CRUSADER IN PUBLIC SERVICE

Margarete Clark

Interviewed by Bruce Henstell

Completed under the auspices
of the
Oral History Program
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Los Angeles

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INTRODUCTION

The 1930s were a difficult period in Los Angeles history. The Depression had come to the city--later perhaps than it had to many other American cities, but come it did. In the midst of the era, the city was torn by an intense political struggle that ended in the recall of the mayor; the "grand bounce," the Los Angeles Times called it. Los Angeles was the first city to include a provision for the recall of elected officials in its charter and the first to make use of it--in 1907, recalling Mayor Arthur C. Harper. Harper resigned from office before the recall election, however. In 1938, the city turned again to the remedy of recall, but this time the mayor, Frank Shaw, chose to fight. He lost.

For most of this century Los Angeles chief executives have been an undistinguished lot, and Shaw sustained the tradition. A grocer, he had become a county supervisor and after a lackluster term of office had run for and been elected mayor. The real power behind the mayor, it was believed in city hall, resided in a downstairs, corner office with the mayor's brother, Joe Shaw. The colorlessness of city hall pervaded the bureaucracy: blandness in form and substance was the order of the day. The city lost opportunity after opportunity as it ignored, sidestepped, or tabled action on issue after issue.

There was little to encourage an average citizen to enter public life. The rewards were few and the problems of confronting and dealing with a clubby inner circle at city hall or in the courts were many.

Margarete Clark was herself surprised she accepted an invitation to run for office. She was a confident, self-made woman who had succeeded in weathering the storms of immigration to a foreign country on her own and the later storms of economic disaster. The board of education in the 1930s was a bastion of conservatism and no springboard for progressive idealism. Mrs. Clark hardly let this bother her, and the stands she took and the issues she argued must have left mouths agape. Still, her activities might not have received much notice had she not insisted on her integrity and declined an offer to overlook the quiet graft common in that day. And then, having been forced to stub her toe, she must have amazed city hall with her stubborn and vocal defense of her position. She just refused to knuckle under, and, in essence, she backed the mayor of Los Angeles down.

My interest in the events of 1938 began several years ago while I was preparing an article about Los Angeles in the 1930s. The opportunity to discuss these events with Mrs. Clark was a unique one, for the participants in the

recall become fewer each year. Her testimony confirmed for me what others had written about the city of that day.

--Bruce Henstell, June 1982

INTERVIEW HISTORY

INTERVIEWER: Bruce Henstell, B.A., History, University of California, Berkeley; M.A., Far Eastern studies, University of Michigan. Former librarian and curator of photographs for the California Historical Society, Los Angeles History Center. Consultant and writer in the field of Los Angeles history; author of Los Angeles: An Illustrated History.

TIME AND SETTING OF INTERVIEW:

Place: Kingsley Manor retirement home, Hollywood.

Dates: October 21 and December 2, 1981.

Time of day, length of sessions, and total number of recording hours: The interview was conducted in two sessions of approximately one and one-half hours apiece. Both took place in the early afternoon. Approximately three hours of conversation were recorded.

Persons present during interview: Clark and Henstell.

CONDUCT OF INTERVIEW:

Although she might have expressed some physical discomfort at times and toward the end of each interview session was obviously tired, Clark, ninety-two, was mentally alert throughout. It was obvious she made a consistent effort to remember persons and dates, and while there were some (perhaps inevitable) lapses, her memory was good.

Henstell's intention was to take Clark chronologically over the period of her life in Los Angeles. After eliciting some family background and information about her early business career in the city, he focused on the period of her public service, from the mid-1930s to the mid-1940s. It was obvious that she was a determined person; she saw no reason to discuss at length the facts of her early life or of her marriage, for example. Therefore, she limited her responses in these areas to the simplest facts. Yet she was more than willing to expatiate on her public career, insisting, however, on discretion. When discussing the charges leveled against certain individuals during the school board contretemps,

for example, she declined to name some names, although it was clear that those individuals were no longer living, and in fact, in most cases the names had been cited in newspaper exposes of the day. Surprisingly perhaps, she appeared to harbor no animosity. One had the impression she was a tough character indeed and, even at the time, had been unaffected by the accusations leveled against her.

Henstell had a long-standing interest in early Los Angeles history and a solid background for the interview, knowing well the general situation in the city at the time. He prepared by researching the Daily News files at the Department of Special Collections, University Research Library, UCLA, where he perused a number of newspaper clippings that traced Clark's career.

EDITING:

Editing was done by Sylvia Tidwell, assistant editor, Oral History Program. She checked the verbatim transcript of the interview against the original tape recordings, edited for punctuation, spelling, and paragraphing, and verified proper nouns. Words and phrases inserted by the editor for clarity have been bracketed. The final manuscript remains in the same order as the original taped material. Clark did minor rewriting of some sections to correct misstatements and in some cases to conceal the identities of persons mentioned.

Clark checked and approved the edited transcript.

Front matter and index were prepared by Tidwell.

The original tape recordings and edited transcript of the interview are in the University Archives and are available under the regulations governing the use of permanent noncurrent records of the University. Records relating to the interview are located in the office of the UCLA Oral History Program.

TAPE NUMBER: I, SIDE ONE

OCTOBER 21, 1981

CLARK: Well, I thought perhaps you might be interested how I got into politics.

HENSTELL: I would, but I'd also be interested if you could give me just the background, a little bit of your life. You were--

CLARK: Well, I came to this country seventy-four years ago. It'll be seventy-five on the tenth of May when I arrived in the United States at the age of eighteen.

HENSTELL: You were eighteen, and you arrived here in what year?

CLARK: 1907. I arrived the tenth of May, and the twenty-fourth of May, I was eighteen.

HENSTELL: Where did you come from?

CLARK: Germany.

HENSTELL: Any particular part?

CLARK: Silesia. I was born in Guben, which was then a little city; I don't know what it is today. Sixty miles from Berlin. My father went down to Silesia (which is now Poland, you know, after the Second World War), and I grew up there with a typical--what shall I say--upper-middle-class education: girls were separated from boys. A girl couldn't get into the Gymnasium or the Realschule; she went to the Hoehre Toechterschule, and there she spent ten years. And after she

came out of there--there was only a question which one--she had one year in finishing school. Then she was educated sufficiently to marry a man in circumstance just like her father.

HENSTELL: Was your father a professional man, then?

CLARK: My father was a businessman, and I lost my mother before I was twelve, the oldest of four children.

HENSTELL: You were the oldest of four children.

CLARK: I was the oldest, and after five years he remarried; and my father and I were devoted to each other, but after he remarried I couldn't get along with him. I got along beautifully with my lovely stepmother, and because the finishing school where I was, in Karlsruhe, had some American girls and we were very friendly, I decided I would be a rebel and come to the United States.

HENSTELL: Karlsruhe was quite a center of culture at that time.

CLARK: Very, yes. And my stepmother tried her best; I couldn't have left, you know, because I wasn't of age. My stepmother pleaded with my father not to permit me to go, and I heard him say once, "Oh, yes, I'll let her go; she'll be back on her knees in three months." Which sure kept me here, being like he is. And I came over here, and of course I was not prepared to earn a living. I was prepared to marry a man like my father.

HENSTELL: You came alone, essentially.

CLARK: I came alone.

HENSTELL: Did you speak English?

CLARK: Perfectly; we always had an Englishwoman in the house. I had an English accent those days, and I didn't know of anything. We always had a governess in the house, so I thought I knew how to be a governess. I took a position as governess, and I was married a couple years later and had three children--two daughters and a son--and now four grandchildren and four precious, adorable great-grandchildren.

HENSTELL: That's terrific. Was your husband a professional man as well?

CLARK: My husband was a newspaperman. He was with the Evening Herald for twenty-three years.

HENSTELL: Really. In what capacity?

CLARK: He was a chief proofreader.

HENSTELL: And his name was?

CLARK: John Grant Clark. There are now four John Grant Clarks.

HENSTELL: That's terrific.

CLARK: He passed away in '43.

HENSTELL: So during the-- While you were headline news, in fact, you husband worked on one of the newspapers in Los Angeles.

CLARK: Yes, and I saw what was coming, and I had three children to support, and I was not raised to earn a living. So

one day I saw an ad by the May Company, extras wanted for a day and a half, and I thought, "Well, I'm not too proud to be an extra." But I stayed five months and left to become a buyer.

HENSTELL: Could I ask you, just go back one step to when you first came to Los Angeles.

CLARK: Yes.

HENSTELL: When would that be?

CLARK: That was in 1920. We left St. Louis in 1918 and bought a home in Berkeley. Then came the epidemic [influenza epidemic of 1918-1919--ed.], and my husband decided that California was the only place where they had the flu, and we were on our way back to St. Louis. Well, it happened that the man who [had been] a superintendent in St. Louis on the paper where my husband was employed had become the superintendent of the Evening Herald. And after we sold our home in Berkeley and decided we'd have one month's rest in Southern California before going back to St. Louis--we had a very nice apartment facing the ocean--and after we were there a few days, he said, "I'm going to go in and see Cookerly," who was the superintendent of the Herald, who came from St. Louis to Los Angeles. And he says, "I'm going to take him to lunch before we go back to St. Louis."

So he left about ten o'clock in the morning, and less than two hours later he phoned me and said, "Don't expect

me back until dinner."

I said, "What happened?" He said, "I walked in the Evening Herald, and Cookerly took one look at me and said, 'Johnny, you're the answer to my prayer. Take off your coat and go to work'"--which was the end of our going back to St. Louis. We bought a home in Los Angeles and raised our family in it.

HENSTELL: Could you tell me a bit about your first impressions of Los Angeles when you came here in 1920?

CLARK: Of Los Angeles? I liked it from the moment I came.

HENSTELL: Why?

CLARK: I don't know; I just felt at home. Everybody was nice to us. We rented a great big home on La Salle [Avenue] before we bought. You know, it was very funny: in all the years I was married, we never lived in a rented place more than four or five months. We always bought a home. In St. Louis I had a big, three-story brick, and we always bought a home. We bought a home when we got to Berkeley; we bought a home when we came to Los Angeles. And then he passed away of a stroke, finally, in 1943; in the meantime, I had gone to work for a day and a half as an extra at the May Company.

HENSTELL: This would be about 1920.

CLARK: That was in 1926.

HENSTELL: 1926. And between 1920 and 1926, then, you were--

CLARK: I stayed at home, yes.

HENSTELL: Just a housewife.

CLARK: [affirmative]

HENSTELL: OK.

CLARK: And I was supposed to work for a day and a half, a half a day; we came in at noon to learn how to make out tickets and get acquainted with the stock-- Am I taking too much time?

HENSTELL: Oh, no, no.

CLARK: And the next day we were supposed to sell. Well, people were-- It was the day before the sales for the charge customers, you know, and I said to the foreman, "Look, these people want to be waited on."

"Well," he says, "you know how?"

"Well," I said, "if I don't know how, I won't be any good to you tomorrow." And I sold several hundred dollars' worth of goods. The next morning when I came in hoping to send it out, it was all gone, divided among the regular people, and I raised the roof.

HENSTELL: Because the credit for your sales had been taken by other people.

CLARK: Had been taken by the regular girls. And I just rose the roof. The buyer was sufficiently impressed to keep me, out of all thirty extras. I stayed for five months.

HENSTELL: Now, was May Company--

CLARK: Does that have anything to do with what--

HENSTELL: Oh, yes. Was the May Company then the May Company, or was it still Hamburger's?

CLARK: The Hamburgers had just sold it to the May Company; that was their first sale. [tape recorder turned off] [I stayed on] five months, because I raised so much roof. And in the meantime, I have become very friendly with the buyer that bought children's things, next door to my department.

HENSTELL: What was your department?

CLARK: Young women's clothing, misses' things. And one day, I think she knew that I wasn't the average saleswoman. We used to chat together, and one day--it was not too far from Christmas--she says, "Isn't it awful we have to ride these awful buses at Christmastime. And she was perhaps getting $10,000 a year, I was getting eighteen [dollars] a week: I was driving my car downtown.

And I said, "Where do you live, Miss Noble?"

She said, a block and a half from where I lived.

I said, "Well, I'll take you and bring you home."

Well, one day she said, "You have no business on the floor; you ought to be a buyer." I was there about five months, and she said, "I have a friend that has a very nice shop on Seventh Street across from Robinson's, the Petite

Shop. He needs an up-to-date gal. He's a jobber carrying merchandise from New York, and he sends most of his stuff there."

Well, I went over to see him, and he doubled my salary, and of course I left the May Company.

HENSTELL: So now you're making about thirty-six dollars a week.

CLARK: Yes-- He did better than that: He paid me $300 a month.

HENSTELL: Considerable sum of money at the time.

CLARK: Yes, considerable. Because I was getting bonuses too, you know. And I was there about, oh, almost three years when one of the girls that used to work with me at the May Company came over to work with me over at the Petite Shop, when one of them said, "I wonder what happened to Mr. Mahoney?"--when he stopped in front of the door. And the Hamburgers had just sold to the May Company, and they were buying Blackstone's--you don't remember that; you weren't here--Blackstone's was the Magnin's of the town, down on Ninth and Broadway. And they tried to make a basement store out of it; they lasted just about a year. But the man that sold me the first coats [Ensminger] said to me, "I know that you need a job, Mrs. Clark; if you will think this is a comedown, it's really a challenge: the Orange Belt Emporium in Pomona needs an up-to-date buyer; go out and talk to Mr. Shephard" [one

of the three owners of the Orange Belt Emporium]. Mr. Shephard--

HENSTELL: Excuse me, about what year would this be?

CLARK: It was in, around [the] thirties, 1930.

HENSTELL: So between about 1926 and 1929 or so, you were working--

CLARK: I worked for [Herbert] Schiff in the Petite Shop.

HENSTELL: The Petite Shop, OK.

CLARK: And then also worked for one year-- I did manage to get two trips to New York in-- You don't amount to very much as a buyer until you do. But they closed their doors within a year or so.

HENSTELL: The Petite Shop.

