

Oral History with Lillian Orlich

Interviewer: Bill Backus

Interviewee: Lillian Orlich

Location: Caton Merchant House 9201 Portner Ave. Manassas, VA 20110

Date: August 17, 2020

Lillian Orlich: When you were introduced, when you first came here, were you introduced as a “You Damn Yankee”?

Bill Backus: No, no, not as a...

L.O.: I was.

Laughter

L.O.: I’ll never forget that as long as I live. The Principal¹ of the school, and he was one himself. And I said to him afterwards: “What did you” (you had to introduce all the new teachers at the beginning of the school year) and I said, “Why did you introduce me that way?” He said “I’m the Principal. I can do anything I want.” I said, “But you’re a Damn Yankee too.” He said “That doesn’t make any difference. I’m still the Principle.”

Laughter

L.O.: So, from that point on everybody in that auditorium called me a Damn Yankee.

Laughter

L.O.: And some of them are still living calling me that.

Bill Backus: Oh wow.

L.O.: Not very many. But some of them.

B.B.: Alright. So, to kick this off, can you tell me your full name.

L.O. Lillian Mary Orlich.

B.B.: And can you spell your last name?

L.O.: O-R-L-I-C-H

B.B.: Ok. Do you have any nicknames or other names that you go by?

L.O.: Miss O.

B.B.: Miss O. Alright. What is your date of birth?

L.O.: May the 4th, 1928.

B.B.: Ok. And where were you born?

L.O.: Manhattan, New York City.

B.B.: Where did you go to school?

L.O.: I went to school in Manhattan. Julia Richman High School, an all-girls school². Hunter College was at the time I went it was an all-girls school and then it became co-ed after the War was over. And NYU.

B.B.: Where’s Hunter College?

L.O.: In the heart of Manhattan. 68th Street and Park Avenue.

B.B.: That’s cool.

¹ Daniel M. Kelso (1906-1965) was born in Pennsylvania Kelso received his B.A. at Westminster College (Pennsylvania) and his M.A. at the University of Pennsylvania. After teaching in public schools in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania he became the Principal of Osbourn High School in 1947, a position he held until 1954.

² Julia Richman High School opened in 1913 as an all-girls high school in Manhattan’s Greenwich Village. It later moved to a new building on the Upper East Side in 1922. The school became co-educational in 1967 and closed in 1993.

L.O.: I still remember.

Laughter

L.O.: And I walked to school every day because I lived on 81st Street. So, it was easier to walk than to take a bus or whatever.

B.B.: When did you move to this area?

L.O.: 1950.

B.B.: 1950. And what brought you to Prince William County?

L.O.: An invitation from the Superintendent³ to come to Prince William. I don't know how he got my name, but the Superintendent of the School of Prince William County called and invited me to come to Osbourn High School. At that time there was no Osbourn Park High School. And I said, "Yeah I think I'd like to do that." And I fell in love with this place.

B.B.: Alright. So, we're going to talk a little bit about your career history if that's ok. Um so what are some of the lessons that you learned through personal experiences as an educator?

L.O.: Be wide open. Don't make any judgements ahead of time without hearing everybody's version of the story. Sometimes we make guesses and we shouldn't. We should listen carefully to what the person is saying. Even if we don't agree with the person, listen, because you may pick up something on the individual. It's amazing to me how just by talking to you I can make judgments about you. But whether they are right or wrong I don't know. But by your conversation, by the way you sit, the way you walk, the way you talk, your tone of voice, all that is telling me something about you. So, I get to know you a little bit better than just looking at you and saying "Oh yes he's John Jones" or whatever the case may be. Uh, it's amazing how much you learn about an individual by talking with the person, so I was a big talker. I like to talk with people and um whether they like to talk to me or not that's another story. Because I was a teacher first and then I became a counselor. And as a teacher I encouraged my students in the classroom to do all the talking they could. Right or wrong, get your thoughts out on paper so to speak so that people can listen to you and can either be critical of you or agree with you or whatever the case may be. So, I was a big promoter of conversations whether they be one-on-one, or they be one in a group of twenty-five or thirty or whatever the case may be.

