

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Growth of Youngstown College

Student and Faculty Experiences

O. H. 25

KENNETH CLARK

Interviewed

by

Alvin W. Skardon

on

June 14, 1973

C. KENNETH CLARK

Mr. C. Kenneth Clark, a distinguished Youngstown attorney, was born in Mt. Jackson, Pennsylvania, on March 23, 1897, the son of Robert and Nannie Clark. He attended Westminster College, Ohio University, and Ohio State University. He taught in high school from 1919 to 1924. Attorney Clark received his law degree from Youngstown College of Law in 1923. He was admitted to the Ohio bar in 1924 and practiced law with the noted law firm of Harrington, Huxley and Smith.

On June 30, 1926 Attorney Clark married the former Katherine Griswold. He was offered a position as lecturer on law at the American Institute of Banking from 1926 to 1930 and afterward was a professor of law at Youngstown College of Law for three years. In 1947 Attorney Clark was elected president of the Mahoning County Bar Association, then in 1954 was named president of the State Bar Association. He was named first chairman of the Supreme Court Commission on Grievances and Discipline in 1957, then was a member for six years.

Among the many organizations to which Attorney Clark belongs are included the American Judicial Society, the International American Bar, the Youngstown Club, the Executive Club and the Torch Club. In honor of his distinguished service to the state, Attorney Clark received the Ohio Bar Medal in 1972.

Currently the Attorney has retired and makes his home in St. Petersburg, Florida. He enjoys traveling. His son, C. Kenneth Clark, Jr., an area attorney, makes his home in Youngstown, Ohio.

SILVIA PALLOTTA
July 1, 1977

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INTERVIEWEE: KENNETH CLARK

INTERVIEWERS: Alvin W. Skardon and Ruth Skardon

SUBJECT: Student and Faculty Experience

DATE: June 14, 1973

S: This is an interview with Mr. Kenneth Clark by Dr. Alvin W. Skardon for the Youngstown State University Oral History Project in Dr. Skardon's home on June 14, 1973 at approximately 7:30 p.m.

C: Senator H. P. McCoy was one of the first graduates of the Youngstown Law School and he had previously been principal of the Parmalee School here in town. I think it was Parmalee, I could be in error about that. We talked for a long time after Mr. Skeggs, General Secretary of the YMCA introduced us, and I finally decided to think about it. You're probably not interested in details of how the school came about.

S: Yes. We're interested. Those are the details that we really find interesting, sir. In other words, we want to get the human side.

C: Well, it was a very small school and, of course, it wasn't very well known. As you know it had only been in operation from 1908, I believe.

S: That's correct.

C: It had only been in operation for a few years. I learned the names of the people who were among the first students. One was H. P. McCoy, one was a person by the name of Busty Ashbaugh, who was a coach at South High School, and another one was Frank Herr, the assistant principal at The Rayen School. A man by the name of Scarborough is the one who had been principal of Parmalee. H. P. McCoy, I believe, was at a different

school. Anyhow, they were among the first graduates. Some of them were already teachers and instructors by the time I got interested in law, which was in 1920. It was actually 1920 before I concluded to go to law school and get what I could out of it while I had my other teaching and being assistant principal.

S: What was the name of the school at the time you were going there, in 1920? Was it the Youngstown Institute of Technology or did it become Youngstown College?

C: I think that it was the YMCA Law School. I believe it was called that at first and then it became the Youngstown Institute of Technology. While I was making a study of the situation, I went to see the dean of the Law School, Theodore A. Johnston, a very interesting person and a lawyer here in town. His specialty was constitutional law. He was the dean of the school.

He interviewed me for a while and he asked a question once in a while or said something, then he'd wait and even when I stopped talking and he had nothing to say so I had to talk. After talking quite a long time, he finally said, "I've just been studying you, looking at you very briefly. I've decided that you can carry a certain amount of work." He said, "I've never let anybody else do it before." He gave me a very heavy schedule and I decided to start right in and I did. It was night work. One of my professors was Professor Scarborough, who was a practicing lawyer with the firm of Nicholson, Warnock and Scarborough. Warnock had previously been mayor of the city of Youngstown, and Mr. Nicholson just died this past year. He was way up in his nineties, I believe. Another one was Henry Church, a very able law teacher and a one-time city attorney.