CLARK: No, Blackstone's.

HENSTELL: Blackstone's, I'm sorry.

CLARK: And the man that sold me my first coats said, "You know you need a job, and they need an up-to-date buyer"; so I went out to see Mr. Shephard, and he said he wanted me very much, but he doesn't pay those kind of salaries, neither does he send his buyers to New York. And I needed a job badly, and I finally said to him, "Well, I'll take the job with one consideration: in six months you either pay me what I ask for or you fire me." He said that was good enough, and when I picked up my third check, I got what I'd asked for.

HENSTELL: Obviously, the Depression had begun, which had affected you.

CLARK: No, no, we didn't feel it.

HENSTELL: Not really? Could you tell me a little bit about that, though? You were aware that it--

CLARK: That was still below 1930, and then it was the corporation of three men, and they all three of them left. They sold their interest. Mr. Shephard was one of them.

HENSTELL: This was in Pomona, now.

CLARK: In Pomona. And they [the Orange Belt Emporium's new owners] offered me a job as a sales representative, and I said I didn't like Pomona when I made so much money; I wouldn't like it now. And the man that sold me the first coats-- No, that was before that. When I came out of the Pomona job, I discovered that the man that used to sell me children's clothing from New York was establishing a firm out here, Mr. Golinko, and I went over to see him, and I said, "I'm going to take your line," and he was so surprised he didn't get a chance to say no.

HENSTELL: What was the name of the company?

CLARK: It was called the Ellay. The owner was Golinko. Ellay Manufacturing Company. Well, I stayed with them for three years. In the meantime I had joined the Business and Professional Women's Club of Los Angeles--believe it or not, I just now closed my fiftieth year--I had just finished my

second year as president.

HENSTELL: Now, let me stop you just for a moment. About what years would this be, the early 1930s?

CLARK: 1935.

HENSTELL: About 1935. Do you remember when you first joined the Business and Professional Women's?

CLARK: Fifty years ago, '31.

HENSTELL: So it would be 1931. And you were working for Ellay Manufacturing at that time.

CLARK: Yes, I was working for Ellay Manufacturing, but in 1935 I finished my second term as president.

HENSTELL: Could you tell me a little bit about what the Business and Professional Women's Club was? Who belonged?

CLARK: Well, of course they've always worked for ERA [the Equal Rights Amendment]; they've always worked for women's votes. We've worked for the progression of women in the professions, and we're now working for getting equal salaries for equal performance. Well, at that time I just finished my second term as second president, when they were looking for a member for the [Los Angeles City] Board of Education. And I told them I didn't have time for that. But after three weeks my club insisted, and I said to them, "Well, it's upon your head. I'll run; whether I'll be elected or not is a different story."

HENSTELL: Now, why were they concerned with the board of Education?

CLARK: Well, they thought it was a prestige to the club.

HENSTELL: To have somebody from the club to serve on the board. And you had three children at that point. About how old were they?

CLARK: Well, in '35-- The oldest one is seventy-one. How old would that be?

HENSTELL: Let's see. Forty years ago, approximately; it'd be in their twenties somewhere?

CLARK: Yes, she'd begun to earn her own living; and then I had a son, and then I had a younger daughter.

HENSTELL: Were they in Los Angeles schools at that time? Were they in the Los Angeles city schools?

CLARK: Oh yes.

HENSTELL: Had you been active in the PTA, [parent-teacher association] or any other organizations like that?

CLARK: Well, I always belonged to three PTAs; whenever they were in any school--they were in elementary, junior high, and high school--I always belonged to the PTA.

HENSTELL: Could you tell me a little bit, before you were on the board of education, what your perceptions were, what your feelings were about the Los Angeles city schools?

CLARK: Well, I always demanded of my children that they do their very best. At that time we had pretty good schools, and I don't know what to tell you about that.

HENSTELL: Your feeling was, the quality of education was high?

CLARK: Yes, yes, it was. Well anyway, you asked me, I think, whether I had said, was it true that teachers were better teachers when they were married-- Did you ask me that?

HENSTELL: Yes, that comes later, though, doesn't it?

CLARK: Yes, well, that was while I was campaigning, and that night I was talking to a very disgruntled old bunch of women and men, and I told them that. And the man, a Mr. Gray, who used to be with the Clearing House Association, drove me that night, and he said, "Mrs. Clark, I admire your honesty and your bravery, but why did you have to argue with them about that? You make every mistake in the book. You're throwing votes away like crazy." Well, came the night of the primary, I had about seven thousand more votes than my nearest competitor, which proves to me that they know the difference whether you tell them the truth or not.

HENSTELL: OK. Let's take just a step back to the time the club, the Business and Professional Women, had asked you to run as part of a slate for the city board of education. Could you tell me what your experience was with Los Angeles politics at that time?

CLARK: None! I was as green as grass.

HENSTELL: Did you know who the mayor was?

CLARK: Oh, I think I must have known who the mayor was, but I knew nothing else.

HENSTELL: Did you know, for instance, who your city councilman might have been?

CLARK: I doubt it.

HENSTELL: You paid no attention at all.

CLARK: No, I knew nothing. I always say, in whatever I succeeded, I succeeded not because I was smart but because I was ignorant. I didn't know anything about politics. I didn't know that you were supposed to close your eyes when these funny things were going on. I always asked questions and stopped most of them.

HENSTELL: Did someone, though, when you were running for office-- Did you take the time, did you know who was on the board of education already, and what kinds of--

CLARK: Oh, yes, that was right after the "Four Horsemen," you know.

HENSTELL: No, explain that to me.

CLARK: It was a wild group that elected a bunch of-- They tried to get rid of a crooked business manager.

HENSTELL: Could you explain that?

CLARK: And they did get rid of him;, yes they got another one that was just as bad.

HENSTELL: They were four horsemen; they refer to members of the board?

CLARK: They called them the Four Horsemen, yes.

HENSTELL: How many members of the board were there at that time?

CLARK: Seven.

HENSTELL: There were seven at that time. How would you have characterized it at the point that you ran for office? Liberal, conservative, middle-of-the-road, or split?

CLARK: I?

HENSTELL: No, the board that existed.

CLARK: The board-- The board was nothing.

HENSTELL: Nothing.

CLARK: For instance, they let well enough alone, you know. Just give you an example: I was on the board maybe eight or nine months when an order came in to buy a hundred gas ranges. Now, everybody was beginning to work with electricity, but they were just going along, the way they always have, and I finally said, "How many electric ranges?" None! I said, "Well, from this time on, I move that 50 percent electric and 50 percent gas ranges be bought." That's the way the electric ranges came into our school district.

I tell you another thing that I am very proud of: there was an unwritten law that no black person could teach in a secondary high school in 1935. And Dean [Mary Sinclair] Crawford, the dean of women of USC [University of Southern California], called me one day. Somehow or the other, they came to me because they knew I'd do something about it. And she said, "Mrs. Clark, we have a brilliant young black

man who's just got his doctorate in music. Do you think you can get him into the secondary schools?"

I said, "Consider it done." And we named him the head of the Music Department of Jefferson High School--in their own area, you know. There was no use trying to get him into Los Angeles High School. But that was a beginning, and today there isn't a high school that doesn't have black instructors.

HENSTELL: You mean it by zone area--that Jefferson was in a primarily white--

CLARK: Jefferson at the time was a partially black school.

HENSTELL: As it is now.

CLARK: Yes. [tape recorder turned off]

He came in the secondary high school because of my insistence, and today there isn't a secondary high school that doesn't have black instructors.

HENSTELL: Was there discrimination among the student bodies in Los Angeles schools? There were charges that there was.

CLARK: Well, not over at Jefferson High School--they have so many blacks. And they had a faculty of eighty-one people, and you know, I never allowed anything to go by without finding out what the result of it was. What the result was [was] that when I came over, at lunchtime, there were eighty-one people on the faculty, one black man;

he was having lunch with all the others, very animatedly. And we had transferred two elementary girls over there--they were having a good time with the others--and I said to the girls' vice-principal, Helen Babson, I said, "This seems to have worked out very well."

And she said, "Mrs. Clark, they are behaving with so much dignity and self-respect, we don't even see the color of their skin."

HENSTELL: But was it true at the time that, for instance, black children could not attend Los Angeles High School or Polytechnic [High School] or something like that?

CLARK: Oh yes, children could attend, but there couldn't be any teachers.

HENSTELL: I see. Let's take a step back again to your campaign for the board of education. Now there had been--This was an era of colorful civic figures. Let me ask you just about a couple that you might have run across that you could give me some reaction to.

CLARK: Yes, surely.

HENSTELL: For instance [Rev.] Robert Shuler [of Trinity Methodist Church South]. Had you run into him?

CLARK: The minister? I don't remember what his position was.

HENSTELL: And Frank [L.] Shaw was the mayor at the time.

CLARK: Frank Shaw!

HENSTELL: Yes.

CLARK: That was my ignorance; this is how all this scandal came about. In my ignorance, you know, I had immediately had contact with all the politicians.

HENSTELL: After your election.

CLARK: Yes. So it was Depression time, and my son just came out of high school. So what simply do you do? You ask a friend if they have a job for him. You know, it never occurred to me that there was anything unusual about going to someone who had jobs to give out. And I went in to see him [Joe Shaw] and I said, "Mr. Shaw, my son is having difficulty getting a job."

HENSTELL: Now, was this Joe Shaw or Frank Shaw that you saw?

CLARK: Joe [Joseph E.] Shaw.

HENSTELL: Joe Shaw, OK.

CLARK: Frank wasn't clever enough; it's Joe that was the clever one.

HENSTELL: OK.

CLARK: And he called a fellow who was head of personnel for the Department of Water and Power--

You see, he tried to bring back that crooked business manager, and you might know that a man is crooked, but to prove it is a different thing. But wait your time. One day, Dr. [Louis B.] Travers, who was the director of [Los Angeles city schools'] personnel, came in. [Travers was

assistant superintendent, personnel division--ed.] And he said, "Mrs. Clark, I don't know what we're going to do, but the business manager is trying to bring in a man who's had five convictions for child molestation."

HENSTELL: Who was trying to bring him in?

CLARK: The business manager. He was trying to pay off political debts. And he says, "I don't know what we're going to do."

I said, "Just leave it to me." And in thirty minutes, he was out. I knew that he'd been corrupt, but I had no proof of it until this happened.

HENSTELL: This was in 1935?

CLARK: That was in about 1936 by that time.

HENSTELL: By 1936. And this fellow was the business manager of the school district at that point.

CLARK: Uh-huh.

HENSTELL: And he had tried to bring in--

CLARK: As a head custodian in a junior high school--

HENSTELL: This fellow with five convictions for child molestation.

CLARK: So he was out in five minutes.

HENSTELL: OK. And you replaced this gentleman with a gentleman you had more faith in, did you not? Let me see if I can find it.

CLARK: Replaced whom?

HENSTELL: The business manager.

CLARK: Oh, he [was] replaced [by] Mr. [A. S.] Nibecker, [Jr.]. Mr. Nibecker took his place. [tape recorder turned off]

HENSTELL: Now, we've gone and found these papers, and let me-- The gentleman that you had first been involved with [the business manager] had been fired-- You had been the author of a motion to force his withdrawal. This would be about June of 1936 according to the [Los Angeles] Daily News--

CLARK: I don't remember the dates.

HENSTELL: --that this gentleman had been replaced by Mr. A. S. Nibecker, Jr.--

CLARK: That's correct.

HENSTELL: --who had served as both, who was serving as both the business manager and architect--

CLARK: Correct.

HENSTELL: --for the board of education.

CLARK: A very fine man.

HENSTELL: Now, the architect was particularly important, was it not? Because of the building program?

CLARK: Oh, very.

HENSTELL: Could you tell me a little bit about that?

CLARK: Well, there were things going on about school buildings, you know, that weren't quite up-to-date. I

still have a very good friend, Col. Daniel Boone, in South Carolina, in Myrtle Beach, who was in [federal] internal security. And he was sent out here to see what was going on with the school buildings, and he was sent to me. And I helped him make the investigation. Mr. Nibecker was a 100 percent honorable, honest man, and they were trying their best to get him just confined as architect and not allow him to have the business manager [responsibilities]. But finally, Mr. [John F.] Dalton, the man that was fighting for it, came over and shook hands; he says, "I'm licked."

HENSTELL: This is another member of the board.

CLARK: He's the one that was the cause of my naming Joe Shaw.

HENSTELL: Now, just let me double-check this according to the newspapers at the time. There was about $22 million involved in the building funds that the architect oversaw, is that correct?

CLARK: Yes.

HENSTELL: I guess that some of this or a good deal of it would come about as a result of the 1933 earthquake.

CLARK: I don't know.

HENSTELL: It was just a general school building fund.

CLARK: Yes.

HENSTELL: I see. And the-- There it was possible or, let

me just ask you, was it possible or did you believe or did you know that there might have been corruption in the way that these funds were spent or that people claim--

CLARK: I think that's the reason they sent Colonel Boone out here.

HENSTELL: From?

CLARK: From Washington. He was an internal security--

HENSTELL: With the United States government.

CLARK: Yes. He's living now in Myrtle Beach in a mansion.

HENSTELL: Now what would be-- Why would the government--

CLARK: Well, because they were suspicious that federal money was being mishandled.

HENSTELL: Oh, I see what you're saying; because federal money was involved in building the building. I see. And he [Boone] came out here. And what were the results of his investigations?

CLARK: I think he stopped some of the things that would have happened, because there was federal money involved, you know.

HENSTELL: I see. Now, when you came on the board of education, you knew none of this--when you were first elected to the board in 1935?

CLARK: Oh, I knew nothing. I was as green as grass.

HENSTELL: Did you believe that the school system would be relatively well administered?

CLARK: Yes! But then I saw the funny things that were going on, and I'd ask questions.

HENSTELL: Now, you were actually a registered Republican at the time, were you not?

CLARK: At the time I was; I didn't become a Democrat until the second term of Franklin Roosevelt.