B.B.: Ok. Um, now can you share a story or an event to illustrate when an interaction with a student or family caused you to change an idea or philosophy?

L.O.: Not really. Um. I'd have to think about that one for a while.

B.B.: That's ok. We can come back to it if you want.

L.O.: Ok.

B.B.: If you could share a few words of wisdom to guide a new school counselor just starting out, what would they be?

L.O.: Keep your mind wide open because when you talk to an individual you can hear everything under the sun and nothing under the sun. In other words, don't make judgements on the first words that come out of the person's mouth. Listen to the whole story. Don't make judgements at all if you can but that's hard to do, not to make a judgement. But don't jump into it and say, "Well let me tell you what to do." Listen carefully to what the person is saying. Whether you agree or not has nothing to do with the price of eggs in China. Right? Its listening. The thing that that person wants is someone to listen to him or her. And so that was a biggie for me: to listen to people, to talk.

B.B.: Ok.

³ Roderick Worth Peters (1907-1983) served as Superintendent of Prince William County Schools from 1946-1951. He later worked for the U.S. Office of Education.

L.O.: Some of what they said was not worth two cents but that's neither here nor there.

Laughter

B.B.: Now, are there any mottos or phrases uh, you were known for, or used often with students to help them keep them on track and motivated?

L.O.: I don't think so. I always tried to say to them "Don't jump the gun, you know. Don't make rash judgements." But I don't think I used any phrases over and over and over again. And I'm not that kinda person. I think I like to use a lot of variety, so I'm not tied to one idea or one thought. So, I would... And of course being a Yankee I used some Yankee terminology as well. "Well what are you talking about Ms. Orlich?" I said, "Well listen to me and I'll explain to you." And so, you know, that that kind of conversation was important to me. It was important to have the person to talk to me and share their thoughts. Whether they were right or wrong has nothing to do with the price of eggs in China. Let them talk. Let them air it out because sometimes when a person airs out his thoughts, as he hears himself talk he says, "I didn't really believe in that" or "I don't believe that" or "I don't think that's right". Ya know sometimes when you listen to yourself, and we very rarely do that, but when you do you hear things you didn't think you had up here. That's just a thought. I don't know how accurate it is; it may not even be accurate, but that's how I feel.

B.B.: Ok. So, uh, talking about some of the culture shock coming down from the North down to Virginia in the '50s, uh, how big of a culture shock was it?

L.O.: Big. From this angle. First of all, I had to know a whole lot history of this area, which I didn't know. I was a history major, so I knew about the Battle of Manassas and all that, but I wasn't really into the history of the area. And number two, the other thing that I had to learn was, I was going to have both men and women in my class, boys and girls. And so, I had deal with them differently. You can't deal with, you can't deal with a boy the same way you do with a girl. Or vicea versa. And you can't deal with one person the same way you deal with another person. You have to be very individualized. And that's hard to do because you need a lot of time for that. And some teachers don't have the time, or don't want to go that route. I don't... ya know make people, um, but I love teaching from the day I was born I think. I had one sister⁴ and we played school. And I was always the teacher, and she was always the student. So, she complained to my mom⁵, she said "Momma why does Lillian always have to be the teacher?" And all my mom could say "She's older than you are." And so, she had to buy that because was. I was two years older than she. But uh, she didn't enter the teaching profession, she didn't have the same feel, feeling for it that I did. I never wanted to be anything else, except one time I wanted to be another Amelia Earhart, an aviatress but I never got to that part.

Laughter

L.O.: But I, that was sort of a dream, ya know how you have dreams far out there. Um and I thought "Gee I'd love to fly a plane." And I love flying anyhow but I didn't know that at that point. I wanted to fly a plane and be Amelia Earhart! Another one. A second Amelia Earhart. But that never happened. But it was a dream.