S: You went to law college here in 1920. Did you graduate from the law college?

C: Yes.

S: How long did it take to complete your degree?

C: It took me until 1923.

S: It took three years then?

C: Yes, it took a little less than three years actually.

S: In other words, you went to school in the evenings while you were vice-principal of the school in Campbell.

C: That is right.

S: I see.

C: I went to school in the evenings , but I also went on Saturday mornings and Saturday night. I hesitate to say that some of the people thought they ought to work a little bit on Sundays. I was fortunate, however, that a man by the name of S.D.L. Jackson, quite a famous lawyer here, had a very nice law library which was given to me by one of his relatives for me to use while I was a student. So I had a rather extensive library in the home where I was rooming at the time. It was very handy and I made good use of it.

One thing that interests me about the Law School is that the students in it were pretty mature. This was after World War II. A lot of people had been delayed for four years in getting a college education and some of them had not actually been successful in getting it. This school opened up an opportunity for them. There was a real need, but the people who came as students were people who had their bachelor and master degrees and had part of their work for a Ph.D.

The students were mature men, married, had families, and it was serious business for them. I think of Knowles Wyatt as one example. He was principal of the Madison School down here. There were a number of men from Warren, a man by the name of Pealer, one was Lafferty, and then there was a man from Akron known as Elmer T. Phillips, who had his roots here in Youngstown. He came over at night and he later became judge in the Court of Appeals. There was a Robert B. Nevin who lived over here on Broadway, just a short distance from you, who worked out at General Fireproofing. He was another student with me and he became judge of the Municipal Court and was re-elected quite a number of times. A lot of the men who went there were pretty serious and somewhat successful after they finished. I could name more, but you probably have the names of all of them in your records at the college.

S: What building did the Law School meet in back in the 1920s? Did you meet in the YMCA building?

- C: We met in the YMCA building as it was then. It hasn't been changed too much, but they met on the second and the third floors. They even met in the cafeteria room. As you go up the steps in the YMCA, is that a restaurant today?
- S: Yes. At least it was the last time I was down there.
- C: Well, that was a cafeteria in those days and I had some interesting experiences which I could tell about sometime. We met all through the building there, in any vacant room big enough to hold fifteen or twenty students. I should mention one other person who taught at the time I went there, Donald Lynn, who is now the oldest senior partner with Harrington, Huxley, and Smith, my old law firm. He had just recently come from The Harvard School of Law and he taught Negotiable Instruments. He and I later were partners, but at that time he was my teacher in Negotiable Instruments.
- S: The school had not yet started holding classes in the house on the hill yet, had it?
- C: The last year I was there I think we met in the old green house, the big two or three-floor building that was just north of what is the Reuben McMillan Library. In that location, the building was torn down and I think they built a garage there, which is perhaps an automobile service supply place now. I think that's what is there. Yes, we met there and then there was a time when they met up in what we called the Pollock House.
- S: I think the Pollock House is still standing. It's donated to the University.
- C: Yes, but I think the house that I have in mind may have been a different one than that, but I'm not really sure. It was up in that area. I didn't have classes there, but I knew it was being used in the latter period of which I speak.
- S: Well, the whole college operation at this time was sort of under the directorship of the educational Secretary of the YMCA, is that correct?
- C: Very much so. Very much so. When I first went to the YMCA in 1919, there was a man by the name of Hayworth, who was the General Secretary. I remember him very well. He was a very fine gentleman and he was succeeded by Skeggs. Around 1919 or 1920, Mr. Skeggs came. It seemed to me he was brought in for the purpose of expanding the activities in the educational field and he was a very able

and capable person. There's a name of another person I can't get. One or two years later, a man came in here whose sole job was to head the educational work.

S: Was his name Nearpass or something like that?

C: I believe that's the name. I tried to think of it today and couldn't. I believe that's the name. If he's the person I have in mind, he did a magnificent job and he helped the College and the school to spread out into different angles and the different fields. Shortly before I came here, I didn't know much about the school except that it was a night high school out in South High and the principal was a Mr. Wright. The Law School had only started in 1908, so you can imagine how small an institution it was. However, in my class, I think we must have had about fifteen or twenty students in the fall of 1920, when I started.