HENSTELL: And so I would assume that if somebody had asked you at the time, you would probably have identified yourself as a fairly conservative person. Would that be-- ?

CLARK: Oh, I don't know [that] I ever was conservative, anyway.

HENSTELL: OK. And the board was primarily Republican and conservative at the time.

CLARK: Yes, yes. I think that most of the-- I think [Jack] Dalton was a Democrat; he was the president of the [Los Angeles] Typographical Union, and he's the one that was trying to bring the business manager back in spite of the fact that there was this charge of five convictions of child molestation.

HENSTELL: Do you know why he was trying to do that?

CLARK: You slap my back and I'll slap yours, you know.

HENSTELL: There was a close relationship between organized labor and the Shaw regime.

CLARK: Yes, he wanted to pay back because he helped him, perhaps, in some way.

HENSTELL: Did it surprise you that in 1938 organized labor supported Shaw in the recall?

CLARK: Nothing surprised me; I helped in the recall.

HENSTELL: Yes, but organized labor was opposed to the recall, wasn't it?

CLARK: I don't remember. It's possible, because he was a leader of one of the main unions. But Joe Shaw had indicated that if I would vote for the business manager to come back, he'd give my son a job.

HENSTELL: Now, you said just a moment ago that in all innocence you had gone to [Joe] Shaw and asked him--

CLARK: Yes. Just let me say, wouldn't you have done the same thing if you didn't know any better?

HENSTELL: OK.

CLARK: He was a man that was in a position to give--

HENSTELL: Now we should say, I think, for the record--

CLARK: But he [telephoned the head of personnel for the Department of Water and Power, who] said, "Oh, yes, I have a job for him."

And [Shaw] said, "We're going to wait a little bit on that."

That let me know that--you know.

HENSTELL: Before he gave your son the job.

CLARK: Yes. So I told Jack Dalton about it, and we laughed about it; he knew all about it. But when he [was]

persistent, the fourth or the fifth time, to bring this fellow back, I finally lost my temper, and I said, "Mr. Dalton, are they trying to bribe you, too?"

And he said, "Who's trying to bribe you?"

I said, "You know very well; we laughed about it" --because I had told him about it.

He says, "Who's trying to bribe you?"

I said, "The man is not going to thank you if you make me name him."

"WHO is trying to bribe you?"

I said, "Joe Shaw."

Well, the press, you know, every paper always has a press around. They just vanished, looking for telephones.

The next day the headlines, which you saw--

HENSTELL: Now, this was all during an open meeting of the board of education.

CLARK: Uh-huh, it was all in an open board meeting of the board of education.

HENSTELL: Could you tell me, when you had seen Shaw how the bribe was offered, how the discussion went?

CLARK: Oh, he didn't offer it. He just let me know by the conversation that he was in no hurry to give John [John Grant Clark, Jr., her son] a job unless I approved what he was trying to do. He didn't say to me, "If you vote for him," but that was understood, you know.

HENSTELL: If I'm not mistaken, there was a sum of money involved, wasn't there?

CLARK: Money involved-- By whom?

HENSTELL: Let me find the--

CLARK: My God, you did do a lot of work.

HENSTELL: Oh, yes. This is in June of 1936 that this event would occur. This actually occurred on the night of June 9, 1936, that you declared--and I'm quoting here from the Daily News of June 10--that you declared at a meeting of the school board that Shaw had offered you bribes to favor a City Hall aspirant to the office of business manager, that the newspaper quotes you as also saying that Mr. Hanson ["Buck"] Hathaway, the editor of--

CLARK: Hathaway, yes.

HENSTELL: --of Parade magazine, had offered you $10,000 in help.

CLARK: It wasn't Hathaway; it was Mr. Gray. I made a mistake. He came to me one day, and he said, "Mrs. Clark, --that was in the middle of the fight [the attempted-bribery incident]--"I have the first $10,000 to run you for Congress." I said, "Mr. Gray, you don't want me in Congress; you want me off the school board. And the answer is no."

HENSTELL: Which Mr. Gray was this?

CLARK: Mr. Gray was a member of the Clearing House Association.

HENSTELL: And do you think that he was acting on behalf of the Shaw administration?

CLARK: Well, of course he must have been friendly with them.

HENSTELL: Just for the record, and please, check me if you feel that this is an incorrect summation, but you said that Joe Shaw was Frank Shaw's brother; Frank Shaw was the mayor of the city of Los Angeles. Joe Shaw had no official position with the city. [Chronological Record of Los Angeles City Officials, 1850-1938, shows that Joseph Shaw held the position of secretary to mayor from 1933 through 1939--ed.]

CLARK: But he ran the town.

HENSTELL: But he ran the town. Did you ever hear the expression "the corner pocket"?

CLARK: Sounds familiar. I forget.

HENSTELL: That his office was in the corner of City Hall and that it was generally assumed that if you wanted to get anything done, you had to go to his office?

CLARK: Yes; well, I just went because I thought-- Well, I knew all these people, and they had jobs to give, and in all my ignorance, you know.

HENSTELL: So you accused Mr. Shaw of offering the bribe; the next day, Mr. Shaw denied it.

CLARK: Yes.

HENSTELL: Well, I have the feeling that you were laughing through this whole episode. As a matter of fact, the newspapers say that you were.

CLARK: Oh, yes. Well, you know, it was very interesting. I immediately got a call from the attorney general there, district attorney, what is it?

HENSTELL: Buron Fitts.

CLARK: Well, it was one of his men.

HENSTELL: Blayney Matthews [chief investigator for the district attorney]?

CLARK: The man that became the attorney for the Forest Lawn cemetery [Forest Lawn Memorial Park].

HENSTELL: Yes. Were you involved in that episode; were you involved in that Forest Lawn episode as well?

CLARK: Oh, no, no. He's one of the men that interviewed me for the grand jury.

HENSTELL: I see, now, Gene [Ugene U.] Blalock?

CLARK: Blalock--we're still on a first-name basis. I don't know if he's still living, is he?

HENSTELL: I don't know. Let's be clear about this, it was Ugene--

CLARK: Gene interviewed me as a second man, but--

HENSTELL: Let me just get this down for the tape. This was Ugene Blalock, whose full name was U.[gene] U. Blalock. And he was an assistant district attorney to District

Attorney Buron Fitts. See, then the people on the other side of the mike know all these names. OK, so Gene Blalock--

CLARK: He was one of the men that interviewed me. And you know, they saw that if they couldn't bring the business manager back, they could bring back, they tried to bring back a man who had been a disadvantaged councilman. (He couldn't run again on his record, his record was so bad.) And I said in the middle of it, I said, "Oh, Mr. Blalock, I forgot the name, but you know the man--"

He said, "Mrs. Clark, we are asking the questions."

All right. So I went on, and in the middle of my conversation, I remember that man's name, and I said, "Oh, incidentally, it was Mr. So-and-so" (I forget his name now).

His [Blalock's] face was so funny. He turned to the grand jury; he said, "Any more questions for Mrs. Clark? No more questions? Thank you for coming."

HENSTELL: What we should say is that right after you made these charges about Joe Shaw, the grand jury investigated him.

CLARK: Yes, yes, and I only had one story to tell.

HENSTELL: Shaw's story came out, and you replied to it, the newspapers quote you as saying, "Joe Shaw is a deliberate liar." That's what you said at the time.

CLARK: Oh, sure he is; I don't mince words.

HENSTELL: Now, could you tell me about this lady, Gertrude--

CLARK: Mrs., yes--

HENSTELL: [Gertrude H.] Rounsavelle.

CLARK: Rounsavelle. Her husband was an insurance man.

HENSTELL: She was another member of the board of education.

CLARK: Yes, and she was a PTA woman. Her husband was an insurance man. They're both dead now. Let them rest in peace.

HENSTELL: But she was quite conservative.

CLARK: Oh yes, she was one of Joe Shaw's friends.

HENSTELL: Was it ironic that some of these people who were quite conservative were so corrupt? Did you ever think of that as an irony?

CLARK: I don't know what was the matter-- I only knew one thing. You know, I didn't know how to-- I only knew one thing, I did things I don't even [inaudible]. As I say, all my successes are the result of my ignorance.

HENSTELL: OK, we're going to stop for just a second here while I turn the tape over. We're almost at the end.

CLARK: You know, I must tell you something interesting about Joe Shaw. After I left, you know I became a commissioner on the first County Housing Authority (John Anson Ford nominated me). Also, I had a city and a county job. And then five months before my school board was over,

Governor [Culbert] Olson named me chief of the Division of Industrial Welfare for the state, so for five months I held a city, county, and a state job. Now I was going to tell you something, and I forgot what it was.

HENSTELL: About Joe Shaw.

CLARK: Oh, yes. So after I left office I had done a great deal of volunteer work for the National Foundation [for Infantile Paralysis] March of Dimes in all three jobs. I was always the chairman for schools, public and parochial, while I was on the school board; I was always the state chairman for state employees--they didn't ask me, they just named me--and I was the county chair. Anyway, see, I forgot again what I was going to tell you. I'm a little bit weary tonight. Oh yes: so when I came out of office, the National Foundation offered me the directorship of the Women's Division for Los Angeles County.

HENSTELL: National Foundation of-- ?

CLARK: National Foundation March of Dimes.

HENSTELL: March of Dimes.

CLARK: Yes, a job I held for twenty years. I raised $8 million for them. What was there about that remarkable?

HENSTELL: Did Joe Shaw become involved in that in some way?

CLARK: Oh, no. Once in a while I had to take a chairman to lunch, you know, one of my volunteer chairmen. So one of the days I took a chairman, and I have this awful habit: I

may meet you on the street and I don't see you. I don't look to the right or left; I just look straight ahead. So this woman and I sat down in a booth, and we ordered lunch, and pretty soon a waiter comes with a martini. And I said, "Well, I didn't order any liquor."

"Oh no, this is from the gentleman across the aisle." And I look over--it's Joe Shaw. I said, "Return it to him and tell him to enjoy it." [tape ends]

TAPE NUMBER: I, SIDE TWO

OCTOBER 21, 1981

HENSTELL: I have a few points here. The problem is sometimes that I know things, and you know things, but we have to get it down. So you'd been on the board of education about a year and a half; you'd managed to get yourself directly involved in a heated discussion with the Shaw administration, which was then running Los Angeles; but you obviously must have met some people who were sympathetic to your efforts. John Anson Ford might have been one.

CLARK: Oh, well, certainly. He promoted me, he nominated me as commissioner of the [County] Housing Authority.

HENSTELL: Can you tell me how you first met him and what your impression of him was?

CLARK: Well, I always considered him a very fine and outstanding, honorable man. I don't know when I met him, but we met through political meetings, you know. He's a wonderful man, honorable as a man can be.

HENSTELL: Yes, and he was at that time a county supervisor.

CLARK: Yes.

HENSTELL: And he had run for mayor and been defeated in a rather vicious campaign. Were you aware of that campaign at all?

CLARK: I was-- Well, I'll tell you something. I'll tell

you, I was very devoted to Mayor [Fletcher] Bowron. And I heard that John Anson Ford was going to run, and I was in public relations to reelect Mayor Bowron. That's the only time he was elected in the primaries. And I had to finally-- I didn't care where I got votes: right, left, in the middle. And nobody knew I was working, but when I lined up everybody, I had to get John Anson Ford out of the race. And I went over to see him, and I'm a great admirer of his. I think he is the most honorable and constructive public servant that ever held office. But I just felt that Mayor Bowron was entitled to another term. And Mr. Ford said to me, "Well, Mrs. Clark, I have such-and-such a group that backs me."

"No, Mr. Ford, they're signed up for Mr. Bowron."

"But I have so-and-so."

"No, Mr. Ford. They've all signed up for Mr. Bowron."

I finally got to a very fine minister we had, I can't think of his name, a conservative, very fine man--

HENSTELL: Mr. [Dr. A. M.] Wilkinson?

CLARK: No, short name. Well, I said, "I have his"-- They were very great friends. "Oh," I said, "No, Mr. Ford, they are signed up for Mr. Bowron."

He got very mad at me, but he got over it.

HENSTELL: Now, this would have been about 1941, '42.

CLARK: Oh, a long time ago, yes.

HENSTELL: OK, but you had met Mr. Ford prior to being elected--

CLARK: Oh, yes.

HENSTELL: --to the board of education?

CLARK: Oh, yes, yes. I knew Mr. Ford; I knew Lois, his wife.

HENSTELL: That would have been about 1933, something like that?

CLARK: Oh, yes. Not '33, but around '35, '36.

HENSTELL: Thirty-five, '36. OK. Now, when were you appointed to the County Housing Authority?

CLARK: In 1937.

HENSTELL: Nineteen thirty-seven. OK. Could you tell me a little bit about the background, what was the Housing Authority then?

CLARK: Well, the Housing Authority had five [commissioners]; I was the only woman. It had Mr. Dockweiler [chairman], it had a--

HENSTELL: [John Francis Dockweiler,] who later became district attorney?

CLARK: [No,] Isidore Dockweiler [his father], you know. It had a Mr.--oh, what was the name of the contractor, very important, very fine man?-- [William A. Simpson]

HENSTELL: Sorry, I can't help you there.

CLARK: And then it had a Democratic man [Robert Wayne Burns].

There were five of us; I can't remember who the fifth is [W. S. Kellogg]. I was the only woman. And they sent me to Mexico representing the county, to an international housing and town planning congress, and I thought they were trying to get me out of the way, and I didn't want to go. I said, "No, you are trying to send me away"-- You see, the thing that I insisted on on every project we built--we built three, for slum clearance, you know--that we have a nursery school and adult education center. And there was a third one that we were building [Carmelitos project, Long Beach], and I wasn't at all sure about that. And this contractor promised me that we wouldn't have a vote until I got back.

HENSTELL: On including these elements in it, an adult education [center], a nursery school, in the plan.

CLARK: Yes, yes. But when I came back I heard that there was no room; I had to make a choice: adult education center and nursery school or doors on the closets in the Mexican [one]. And I said, "Well, let 'em hang curtains." But we found enough money for both.