B.B.: So you, so you always wanted to be a teacher.

L.O.: Always.

B.B.: Uh, did you want to....

⁴ Dorothy Orlich (1930-1970)

⁵ Rose Orlich (1905-1993) was born in the Austrian-Hungarian Empire of Croatian parents. She emigrated to the United States in July 1927 after marrying her husband Anthony Orlich that February. She was naturalized in 1939.

L.O.: Played school all the time and I was always the teacher and my sister was always the student.

B.B.: So, did you, um, so when you were looking for your first teaching position, were you looking everywhere in the country or were you looking to stay in one particular area?

L.O.: Well first I thought I'd want to teach in New York and then I thought "No I think I'd like to go someplace where I'm starting fresh, I don't know the area, the historical area," because I was a history major. And so that happened to come here in that way because this is a historic area. It was a very small town. I mean two by four, and now it's a city. And, um, I just thought "Well it's a good place to start". And I loved. The minute, the minute I walked out of the train...I came by train because I didn't have a car. In New York you don't have cars, not at the time that I was growing up. It was a detriment to have a car. So I got off the train and I thought "Here I am in Manassas, Virginia."

B.B.: And, uh, what were some of your first thoughts when you moved to Manassas for the first time?

L.O.: I thought "Well is this a historic place? What am I doing here and why am I here?" I had to convince myself I did the right thing when I made that decision. But I did. I did.

B.B.: Yeah.

L.O.: Um. And then as I taught longer, and longer, and longer and I got had people who were graduates that I had taught, and they reminded me "Remember Ms. Orlich when you said 'blah, blah, blah, blah, blah?'" And of course, sometimes I remembered, sometimes I didn't. Um, I was "Oh yeah I remember. But you made an impression on me and I remember that." And then when I could say I taught the Mayor of Manassas, so I taught so and so who's head of such and such, I had a good feeling about myself. I felt I had given something to the world. I still do. I still do. I still feel that way. I still feel right now as I'm talking to you I'm feeling that I'm giving you something. I know you're gonna write an article about it, but maybe something I say is going to go back here and one day it may come out and you'll say "That Ms. Orlich she said that. I remember her." I'm just dreaming I guess.

B.B.: Um, so what would some...

L.O.: The only other thing I ever wanted to be was Amelia Earhart, the aviatrix. But from day one, I always wanted to teach. And of course, I played school with my sister. I didn't have, I had just the one sister and she was the one that I said complained all the time that Lillian was the teacher and she was the student and why can't she, turn it around. And my mom said "No she's older than you are. She's the teacher, you're the student. She was suffered that.

B.B.: Uh, what would your college, what would your colleagues or students be most likely to say to remember you saying or doing?

L.O.: Speaks her peace.

B.B.: Speaks her peace.

L.O.: Says what she thinks. Um, is open minded. I don't know what else.

B.B.: Alright

L.O.: I do speak my peace.

B.B.: So, we're gonna talk a little bit more about your career as a teacher.

L.O.: Ok.

B.B.: Um, so we kinda touched upon this a little bit earlier but when did you start teaching in Prince William County?

L.O.: 1950.

B.B.: 1950. What schools did you work at during your career?

L.O.: Osbourn High School.

B.B.: Osbourn High School.

L.O.: At that time Osbourn High School was... There were two high schools in Prince William: Gar-Field and Osbourn. And I chose Osbourn. On sight unseen of course. Um, and I'm glad I did that because I think I probably had more experiences, a variety here. And then of course Manassas became a city and then there was Osbourn Park. We moved there, moved to that new building. This area grew like topsy. I mean it mushroomed. It was people and then they had to build new schools. And when they opened Osbourn Park, which was 1979, we moved in there. The City of Manassas purchased the old building of Osbourn High School and created its own system. I was Prince William County and that was Manassas City. It was kinda, I think it's a little bit confusing to people don't seem to understand the difference between the two. And it was hard because this, this area mushroomed in terms of population. And people, many people live in this area and work in Washington D.C.