S: The official founding of the College is given as 1908. However, we have records that the YMCA had an educational program that dates back to 1888, and the YMCA began here in Youngstown around 1862. An interesting fact about the YMCA is that it was originally founded as a evangelical association of young men, who were primarily interested in religion. Then it developed an educational program and became a tremendous organization, primarily evangelical and educational. Then, quite late in its career, a secretary of the YMCA in Boston began to introduce gymnastics and physical fitness. That was long after the YMCA was a firmly established place. The school was not accepted too well; it grew slowly.

If you think of the YMCA today, you immediately think of physical fitness, which is a late development of the Y. This educational program was far earlier than the physical fitness program. So, we do not know exactly when classes first began at the YMCA. They may have gone back as far as 1888, or maybe before.

C: Well, that's one thing I did not know anything about. I never heard anybody give any such figures. Of course, by its name, we know it to be educational and Christian in its background. Well, I think the development over a few years was tremendous. You have the statistics and know them as I do now. I carry away the impression of what Youngstown College, Youngstown Institute of Technology, or Youngstown School of Law, or whatever it happened to be at the particular time, was doing for Youngstown. In my judgment, living here at that time, I thought it had a very profound influence on the city.

It seems to me that it must have had in order to have furnished the basis for the expansion in the school as then took place.

The period in history was a good time for the school. As I mentioned a while ago, there were four years of war. Because of the war this was the first time, I believe, that we had had international contact which put our boys in contact with citizens abroad and allowed them to see things and get a new perspective on life. I think that all entered into the picture stimulating the development.

S: Were most of the men who were students there with you veterans of World War I?

C: No. I wouldn't say that there were in my particular class. No, I think not. But there were a good many of them who had had experience in the war. One of them, for instance, was, Ralph Toombs. He had had quite an experience as a Marine. He's now dead. He went to school with me, I remember about him and his wife and his children. I remember the work that he had to do to keep all things going, and to make a living for himself, while he was going to school and how he studied. Yes, he was a Marine. I can't tell you the background necessarily of the others. Most of the others had an educational background; they were teachers and principals in the schools.

S: At the time, was teaching regarded generally as a profession that you studied for some other profession? This has been true in the South. Teaching attracted very able men in the South, but it didn't provide any advancement and if you stayed too long in teaching, you were stuck. You find many of the South's most prominent men who were at one time teachers.

C: I think that was true of the age. It would be almost embarrassing for people of the age, to disclose what their salaries were when they started to teach. I don't know how they ever got anyone to teach except that jobs were scarce and it was, as you say, a stepping stone to something else, something different. Well, the group that I mentioned, all the teachers and the principals of the schools, decided to get into the professional field and go into law. If we had had a good medical school here and it had been possible to go there, I haven't much doubt that some of those who went through law school might have gone to medical school. I had another little interest in the things which developed over the years. I think it was in 1931, according to the notes I saw, that the Main building was opened. It is now known as Jones Hall.

- S: Yes. In Northeastern University in Boston, which has almost a parallel history to Youngstown University, the law school was established again around 1910 because there was a tremendous growth in business in Boston. There was a tremendous demand for lawyers and the conventional law schools just couldn't supply the demand. Would that be true, do you think, of the Law School here around 1920 when you were here?
- C: I think it very much was true and I think the demonstration of that is the mere fact that after I had finished and passed the bar, someone in a big law firm of whom I had never heard, sent for me and then hired me. How different it is from the person who comes out of law school today. It is very different.
- S: The history of Northeastern University also went on to say that around 1955, it was decided to disband the law school because now the conventional law schools were supplying a sufficient number of lawyers and there was no longer the great demand for lawyers. Are you familiar with the dissolving of the Law School here, sir?
- C: Yes. Yes, I am. I think that what you just mentioned was part of it. Another thing which I wouldn't be positive about,--it is just a matter of my judgment, from things that I heard--is that we had so many local people. They were just like the people that I named a while ago. They went to law school and then started in to practice law. In the judgment of some people the effect was to overpopulate this particular area with law schools because people went to Harvard and they came here, people went to Western Reserve and came here. They didn't stay at Western Reserve in Cleveland, they didn't stay in Boston at Harvard, but those who went to law school in Youngstown stayed in Youngstown because they were permanent residents here when they went to school. The population of lawyers was growing here rather rapidly and naturally, a few people thought there was a little over-population.

The law requiring you to meet certain standards of libraries and a certain number of professors and the hours that they taught, was too high a standard for the Youngstown College of Law to really qualify. Financially, it was going to be very difficult. Then they became, in that respect, competitors with the other big law schools. I think that all of these problems led to its breaking up.

- S: In other words, there were two items involved in the dissolving of the law school. One was that there was already a sufficient supply of lawyers and the second one was that the financing of a full-scale law school was almost out of the question.
- C: That is right. Now, you see, the American Bar Association had established certain standards for law schools to meet and within the state of Ohio, certain standards were established by educational associations. It was going to require money to meet those various standards. The money was not available and there was no great need for the school here, and as a result, it was abolished.
- S: I see. Do you know the name of the man who was the dean of the Law School, but died suddenly around 1955?
- C: I knew him very well. Raymond L. Falls. He has a son down in New York City practicing there right now at 63 Wall Street.
- S: That's a good location.
- C: That's where my son was for six years.
- S: Another phase of the Youngstown College that interests us very much, particularly those of us who are from outside of Youngstown, is that it was so much a part of the community. That is, Youngstown University really has no competitor in this area. Old Fenn College, had to share Cleveland with Western Reserve and Case Institute of Technology; New Orleans, and LSU have to share New Orleans with Tulane and Loyola, Dillard and so forth. Youngstown University seems to have had no competitor in this area and we are quite fascinated by the relationship it had to the community. In your years as a lawyer here, would you have any interesting comments about the position that the school occupied in the community?
- C: Well, I would hardly know how to give a proper answer to that question. Of course, I was aware at all times that Youngstown University had a very direct relationship to the community. It had a lot of influence in the community, and was a closely-knit school. The people who served on the various boards of the College were the business people, the lawyers, the manufacturers, the merchants and all the professional people in the city, who were so interested in Youngstown. They had a personal interest in their business, they had a personal interest in Youngstown, which helped them profit in their business, they had a personal interest

in the college because of what it, in turn, would do for the community. I think this had a lot to do with the growth of Youngstown and the respect that Youngstown had throughout the country.

- S: After being here for just two or three years I was struck that there was no place in Youngstown that I could go where I wouldn't be recognized. It was not just the city of Youngstown, but the whole area--the Mahoning-Shenango Valley--and there was no other college or university in this area that could possibly in any way compete with Youngstown University. It didn't take me fifteen years to get known around here. I was here for just three or four years and I had to behave myself because wherever I went in this area, I would be recognized. This is one of the little striking things about the University that impresses an outsider.
- C: Well, I haven't thought of that, but I can really understand it because it's a part of the city. It all goes together. You have city government, city police and a city college. You just have everything in the city.
- S: Someone remarked that everyone in Youngstown has either served on the Board of Trustees, has taught at Youngstown University, or has been a student there.
- C: I would think that for a city comparable in size to Youngstown, that it might be difficult to find any other place where as large a percentage of the people growing up in that city attended the college of the city's own name.
- S: I do not know of any other college or university in the country that has this unique position that Youngstown University has.
- C: Well, that's very interesting.
- S: I know of an old YMCA college that's now a state university, but it doesn't have the place in the community that Youngstown University has. It has to share it with someone else.
- C: Well, you see, we live with Youngstown University here just as a family. We thought of it just that way. It isn't until someone like you comes in from the outside and makes these observations that we think anything about it. We expected that it would be a part of the community. That's one of the greatneses I think, of the College here and while it's growing and doing service to the community and to other people, else-

where, I think it might lose just a little bit if it grew too much. Then it wouldn't fill that need that I'm speaking about or fill that place. Of course, that's confining it a little bit to the city more than really is the intention, I'm sure.

S: Did you know Mr. Leonard Skeggs?

C: I knew Leonard Skeggs very well. He is the person who talked with me in the lobby of the YMCA and wanted me to meet Senator McCoy. Senator McCoy insisted I could go to school at night, in connection with my other school work. Oh, yes, I knew him very well.

S: Did you know much about the move to break the ties with the YMCA and make it an independent college?

C: I knew of it occurring, but I had no inside information that I can remember now.

RS: I have come to feel that when people read the newspapers, they think that these children are always up to no good. You wonder where they are going, you know. But when you read the Jambar, and are as close to the University as we've been, you suddenly realize that these youngsters are really concerned about mental retardation and helping in the hospitals and working up here at the Gilead House and canvassing. They run two days bouncing a ball in town for the heart fund. These things are wonderful.

C: Well that means that they are interested in being good citizens. This to an extent is manifest in various schools.

RS: Right. The students are aware.

C: I didn't know the extent to which that might be true in Youngstown, as compared to other cities, but it's very easy for me to believe that it exists here to a marked degree.

S: In the other universities and colleges that I've been associated with, this is true to a certain degree, but it's not as striking as it was here in Youngstown. In the other cities usually you think that the students did it because some professor asked them or somebody got behind them, but here it seems like almost a spontaneous thing.

- C: Do you think that that could be due, in part, to the fact that such a large percentage of the students are Youngstown students to begin with?
- S: That's true.
- C: This is their home; this is their home city. They've grown up here, with the local newspaper, the local TV, the local schools, and the local government. These are the things they hear their parents talking about. If students go away to school, they're in a fraternity someplace, and they don't hear their parents talking about these things. In Youngstown, though, this is part and parcel of their lives.
- S: I think also what is striking about Youngstown is that there is very little evidence of town versus gown conflict. In every university town, particularly at Kent University, the townspeople and the university people are hostile toward each other. There is a little hostility to the University here from various people who have some grievance or maybe some economic group, but on the whole, wherever you go in Youngstown, the University seems to be something people know about. They respect it and far from being hostile to it, they're somewhat proud of it.
- C: Well, I've been away for about three years now and just hearing you mention the subject makes me think about it for the first time. But I never remember there being any problem of that kind. As an active man in the community for so many years, I just wasn't aware of there being anything except the finest relationship between College and town. It was a family affair.
- S: You see, if you ask people in Berea what they think of Baldwin-Wallace College, or people in New Orleans what they think of Tulane, you find this hostility very definite. The University of Chicago has the same thing. It's not at all evident here in Youngstown. As a matter of fact, when you do run into this occasional pocket of hostility, you're so surprised because there are generally many people who are so enthusiastic about the University.
- C: Do you think there's a trend toward the development of hostility that did not exist in past years?
- S: There have been a few things. For example, environmental people have resented the University taking over so much area in the center of the city. That property was once

on the tax rolls and now the city no longer gets the taxes from it. The city has to tax other people to make up for it. There is a difficulty in almost every urban university where students come in, register and live in the neighborhood. They create a considerable amount of trouble. Those seem to be the two things that have created some hostility.

- C: No doubt that comes about in part, because of the size as of the University now. The situation is quite different from when you had twenty-five hundred to three thousand students here. What is it now, about sixteen thousand students?
- S: We have about fifteen thousand now and I think last year was the first year that we didn't actually increase.
- C: It has grown so large in such a short time.
- S: Yes, but there was one period when, in just a matter of a few years, it grew from one thousand to five thousand. I was talking to another professor this morning and he said that that was quite a tremendous rise. That was right after World War II when the veterans all came back. When I came here the enrollment was five thousand and I was told that this was a good size and we didn't want to grow anymore. What's more, they said we didn't have the buildings or resources to do so, but within my ten years, the enrollment jumped from five thousand to fifteen thousand.
- C: That has been terrific. I didn't realize that just ten years ago it was only five thousand.
- S: Well this was fifteen years ago.
- C: Oh, fifteen years ago.
- S: Well, we've covered most of the area that I am interested in now. Have you anything of your own to suggest?
- C: I don't know if there's anything in particular that I have that would fit in with what I understand is the scheme of your book. I had started to mention about Mr. Harrington and Mr. Foster and Mr. Rowland being instrumental in raising a lot of money to get the first building, the Main building, built. This was indicative of the personal interest of certain citizens of the city who were fortunate in being financially able to do things of that sort. I don't believe the names of Mr. Harrington or Foster or Rowland, appear very much in records of the

University, but I've always felt that they had made a contribution that was not always appreciated because people had no way of knowing what they had done.

- S: Yes. Did you know a Mr. Hugh Manchester? He's a member of a law firm of several names. It's in the same building as the Youngstown Club and he has been the secretary, I think, of the University Board of Trustees and also secretary of the Board of Trustees at the YMCA for many years. We plan to do an interview with him somewhat later and he has gotten an abstract ready for us from the minutes of the Board of Trustees about many of the legal matters to be handled.
- C: Oh, yes. I knew Hugh Manchester very well. I knew the firm. I knew his father. I knew his uncle.
- S: You knew his whole family, then.
- C: Oh, yes. I knew his father, Curtis Manchester, very well. He was one of the first lawyers I met in Youngstown, in 1923, and then his uncle, Leroy Manchester, was general counsel of the Youngstown Sheet and Tube, and I knew him very well. Back in about 1933, our firm handled some of the litigation in Judge Jenkin's court, Common Pleas Court, involving the little squabble between the Youngstown Sheet and Tube and the Bethlehem Steel Corporation. I believe that was about the time Hugh Manchester came here to practice, so I'm a little older than he is. I know some of the background beyond that. Besides that, Hugh Manchester served on the Board of Elders of the First Presbyterian Church during the period that I was there and there are a lot of other things that I could tell you about him. He is a very fine gentleman. It's a very fine firm.
- S: I certainly appreciate that you have taken time out to talk with me about this, sir.
- C: Well, I wish there was more that I could say to you that would be of some help. There are things that I was thinking about as we were speaking here a moment ago. We're talking primarily about law because of my interest in it and in the school, first as a student and then as a teacher. I was just remarking to my wife this evening about the school of Business Administration, and the graduates of that school, and what they have done in the city life here. Sidney Collins is an example. He became quite a businessman here. He's still here, a CPA. You can go into any of the branches

and see what this local college has done for the people, and for the city, and, of course, for the students themselves.

- S: I was amused at Mr. Richardson, the young banker down at Home Savings and Loan, who arranged the financial end of our business. He was in one of my first classes here at Youngstown University.
- C: Is that so?
- S: Yes, sir. It was quite interesting. Every time I had to call him, he reminisced a few minutes about when he was a student here.
- RS: Yes, it is sort of a family affair because so many people we meet up in town know Alvin. They'll walk up to Alvin--even in Church--and say, "I was in your history class six years ago." From their looks, you're supposed to remember all of them.
- S: I remember a good many of them, anyhow.
- C: Well, you see, I've had a most interesting life here. Some of the first teaching that I did was in the banks. I taught Commercial Law and I taught Negotiable Instruments in the American Institute of Banking. That, again, was a night job. I don't know if I did a good job or if the students decided they'd have to go out on their own or what, but I found that so many of the students that I had, became presidents of the local banks.
- S: You did a good job.
- C: Well, I don't understand it, but that's actually what happened.
- RS: You must have done something right.
- C: Well, I don't claim that I really did a good job because the students were moving on, anyhow. I thought it was a privilege to have people in class who were interested and who had the capacity and the ability to do things. In other words, they made good students. That's just part of the point that I made about the students in the Youngstown College of Law. They were people who knew how to study, had a reason to study, and had families to support. They had ambitions, could see the light ahead and wanted to do things and so many of them did. We've mentioned some few of them, but so many of them amounted to something.

- S: We play this tape back to two or three members of the committee and almost invariably, it brings up new questions that we hadn't thought of before. Probably things will come up to you after this is finished and, if you're back in Youngstown again, I might just drop over sometime and propose to you the questions that have come up as a result of listening to this tape.
- C: Why, I'll be very happy to cooperate and answer because I feel pretty close to Youngstown. I feel pretty close to Youngstown School of Law. Even though it's not in existence today, it's still a part of the University. Anything that I can do to help you, I would be happy to do. I'd be glad to do anything I can do to help with the picture of the whole thing as far as Youngstown is concerned. I have a son here, too, you know, who is pretty active.
- S: Yes, I know you have. He didn't go to Youngstown University at all, did he? Does he have any connection with it?
- C: No, he went to Oberlin for his regular college work, got his A.B. there, and then he went to the Harvard School of Law. Of course, he couldn't go to any other school than Harvard because my wife's full cousin was dean of law at Harvard. He's now Solicitor General of the United States. We haven't heard from him until today. In the mail today, we got a letter from him.

END OF INTERVIEW