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Title: **1981-interview_p095**
Provenance: **Provided to the Ezra T. Clark Family Organization Library by Bryan Clark, son of the late Ralph Clark**
Transcript of an Oral History, conducted by Clark S. and Ruth Knowlton of Orson and Lucile Clark

Category: **Volume**
Person:
Date: **11/23/1981**

Interviewer: Did the teachers have much of a voice in the administration of school? Or were the schools strictly run by the principals and superintendents?

Orson Clark: Well, pretty much by the superintendents and principals.

Interviewer: What were some of the more delightful experiences that you had and some that were not so delightful while you were teaching?

Orson Clark: I enjoyed it because I like to work with young people. The students in the day when I taught wanted to learn. They would accept what you would tell them and they would do what you asked them do. Discipline was no problem with me and the young people. I tried to make it so interesting to them and so fascinating and so fast that they just didn't want to cause any trouble or disturbance. I used to teach several classes in algebra. I would put on the board a few problems of a method that we were in. I would have it all covered. When they would come in and as soon as that bell would ring I would lift cover up and give them three minutes. When the three minutes were through they would hand their papers in. You know, it would get so that those kids would come right there with their pencil and papers ready to go.

I used different methods with the youngsters, too. There is one thing that I did try to do, especially in mathematics classes and the like. I would see that they understood. I used to teach 50 to a class but I would give them a little test and check on them. I would let them correct their own, I'd give them the answers. If they were missing something I would try to find out what the principle was they were missing. I would even out those that could get it on one side of the room and those that didn't on the other side and I'd teach it over to these others while the one group was working. They used to like that. There was no discipline.

Interviewer: You never had discipline problems in those days?

Orson Clark: No. Oh, with one or two. Only one that I can think of. That was one boy. Nearly all the teachers had trouble with him. But you couldn't get him to do anything. I don't know he was just one of those. I thought, "Well, there is one boy that will never want to see me again or respect me." You know, when he got into high school, I went up to a football game one day. He was clear on the other side of the field and he came over to shake hands with me. He was one that I thought would never.

Interviewer: He would always have hostility. That is interesting. Were you involved in any extracurricular activities in the school?