B.B.: mmm hmm

L.O.: But this area has just grown and grown and grown. It's the City of Manassas itself. It wasn't a city, it was a town when I first came here. Of course, now I look at the city and I say to the Mayor "I taught you! You better behave!"

Laughter

L.O.: And that gives me a sense of pride to be able to say I taught you. Whether it was in a classroom or in a counselling session made no difference. But um, say remember I taught you. You better do it right.

B.B.: So, you had an option of picking which school you wanted to teach at initially?

L.O.: Well, not really. I think the Superintendent of Schools decided that I was going to go to Osbourn High School.

B.B.: Ok.

L.O.: Yeah. And I...this came sight unseen. Ya know, I didn't come here to visit and be interviewed and look at the school. I came here. The interview was via telephone and I arrived here and that was the school, Osbourn High School.

B.B.: Oh, so you arrived here in Manassas with a job offer.

L.O.: Sight unseen, but with a job offer yes. I didn't come here and then look for a job. No.

B.B.: Ok.

L.O.: No.

B.B.: Uh.

L.O.: It was a very interesting experience. And a shocking experience coming from New York to a small town. This is a big town now, but now it's a city too. Um. But it was a big shock to come from New York City to a small town. But I loved it. I loved it.

B.B.: Um, so how many years did you teach as a teacher?

L.O.: Oh wow. 1950... gosh I don't know. I first taught then I became a teacher and a counselor because I started the A.P. program. And so, I wanted to continue teaching in the A.P. program but I wanted to counsel as well. And then...we moved to the new building. And then we moved from that building; because I was with Prince William County and then Osbourn city. The City of Manassas created its own school system and I was Prince William County, so I went to uh, Osbourn Park.

B.B.: Ok.

L.O.: It's kinda confusing. I think it's confusing for people because this area has changed drastically over the years. It's now a suburb of Washington, really when you think about it.

There're very few areas in Manassas that are strictly Old Town Manassas. Most of the people living here are working out of Manassas. I can't prove that. I'm just saying that.

B.B.: mmm hmm. Um, what classes did you teach?

L.O.: I taught every level of English, and American history and I started the A.P. program in Prince William County. So that was a big event for me. Um, and I taught A.P. European history. And then I went to counselling but I wanted to keep teaching as well so I was able to teach the A.P. course as well as council. And then I had to give up teaching because they wanted something all counselling or all teaching.

B.B.: Ok.

L.O.: That's how it all changed so much in this area. When I first came I could both if I wanted to. Or I could do two different areas perhaps. But, why by the time I finished you had to be on one track or the other track.

B.B.: Huh.

L.O.: You couldn't be on two tracks.

B.B.: Um, what were some of your first thoughts or impressions when you first started teaching?

L.O.: I said, "Oh my God where have I landed?"

Laughter

L.O.: I didn't know the area. Ya know. Even though I was a history major and I knew about Manassas, Virginia, I didn't physically know the area. So, I was startled by the small town. But I loved it. And that was a good thing for me that I really jelled quickly with it. Um, because if I hadn't then I would have gone back to New York and then who knows where I would have ended. Now I did have an opportunity to go into Administration in New Jersey and I took advantage of that, but Administration was really not for me. I missed teaching. And so, I went into counselling after that.

B.B.: Ok.

L.O.: So, I was a teacher, administrator, councilor. And I ended as a full-time councilor.

B.B.: Did you, uh, expect in your career to be a councilor?

L.O.: I'm sorry.

B.B.: Did you expect, uh, in your career that you ever be a councilor?

L.O.: No. I thought I'd be teaching. Yeah. And...because councilors teach everyday anyhow, but they teach in a different way. No but I loved, loved everything I did. I'm never sorry I entered into education as a career.

B.B.: Um, what changes have you noticed in the area schools over the years?

L.O.: Well I think there was more intimacy when I first started because it was smaller, so we could afford intimacy in terms of relating to teachers or relating to students. Um, we we branched out and we offered more to the students as we grew and so that was a plus factor. There was less, I think a little bit less communication between the administration and teaching as we grew. Just because we were so large in size it was difficult to just stop by the principal's office to tell him how ya feel. You had to make an appointment to see him. And that's an exaggeration I know, but there's more distance between administration and teaching. And maybe that has to be, I don't know, uh but there was never any distance between teaching and students. I think that continues to this day no matter how large a system ya have. If there is a certain amount of intimacy and relationship between the teacher and the student, you have it made. Everybody benefits that way. The student benefits and the person teaching benefits as well. You have to be able, I'm going on and on now...

B.B.: You're fine, you're fine...

L.O.: Ya have to be able to say at the end of the day, "I'm ok about today." And if you say, "I'm not ok," then do something about it. And some teachers are maybe hesitant to do that, but Ms. Orlich wasn't.

Laughter

L.O.: I spoke my peace. And they always would say "Well you're a Damn Yankee Ms. Orlich. We don't listen to you." I said, "You better listen because what I'm saying makes sense."

B.B.: Um, when you first started teaching how.... When you first started teaching how large were your classes?

L.O.: Twenty-five to thirty.

B.B.: Ok.

L.O.: And then I got into... I set up the A.P. program in Prince William County so those were specialty classes. Um...I'd say, depends on the subject area but I'd say no more than twenty-five. Maybe...

B.B.: Twenty-five.

L.O.: Maybe in some cases less than twenty-five and in some cases more than twenty-five. Not a huge number where you had to worry. Now, every number is huge in a sense, but you didn't have thirty or forty in a classroom so.

B.B.: Ok. Um...

L.O.: I'll tell you something. Teaching is an exciting job. It really is. No two days are alike. You go home with stories from A to Z and back again. And every day I would look forward to "Well what's going to happen to me today?" It's fantastic. It's a fantastic, fantastic profession.

B.B.: Um, so what were some your thoughts starting your career in a segregated school system?

L.O.: I don't remember that I had any special thoughts about that because I never went to a school... I didn't...Just because of where I lived I never went to an integrated school myself. Um, so I never really gave that much thought.

B.B.: Ok.

L.O.: Ya know whatever happens, happens. It's important that everybody gets an education however it's done. It changes from year to year often but necessarily year to year, but I'd say every ten years you see a big change in education. Sometimes good, sometimes not so good. Sometimes mediocre. Depends.

B.B.: Ok. And um, what were some of the reactions to you and your colleagues when integration started?

L.O.: I'm sorry.

B.B.: What were some of the reactions to you and your colleagues when integration started? What were some of the experiences?

L.O.: I think for the most part the teachers were not concerned about the teaching aspect of it. I think they were more concerned about the interrelation between this student and this student. A student of color and a student of... and a white student. And I think they were ready. I don't think they were prepared for the amount, necessarily, but I think they were ready to try to deal with it. I don't think we had... In this area, I don't know about other areas, but in this area, I don't think we had any huge problems with that sort.

B.B.: Ok. Um, so were you aware of Massive Resistance in other school systems?

L.O.: Was I aware of what?

B.B.: Of Massive Resistance in other school systems.

L.O.: Not particularly.

B.B.: Ok. Um, now do you remember your first integrated class?

L.O.: No.

B.B.: No?

L.O.: That was just sort of, I don't even know how to say it, not expected but... I'm teaching. I'm a teacher. Whoever sits in front of my class, in my classroom I'm teaching that person. Now I may have to do it differently with certain students because they need more help or less help or whatever, but I'm still a teacher. That's my big job. I'm teaching.

B.B.: Now when, uh, Manassas and then later Manassas Park became their own cities...

L.O.: Right.

B.B.: Did you see a change in the student body? With now you're just strictly a county teacher?

L.O.: Not really. No. Because people... Ya know this area has grown so very, very much in size and in numbers. Manassas Park became a city and established its own system. So, they had developed a school system of their own. Manassas City developed its own system, so they had a school of their own. They bought our old building, right. And Prince William County just happened to be in there, in between the two cities. But a teacher is a teacher is a teacher. And whether you're teaching a person from Manassas City or Manassas Park or from Prince William County, you're zeroing in on that person. And you're trying to help that person succeed. So, no.

B.B.: Ok. Now, were there any other, like, prominent historic events that you feel may have significantly impacted schools and education in your career?

L.O.: Well for me I thought it was great when I could say "I taught you".

Laughter

L.O.: To political figures. The Mayor of Manassas for example, I counselled him. Um. So, I thought... that was a lot of pride on my part, and a lot of "why are you saying that to me" and so on. Because I want you to know that I still influence you. Nothing big or outstanding. It's just ordinary with me. And I'm very, very, outspoken as you probably realize. Um, but I always do it with a purpose in mind. If I'm outspoken to an administrator, I have a reason to do that. It's not just that I want to be heard. Ok. It's a purpose behind it, and I want something done and it's just my way of doing it. Sometimes it was accepted, many times it was not accepted by the administration. But they had to answer to people that I didn't have to answer to. So maybe they were making their decisions based on that, I don't know. I was very fortunate in administrators in whom I dealt with, for the most part, were very open to suggestions and open to my conversations. And I didn't hesitate to speak my peace, as you probably realize. Um. But I never had... Well I'll put it this way. I never had a situation whereby I was openly criticized in a public area by any administrator. If an administrator differed with me, he told me that (or she told me that) in private. And that's a good thing. That's not a bad thing. Because then it gives you an opportunity to evaluate it and also the opportunity to change, if you want to make a change. So... I'm very outspoken, I know that. And I'm the first one to tell you that but I always stated myself, it's not because I'm a Damn Yankee, as I was introduced, but it was because I hope I'm thinking through all the possibilities that are open. I like to see a lot of, um, options for people. I don't...this is not just one path you'll go on or you have this one. Now you have to make the decision about which one you're gonna follow. I don't make this for you, you make it. And then you live with your decision. You can change your mind along the way, but you still live with whatever decision. And I push that a lot. It's up to you to make a decision. But think it through before you make it, and then live with it.

B.B.: Ok. What were some of the, uh, the biggest changes that you saw as an educator through your career?

L.O.: Well, integrated classes of course. That was a biggie. Um, I don't know if there were any outstanding...I'm not sure that there were any...every, every change is an important change and you have to deal with that change. Sometimes you deal with it in a short span of time, sometimes over a long period of time. But you have to be ready for change. And some people who enter the profession want to do it one way, and they do this. But that's true with everything. It's not only true with teachers, it's true with every profession. They put blinders on and say, "This is how we're gonna to do." But you can't do that. Because when you deal with people, you have all kinds of people you're dealing with. I mean your different from me. Your different from the fellow next to you and the fellow next to you and the fellow next to you. That's not bad or good, it's just we have to recognize the differences, that's all. And I push that a lot. Whether it's right or wrong I can't tell ya. I don't think there's a right or wrong on that one.

B.B.: Um, so can you tell me about how teaching has changed over the course of your career?

L.O.: I think there, this may, may not be good but, I think there more written rules and regulations. Some of them are important to have, some of them less important. Some of them are made because they get pushed from the outside and the educators have to do it. Um. I think we have to be open to change all the time because this world never stands still. No world stands still. And this area has changed drastically since I've been here. This was a small, little old town, historic town, where everybody knew everybody. Now, it's a city. And so, you have to be ready for all those changes. And sometimes we don't want to look at those changes. We think "We don't want to change. We like it the way it is." Yeah, that isn't the way life is. And I'm talking as an old lady. I'm in my nineties. So... I was born in 1928, so ya know, I've seen a lot of changes in the outside world but, in my inside world you're very important to me as a human being. And I'm going to examine you and your thinking and you're going to listen to me and I'm going to listen to you. And that's what we need to do. That's my speech for today.

Laughter

B.B.: Um, now what tools did you use in your classroom at the beginning of your career?

L.O.: At the beginning of what?

B.B.: Your career. Like any special tools or techniques that you used?

L.O.: Well, techniques maybe. I was a very open about what I expected. I didn't hesitate to tell a student "This is what you're going to do if you're gonna succeed in my classroom." But I made that speech to everybody, not to just one person. So, at the beginning of the school year when I had my first session with a class, I said "This is what we're looking for. This is how we're gonna get there. In between there may be some changes that occur, be ready for those changes." And fortunately for me I had, I don't remember any group of students that differed with that thinking. They liked to be open. They liked to think "Well maybe what I say is important, so I better say it." And that, I encouraged that. Speak your peace but when you do so be sure you have some backing for it. Don't just say "And this is what I think Ms. Orlich, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah," without saying "This is what I think Ms. Orlich, and this is why I think it." I was always interested in the why of it, and how did you reach that decision. And I think that was encouraging to people, to the students. I think they enjoyed that approach to teaching. And I think that's done now by many people, maybe depending upon the class that they're teaching. I taught every level of English at some point, and every level of Social Studies. I never taught Math or Science, that wasn't... those weren't my areas of interest. So, the techniques could be very different in those areas. But in Math and English, I'm sorry in English and Social Studies, you have a broader opening. You can say a whole lot more and do a whole lot more. That isn't...I'm not this kind of person. Although I had rules and regs, I could do this and like that

too. And of course, I always was accused “Well you’re a Damn Yankee Ms. Orlich. You don’t know what you’re talking about.” I said “Ok, but I’m the teacher!”

Laughter

B.B.: Um, so did the physical classroom...

L.O.: I’m sorry.

B.B.: Did the physical classrooms change at Osbourn Park, uh, during your career?

L.O.: I’m not sure what you mean by that.

B.B.: Like the physical size or...

L.O.: Oh! I’m sorry.

B.B.: Or the physical rooms. Did you see any changes over your career that stood out to you?

L.O.: No, no, no. I think, um, that the fact that we were offering more courses of different types, that made changes. There were some courses that were very popular and some courses that, by virtue of what they were, were small in size, and what they did was small in size. I think as far as Prince William County, and I think Manassas and Manassas Park same thing, there’s always, um, a period of time during a school year, usually at the end of the year, before the next year begins, of evaluation of what was successful and what wasn’t successful. And, ya know, trying to balance the two and trying to meet the needs of when the teacher said, “It would be nice if blah, blah, blah, blah.” Trying to meet those needs. I think that’s important. I think we do that. I can’t speak personally for the other systems, but I can guess from just talking to the educators from the other systems that there is that option open to them. And what they think is considered by the Administration. At least that was my feeling all the time. Now maybe I was more open and vocal than most people, I don’t know. I was kind of a talky person.

Laughter

L.O.: As you can tell. And I was a Damn Yankee to everybody. Everybody. Even today.

B.B.: So that... so that, uh, like nickname, did that follow you through your career?

L.O.: I think so. I think so, I don’t know how it did, but I think so. So, I hear people talking about Ms. Orlich “She’s a Damn Yankee.”

Laughter

L.O.: And you know, I wasn’t really, what I would call, how shall I say, a staunch Yankee. I didn’t say I’m a Yankee therefore blah, blah, blah. So, I don’t know how they got that. I think they liked idea of tail, tailgating or if not that labeling somebody and saying “You’re a Damn Yankee. You’re a Damn Yankee.” I had a wonderful, wonderful career. I really did. And I can only say teaching is a fantastic... there’s nothing boring about teaching. Nothing. You do have to be some administrator requirements and you do have to fall in line, but you can get around them too. