well, Mr. Clark," he said, "you know, before we go any farther," he said, "I get a fifty cents a ton cutback on all the coal."

And my husband said, "Well," he said, "I do not give cutbacks. We have the best coal, the best price and it's what should be bought for the schools and the hospitals and everything. And he said, "That's better than this smoking-producing, soft coal that is polluting the whole city. I am selling the best quality, the best deal."

And Truman said, "Well, I get fifty cents a ton cutback."

And Russ said, "Well, then I do not buy or sell coal to you," he says "I do not give cutbacks," and he says, "I do not deal with crooked politicians." And he said, "I'm not interested in dealing with you."

And Truman said, "Well, you needn't call on me anymore."

And my husband said, "I am very happy not to call on a quality man that you are. I don't do business that way, so I don't need your business." So, he walked out, and that was the last time he had any conversation with Harry Truman.

Yust: Did he ever vote for him (laughter)?

Clark: No, sir, he never voted for him! (Laughter) I will say that we've had worse since then. And another thing, when we lived there in the apartment, why it was so hot in the summer, and

we'd all go downstairs. They had some benches outside the apartment, and the politicians would be coming along, you know, campaigning, and they would come by they'd say, "Are you a Republican or a Democrat?" And, so everybody in the apartment, in fact, all over town they'd always say they were democrats because...

Yust: ...because Harry was a big man in town?

Clark: Yeah, and Pendergast; he was a Pendergast man, and if you didn't say that and the people would say they were Republicans, if they had a car, their lights may be broken out of the car the next day, or your windows may be broken out. So, you didn't dare go against the mob. Kansas City was tough. I mean it. The red light district was all open and the gambling was open, and it was tough.

Yust: Do you think more so than St. Louis when you were in St. Louis?

Clark: No, I think Kansas City was worse than St. Louis. St. Louis had crooked politicians and there was more or less a bunch ran them, but not the Pendergast type. They weren't near as ruthless as the Kansas City people were.

So, anyway, then he (husband) left his office place, and for a little while he sold furnaces, and then we went to St. Louis, and he was going there thinking that maybe he could get a job awith the company he'd worked for, the milling company, they wanted to hire him back. And I said, "No, don't go back. You'll always be the boy next door. And with the people that he's got in there under him right now, they will always be jealous. You'll get something better, so don't worry about it." Well, my sister-in-law's father worked for Lessenware Rope Company, and he had an excellent job. That company was a marvelous company, and so my mother said, "Why don't you go over and apply at that job?" So, he went over and applied with a German guy, and he hired my husband. And he gave him eight states, and we were living in Kansas City at that time. And Kansas City was where we lived, and then we had eight states around that. The war was just beginning to start up, and so they furnished him a four-door Road master Buick car and they paid him I think about one hundred fifty dollars a month, which was a big salary then. And, he traveled most of the time. Well, I traveled with him because we had no children, and he wanted me to travel with him, and it was a lot of fun. So, we would travel, and he called on the coal mines and zinc mines down here in Oklahoma, and of course, all the army bases that were being built up then. When they let the contract to build Boeing airport in Wichita, why was my husband was always up at six o'clock in the morning, and the first tractor that pulled in, he followed him right in to sell him wire rope. Along with the army bases, we were still calling on a lot of the mines in Arkansas and Oklahoma and Missouri. There were strip coal mines, lots of them, and in Oklahoma we had lots of the mines with zinc and other metals like that. And that's when they had Big Bertha. That was a great big piece of machinery that could take about a half of hillside, and my husband didn't believe in walking any place that you could drive a car. So, they had the strip mines, and they would be deep, and we would drive the car down and down and almost take the tail pipe off getting down in the bottom of that mine so he didn't have to walk. Then, he would have to go and climb up on Big Bertha, and a lot of my gray hairs came from watching him 'way up in the air going across the Big Bertha from where he climbed up on it across the pit there to look where thing was scooping up the side of the mountain. And, it was

pretty scary. So, anyway, he never fell off and we managed to get out of those pit mines. So, that was a little exciting. Well, as all the air bases and army camps began building up we began traveling to them. And, there were a lot of interesting experiences. One place that's now is a big army base and airfield now in Nebraska, I forgotten the name of the town, but there were acres and acres, and it was about 100 degrees. Hot as could be, and not a tree within miles or nothing else. So, they wouldn't let me go on the base with my husband because you had to wear an ID badge, but a lot times they wouldn't let me have one. Of course, you couldn't see anything for miles, but they were being very careful. So, anyway, this one day we were in Nebraska, and it was hot. And, so he followed the first tractor in to start the airbase, and I had to stand outside. The only thing that I had for shade was a fence post. So, I sat outside in the shade of the fence post and listened to the birds and crickets and so forth from about one o'clock in the afternoon until about 5:30 that afternoon. And the first concession truck came up with a load of Coke, and it was hot, and that was the best Coke I ever had. I was about to die of thirst (laughter). But, it was interesting and I never minded waiting. Sometimes it was cold. I know one night we stopped one night to call on some man that was just starting one of these big bases, and we were on our way to Kansas City. I stayed in the car while my husband went in--it was after dinner in the evening--and this man was raising mink, and he took all evening telling my husband how he raised mink. And it was eleven o'clock that night, and it was so cold, and I was too scared to start the engine of the car, and I nearly froze. So, there were hot times and cold times. But I never minded because I got hear all about raising mink when he came back to the car. And then there were the bases. There were all kinds, there were ammunition dumps that no one knew anything about, and airbases, and army camps, and so all of those states that we were calling on, they were being built up. And, very fast, it didn't take them very long. And then, the soldiers began coming in, and they'd bring them in by trains, and one time I was in St. Louis visiting my family, and my husband was in Kansas City. So, I got on the train, and the train had come from the East, and it was loaded with soldiers. So the only place there was room for another person was between the cars. They couldn't even shut the doors, and just inside the car I was nearest, there were three soldiers sleeping in the men's bathroom floor. You couldn't even get down the isle. So, I stood up between those cars, and oh my, it was terribly – snow banks on each side, and even between the cars, it was crowded with soldiers, and they were so tired. So, I had a Samsonite bag, hardcover bag, and one boy was tired, so I said, "You sit down on my bag." So, I stood up all the way from St. Louis to Kansas City between the cars, and I let the boy sit on the bag. He was about to pass out. We got into Kansas City, and I met my husband, and no one could eat on the train because you couldn't get where there was any food, and they couldn't bring any to you. So, we didn't have anything to eat that day. So, my husband met me, and we got on the train. That was the next morning, and we got another one of these trains full of soldiers, and they said, "Well, there's no stops until you get to Wichita. So, you better order a box lunch." So, we all ordered our box lunches before we left Kansas City and paid for them. And at Emporia, the train stopped, and the college kids were getting off for some kind of holiday, and they saw the people with the carts bringing our lunches to them. They just grabbed them all off the carts, and took them, and ate them, and didn't pay, and we never got anything to eat that whole day (laughter). So, we finally got into Wichita later that evening and hadn't had anything to eat since morning, so traveling was not easy in those days.

And, one of the places where they fed soldiers was the Harvey Houase in Newton, Kansas, and another one was Hutchinson, Kansas. It seemed like when we rode the trains, those places had

one table reserved for civilians. And, then they'd bring the boys off the train into the station at Newton, and they would take up all the rest of the dining room and the same way with Hutchinson. So many times, I have eaten with a whole trainload of boys and I'd be the only woman there because the civilians stayed away from there because they knew they only had one table reserved for civilian people. And, the rest of them at mealtime were usually for when the train stopped fed the soldiers. Then, the camps were finally built, and the boys were in, and everything was moving. It was real busy, and one of our big stops was at Forth Smith, Kansas. Camp Chaffey I think was the name of that base. And, we had to call on them lots, I don't know why – well, it was a big camp, and it was heavy artillery – the tanks and the big guns and all that kind of thing. There were twenty-seven thousand boys at that camp and we'd usually get in there at dinner, and the buffet-- the Golden Hotel where we always stayed had a wonderful buffet, so we'd get there just in time when they were beginning to serve the food. One night after the boys all got there, we went in to eat, and there was not one single bite of food in the hotel, so we started driving around town to find something to eat. Everywhere, even filling stations and little hamburger placed, it was the same story: no food. And finally, about ten o'clock, we found a little grocery store and we got a pack of sugar-free gum and little stale pack of crackers, and that's all the food there was in town. So, we had a big meal that day (laughter). All the time after that we'd get there early before the boys. They would eat their meals out at camp two or three miles out of town, and they had buses to take them back and forth from town. So, they'd eat their meal at the camp and come to town and eat anything in town. So, we had to get there early to get any food. At the camps, if we were there at meal time, why they always asked us to eat. So, we'd go through the line with all of the boys. Hutchinson, that was an airbase, they usually had around twenty thousand boys there, and Camp Chaffey had twenty-seven thousand. And, I've forgotten some of the others. We seemed to spend more time at those two camps. And so we would eat with all those boys quite often. And it was interesting when I would come along in the line with the metal tray that was divided in little sections where they put food. A couple of boys in front of me, the boys that were serving up the food, oh, they would slam that food on those poor boys trays and just be terrible. And then, when my tray would come along, they were so dainty and so nice, they put all the food on the tray real nice and separated, and I knew they were trying to scare me. They'd have that little mischievous glint in their eyes and I knew they were trying to scare that old gal that was coming through the line (laughter). We'd have to park behind the kitchen sometimes, and they would be breaking eggs in a metal barrel, it looked like, and they would take up four eggs in each hand and squeeze them, and all the eyes would come out in the barrel. That was the way they did it and I've often wondered how they could squeeze four eyes at a time in each hand, and they'd always laugh and say, "Not a shell in there!" Other times, we'd be back there, and they'd be peeling potatoes, and they'd get those knives, and they'd start cutting, and there'd be about a third of the potatoes left on the peels in the garbage. They got a kick out of showing us how they did their cooking. And it was fun going through the lines and seeing what they were eating and fun eating with them. So, we did that all the time that the boys were in the camps before they left. But, when they began leaving, we were in Fort Smith, Arkansas, and the town was full of soldiers, and we'd gone to bed – well, my husband had to gone to bed one night, early as he always did, and I heard this roar. It was like a distant thunder, and I thought, well, I wonder if we're going to get a rain. So I got up and looked out the window, and after a while the roar got louder and louder and pretty soon here came down – we were right on a big, wide main street, we were on the second floor and could get a good view of the street, and here came staff cars with their full packs and the flags waving at nine o'clock at night. Thee

cars went on and on and the staff and the all that passed, and here came the regular soldiers, and the trucks, and then came the tanks, and the big heavy artillery. The roar was terrific, and I sat up all night and watched twenty-seven thousand men leave the camp. That morning, I was still in bed, and of course, my husband was gone, and there was a knock on the door, and I opened the door and here was this young captain, and he had a six pack of Cokes. He said, "Would you take these Cokes and celebrate the birth of my twin babies, my twin boys, last night? I had leave to go to Illinois when my babies were coming, but I couldn't go because we're moving out. Anyway, I just got word that I had twin boys. I wanted to celebrate but, I don't have time. Will you take these Cokes and celebrate the birth of my boys?"

And I said, "I'd love to!" So, I took the Cokes, and I asked him if he'd had time to name them and how much they weighed. And he told me and then he had to hurry off. I took the Cokes and enjoyed them, but that night, those boys--seeing them leave, and those trucks, and those tanks, and all that heavy artillery that pulled out--I have often wondered if he ever got to see his twin babies? I never forgot that, but it was so impressive to see that many boys, and we later found out that they were on their way to New Orleans to be sent for D-Day overseas. It was a sad experience, too, and the next day the town was empty. No soldiers. We could get everything we wanted to eat but it was sad to think that the boys were all gone and how many would never get back.

So, it was a sad time but a fun time. I always enjoyed being around the camps, and seeing how quickly they built them, and the people you would meet that were running the camps. We ran into some characters. You had to watch them. A lot of them hadn't had jobs for years because of the Great Depression and some was pretty tricky. One I recall was from St. Louis. he hadn't worked for years, but he had gone to college, so he had a job there. And all the salesmen like we were that were traveling to these camps, we knew all the tricks of the people that were working for the government. This one fellow in particular, we all knew him because he had a girl in St. Louis, and he was stationed at Hutchinson. Of course, you'd always have to take them to dinner, and we would always take him. Well, he had girlfriend in Hutchinson, too, and the one in St. Louis. And he would hint around, and he'd said, "Well, after dinner, maybe we can talk something over, and maybe we could just go to your room." Well, all of the people that were doing like we were, we knew what he was wanting because he was always hoping--Kansas was dry then--and he was always hoping someone would come with some liquor, so that he could have a drink and use your phone. He'd get on your phone in your room and spend the whole evening talking to his girlfriend in St. Louis while the girlfriend there in Hutchinson would be sitting there listening to him talk to the other one. So, there were lots of little tricky people we ran into like that, and we learned, all the salesmen learned, who they were and the things they would pull. So, we would say, "Oh, well, our room's just too bad. It's comfortable here. We don't have comfortable enough chairs, so we'll just sit here in the lobby." And of course, you couldn't have any drinks served there, so the poor guy didn't stay very long.

Omaha, was another place we had big customers. So, the people in Omaha, had a business in Wichita. And it hadn't made any money for four or five years. They had a couple young fellows running it that were no good, and their two sons that they had bought the business for, they were still in the service. So, they wanted to sell it. Well, we didn't have any money, but for this company, my husband got an \$8,000 bonus one Christmas. It was a marvelous company.

Yust: ... and a nice bonus for back then.

Clark: It was wonderful. It was like a million now (laughter). And so my husband said, "Oh, that business in Wichita, I'd sure love that." But, we had less than a hundred dollars in a our checking account.

And, so I said, "Why don't you offer them that bonus money and see if they won't let you pay it out so much at a time?"

He said, "Well, they've lost money for four years."

And I said, "Well, you're smart enough you can fix that all right."

And he said, "We might lose it."

And I said, "We've never had \$8,000 before. If we lose it, we won't miss it; we've never had it before. So, let's go for it."

Well, we did. He talked to the men, and they sold, and we paid it out. Didn't take very long; it was amazing. So, we came to Wichita, and it was a business that was making country elevators. And, elevators that-- those little wooden elevators you see all over Kansas--they were going out of style fast. So, the man during the war he had to take on some machinery other than a hammer and a saw, so he was taking a little bit more, heavier machinery to build because they were having to build places then to make airplanes, and people were coming into Wichita by the dozens then. So, anyway, this old man he sold that, and so my husband began taking larger machinery, and then we moved our business a couple blocks away to a bigger place. And, then began calling on the aircraft plants because they were moving by that time. And he took on the heavy construction, and then, later when the airplane business got so big, he took on the machine tools. And of course, he already the type of tools--the saws and things-- to build houses, so we were the only company of that type to have three businesses under the same roof because it took different salesmen and different mechanics for the heavy construction like the tractors and the big boom machinery they had to get up high on big buildings. And then the machine tools took engineers, and it was an altogether different type of selling and different men to sell it. And then, of course, building houses was a different kind, so we had three different businesses under one roof, and we were the only one in the country. So, anyway, it began to be successful, and then they needed--let's see, the aircraft companies had computers, and Coleman was the next to have a computer, and my husband decided to have computer for our business. Well, everyone said, "Oh, you couldn't haven't that" because it was impossible to have that type of business we had on computers. Well, my husband said, "I will -- I'm going to have one, and I'll figure it out." So, Coleman was installing theirs at the same time that we decided to have one. And, one of my sisters in St. Louis had gone to the first school they had to teach computers when the war began to get more and more advanced. She had worked in St. Louis on these computers. So, she decided to come to Wichita, and she came down and worked for my husband at the time Coleman was installing their computer, and we were installing ours. So, the men that were installing the computers, they had never installed them before because there'd never been that kind of business use for them. So, it was lucky my sister was here because she had learned how

to wire them up there in St. Louis and had been taught how to help install them. So, when they were installing the ones at Coleman, she worked for Coleman, and when we got ours, why she helped there. So, anyway, after we got ours going, then all the distributors in the country--I don't know how many--came, our friends that we had met at the conventions, and they saw what we were doing. So, they came from all over the country and saw our computer and learned how to do it. And, of course now, everybody has them.

Yust: You so were pretty advanced at an early time?

Clark: Yeah, yeah. In fact, I think after we had ours, then the meat company --Sam Marcus, I think-- he had the next one in town. So that was kind of another thing that happened during that period.

So, anyway, we enjoyed that business for a long time and went to many conventions and made many, many friends and had a wonderful life. My husband could never fly. We went by train and car because he had an inner ear problem and he'd get so sick. He tried to fly three times and was sick a week each time. So, our salesman--we had the state of Kansas, and then we had the machine tool business in Oklahoma, so we had quite a bit of traveling for our men to do. So we bought a twin engine Beech plane, and our salesman used the plane, but neither one of us ever used it. My husband, he used to say, "Oh, take the plane and go see your mother in St. Louis and go to Kansas City and have lunch," but I never had the heart to go and leave him because he loved to travel, and I knew he'd be sitting there thinking, "Oh, I could have gone too. I could have just stood it." So, I never had the heart to do it, and I stayed home, and I am glad I did. So, I never went up in the plane, but it was a real nice one. It had nine seats, it was surplus plane; it had never been used before, and they had several of them for their officers that they had the seats all upholstered, and they were real nice planes. So, he bought three of them, and sold two, and the kept one for our salesman. So, our salesman used it until he sold the business.

So, he wasn't feeling very well, and he sold the business and was without an office a week, and he always had to sell something. I used to accuse him of being willing to sell me if he could have had gotten anything for me, but (laughter) he never made that sale. We had sold our business without an attorney, so one of customers from Chicago said, "I don't know how you'd sell a business like that without an attorney." And my husband said, "Well, I told the people 'if someone wanted to buy it, I wanted to sell it,' and I told him I'd sell it under one condition: that nobody would know it but his wife and my wife, and if I heard a whisper of it before it was sold, the deal was off." So, no one knew about it until he called all eighty-seven employees in and told them there was a new boss. And, those eighty-seven people nearly fainted.

So (laughter) anyway, Wheeler Kelly, the manager down there said, "You sold that business without a lawyer?" And my husband said, "We have people that come in here and want to buy real estate and insurance and everything else, and we don't have a sole that can go in a factory or anything and sell it without an attorney?"

And Kelly said, "Why don't you take an office down here and work for us?"

My husband said, "One thing: When I feel like it, I'll work. I want straight commission. You pay the overhead, and I'll work." So, he worked with them for four-and-one-half-years and loved it! And, we had some interesting experiences there.

Yust: This is where?

Clark: This is when he was working for Wheeler Kelly here in town (Wichita). And, so after he started from there, our friend in Chicago that had invented this machinery that you put in concrete, and it vibrates it, and you don't have to get on your knees and spread it out when you are making it smooth. He said, "I can't imagine you selling your business without an attorney," and said, "Why don't you sell mine? I'm getting old and want to sell it." So, my husband worked out a deal and sold that one. And then, in Tennessee, he sold a pencil factory, and then he sold many little small businesses around, filling stations and things like that. And we were working a chicken operation in Shelbyville, Tennessee, and that was real interesting. We went there; we drove in there, and he called the people and told them he was in town, and they said, "Where are staying?"

We said, "At the motel."

And they said, "Well, you must come to our house for dinner." And we said, "Well, there's a restaurant here." They said, "Oh, you can't go there! They allow coloreds," you can't eat there." So, they insisted we come to their house for dinner. Well, they had a beautiful home. And Shelbyville, Tennessee, all during the Civil War, there had never had a shot fired in that town. It sounds unbelievable. And, they all had their old Antebellum houses filled with antiques. His wife and I, we got along fine. She was head of, I think it's Andrew Jackson's home, the Hermitage, that's it. She was on the board of "The Hermitage," and she said, "Do you like museums?" And of course, I love 'em, and she said, "Well, I'll pick you up in the morning, and we'll take you to 'The Hermitage'." So, she and her friend came and picked me up in a brand new Rolls Royce--the first one I'd ever seen, let alone ridden in. So, we went to "The Hermitage," and we enjoyed that. They were on the board, so they could take me in all the little corners and show me the interesting things. So they said, "You're one of us," well, of course, I'd lived in the South for a long time, and my mother's folks all came from the South, so I was – I guess I still had some of the South in me because they recognized it, and said, "You're one of us."

Yust: ...Southern belle (laughter).

Clark: Yeah, I spoke the same cotton-pickin' language, and so anyway, they said, "Well, we want you to see some of our other friends' houses." And so we drove around to several of the other friends' houses, and we'd walk up to those big, beautiful homes, and they wouldn't knock or anything. They'd just open the door, and then say, "Lily Mae, we're bringing a friend up to see your house." And the lady--they always seemed to be upstairs--would say, "Just come on in and help yourself," and they'd bring you and show you all around their friend's house, open closets and show their little things, and the woman would come, and it was just fine (laughter). Southern hospitality. So they took me around, and I got to meet a lot of their friends. Anyway, when we had dinner the first night that we were there, they had the colored maid that been with them all her life, and the table was beautiful. Everything was silver except I guess the cups and

saucers were china. And they had these beautiful birds, and I said, "Are those Dorothy Dowtey birds?"

And she said, "Yes!"

Well, Dorothy Dowtey had just died, and I had been drooling over Beam birds. I was trying to get enough to collect them. And so, I said, "I am afraid to chew." Of course, being a chicken operation, actually we had the most wonderful fried chicken. And I said, "With sitting here, eating here and these birds on the table, and they're so rare and such wonderful birds and all." Anyway, they didn't even realize the birds were so rare because they'd had them a long time, and they didn't know that Dorothy Dowtey had just died, and they'd gone 'way up in price.

Yust: They'd gone to Sotheby's in New York?

Clark: Uh-hmm, and at that auction house that has that wonderful furniture that they get so much money for and had bought this beautiful china cabinet to store her Dorothy Dowtey birds (laughter). And the next time we were there, we were eating on some less valuable birds than the Dorothy Dowteys. But they were fun to be around, and they would take me around to their friends who had antique shops, and it was wonderful being with them, and my husband was getting along fine. They wanted eight million dollars for their chicken operation, and that was so interesting because it was a real big one. Everything was timed to the minute. They would order eggs, so many thousand eggs, and they would have farmers pick up those eggs and take them to their farms and incubate them, and they would time just to the minute when the chickens should hatch, and there'd be another group of farmers that would bring the chickens in. And they had a big factory there, and they would put the little chickens on the belt and cut off the tips of their tongue – or their bills – because those little chickens were the kind that they'd kill each other. Then, another group of farmers took them and fed them, and they fed the feed that was processed by another company for these particular type of chicken to fatten them for a certain time. And they were right down to the minute and so many, and it was just like clockwork. They picked them up and clear on until they had them in trucks all ready to freeze and send to New York.

So, we had that deal almost closed. They were right up to the final closing of that deal, and so we were working – we had come home and were going back in a couple of weeks there, but we were leaving for... going down to look at a forty-three thousand acre ranch that was for sale. And, so that – I was getting ready to go on that trip, and my husband showed a building here in town to be leased, and he stopped by and picked up some sandwiches, and we had sandwiches. And he left, and he said, "Oh, I feel so good!" He always felt bad because he was diabetic, and so he said, "I feel so good today – better than I've felt in ages," and so he was going out to play tennis. So he played two sets of doubles, and he loved ice cream. He could eat ice cream after he'd worn off his insulin, and then he could go and get some ice cream. So, he had his tennis over, and he went over and ate two sundaes and ordered a third one, and when the third one came, he was dead.

Yust: How did he die?

Clark: Massive cerebral hemorrhage. Just struck his head, and he was gone immediately. He died right there in the ice cream place.

Yust: How old was he?

Clark: He wasn't quite 52, and we hadn't been married quite 28 years.

Yust: And this is in 1965?

Clark: 1965, uh-huh.

Yust: And your life as a widow took off after that?

Clark: Uh-huh. So, then – he had never been able to go by boat or fly, and so after he was gone, I began taking trips. It was terrible. It took me four and one-half years to get through probate court because he was still building, you know, after our business was sold, and he was just working with this other company just selling when he felt like it. But, he was buying property, so I was left with all that property that wasn't paid for (laughter) with no money to pay for it because we had to give half of what we had for our business to pay taxes. And, of course, we had to give that away and put it in a charitable trust, and I got the interest off of it, but half your money was gone. So, here I had all this property to pay for, and just half the money.

Yust: What did you do?

Clark: Well, we had a two hundred thousand dollar insurance policy that was mine alone, and it was the most wonderful thing. One of our good friends insisted that my husband take that out, and it was the best thing in the world. And so I had that money no one could touch. I didn't have to pay taxes. I didn't have to pay anybody; it was mine. And, so we had about \$500,000 property paid for that I had to pay with the \$200,000 policy and not much of a bank account. So, anyway, I struggled along, but he had bought some a – there was a man in Tulsa that had invented some machinery that would hook up to the big ready-mix tractor to that thing that it dumps it out, and he had invented that, and he wanted to build, but he didn't have any money. And, he told my husband, "If you'll buy some stock in my company that I'm going to start to build this, why I'll buy the machinery from you to build it." So, that was a deal, and my husband – I don't remember how many shares he bought – not too much, but it was a dollar a share. So, he bought – as I said I've forgotten how many shares – and he said, "Well, sell three shares – if it got to three dollars a shares to pay our taxes that year." So, it got up to three dollars a share, so we sold that, and that didn't take very much of that. Well, we had the rest of it left – I don't remember – it wasn't too much. So the bank they said, "Oh, sell that," and the lawyer and everybody said, "Sell that. That's a company that – it's just a new company nobody knows it." And I said, "I know the man, and I know what he has," and I wouldn't sell, and I didn't know one thing about stock. I couldn't even read it... couldn't even read a stock report, and my husband always added the little allowance in my little checkbook. He did that, and I didn't do that. I could have if wanted, but I didn't (laughter). And, so anyway, I was talked to very confidentially, telling me how dumb I was if didn't sell all that stock when it was no good. So, I kept it about a year-and-a-half, and it went up to – I've forgotten – oh, they began talking about a merger. I didn't know what a merger

was (laughter). So, the broker said – oh, I think it was fourteen-and-one-half--and he said, "Well, it's no good, and so you better sell it now." Well, I was silly enough to go on and sell it at fourteen-and-one-half. Well I made twenty-seven thousand dollars clear, and I thought that's a pretty good way to make money, when I needed money so badly, and I didn't know how to anything but scrub floors. So, I started learning how to look at the stock market. So, I subscribed to the *Wall Street Journal*, and to *Barrons*, and to *Babsons*, and a lot of different investment magazines, and bulletins, and so forth. And for fifteen years I just read stock things, and I found out by that time, the broker would say – he was a nice man – and he'd say, "Now, I got a good tip from New York. Just came in, and I think you ought to buy some shares of..." And, of course, I just had this twenty-seven thousand dollars. That was it.

Yust: What was left...

Clark: That was left, yeah. And, so I was getting the payment on our business, which was around two thousand dollars a month, and that was about it. So, anyway, I told the broker when he – after a while I bought a few stocks – very small, you know, amounts, and they began going up some, and so, I told the broker, I said, "You know, I read about that stock" – that was this big tip he'd just gotten from New York – "I'd read about it a couple of weeks ago in some of these things," and I thought, "I don't know why I need him for, I knew that two weeks ago," (laughter) so. . .

Yust: You went out on your own (laughter). . .

Clark: So, I went out on my own, and I've been out ever since. Now I'm educating the bank, telling them I don't need them either. So, anyway, I got interested in stocks, and then I began being able to travel some, and I had belonged to the American Rose Society before – well, let's see, right after my husband died. And, of course, we'd never traveled anything like that. We did a lot of traveling and a lot of conventions and a lot of places when we were traveling for business, but I hadn't done any traveling of the other kind. And, of course, this was all flying too. So, the Rose Society, they began going places. They would just moving from Illinois to Shreveport, Louisiana. They found some ground down there. In fact, a Shreveport family gave them 125 acres to have a new national garden, and so we began working on that and began going to conventions, and then every two years we would have a foreign international convention. So, then I started going on them, so I did quite a bit of traveling that way. So, first trip I took was to Australia, and then we went on to New Zealand, and I ended eventually going to Australia again and going to New Zealand two more times.

Yust: You must like. Isn't it a beautiful country?

Clark: I love New Zealand, uh-huh. And, then with them every two years, I've been to Germany, and Europe, or I mean England several times, and Hawaii eight times, and so I...

Yust: So you have a whole another life after...

Clark: ...a whole another life, yeah. So, from then on, why I started – I belonged to the National Horticulture Convention – Society. And for the rose conventions and rose meetings we would go

to mostly homes and parks, but with the horticulture we went to the big estates, and, of course, all the parks and places like that but the big estates. And, when we went to New York, David Rockefeller was the main speaker. Every year they give an award for the person that has – the family that has done the most for horticulture. And so that year, David Rockefeller had given the most for horticulture, and we had our band, but we had a big beautiful blue and white stripped tent, and he gave the talk. And he showed big slides from slides of his life from when he was a child and showed his – let's see there were six of the children, and he was only six-years-old, and he was telling about – he said, "The Rockefellers had always been – liked gardening."

Yust: ... big estates on the Hudson River or something?

Clark: Big estates, um-huh. And, so here were pictures of his older sister and the rest of the family down, and he was six. And he said, "We children were always given our own gardens when we were at home." And he was standing there will little knickerbockers pants and a little straw hat, and he was pouting. And he said, "I was mad that day." And he said, "The other kids had been given a larger plot of ground than he had," and so he didn't like it. And he said, "Later on we all had plant our own gardens," and he said, "We ate the food that we grew." And so he said, "I planted my garden," and he said, "I planted a" – he planted peas, and he planted potatoes, and he planted another vegetable. I've forgotten what that was. But he said, "I wasn't very successful because about every three days I dug them up to see how they were doing." (Laughter) He said, "So we never got to eat anything out of my garden that year." (Laughter) So, anyway, he went on was telling about the family and showed pictures of a little pony cart that they had and how their lives were as they were kids and very ordinary bunch of kids you know. And so he said, "Now tomorrow you are going to visit our estate." And he said, "Now I'm sorry that we can't have you in the house." He said, "We are redecorating, but we'll pull all the draperies back," and said, "Feel free to go up and look in the windows and the doors because we're redecorating, so we'll pull them back so you can look in." So of course, we all went up and put our nose against the door and really looked (laughter).

Yust: Where was this at? Is this upstate New York?

Clark: Uh-huh. Yeah. I've forgotten how many hundred acres he had there, but it was a huge estate, and his brother, Nelson, had the land adjoining, but he said his widow was not very anxious to have people come and look at her place, so we didn't go over on that side toward her estate. We stayed mostly on his. But, he had just built a big Japanese – had a – I think it was – I haven't forgotten how many acres. It was several, two or three acres – a big Japanese garden, and I was talking to the man who had designed and built this Japanese garden there. And he told me, he said, "You know the Rockefellers are the most wonderful people to work for." He said, "I hope I never have to work for anybody else." But he said, "When they were going to build this garden" – I think that garden was six acres.

Yust: Oh, my gosh! Huge!

Clark: Huge. And he said, "I laid out the design, and Mr. and Mrs. Rockefeller both are gardeners, and they know what they want." And he said, "I laid it what I thought would fit there," and he said, "They would have a little word or two to say once in a while." But he said, "That

was it. I had – could just go ahead and use my own way – whatever I built." And he said, "Of course, money was no problem," but he said, "They're just wonderful people to work for. Easy to work for." So, it was a very fine time, uh-huh.

So, we visited all the gardens around New York, and since then, the last one I went on, I had just moved here (Larksfield Place). And it was in – we were at the hotel in Washington D. C., and we were doing the – it was the Du Pont's. A lot of Du Pont's live around there. So, anyway, from Washington, we went down to Longwood Gardens, and that's one of the most famous gardens anywhere. So, we were there for that. I'd been there several other times with other groups. And then, we went to Winterther. That's another big Du Pont estate that people can go and go through the mansion and so forth. And then we went on down to – there was another Du Pont lady that was getting the award that year, and she was down a little farther – 380 acres. They're all big estates; they're around 300 acres. And, I had sprained my ankle and was not able to walk around. It's, of course, quite mountainous. And there was another lady that her foot was in a cast, and so we decided instead of walking all the paths up around the mountains that we would just stay around the house and look at the gardens there. While we were staying, the rest of the groups – there were four busloads of us – they were all taking off down the path and around the mountain. So, Mrs. Du Pont came out, and she said – we told her that we were just staying because we didn't walk very well. She said, "Oh, I'll get my husband's golf cart." And she said, "He loved to play golf, but he – it was too far to go to the public course," so she said, "He bought that land right down at the foot of the hill here and built his own golf course." So, from the house, you could look down over their golf course. So she said, "I'll get my golf cart." So, she got her golf cart, and she was little lady about 75 maybe and was kind of chubby and had on a little suit that was nothing great, you know. And so she got her golf cart, and we all three got on the golf cart, and we started off down the paths. Well, the group was ahead of us, oh, some little distance. Well, there I was so embarrassed passing all my friend in the golf cart with Mrs. Du Pont.

Yust: (Laughter)

Clark: (Laughter). So, anyway she took all us around the mountains – a lot of little places that the others didn't get to go. She knew all the names of the grass, the trees, everything by their botanical name, and she had little – kind of like little mail boxes, little wooden ones along the paths, and she'd live notes in there for the men that were working in the gardens. And she'd say, "Oh, see that little plant up there. I had them pick that up in some foreign country, and I want to try it. And if it spreads, I want them to get this part of the mountain covered in that." All planning all the time what they're going to do to that mountain. And, so she went on around some place that the others didn't go, and there was the prettiest little pond there and had a real nice little wooden bench. And she said – and the house was up quite a distance. You could see it, but it was up there. And she said, "You know in the summer time I love to bring my cocktail down here and sit down here and look at this little pond and enjoy myself." (Laughter). And she said, "I had this made, this pond made." Said, "It's only about two feet deep." And there was a little boat on it, and she said, "I bring my grandchildren down there, and they think it's great to get in that boat." She said, "They think it's deep, and that they are really on deep water, but it's only a couple feet deep," and said, "They get in there and think they're really doing something dangerous." (Laughter) So she said, "All of us Du Pont's were all farmers," said "We were farmers in the Netherlands." And she said, "We're all farmers," but said, "I have one nephew

that's an artist." Said, "Last summer I gave a lawn party right up there in that lawn." And said, "It was quite a large party, and everyone was saying, 'Oh, why don't you sketch a picture or painting of us? Why don't you do some?' And he said, 'Well, I'll do a painting of my aunt, but it's going to be in the nude.'" And she said, "Imagine these saggy breasts and wrinkled face being in the nude, being a painted." (Laughter) So, anyway, we laughed about that, and so finally we followed the rest of the crowd and went on up to the house, but you just run into things like that with groups like that that you never would meet otherwise. And those people, those real super rich people and those estates, I never saw one of the women with her fingernails all done up or her hair all done up and a lot of makeup. They had on slacks, and they were all telling they worked in the yard.

Yust: They lived pretty normal, ordinary lives.

Clark: Very normal, ordinary lives, yeah, uh-huh. But another funny thing about those people, they all knew – they'd say, "Well, this land was so and so's, but then we bought it and added on." But they all knew their neighbors who were old and had no children, and they had their eye on their land." (laughter) Every one of them. And like Mrs. Du Pont...

Yust: The name of game was buying up the land around them.

Clark: . . .buying up the land around them, uh-huh. Mrs. Du Pont said, "Well, that land" – this elderly man where they build their golf course – she said, "My husband decided to build this golf course," and said, "One of the other Du Pont's wanted it, but we beat 'em to it." (Laughter) So, anyway, my traveling days are over because I've. . .

Yust: You said that you had a lot of fun experiences in New York when you were there. Did you enjoy going to New York City?

Clark: Oh, I loved going to New York, yes. I went there on opera tours at least once a year, and that was always interesting because we got to go to so many places there other than just going to the opera. And then they would take a – about every year they go somewhere out of New York to different towns. I've been to the opera twice in Dallas, and once in San Francisco. And, let me see – one place in the South, I've forgotten now, but anyway – oh, not South, it was Denver. And when they go out of New York – now in New York we usually get to go to – they stay in expensive, very elegant, small hotels that have been renovated. And they're usually very nice, and then we go to some of the real expensive restaurants that you read about that you wouldn't – that I wouldn't go there other than with a group like that and hopefully get a little better rates too than you would by yourself. (Laughter) But there's always something there that you get to go extra – we get to go to extra plays or if there's special museum things to go to or something special, you always get some of that along with the opera. And then the last night at the Met, they always have an elegant dinner on the entrance there. What do they call it? – the ground...

Yust: ... with that big chandelier. It is beautiful with all red . . .

Clark: Yeah, on the red carpet and the chandelier, they have tables in there for the tour people for your tour. And there is always one of the staff at each table, so you get to really get acquainted

with them and hear about their trips they're planning and the other places they have been. And when they take you out of town, like for instances, we went to Denver when they dedicated the first Opera in the Round in Denver, and they took us to the home of a family that had lived in Japan after the war for several years, and they had just built a new house complete Japanese. They even did their cooking like the Japanese cooked, and so we had dinner at their house – all Japanese cooking and everything in that line. It was real interesting. And the last one I went to was in Dallas a couple years ago, and the ladies there, after the opera was over, we went to their house, their apartment – two sisters; one was 93-years-old, and she had a large ranch that she operated herself, and her sister was 83-years-old, and she was the first executive in the Exxon Oil Company, and she married one of the executives in that company. And we got to talking; we had the dinner at her house, and I happened to sit by this 83-year-old and found out that – I said, "Why you were the first executive in the oil company. Did you live in New York?" No she said, "I was born near Galveston, Texas, and my father was a cotton farmer." And I said, "My gosh, I was reared in the South too, and I know all about that cotton farming." And she said, "Well, my older sister, the 93-year-old, said she wanted to learn to dance, and she talked my mother into going to New York to take dance lesson." So, the mother let her go for a year. Well, she didn't come home after a year, so she sent the younger sister, the 83-year-old, after her sister. She didn't come home. She found a job at \$15 a week in New York with the Standard Oil Company of a – the oil company – couldn't think of the last name. Anyway, I've forgotten the full name. Now it's Exxon. And so she, I got a job at \$15 a week, and I wasn't about to go back and start picking cotton, so mother came after the two girls, and she stayed 30 years, and they all stayed in New York. So after many years, why they went back to Dallas, and they had this big apartment. It used to be a big home, and they had a large apartment in this home, and they built it into a hotel, and so they had all of the tour people when were in Dallas at their apartment for dinner, and everything that they served was grown in Texas. So, we had a lovely steak, and we had black-eyed peas and sweet potatoes and corn, and of course, tossed salad, and we had avocados and cherry pie, and I've forgotten. Anyway, it was a big dinner, and later, I said, "That dinner was delicious. And I said, "The steak was very good." And she said, "Yes, that was buffalo." So, we had a typical Texas dinner, and that lady, the 83-year-old, had been to 100 operas with this Daly Thorp Opera Tour Group. And she said, "The next week..." – now this was in this apartment, and there 18 of us, and she had a large, regular dining room table and had put another smaller table at the end of it. And she said, "Now the next two weeks we're going to entertain Pavarotti, and 40 in this apartment for dinner." So, you run on to things like that that's so interesting (laughter) that people would have you in their homes, have a whole tour group. And if like – her place she put extra small tables at the end of the dining tables, and so you just meet a lot of interesting people and get to go to a lot of interesting homes.

Yust: It sounds like those experiences have been worthwhile.

Clark: Oh, just wonderful. So, now I don't believe I'll get to go to anymore of those things. My touring now – the last one we took was a 2-day trip last week to Ponca City – the Marlen Mansion.

Yust: But, you said you still had fun on that one, didn't you?

Clark: Oh, yes. I love these little trips. From now on, I am just going to take little 2-day trips or over-night trips here with the people from Larksfield. And, I've been to Branson with them, and I sure hope to go to Branson again with them because that could be a week. But, I won't be able to take anymore big tour trips. One of my outstanding ones – I don't know how many cruises I have been on, but I've been on quite a few – but I was one cruise in the – one of the Royal Dutch lines – and it was a Christmas cruise through the Panama Canal. And then, I got to go through the Panama Canal and a Tricycle Music Cruise, and it was a cruise around the world. But, we got on at Fort Lauderdale and went through the Canal around to Los Angeles on the QE II, and they had six people from the musical – classical music – they had a pianist and a singer from Canada, and so they were all outstanding classical people. And then just for an extra, they had Victor Borgjen to fill in. So, that was quite an experience, and I was thrilled to death to get on the QE II and take a trip for just that.

Yust: That would be long trip.

Clark: Yeah, from Fort Lauderdale all around through the Canal and up to Los Angeles, yes, uh-huh. And every night on that ship – it's 13 stories high, four football-fields long. It takes 82,000 gallons of oil a day to run it. (Laughter) And, I never did find the way to my room without a map. (Laughter) That is so big, but everything is done so well, and there is so much to do on that ship. And, I saw it when it made its first voyage from England to New York, and we happened to be there, and of course, everybody was going down to see the QE II. And I looked at that, and I thought, "Oh, it would just be wonderful to take trip on that ship," never dreaming that I would get to take one that long and with the classical music. And, we would have dinner; we all ate at the same time, and at seven o'clock, we would go up – the dinner would be finished – and we would go up to the top deck because there is a concert room, and they would have whoever was playing there – a violinist, a pianist, whoever was going to perform, and they would have about an hour and half regular performance. And, we'd go down to the next floor, and they had a real good orchestra. It was a big band, and like the bands – the big bands used to be – they would have a regular floor-show, and every night there would be a different show. Beautiful costumes, and this band was real good like the old ones we used to dance to. And then, they had 15 men that had no other job but to dance with ladies that didn't have partners (laughter).

Yust: Oh, and you like to dance.

Clark: I love to dance. So – and they were from young men to old gray-haired men, and they were all very nice, very polite, and we all wore formal clothes, and the men were all in tuxes, and it was very elegant. And there's just a different atmosphere when you're with a group like that, and they're all dressed nicely, and it just makes for a wonderful trip. And in the daytime, they had cards and all kinds of programs, speeches, and in fact, one fellow that gave a speech, he was the son or nephew, I think, of the man who wrote "Hawaii." What's his name?... Anyway, he lived over there all the time, and there is a book "Hawaii." I have it, telling about the islands, you know, when they first were over there. And he was writing another book, and I haven't looked since I've been here to see whether its on the market now or not, but they would have programs like that for you to do in the daytime. So, now I am just down to taking to taking the little short trips here and thoroughly enjoying them (laughter).

Yust: You had a lot of interesting experiences. I hope we were able to document a few of them – just a few.

Clark: Well, anybody would be bored to death listening to that (laughter).

Yust: I don't think so (laughter). Well, thank you. Are we done? Do you need to . . .

Clark: Yeah, that's ... I'm going to shut up! (Laughter).