HENSTELL: Where were these three projects that you built during your tenure? What were the projects that were built during your tenure?

CLARK: Oh, three great big, county-- They were all in the county. I don't remember their names. [the Maravilla

project on Brooklyn Avenue in East Los Angeles; the Carmelitos project, Long Beach; and Harbor Hills, Lomita--ed.] The Mexican one, the biggest and most elaborate one [Carmelitos], we had to wreck completely. The customers, the tenants just wrecked the place. That was after I was off.

HENSTELL: But the purpose of the Housing Authority was slum clearance and building of low-cost housing?

CLARK: Right.

HENSTELL: Was the financing local, or [was it] state relief agency, federal?

CLARK: I think combined.

HENSTELL: And each member of the authority served at the discretion of the--

CLARK: Nobody got a dime.

HENSTELL: But you were appointed by the County Board of Supervisors.

CLARK: Yes. Nobody got a dime. But I served, because I was asked to.

HENSTELL: Now, there was another famous individual associated with Mr. Ford, who was asked from private business to participate in county government, and that would be Clifford Clinton.

CLARK: Clifford Clinton. Clifford Clinton, are you a friend of his?

HENSTELL: No.

CLARK: Clifford Clinton claims a great deal of credit for things that he didn't do. Clifford Clinton-- After I named Joe Shaw, Clifford Clinton was going to verify some of my charges. And he hired a police lieutenant by the name of [Harry] Raymond. And one day Raymond steps on his starter and is blown out of the car. I don't know whether the man-- It didn't kill him, but I think it injured him terribly. And the public relations man put in by the Shaws for the board of education came in to see me-- He's dead now. He was put in by the Shaws. He had something against his record, and he couldn't get a job, so they put him on the board of education. Nice guy. So he came to me, and he said, "Mrs. Clark, we are so worried about you." (I was fighting the Shaws at the time.) He said, "Look what happened to Lieutenant Raymond."

I said to him, "I write myself a registered letter once a week. And I put down <u>everything</u> I hear. It goes unopened in my safe-deposit box. And if anything happens to me, they'll know exactly where to look for it." Well, I didn't write any letters, and I didn't own a safe-deposit box, but they didn't know that.

HENSTELL: For the record, the name of the police lieutenant is Harry Raymond.

CLARK: Harry Raymond, yes, that's Lieutenant Raymond.

HENSTELL: He was an ex-, --He wasn't-- He was just a private detective at that time. He had been in the Los Angeles Police Department, he'd been the police chief at Venice.

CLARK: But he was crippled, wasn't he?

HENSTELL: No, he was just kind of injured. He took quite a bit of shrapnel, but he wasn't killed.

CLARK: I think he was very badly injured.

HENSTELL: No, he lived to a ripe old age and loved to boast about his wounds.

CLARK: You see, you learn awfully fast to protect yourself. Even no matter how ignorant you are, as I was-- I was ignorant as I could be--

HENSTELL: So you think [the public relations man] was bringing you a message from the Shaw administration.

CLARK: Well, I don't know whether he did or not, but, anyway, it was certainly inspired [by the Shaws]. So many things happened. For instance, a teacher by the name of [Jane] Maxwell, who taught at [John] Marshall High School-- I never saw [her] in my life, but you know, among all these men, there's always one decent man. And she calls me and she says, "Mrs. Clark, you're going to get an invitation to a yachting party, and it's going to be very flattering. Don't you go. You'll come back either very compromised or not come back at all."

And I said, "Oh, Miss Maxwell, things like that only happen in the movies."

She says, "Well, I've said all that I'm going to say."

Two days later, the man that was the head of finance for my ticket came in to invite me, and unfortunately, I have no poker face; and he must have read in my face what I thought, because the invitation was never renewed. When I think of Chief Davis, you know, not the last one--

HENSTELL: James Edgar Davis.

CLARK: Jim Davis.

HENSTELL: Jim Davis. What about him?

CLARK: He was part of the outfit. One day I came in from a trip-- I was in the wholesale business then, and the phone rings, and it's Jim Davis. "Mrs. Clark, I know how you love San Francisco."

I said, "Yes, I do, chief."

"Well, I'm going up there in a couple days; how would you like to go along?"

I said, "Chief, I just got back from there."

HENSTELL: What do you think he was suggesting?

CLARK: Nothing, he knew that he was off!

HENSTELL: Yes, but I mean, why the phone call?

CLARK: No, he didn't dare go any further. He knew me by the sound of my voice. But I mean, you protect yourself:

you have to learn to protect yourself, you know.

HENSTELL: I see.

CLARK: And I learned very fast.

HENSTELL: Could you tell me a little bit more about Clifford Clinton? You said he took credit for things he didn't do.

CLARK: I tell you, I think he was a very decent man, very fine man. But he claimed that he cleaned up City Hall by 1940. And [Fletcher] Bowron took it over in '38, and he cleaned it up right then and there, you know. Clinton didn't do anything to clean up City Hall. Bowron did it in 1938.

HENSTELL: But certainly he was one of the first people to make a public issue of protected vice and gambling in the city?

CLARK: Well, he perhaps did, but why didn't he do something about it? Why did he leave it to poor simpleminded Margarete Clark?

HENSTELL: Well, now, he did form C.I.V.I.C. [Citizens' Independent Vice Investigation Committee].

CLARK: Oh, did he do anything with it?

HENSTELL: Yes, he organized the recall.

CLARK: He organized the recall, but he didn't do anything until after I named Joe Shaw.

HENSTELL: I see what you're saying: but you feel that your

naming of Joe Shaw began the whole movement.

CLARK: It began the whole thing.

HENSTELL: I see, I see.

CLARK: It began the whole thing, and if you'll investigate you'll find that out. There was nothing done about a recall until--

HENSTELL: The next year.

CLARK: The next year.

HENSTELL: Which would be 1937.

CLARK: Yes.

HENSTELL: Did you participate in C.I.V.I.C.?

CLARK: No. No, I just minded my own business.

HENSTELL: Did you participate when the recall--after the Raymond bombing of January 1938?

CLARK: I didn't do anything about it, except that I--Of course, everybody knew I was for the recall. But I didn't make any speeches or anything of that sort.

HENSTELL: When did you first meet Judge Bowron?

CLARK: Judge Bowron? Not until he was elected. I had nothing to do with his selection or with his election, nothing. All I was anxious of was to get rid of the Shaws, and we happened to get a good man.

HENSTELL: You made a little bit of an allusion, but could you perhaps tell me a bit more of your impression of Frank Shaw?

CLARK: Of Frank Shaw? Frank Shaw was a happy-go-lucky--He'd pay you compliments, and I never suspected him, you know, until after a while, of doing the things he did. Not until Joe Shaw put me wise [about his] putting a price on everything. I was so green, you just don't believe how green I was. I had nothing to do with politics before, you know and--

HENSTELL: You seem to have found out fast.

CLARK: I had to learn fast.

HENSTELL: Did your husband, being with a newspaper and a crusading newspaper at that, the Herald, did he serve as a--perhaps give you information?

CLARK: He resented my mentioning that I had any connection with him.

HENSTELL: Why?

CLARK: He didn't want me to take advantage, you know, get any sympathy through him. He said, "You stand on your own two legs; don't involve me in anything like that."

HENSTELL: But did he support you in your activities?

CLARK: He took no position.

HENSTELL: But certainly he didn't insist that you stay home and not be--

CLARK: No, but he didn't--pro or con.

HENSTELL: Did he vote for you, do you think?

CLARK: I hope he did! [laughter]

HENSTELL: So you didn't get any particular attention from the Herald.

CLARK: Oh, no. No, indeed. I had to stand on my own two legs.

HENSTELL: OK. Now, so--

CLARK: And I think the reason I was elected is because I told the people the truth. When they asked me something-- Now, I'm going to tell you something.

HENSTELL: What is that?

CLARK: You know, in 1935, if a teacher wanted to take a cocktail or light a cigarette, she had to hide in the closet. I read about that, and I heard from teachers that objected to it. Well, the ATOLA gave a big banquet. The Affiliated Teachers' Organization [of Los Angeles], ATOLA, gave a big banquet for the newly elected people, and when I got through with it, I lit a cigarette.

HENSTELL: At the banquet.

CLARK: At the banquet. [laughter] But I thought I was going to free them. Now, I have here something-- May I just take a moment to read this to you?

HENSTELL: Please. Would you tell me again what that is, what you're reading from?

CLARK: Well, it tells you of my being elected to the different offices.

HENSTELL: What is this actually from?

CLARK: This is Delta Kappa Gamma, an international society of educators [a Delta Kappa Gamma Alpha Chapter publication, 1969, containing biographies of members--ed].

HENSTELL: And you were given the first membership.

CLARK: I got the first honorary state membership. Now, I got all those three jobs, and I was the only member not representing an organization to sit on a national juvenile delinquency panel with thirty-eight members, named by Attorney General Tom [Thomas Campbell] Clark in 1946. I thought that might interest you. Juvenile delinquency panel-- Oh yes, Time magazine mentioned it twice. "And Mrs. Roosevelt wrote a feature column about her work during her first visit to the White House." She invited me to lunch three times. "In 1945 she was made manager of the Women's Division of the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis March of Dimes, a post she held until 1964." I put in twenty campaigns. And then they give me a lot of hot air, you know, which I don't care for. But here's one thing that you might be interested in: "In recognition of Margarete's signal success in retailing and merchandising, she was elected president of the Business and Professional Women's Club of Los Angeles. She was made a life member of the Parent-Teachers Association and was also the recipient of an honorary master of business administration degree from Woodbury College [now Woodbury University, Los

Angeles]. "In September 1966"--and this is amazing--"she of German birth"--and a liberal Democrat--"she of German birth"--where is that?

HENSTELL: Lost your place there.

CLARK: --"received the Good Citizenship Medal for Foreign-born Americans presented by the Daughters of the American Revolution."

HENSTELL: Do they not check too carefully, do you think?

CLARK: They investigated me carefully, [laughter] but I consider that a great honor. And then a speaker speaks of-- A reporter in San Francisco (that's when I became an Industrial Welfare chief), "recounts an experience with Margarete Clark, who thrives on threats: 'I know, for I saw her smile and heard her answer the other day to a man threatening her with an FBI investigation, because she told him he would have to pay the minimum wage set by law to his women employees. "I did not make the law," she said, her black eyes flashing, "I administer it. That's what I'm here for. Call in the FBI if you like--it's been done before. But I'd advise you to save yourself the bother--just pay the minimum wage and we'll get along." Smilingly she explained to me that the recalcitrant employer objected to what he called her "Teutonic accent." "I am of Teutonic birth," she said. "I came to this country in 1907. I am an American citizen, and I believe the first test of good

citizenship is to obey the laws of the country, and that applies equally to the adopted and native-born."'" And it goes on, and so on.

HENSTELL: You were, I don't know what the proper word would be, but certainly a feminist-- or would you describe yourself as a feminist?

CLARK: Oh yes, feminine, definitely.

HENSTELL: In the 1930s, you were campaigning for a number of issues that were then considerably controversial. For instance, you publicly supported sex education in the schools.

CLARK: I introduced it.

HENSTELL: Oh, you did. Could you tell me something about that?

CLARK: Yes. I heard about little girls thirteen or fourteen who became pregnant, got syphilis, got gonorrhea, and I said, that has to stop. And I introduced-- I wish I could show you my clippings; they're up in Sacramento. I have a book like this [gestures indicating thickness], and I introduced a resolution-- I was backed by judges, by the clergy, by women's clubs, and I was hoping that it would take on a phase that would make children think before indulging. Today they are teaching them the techniques.

HENSTELL: That's not exactly what you had in mind.

CLARK: It's certainly not what I had in mind. That's

certainly not what I had in mind.

HENSTELL: You said at the time, this would be 1937, "We must avoid scaring young persons about sex, for fear is a deadly enemy of healthfulness and happiness. Proper, healthy sex attitudes must be developed; wrong mental attitudes must be avoided" [Daily News, 5 August 1937, p.6].

CLARK: That's right.

HENSTELL: And you got quite a bit of reaction from this.

CLARK: Yes, and you know, it tickled me-- Just a few years ago, that was in 1936?

HENSTELL: Thirty-seven.

CLARK: Thirty-seven. I recently read that a Dr. [Mary Steichen] Calderone introduced sex education twenty-five years ago.

HENSTELL: What sort of program did you actually introduce in the schools? What kind of program was it, a regular course or a part of a curriculum?

CLARK: Yes, a regular course. At least an hour a week in which a child would be instructed of the dangers, scare them to death, I hoped.

HENSTELL: Scare them to death, you hoped?

CLARK: But unfortunately, what's happening today is sad.

HENSTELL: But at the same time you were also debating publicly that teachers should be allowed to have children.

CLARK: Oh, you bet.

HENSTELL: Now, tell me a little bit about that debate.

CLARK: Well, I'll tell you about that. I went into this meeting, where Mr. Gray was carrying me in [he drove her] and they thought that when married teachers are hired, they ought to be fired, because it takes a job away from another teacher! Which has nothing to do with it, you know.

HENSTELL: No, I'm sorry, I don't quite understand that. When teachers are hired--

CLARK: They think that if a teacher gets married she should drop out and give a chance to a teacher that's not married. And I told them right then and there that I think that a teacher married and having children would make a better teacher. And Mr. Gray said to me, "Oh, Mrs. Clark, why do you make such a remark?" (Because I'll tell you, in the primary I got approximately seven thousand more votes than my nearest competitor.)

HENSTELL: You seem to be implying that the feeling was that most teachers then were bachelors, or at least the female--

CLARK: They were forced to. You know, there were places where they were fired if they got married. It was awful what teachers had to put up with. They had to avoid having a boyfriend; it was awful. In some districts, in some small towns, they had to live with a board member and pay their board there--oh, awful conditions. And I went

up to Sacramento, and I couldn't wipe that out, but at that time, teachers were working for $200 a month. And I lobbied through a $375 minimum salary for teachers (that was very early), and I also lobbied through a tenure bill. My daughter will never forgive me for that.

HENSTELL: Why is that?

CLARK: Oh, she thinks we have so many rotten teachers. But if a principal doesn't understand in three years whether a teacher's competent or not, then she shouldn't be a principal.

HENSTELL: There had been no tenure system, then, in L.A. schools prior to that?

CLARK: Many of them. And it was very funny--

HENSTELL: No, no, wait a minute, let me be clear about this: there was no tenure procedure?

CLARK: They were fighting it.

HENSTELL: They were opposed to tenure?

CLARK: Yes, opposed to tenure.

HENSTELL: The teachers, I mean?

CLARK: Not teachers. But I went up-- The ATOLA aide took me up to Sacramento, and John G. Clark, you remember him, former [superior court] judge?

HENSTELL: No, sorry.

CLARK: He was chairman of that committee. And he listened to all the people objecting to tenure until five minutes

to twelve, until the public relations man for the ATOLA said, "Now, look, it's five minutes to twelve, and we have to have a little time, and we [all know] now [that] we'd like to speak on this."

I had taken notes of what these superintendents from some backwoods counties and others had said, and I turned to them, and I said, "Did you say so-and-so?"

Well, he couldn't deny it.

I said, "Did you take so-and-so? Well," I said, "No wonder you object to tenure."

But they couldn't get a vote; they didn't get a vote.

HENSTELL: About when would this be?

CLARK: Oh, I was on the school board about a year or two.

HENSTELL: So about '36, '37, somewhere around there.

CLARK: Yes.

HENSTELL: And there was no tenure procedure in L.A. city schools then at the time.

CLARK: Not that I know of. They were fighting tenure.

HENSTELL: And this was the first tenure procedure to go through.

CLARK: That was the first one that was legalized.

HENSTELL: What were some of the other problems of the school system, outside of corruption and curriculum?

CLARK: Oh, my Lord. Just to explain to you the likes and dislikes that a principal had in stopping a teacher. We

had a brilliant woman out at the [Los Angeles] City College, you know, when it was on Vermont. She was a counselor, Victoria McAlman. Her brother was a famous British journalist. Because the principal was such a reactionary idiot, he kept her on a salary of an elementary teacher's counselor. Well, not after thirty days after I was there. But some of those unfair things, you know, and when any of them came to my attention, I straightened them out.

HENSTELL: Were there any other general problems that the system faced at that time?

CLARK: Such as?

HENSTELL: Oh, segregation or curriculum or--I don't know.

CLARK: No, no, except that they were-- The progressive teachers were shunned by the reactionary. We had more reactionary principals than you can shake a stick at. Sickening, to me.

HENSTELL: Did you have a majority, a voting majority, on the board, which would listen to you?

CLARK: I very many times carried them. In this article that you are going to copy, you're going to see that I carried most of them with me.

HENSTELL: Even though they might not have wanted to, if they--

CLARK: They didn't dare. Once in a while, one of them

would buck me; but no, I was never afraid to fight.

HENSTELL: When was the first time that you met Eleanor Roosevelt? Was it at this period of time?

CLARK: [laughter] I must tell you about that. I was a Republican when Hoover was elected and defeated. In the second term of Roosevelt, I, as a Republican, went out to fight for him.

HENSTELL: For him. This would be 1936.

CLARK: Yes. And a member of the Social Security Board, a charming woman, the widow of a federal judge from Mississippi, came out here to see Jack [John B.] Elliott, who was our national committeeman out here. And he said to her, "You ought to go over there to that board of education and meet that Republican. She's working her head off for Franklin Roosevelt."

So she called me and asked me if she could come and see me, and she did. And my interest in the schools were nursery schools and adult education; those were the things that I pushed hard. And we talked about it, and she said to me, "Oh, Mrs. Clark, how I wish Mrs. Roosevelt could hear you say that."

And I, just trying to be funny, said, "You know, she can; I'll be in Washington in two weeks."

And one week later came a telegram inviting me to the first luncheon; she invited me twice more. She was a remarkable woman.

HENSTELL: How so?

CLARK: How so? She could discuss anything you mentioned intelligently and have the facts to prove it. The first time I was there, there were eight women altogether, and [I] being a Republican was seated to her right. I never was, after that, after I became a Democrat. But as she was saying goodbye to everyone at the door, she turned to me and she said, "Mrs. Clark, would you like to talk to me?"

I said, "Yes, I would, Mrs. Roosevelt."

So she took me upstairs to her living quarters, to her sitting room, in a rickety old elevator, and we chatted for a little while, and I think that's the reason she invited me again and again, and I appreciated-- She was a remarkable woman.

HENSTELL: What did you talk about?

CLARK: What did we talk about? Oh, Roosevelt's politics and how we could convince the public to go along with him.

HENSTELL: Now why did you, as a Republican, become associated with the Democrats in 1936?

CLARK: I stayed a Republican the first--the second term, but I turned a Democrat.

HENSTELL: In 1940?

CLARK: I felt I could do more for the cause.

HENSTELL: But what was the cause? What attracted you to

the Democratic party with the Roosevelts?

CLARK: Well, for one thing, I think that Franklin Roosevelt kept this country from going communist or fascist; I think he held on to democracy. And I think he deserves a lot of credit for that, because the country could have gone any old way, they were so desperate, you know. I'll never forget the bank holiday he had. Do you remember that? I had an engagement in the beauty shop that day, and I didn't have any money to pay her. [laughter] I had some money, but I didn't want to let go of it, you know.

HENSTELL: But you supported it.

CLARK: She trusted me.

HENSTELL: You supported those policies.

CLARK: I think he was a great man, and I think one of the main-- A reason he was a great man was because he was married to a great woman. And I hate this horrible creature-- I haven't seen the book [Lorena Hickock by Doris Faber] reviewed once, and I don't think it's selling anyplace. I don't know whether you noticed that, about six, eight months ago, in which she [Eleanor Roosevelt] was accused of being a lesbian; did you read that book?

HENSTELL: No, I didn't.

CLARK: It made me furious. I don't think the book sold. Nobody ever reviewed it [the book was extensively reviewed nationwide--ed.]; it was only mentioned once. She was very

friendly with the secretary of Franklin Roosevelt. I tell you, people have such filthy minds, it's awful, awful. Everybody wants to think the worst of everything.

HENSTELL: Is that an experience out of the politics of that day, do you think?

CLARK: Yes.

HENSTELL: We're now somewhere in the late 1930s--

CLARK: Now, I'm hoping that you are-- Are all these letters out of the Times?

HENSTELL: I'm sorry, these?

CLARK: Yes, all you read.

HENSTELL: Actually, these are out of the Daily News.

CLARK: Because you know, I was very funny when I was fighting City Hall. Manchester Boddy, of course, supported me, as did, amazingly, Judge [Harlan] Palmer of the Hollywood Citizen News. [Palmer] wrote editorials all the time, and so did Manchester. So did Judge Palmer; he'd write, "one lone woman" or "exceptional," and so on. Anyway--but the Times always quoted me accurately; the Examiner always referred to me as "that woman." [laughter]

HENSTELL: Why do you think that was?

CLARK: I don't know. Ask them. [laughter]

HENSTELL: The Times doesn't-- Did you have any contact with Harry Chandler at the time?

CLARK: Oh, yes, he [Norman Chandler] was a most fair and

unbiased man. I never knew Harry Chandler; he was dead.

HENSTELL: How did you first meet Chandler?

CLARK: Well, I'll tell you. I was a very controversial person in this community, and I knew that if he didn't get correct information, it might not reach the paper. So whenever any question came up-- The chief that was there before I was protected the employers, not the girls that he was supposed to.

HENSTELL: I'm sorry, the chief that was there before you-- ?

CLARK: The chief that was there before me.

HENSTELL: At the school board or-- ?

CLARK: No, not the board of education. Industrial Welfare.

HENSTELL: Industrial Welfare.

CLARK: Yes. Any time that ever came up or [anything] controversial, I'd call Norman Chandler. I said, "Mr. Chandler, may I see you?"

"Come over right away, Mrs. Clark."

And I'd go, and I put the material in front of him, and I'd say, "Just so that you know the facts."

HENSTELL: Now, this was Norman Chandler.

CLARK: Norman Chandler. Always was very fine. In fact, he almost fired one of his reporters once because of me. This reporter was a great friend of the former chief's, and the first meeting that we had, she was still on the commission. And one of the secretaries in the office overheard

her telling the reporter exactly the opposite of what took place; it would have put me in a very bad light. And I called him, and I said, "Now, look, you have misinformation there. These are the facts."

"Oh," he says, "Mrs. Clark, if you don't like what I write, you can ask us to recall it, and we'll print it the next day."

I said, "I'm asking you not to write it."

Next morning the paper arrives with that misinformation. So I called Norman Chandler, as I always had before, and I said, "Mr. Chandler, this is what happened."

"Oh," he says, "Mrs. Clark, he wouldn't do it, Joe--" what was his name? Anyway.

HENSTELL: The reporter.

CLARK: Uh-huh. He said, "He wouldn't do a thing like that."

I said, "Mr. Chandler, I'm a very controversial figure in this community, and I never speak on the telephone without my secretary taking a notice. Are you there, Miss Flanigan?"

She said yes.

I said, "Would you like for her to read the conversation between Joe and me yesterday?"

"That won't be necessary, Mrs. Clark."

But at that time, the Times was directly opposite the state building, if you remember, and he came over about ten

minutes later; he said, "Mrs. Clark, you almost had me fired!" I said, "You can say anything you want about me no matter how disadvantageous, but you can't lie about me." And I said, "I warned you." And he says, "Mr. Chandler says for you to write the story and we'll print it tomorrow." Which I did.

HENSTELL: Now, this was Norman Chandler.

CLARK: Norman Chandler. Very fine man.

HENSTELL: Did you know Harry Chandler?

CLARK: [negative]

HENSTELL: No. You had no contact with Harry Chandler, then.

CLARK: No.

HENSTELL: And the Times was, I get the impression, very lukewarm to your activities in the 1930s. They were kind of supporting the Shaw administration.

CLARK: They were fairly accurate most of the time. I don't think that they supported the Shaw administration. But they didn't fight me, I didn't think.

HENSTELL: And neither did they support you.

CLARK: Yes. Well, I think we have covered the field, haven't we?

HENSTELL: Well--

CLARK: All except the Division of Industrial Welfare?

[tape recorder turned off]

TAPE NUMBER: II, SIDE ONE

DECEMBER 2, 1981

HENSTELL: You don't believe that there's anything remarkable about what you've done? I think you've had a very remarkable career.

CLARK: No! I did what I was supposed to do.

HENSTELL: What did you mean, you were supposed to do?

CLARK: Well, I was supposed to-- I held three political jobs; I did my job in each instance, and I don't think you'll find a flaw in any of them. This thing with the city administration was an outrage.

HENSTELL: You mean the Shaw matter.

CLARK: Yes. It's something that I didn't want to expose. I was forced to by another board member who was determined to bring back a corrupt business manager who was fired because he was trying to bring into the system a head custodian who'd had five convictions for child molestation! Well, it took me just about ten minutes to fire him, you know, but this other man was determined to bring him back. And after a few weeks, going through that time, I finally said to him [John F. Dalton], "Are they trying to bribe you, too?"

And he said, "Who is trying to bribe you?"

I said, "You know very well; we laughed about it." He did know, but he felt so defeated, I guess, [inaudible]

and I said to him, I said, "You know, the man is not going to thank you if you make me expose that."

He says, "You name him."

I said, "Joe Shaw."

That blew the whole thing up, of course. And I got an invitation from the district attorney to appear before the grand jury, and of course I went, and I only had one story to tell; and they didn't think that this deputy was smart enough, so a week later they called me again and said, "Would you come back?" They were always very polite and [asked], "Can we go over this again?"

I said, "By all means"; so I went back. And at that time, my good friend--isn't that funny, I can't remember his name; he became the attorney for Forest Lawn. What was his name, a famous deputy?

HENSTELL: Not Ugene Blalock?

CLARK: No, Gene Blalock was the second one to interview me, and they not only-- When they saw they couldn't bring him back, they were trying to bring back somebody just as corrupt. And one of them was a councilman who didn't dare run again because of his record, and I said in the middle of it, and I said, "You see, they also tried to bring back this man," and I described him, and I said, "Mr. Blalock, can you help me with his name?"

He said, "Mrs. Clark, we are asking the questions."

I said, "All right," and then in the middle of my conversation, the name came to me, and I said, "Incidentally, this man is So-and-so." I'll never forget Gene's face, and he turned to the grand jury: he said, "Any more questions of Mrs. Clark?"

"No."

"Thank you for coming, Mrs. Clark; there are no more questions." They were afraid of what else I might tell them, you know. So I mean, that was the story of the Shaw thing, and it was such a petty bribe, you know; I mean, the whole thing was so-- I just lost my temper or I would have never named him. But I got sick of Jack Dalton coming back every week trying to bring this fellow back, and I don't think a man who is so unreliable as to try to bring into a system a man as head custodian who's had five child molestation convictions was a fit man to run the thing. So. Anyway, they finally, upon my motion and insistence-- We had a very wonderful man to head the building, what do you call it, the architecture. I wish I could remember his name.

HENSTELL: I have it here.

CLARK: Wonderful guy.

HENSTELL: But you go ahead, and I'll--

CLARK: And I nominated him, and they couldn't deny him, he was so first-class. But again, the same board member

who made me expose Joe Shaw in my temper tried to deny this man both jobs, and I remember that one of the district attorney's representatives, who later became a judge, Judge [William B.] McKesson, was present, and he said to him, "He can't hold both jobs; he can't be business manager and head of the architecture department.

HENSTELL: This was Mr. Nibecker.

CLARK: Mr. Nibecker.

HENSTELL: That's the one that you thought well of.

CLARK: Oh, yes.

HENSTELL: OK.

CLARK: Fine gentleman. And so Mr. McKesson, who later became Judge McKesson, he turned to him, and he said, "Can he hold both jobs?"

He said, "Oh yes, he can; he's competent."

So I will say this for Jack Dalton, he got up--he was at the head, the chairman, and I was seated at this end; the table was a little longer than this--he got up, and he held out his hand and he says, "Shake; I'm licked."

And so Mr. Nibecker became both business manager and head of the architecture. And we had a clean administration during all that time.

HENSTELL: A couple of points that I'd like to ask you about. You seem to speak fondly of Mr. Blalock.

CLARK: I wasn't fond of him; I just knew him. I liked him.

HENSTELL: Oh, you just knew him; I see. Could you tell me what your general impression was, though, of the district attorney's office at that time and of District Attorney Fitts?

CLARK: Well, I don't like to express myself. Gene and I-- Is he still living?

HENSTELL: No.

CLARK: We were on a first-name basis, you know; it was Gene and Margarete. When did he die? Recently?

HENSTELL: I think about-- Some time ago.

CLARK: Isn't it funny that I missed that. Gene was a good district attorney; he was serving under Buron Fitts, of course. But I want you to know that in all my jobs and maybe because of that Shaw thing, I got the greatest support from Buron Fitts's office in anything that I ever did. You see, when I became chief of the Division of Industrial Welfare, I had to prosecute in each county through the district attorney. And something very funny happened over here. They have a little paper that they give out every two months, and they gave my record of office-holding.

HENSTELL: I'm sorry, who is "they"?

CLARK: Over here, right here.

HENSTELL: Oh, the Kingsley Manor, I see.

CLARK: And one of the very fine men and his wife living

there, he came up, and he said to me, "Are you a lawyer?" And I said, "No, but I licked twenty-three." And I don't know whether I'm rambling or whether you're going to get anything out of this at all.

HENSTELL: When you say twenty-three, you mean the [defense] attorneys.

CLARK: I licked twenty-three. When Governor [Culbert L.] Olson-- If you are an appointee, you're out when he's out, you know. So when Governor Olson made his last report (and you can look that up, in a thick book), he reported on my division; I was chief of the Division of Industrial Welfare. And he said out of twenty-three cases that I took to court, I won twenty-two. And I couldn't remember, couldn't remember, what case did I lose? Well, weeks later, in the middle of the night, I woke up-- The case that I was in court with longest, over two years, the waitress tipping case, which I lost in the superior court, in the appellate court, but I won it four months after he was out of office, in the supreme court; so those were the twenty-three cases. I won all twenty-three cases that I took to court, prosecuting employers that didn't obey the law.

HENSTELL: Now, that was the waitress tipping case; I want to ask you about that, but could I ask you about just a couple of points before we come to that? The general,

what was the general impression, though, about Mr. Fitts?

CLARK: Well, he had as many friends as he had enemies, I imagine. I will say that I got all the cooperation I ever wanted from his office; whether the Shaw thing had an effect on him or not, I don't know. I have to say for Mr. Fitts that he did an excellent job in my behalf. And a very good, close friend of mine followed him--

HENSTELL: Well, Mr. Dockweiler.

CLARK: Yes. John. And sometimes I think that he just thought that I was playing politics. I was not playing politics. You'd be amazed at the corruption among employers. Now, I succeeded a chief that thought it much more important to have favors with the employer than to protect the girls in their rights. And I heard some cases that were amazing.

One of the worst cases, of course, was the one that I won four months after the governor was out of office, and I was in court with that for over two years, because the restaurant people said tips-- The girls made so many tips they don't need the wages, the minimum wages; and I said, "The holiday is over, gentlemen." They gave a dinner for me at the Brown Derby after I was named, and I said, "The holiday is over; you're going to pay minimum wages now and let the girls keep their tips. I'm not subsid- --I'm

not helping you pay your expenses; I'm showing my appreciation to the waiter or waitress [by tipping]." Well, they took me to court-- I took them to court, and as I say, I lost it in the superior court, I lost it in the appellate court, but I won it in the [California] supreme court four months after Olson was out of office. That was just one of the things. I understand they've made some changes now where [now] they deduct a little of the girls' wages, because they get tips. They wouldn't do it if I were there.

HENSTELL: Could you tell me just a little bit more about this case: Waitresses received tips, and then the employers would deduct it from their salaries, or-- ?

CLARK: No, no, no. But they wouldn't pay any salaries! And that was great for the girls that worked here on Western and Wilshire-- They were making sixty, seventy-five dollars a month in tips; but the girls down at Seventy-fifth and San Pedro [streets] got five, ten bucks. And the minimum wage in those days was only sixteen dollars a week; and it still would be swindled out of them. So I took them to court.

HENSTELL: The restaurant owners, do you mean? Who did you take to court?

CLARK: The [California State] Restaurant Association. And the funniest thing was, the district attorney subpoenaed

the records of one of--you know, we used to have a lot of drive-in restaurants--subpoenaed the records of one of them--I'm not going to name him; he's dead--and there was Mary Jones making $5.65 on Thursday, Eleanor Quinn making $5.65 on Friday, and so on. They never did know how much [in] tips they got. But they made a record to show that they made their minimum wage.

Now the restaurant industry: that was my, I guess, most noted court [case]. But another industry that was horrible was the canning industry. Now, every industry has its own regulations as to minimum wages and working conditions. I was in office about thirty days--I had five offices in this state, you know--when one of the San Francisco agents came in and said, "Mrs. Clark, it's the funniest thing, but this particular cannery, every week when we check their records, 50 percent of the girls make the minimum wage." And the rule then was that if 50 percent make the minimum wage, the piece rate was right.

Well, I went to see the prosecuting attorney there, and he said, "Well, we'll just haul in the payroll records; I'll send a van down there." And when it came, there were names there of women who never existed showing that they made the minimum wage. You understand what I mean?

HENSTELL: Yes, they had the minimum wage, and then they could pay everybody else on a piece-wage basis.

CLARK: They paid all on a piece rate, because somebody brings a basket of tomatoes, the forelady punches a card, and by the time the day is over, they know how many baskets she-- Did she make her minimum wage or not? But there she carried fictitious names showing that they made the minimum wage, this dishonest creature. She's dead now.

HENSTELL: The person who owned that particular company.

CLARK: Yes. You know, she was a clever businesswoman, but she was as ignorant as she could be. Every year the canning industry invites the chief: I'm going to tell you about the one shady thing I did in my life.

HENSTELL: OK.

CLARK: The canning industry invites the chief to their convention, always held up at Del Monte [Hotel, Pebble Beach, California]. And I had just taken care of this woman and collected $7,400 from her for the girls that she cheated. And there was another man, who was canning in another town nearby, and they asked me to be the speaker. They wanted to know what I had on my mind, and I didn't mince words. I told them; I said, "There are a great many honest canners, and the crooks are enemies of theirs and a great handicap, and I'm going to take them out of your way." And I said, "There's a cannery in such-and-such a city"-- I'm not going to name any of them to you--"and if you invite me to your convention next year, I'll have him delivered

to you." Am I talking sense? I mean, is that the kind of stuff that you want to hear?

HENSTELL: Yes, absolutely. I'm fascinated, please.

CLARK: Well, as soon as this man heard about it, he went into receivership. And a very attractive, young, clever man, young like you, was made the receiver there. And I called their attorney who was the attorney for that town; they used to call him the Man on Horseback. You would know who the attorney was; his son is now succeeding him. He ran that city. And I called him into the district attorney's office. I never talked to anybody except to the district attorney's office. And he said, "Now, Mrs. Clark, this is the way this canner stole money. In the canneries they have to have rubber caps, gloves, aprons. This man would charge every week for some of those things and deduct it from their salary."

Well, I called this man into the office, and he was a stately man who wore a pince-nez on a black ribbon, you know, and he said, "Well, Mrs. Clark, we don't question you, but will you allow us to make an investigation?"

I said, "By all means." And I said, "I'll meet you in this office here in thirty days."

"Oh, Mrs. Clark, we have an awfully busy office here; I'm not sure that I can agree to that."

"Well," I said, "you'll have to agree to it, because

in thirty days you'll have time to do that."

The rule is that if I don't collect the money within a year, I can't collect, you know. For eleven months, two days before thirty days would be up, I'd get a telegram [from] him: "I'm so sorry I cannot appear, but we have this important case in court." Well, two weeks before the year was up, I went into that city to the district attorney's [office] and I subpoenaed the--what do you call them--the receiver, this young man. And this is where I'm going to tell you I did the one shady thing in my life. The bookkeeper, a very nice young woman, had told us all about the things that were going on, before they were in receivership. Well, after this young receiver came, he fell in love with the girl. Well, I went into the district attorney's office and called for the receiver.

He said, "Well, Mrs. Clark, we would love to pay the girls that money, but we just don't have the money."

I turned to the-- I didn't have my own office there; I worked in the labor commissioner's office, so I turned to the labor commissioner. I said, "If that money is not here by two-thirty, you arrest both the canner and the bookkeeper." I knew he wasn't going to let the bookkeeper be arrested. That was my shadiness. [laughter] I knew of this, and I took advantage of it. The money was there by two-thirty.

HENSTELL: Because he was in love with her, he wouldn't allow her to be arrested.

CLARK: Well, whatever happened, the money was there at two-thirty.

HENSTELL: Could we go back? Could you tell me a little bit-- You told me earlier you had been a Republican.

CLARK: Yes.

HENSTELL: And Olson was a Democrat. So how did your appointment come down?

CLARK: I was a Republican when Mr. [Herbert] Hoover was elected and defeated. I became a Democrat in the second term of Franklin Roosevelt. I started to work very hard--I was on the school board then--and I saw that he was doing all the things that Hoover was wanting to do and couldn't. So as a Republican I went out and I worked my head off for Franklin Roosevelt.

One of the very fine members of the Social Security Board came out here and went to see John Elliott. You know who he was? A very wealthy oilman who was the national committeeman for the Democrats. And he said to this marvelous woman--she was the widow of a federal judge from Mississippi--said, "You ought to go over to the school board and meet that Republican; she's working her head off for Franklin Roosevelt."

So she phoned me and asked me, could she come and see me?

I said, "By all means."

Well, my great interests, when I was in school, were nursery schools and adult schools. They needed a lot of help. Well, we were talking about my work, and in the middle of it, she said to me, "Oh, how I wish Mrs. Roosevelt could hear you say that."

And I, trying to be very funny, said, "You know, she can; I'll be in Washington in two weeks."

Well, one week later came my first invitation to lunch with Mrs. Roosevelt. I lunched with her three times; she was interested in my work. But I became a Democrat, because I saw the program that Hoover was trying to put over being put in effect. Franklin Roosevelt really put Hoover's program into effect, because Hoover couldn't do it, he was such a cold fish.

HENSTELL: But how did you come to know the Democrats in the state, particularly Culbert Olson, who became governor?

CLARK: He got to know me. He heard of me-- Well, while I was on the school board, he was a senator up in Sacramento, and I had got some help from him; that's how he happened to know me.

And his son Dick [Richard Culbert Olson], of whom I didn't think a great deal-- But anyway, he called me about a week before the election. He said, "Mrs. Clark, Father would appreciate it greatly if you'd go on the air for him with

a talk." I said, "I'll be very happy to." And I did, and he said on the way out, he said, "We're going to get elected," and I said, "Well, I certainly hope so."

And then, once when I was up in Sacramento for the school board, I went to see, to say hello to him, and he said, "We want you in our administration." And I said, "There's only one job that would interest me," and he got a little annoyed with me. And I said, "That is the Industrial Welfare Division."

He says, "There are many good jobs."

I said, "Yes, but I would want to be in a job where I would be a credit to you, because I know industry."

HENSTELL: Now, why did you say that?

CLARK: Because I knew industry. I was-- You see, my husband was with the Herald for twenty-three years when he passed away in '43. We lived in St. Louis, and his health was beginning to fail. And we thought that by coming to California his health would get better. Well, it did get better; he lived for twenty-three more years. What was the question you asked me?

HENSTELL: Why you were so interested in industrial welfare.

CLARK: In industrial welfare. Because I knew industry; I knew the abuses of it, and I knew the good points in it. And I wanted to be a credit to Olson, and I was no use in other jobs. He was going to put me in that job that Rheba

Crawford had, you remember? It was sort of work with the poor, you know? I said, "I wouldn't know where to begin, but I know industry," because when I saw that my husband's health started to fail, I knew with three children that I better prepare myself to help with expenses. Now, I was brought up in Europe. I'm talking too much.

HENSTELL: No, you're not, not at all. [laughter]

CLARK: In Europe, seventy-five years ago, when I came here--soon it'll be seventy-five years since I came; I'm now ninety-two, you know--there was a great division in education between boys and girls. They never were in the same schools together, except in the public schools, where the poor went who couldn't pay. Well, I got a typical girl's education of seventy-five years ago. I was put into what was considered a combination elementary and high school. It lasted ten years, and you paid; you had to be able to pay; it's usually middle-class and upper middle-class. And then when that year was over, you went for one year to a finishing school, and then you were supposed to be educated enough to marry a man like your father. But I was a rebel, and I came to the United States.

HENSTELL: And you went into business when it looked like your--

CLARK: When my husband's health started to fail. I knew

nothing; I wasn't prepared to earn a living. But I did know clothes, and so I started to make applications, and everybody treated me beautifully. Well, I was thirty-seven years old and had no experience. One day the May Company-- Right after the Hamburgers sold to the May Company, they had their first big sale. They advertised, oh, I don't know, two hundred, three hundred extras. So I thought, "Well, maybe I'll get a chance there." So I went down to the May Company; it was their first big sale. He says yes, he has a job for extras for a day and a half. You come in noon one day, we'll teach you how to make out the ticket, and you'll get acquainted with where the stock is, and the next day you're supposed to sell.

Well, that was a courtesy day for charge customers, you see. And I came in at noon, and it took me about two seconds to learn how to make out a ticket, and it took me maybe half an hour, forty-five minutes to find out where all the stock was, and people were milling around, and I was standing around as were all the other extras; and I went over to the floorman, and I said, "Look, why can't I wait on these people? They want to be waited on."

And he said, "Well, do you think you know how?"

And I said, "If I don't know how, I'm not going to be any good to you tomorrow."

So the next day I come in--I don't know why you're

going to want to know all this stuff--the next day I come in-- I had sold over $700 worth of goods that afternoon. All my stuff was gone; I thought I was going to make such a big showing. I went to the head man, and I said, "Where's my stuff?"

He says, "Well, the regular girls sent it out," because all we were allowed to do that day was to put on the charge name and address.

I raised holy Cain, and he was very much amused about that. I said, "You know, I came to work for a day and a half, but I intend to stay."

About eleven o'clock he came to me, and he said, "After lunch, be sure to see the buyer"--a marvelous fellow by the name of Mahoney. So when I came back from lunch, he says, "Be sure to see the buyer."

Well, at two o'clock Mr. Mahoney came over and said, "Let's go upstairs." And I was kept on a permanent basis.

HENSTELL: That's a wonderful story.

CLARK: He left five months later to become a buyer for a chain in Florida like Magnin's. And I had become acquainted with the-- I'm taking up a lot of your time!

HENSTELL: No, no.

CLARK: I became acquainted with the buyer next to me that had children's clothing. And it was around Christmastime, and she was saying, "Isn't it awful that I have to run

around on these awful buses." Now, she perhaps was making ten or twelve thousand dollars a year, and I was making eighteen dollars a week, but I took my car downtown. And I said, "Miss Noble, where do you live?" Turns out she lived within a block and a half of me, so I said, "From this time on, I'll pick you up and bring you home." And we became good friends.

After a while she said to me, "You know, you have no business being on the floor; you ought to be a buyer."

I said, "How do you become a buyer?"

She says, "I have a good friend who has the Petite Shop, across from Robinson's on Seventh Street; he needs a girl like you to buy and manage [his] shop."

Well, his shop happened to be fed all the merchandise from his own jobbing; he was a big jobber. And all the merchandise that came in came from his place. Well, even in those days [local] sportswear was so superior to anything that New York made. We didn't have a coat in the place. So after I was there about a month, I said to him, "Mr. Schiff, we ought to buy some local sportswear; it's superior to the junk that you bring from New York, and we ought to have some coats."

He says, "I've run this store for a good many years, and I know what I'm doing."

I said, "It's your money."

About a week later he had to go back to New York to replenish his stock, and he had a young partner, who used to be a stockbroker in New York. But Schiff was hardly on the train when I said the same thing to this young man.

He said, "You know what Herb said; he doesn't want that."

I said, "All right, it's your money; it's your store."

But he came back that afternoon, and he said, "How much money do you want to spend?"

I said, "The first $500 for coats."

He said, "There's a jobber over at the Alexandria Hotel; let's go over and see him."

The coats were delivered at four o'clock. I put two of them in the window, and we sold both of them before we closed the store.

When Schiff came back--he was quite a guy--he said, "I heard what you've done; don't bother me with this store any longer."

I was there for, oh, about two years or so, when one of the girls that worked with me at the May Company--and she had come to work for me at the Petite Shop--said to me, "I wonder what ever became of Mr. Mahoney."

And I said, "Isn't it funny? I was thinking about him"--when he stopped in front of the door. I don't know

who was the most surprised.

But anyway, the Hamburgers-- You see, you are too young to know the history of Los Angeles.

HENSTELL: I know who the Hamburgers are.

CLARK: The Hamburgers couldn't stay out of business, so they bought Blackstone's, which was the Magnin's of the town, and tried to make a basement store out of it. They lasted just about one year. But Mr. Mahoney said, "I'm here to merchandise Blackstone's"--he had great hopes for it because it was the finest store in town--"and I want you to come and buy for me, because you'll never amount to anything unless you get to know the New York market, and I'll send you to New York."

So I left Schiff, the Petite Shop, and went over there. And it was very evident what was going to happen. And the man that sold me the first coat, a man by the name of Ensminger from San Francisco, said, "Mrs. Clark, I know you have three children to look after, and you'll think this is a comedown, but the Orange Belt Emporium in Pomona needs a woman like you. They've lost all their good trade, because the buyer buys for the farm woman, and there's a lot of money in Pomona for the good [merchandise]."

So I went to see Mr. Shephard, who was one of a corporation of three men and a great guy, and he said to me, "Well, Mrs. Clark, we'd love to have you, but we don't

pay your salary, nor do we send our buyers to New York."

I needed a job, and I said, "Well, I'll tell you, Mr. Shephard, I'll come with one condition: that in six months you either pay me what I ask, or you fire me." He says, "That's good enough." My third check--I got what I asked for.

HENSTELL: That's delightful.

CLARK: But I stayed there until the corporation dissolved, and they asked me to stay as a floor manager, and I said, "I didn't like Pomona when I was making real money." And a man who-- Shall I go on with this? There's not much more to be told.

HENSTELL: Oh, please, go ahead.

CLARK: A man whom I used buy children's clothing from in New York came out here to manufacture, and I went over to see him, and I said, "I'm going to take your line," and he was so surprised, he didn't say no. But he told me--I wanted the state of California--and he said, "No woman can do that; your territory is [from] Santa Barbara to San Diego." But one day I came in, to the factory, and he and the designer and the factory forewomen were there, and they started to smile; and I said, "Are you people waiting for me?" (Are you supposed to change that [the tape]?)

HENSTELL: (No, no, go right ahead.)

CLARK: He said yes, and Mr. Golinko said, "How would you

like to go to San Francisco?"

I said, "What would I be doing up there?"

He said, "Call on the trade."

I said, "What about that man that writes you those beautiful letters?"

He says, "He writes beautiful letters, but he doesn't write any business."

So I had all of California.

In the meantime, I had joined the Business and Professional Women's Club of Los Angeles, and I had just finished my second term as president when there was a question [about] the board of education. I kept saying no, and they kept saying, "You must," and that's when my political profession started.

HENSTELL: I think we covered that. Let me skip ahead now and ask you, before you accepted the post at Industrial Welfare, were you familiar with the department and its [previous] director?

CLARK: No. Heard their criticisms from the League of Women Voters [of Los Angeles].

HENSTELL: What were the criticisms? What did the league say?

CLARK: That she played favors with the employers but neglected the girls [when] she was supposed to see that they got their weekly wages.

HENSTELL: What was the-- What did the--

CLARK: Sixteen dollars a week, those days.

HENSTELL: The minimum wage?

CLARK: Yes.

HENSTELL: What was the purpose of the Division of Industrial Welfare? Can you tell me generally what was its task and organization and all?

CLARK: I don't know what you mean.

HENSTELL: What was it supposed to do?

CLARK: Well, it's supposed to protect the girl against exploitation. And I told you how this woman exploited her girls, stole their--just thievery, you know. In the same way that man that was canning up north.

HENSTELL: But what in state law-- Or what were you told about the department when you took the job? [What] was it supposed to do?

CLARK: All I knew [was] that I was supposed to see that the girls get their wages. And I was determined they were going [to], and they did. And I closed up Chinatown homework altogether.

HENSTELL: I'm sorry, you closed up-- ?

CLARK: The Chinatown homework. You know, the agents said at night you went through Chinatown, you heard the machines going in the basement: piecework for the dress manufacturers, who also were no good and exploiting the girls. And the

whole family would earn the salary of one person, and they'd work half the night. I just closed up the homework in Chinatown; no more homework in Chinatown. And I also was very strict about homework anyplace else, and I must tell you a cute story. What was the name of the woman that established the--

HENSTELL: Established what?

CLARK: No, no, this charity, they have that marvelous lunchroom up here, near Western-- You see, my mind is getting tired, that's what's--

HENSTELL: The Ebell [Club of Los Angeles]?

CLARK: No, not Ebell, the Assistance League [of Southern California]. They make for charity little layettes for girls, you know, and the little things for children. They don't get paid for it; they do it for the love of humanity, so they're not involved in the Industrial Welfare; they give their time. The chairman of the homework department of the Assistance League heard that I was closing down homework, and she thought they were involved, and so she said to her husband, who was one of the chief editors of the Times, "I'm going to"--she had a committee of fifteen women who worked on that--she said to her husband, "I'm going to pass a resolution against Mrs. Clark." This comes from the Times.

He says, "Have you ever discussed it with Mrs. Clark?"

"No, but I know she's closing down homework."

He says, "Well, if I were you, I would discuss that with Mrs. Clark, because I've never known her to be on the wrong side of a public question." I thought that was nice, coming from the Times.

Well, anyway, she called me, and I said, "Well, you're not involved, thus it has nothing to do with you."

She says, "Well, would you come and speak to our committee at a luncheon?"

I said, "I'll do better than that, I'll print a statement and give each one of your members a statement"--at a lunch, which I did.

HENSTELL: Why was homework, or piecework, a problem?

CLARK: Because they never made the minimum wage. They paid so little for making buttonholes or things like that, they couldn't possibly make the sixteen dollars a week working eight hours a day. And do you know how they still arrive at minimum wages? Up at the [University of California,] Berkeley, is a section called the Heller Foundation [no longer extant--ed.]. The Heller Foundation works the year long: How often does a girl need a new pair of shoes? How long can she wear a coat? What does she have to pay for rent or room and board? How much does she have to spend for carfare? And when they sum that up, then they know what the minimum amount is on which a girl can live;

that's how they arrive at the minimum wage. It's not just something that's grabbed out of the air.

HENSTELL: Can you tell me about some of the other cases, the other problems that you confronted when you were chief of Industrial Welfare?

CLARK: Well, there were so many. I had trouble with the laundries-- You see, every industry had different regulations for learners' periods, which were below the minimum wage. In the case of the canning industry, [the criterion] was the piecework, you know, if half of them made the [minimum wage doing] piecework. In the laundry, I think [employees] had three weeks to learn, in which [the employers] can underpay. Then they dismiss them for a couple or three days and hire them back as apprentices. Well, there were so many things, I can't possibly tell you. I can't even tell you what the twenty-three cases were that I won. I remember the one-- And you know, it was interesting; when it was all over and they were told that they had to pay the minimum wage and let the girls keep their tips, that they couldn't charge them for broken dishes-- There were so many abuses. They couldn't charge them but so much for their meals. They said, "You know, Mrs. Clark, that should have been done a long time ago."

HENSTELL: Now, what about unions, though?

CLARK: Oh, the unions. They brought their reports to me,

and I'd investigate them. If they were right, I'd back them 100 percent. If they were wrong, we had to point out that they had made a mistake; it wasn't often. But I remember the first meeting I held; I invited all the unions as well as others, too, and they offered all kinds of help, and I said, "I'm sorry, ladies and gentlemen, but I'm not permitted to use you." I'm very pro-labor, you know, I'm very pro-organized labor, though I disapprove of the national leadership of the Teamsters [International Brotherhood of Teamsters and Warehousemen]. I think-- They have a man here [at Kingsley Manor]; he came up to me-- They have got to have that little newspaper; they report on the new people that come in: they reported on my job. He came over to me and he said to me, "Mrs. Clark, are you a lawyer?" I said, "No, but I licked twenty-three of them."

HENSTELL: So you were very supportive of-- This was a very active period for the formation of unions, in the 1940s.

CLARK: Well, they were all very active; yes, they were all very active, yes, indeed. And they were right most of the time. Occasionally they-- What are you going to do with all this stuff?

HENSTELL: Well, we're getting toward the end of the tape here, so we're going to have to change it.

CLARK: I'm just dying to read it, see what you make out of it. Well, I don't know what else to tell you.

HENSTELL: Well, there's a couple of things about state government I have--

CLARK: After I left my government job, for twenty years I was manager of the Women's Division of the National Foundation for Poliomyelitis [National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis] March of Dimes.

HENSTELL: Before we come to that, let me ask you about a couple of people that you worked with that we talked about the other day; for instance, Robert [W.] Kenny.

CLARK: Robert who?

HENSTELL: Robert Kenny--the attorney general at the time. Remember him; he was a judge? No.

CLARK: Never heard of him; I didn't mention him.

HENSTELL: OK, how about Carey McWilliams?

CLARK: Oh, Carey was a good friend. I knew him-- Of course, he was chief of the Division of Immigration and Housing, while at the same time-- You know, that particular section [the California Department of Industrial Relations] has five different chiefs; he was in charge of Immigration and Housing, and I was Industrial Welfare. Isn't it odd the way they died: first Helen [Mary] Gahagan, then Carey McWilliams, and then [Melvyn] Douglas?

HENSTELL: And then Douglas?

CLARK: Helen Gahagan's husband. They all died within a period of three weeks. [Carey McWilliams, d. June 27, 1980;

Helen Gahagan Douglas, d. June 28, 1980; Melvyn Douglas died over a year later, on August 4, 1981--ed.] They were all very close friends.

HENSTELL: Yes, they were.

CLARK: Carey McWilliams was very straight, very idealistic, and very free, but he had the welfare of the people at heart, he really did, you know. He was not a nut; he was a very bright man. Did you know him?

HENSTELL: Yes.

CLARK: Yes, we were very good friends, and of course he went to New York, and I only saw him once. He was out here once, and they held a reception for him, and I went to it.

HENSTELL: Was he of assistance to you, or were you of assistance to him while you were both in office?

CLARK: Oh, no, we each had our own department. He'd run his department, I'd run mine.

HENSTELL: How about Helen Gahagan Douglas: were you familiar with her?

CLARK: Very fine woman. Naive in many ways; she was elected to Congress, and-- How long have you lived in this city?

HENSTELL: I was born here.

CLARK: Oh, you were born here. Well, then you knew Congressman-- No, who were those people who were so nuts about her? Now I ['ve forgotten]. Anyway, she was in Congress three years, and I heard that she's running for Senate. [laughter]

HENSTELL: Excuse me one second. [tape recorder turned off]

TAPE NUMBER: II, SIDE TWO

DECEMBER 2, 1981

CLARK: Now, Helen Gahagan was in Congress for three terms, as you know, and she would have been there till the last day of her life, if she had wanted to. But suddenly I hear she's going to run for Senate. I wrote to her; I said, "For God's sake, Helen, you haven't got a chance. Stay in Congress where you are needed." I got a letter back from her: "Well, I have too much sense to run for Senate, I know that." One week later, in the newspapers, she's running for Senate. And it was Tom [Thomas Francis] Ford and his wife [Lillian C. Ford], who were so crazy about her, who talked her into it. So the Business and Professional Women['s Club of Los Angeles] engaged a great big banquet room at the Ambassador [Hotel], invite her and Nixon. You know [that] Nixon was opposing her? And two or three days before the banquet, we get a telegram from Helen: "Sorry, I cannot come, but an important bill is coming up, and I have to be here to vote it." Well, Nixon was there too, but it didn't bother him; he came out. And of course, the cancellations to the dinner came in, but the Republicans took them all up, so we didn't lose a dime on it. There were only two tables of Democrats, the one where I sat and the one [where] young Vanderbilt [sat], you know, he [Cornelius Vanderbilt, Jr.] was then

owning the [Los Angeles Daily] News: just the two tables of Democrats; the rest were all Republicans. And Nixon is an excellent speaker, so he wowed 'em, and Helen didn't have a chance; she was licked that night, you know. But she was a very fine person [but] much too trusting in people's motives; she couldn't see through their schemes. And now she's gone; her husband left just two or three weeks later, and so did Carey McWilliams. They were very close, you know.

HENSTELL: Another couple of people that you mentioned. You mentioned Rheba Crawford earlier. Did you know Rheba Crawford?

CLARK: Rheba Crawford, oh, Rheba Crawford. When I exposed Joe Shaw, Rheba was getting $500 every Monday night for four weeks to attack me on radio, and she couldn't attack me, but she tried to ridicule me. She would tell funny, crazy stories that I never heard of, and she'd refer to me and say--"And Little Audrey laughed and laughed and laughed"--because nobody'd ever seen me except smiling, you know. [Mrs. Clark has informed us that Little Audrey was a cartoon character who characteristically responded to all events with laughter--ed.] Well, I had my revenge on Rheba--Aimee fired her because of me, you know, Aimee Semple McPherson. She couldn't get a job. One day I get a telephone call-- It was several months

later, that was while I was with the state; it was several years later, wasn't it? Quite some time. But anyway-- And I think it was while I was with the state, maybe I still was, I don't remember what date it was. And there's Miss Crawford, and she said, "Mrs. Clark, would you see me?" I said yes, so she came in, and she said, "You know, I just can't get a job unless I can--" She had a-- It was one of those plants that makes airplanes, you know; [they] were going to give her a job if she can get a letter of recommendation from me. So she came to see me, and she said, "Mrs. Clark, I can't get a job, but I can get that job if you'll write a letter of recommendation." And I said, "Well, Miss Crawford, nothing would give me greater pleasure." And I did, and she got the job, and I was revenged.

HENSTELL: Could you tell me a little bit about Aimee McPherson. Did you know her?

CLARK: Aimee Semple, no, I never did. I just know two things about her. Out of curiosity, once I took my youngest daughter. She was just a little girl, nine or ten years old, and she just-- She was determined she was going to go down there and be blessed by her, you know.

HENSTELL: To the Four Square Gospel [Church, Echo Park, Los Angeles]. To the church.

CLARK: In the church, yes. Finally I had to sit on top of

her to keep her from going down there. And then when I had that trouble with the Shaws, I had some friends among the military people. I didn't know it, but a night came up in which they--what do they call those veterans, the Purple Hearts?

HENSTELL: The Order of the Purple Heart?

CLARK: Yes. They were giving awards in Aimee's temple. And somebody had enough-- You know, she had the radio station. Somebody had enough influence to tell her that she should have me give the awards to offset the criticism that came, because of the Shaw thing, from the wrong people. So I went down there, and I gave the awards and made a little talk. And she stood behind me, and every other word I said, she said, "God bless her, God bless her, God bless her"; that's as much as I knew of Aimee. [inaudible]

HENSTELL: did you happen to know her great antagonist, Bob [Robert] Shuler [of Trinity Methodist Church South]?

CLARK: No, you see I don't go to church. I believe in God; I'll say a prayer every day, but I don't believe in organized religions.

HENSTELL: I see. And one final question about the Shaw matter. Of course after Frank Shaw was recalled from office, Joe Shaw was tried for and convicted for selling civil service appointments. But it was later overturned.

CLARK: And he never went to [jail].

HENSTELL: Yes, it was overturned. Do you have any reaction to that?

CLARK: I thought he should have been there. [laughter] But I told you about the experience I had with him afterwards--didn't I?--several years later, in a restaurant?

HENSTELL: And he sent you a drink.

CLARK: He sent me a martini. And I said to the waiter, "Just give it back to him, and tell him to enjoy it."

HENSTELL: How long were you at the Division of Industrial Welfare?

CLARK: Four years and three months. Governor--

HENSTELL: Olson?

CLARK: No, no, the man that followed him.

HENSTELL: [Earl] Warren?

CLARK: Warren tried his best to keep me.

HENSTELL: Could you tell me about that?

CLARK: Well, he had a man here who was head [president] of the merchants-- What do they call that association?

HENSTELL: Merchants and Manufacturers?

CLARK: Merchants and Manufacturers [Association]. What is his name? A short name, one syllable [Paul Shoup]. Oh, you'd know him at once. A red-hot Republican, and he wouldn't stand for it. So after three months-- I stayed [during] Warren's [tenure] for almost three months. And he wrote me a letter and thanked me for the service, because he was my legal representative; he knew the way I acted.

And Grace Stoermer, do you know who she was?

HENSTELL: Stoermer, no, I don't.

CLARK: She was the first woman to be made vice-president of a bank, Bank of America, a good friend of mine. She said to me when Olson was defeated, "You stay on. Warren's going to reappoint you." Because everybody else resigned, you know.

Well, after about three months, she said to me, "You better resign, because he's going to appoint somebody else."

So I said, "No, he'll have to fire me."

So I got a very nice letter from him thanking me for the service I'd given the state, and he says, "You understand, of course, that I have to appoint a Republican."

HENSTELL: Did you know Warren?

CLARK: Oh, yes, sure.

HENSTELL: What sort of fellow was he?

CLARK: Oh, he was a peach. He was a great guy. I liked him a lot. He was a gentleman, you know. Oh yes, I liked him very much. And he was not bigoted. He could see other people's point of view. Yes, I liked Governor Warren very much. He really tried his best to keep me; wasn't allowed to.

HENSTELL: And then after you left office, then--

CLARK: That's when I jumped. You see, when I was in the

schools, I was chairman of all public and parochial schools for the March of Dimes. When John Anson Ford appointed me to the Housing Authority, immediately I became chairman of all county employees. When the governor named me chief of the Division of Industrial Welfare, immediately I became chairman of all state employees, and of course nobody dared to turn me down. And I appoint the heads of the different divisions as chairman for the March of Dimes-- And so, see, my mind is getting tired.

HENSTELL: Why were you so interested in being involved with polio?

CLARK: With polio? I had children and grandchildren. Do you know that in 1948, I think it was '48, we had thirty-three-hundred-odd cases of polio in Los Angeles County? And this year we had seven cases in the United States? That's why I was interested. I raised $8 million for them.

HENSTELL: And the position, then, you took after you left state office was as-- You were the chairman of the fund raising for the state--

CLARK: No, no, I was manager of the Women's Division. They didn't know how to run a campaign in Los Angeles. They had a Mormon bishop, a nice guy, who would send out fifteen hundred letters signed by Gene [Eugene] Biscailuz as [campaign] chairman, and then they had those cards, you

know, with five dimes in them, and then they had a few dances, so you had "Dance so others may walk"-- that was their campaign. They had no Women's Division, they didn't get any foundations, they didn't get any government money, nothing. And I came in there, and I asked him about it, but he says, "You go ahead and try," and I tried. Well, he was later replaced; I had one, two, three, four different directors while I was there; the last one died of a heart attack about a year after I left them, a young man. But the Mothers' March-- You heard of the Mothers' March? No? Well, that was started by a little groceryman in Arkansas, and then the next year it spread over the United States. He got the mothers to go out for two hours in the evening from door to door to solicit for the March of Dimes. They notified me about two weeks before the first one I had, and I'm sorry to tell you, though I had help from the PTA, all I got was $72,000. But the year '48, when we had about thirty-three hundred cases here, the women in this county collected just a few dollars under $60,000 in two hours. And then, of course, I had the foundations-- they sent us money; I had the government people, who sent us money; the schools-- In the years that I was with them I raised $8 million for them.

HENSTELL: You told me at the beginning of today's

session that you don't feel you did anything extraordinary, and yet wasn't it, in fact, as a woman in those times, wasn't your career very extraordinary in many respects?

CLARK: It was extraordinary, I think, only in one way: that I held a city, a county, and a state post all at the same time. And then I think one of the very nicest compliments that was paid me was when Tom [Thomas Campbell] Clark, United States attorney general, selected thirty-eight people throughout the United States to sit on a juvenile delinquency conference in Washington, and I was one of the thirty-eight, and I was the only person that didn't represent an organization. Father [Edward Joseph] Flanagan was there-- I think those are the things that perhaps I should be a little bit proud of, but they just happened to me, you know. If I hadn't been there, somebody else would have been there; the same thing would have very likely happened to them.

HENSTELL: But you don't feel that your career was anything special as a woman in the 1930s? We were talking last week about the fact that you were debating on the subject of schoolteachers and having children, and all you were telling--

CLARK: Oh, yes, yes, I didn't make-- [laughter] That

was funny. How did you find out about that? A Mr. Gray, who was with the Clearing House Association, used to occasionally drive me where I was invited to speak, and I talked to this disgruntled bunch of schoolteachers, and they thought that if all the married schoolteachers were fired, they would get more jobs, you know? And I told them that I thought that a teacher was a better teacher if she was a wife and mother, or something to that effect. I don't know what words I used.

And as we walked out, Mr. Gray said to me, "Mrs. Clark, I admire your honesty and your courage, but you're throwing votes away like crazy." He says, "You're making every mistake in the book."

Well, I said, "Mr. Gray, all they have to do is not vote for me; this is the way I feel."

But came the night of the primaries, and I had somewhere around seven thousand more votes than my nearest competitor.

HENSTELL: But you had no interest in going further in politics.

CLARK: No, no. I tell you, when the Shaw thing came up, the same Mr. Gray, a nice fellow--he had to get along with everybody--he invited me to lunch, and he said, "Mrs. Clark, you know, you have made quite an impression on the community, and I have the first $10,000 to run you for Congress."

I said, "Mr. Gray, you don't want me in Congress, you want me off the school board."

HENSTELL: But later, later when it wasn't--how shall we say?--a bit of an encouragement, you had no interest?

CLARK: No, I had no ambition to go any further, no. I had done my fighting, and I'd delivered a job, and as I tell you, the only shady thing I did was take advantage of knowing that there was an affair going on there. [laughter]

HENSTELL: But you were really quite out in front of a lot of-- Well, now look at this. This is from the [Los Angeles] Daily News in the late 1930s, about your debate over [whether] sex facts [should] be taught in public schools.

CLARK: Oh, yes.

HENSTELL: Now, that was a controversial issue.

CLARK: Very, and I have-- Oh, I wish I had my clippings; they're up in Sacramento. Yes, that was quite-- But the only opposition I got there was from my friend Father [Thomas] O'Dwyer.

HENSTELL: He was a friend of yours.

CLARK: Oh, we were on very friendly terms, but he did what the archdiocese told him. I tell you, I heard of these little girls thirteen and fourteen having babies and having syphilis and having gonorrhea and God knows what, and I introduced a resolution-- That was thirty-seven years--that was in 1936 or '37. It was very interesting to me to read

in the [Los Angeles] Times not too long ago that a woman twenty-five years ago introduced the first bill for sex education: that was years after I did.

HENSTELL: It hasn't changed very much, though, has it?

CLARK: No, they haven't done it properly. You see, what I was hoping was that we'd scare the kids to death; instead, today we are teaching them the techniques. I think what's happened to sex education is an outrage today; it's not properly taught. That's why we still have so much-- These poor kids; they are so dumb, they don't know any better, you know.

HENSTELL: Tell me, looking back from the unique perspective of having served the county of Los Angeles and the city of Los Angeles and the state of California, do you still follow politics and business today?

CLARK: Oh well, I don't participate.

HENSTELL: What is your impression, though, of affairs? Are they better, worse, or just different than you knew them?

CLARK: They are having so many problems now, some of which we never had. This [Howard] Jarvis with his Proposition 13 has brought us problems that we should never have had. It's affecting education; it's affecting our libraries; it's affecting too many things. I am very disappointed in-- Of course, I never thought a great deal of him as president; I

think all he does--

HENSTELL: I'm sorry, of whom?

CLARK: I don't think very much of our president.

HENSTELL: Our current president.

CLARK: Yes.

HENSTELL: Mr. Reagan.

CLARK: Because I think all he does is what he's told to do by the people that put him in. When I think of the money that he's spending for ammunition, and we are loaded, you know.

HENSTELL: How about the city of Los Angeles, though?

CLARK: Ah, the city of Los Angeles, let's see. Our mayor, what's his name?

HENSTELL: Mayor Bradley.

CLARK: Bradley. I think has done a very good job. I have a great deal of respect for Bradley. I don't think he's going to be made governor, because I don't think the north will support him. I'd like to see him governor; I think he's made a good mayor-- How do you feel about him? You don't like him?

HENSTELL: No, no, it's not important what I feel. He's a sight different than Frank Shaw, though, isn't he?

CLARK: [laughter] A lot different; I think he's an honest man.

HENSTELL: Well, I think we've kind of arrived at the end

here; what do you think? Are there any areas that you feel that we haven't discussed or any of the various jobs that you've-- There's so much--

CLARK: I can't imagine; I think you've got about everything that I know.

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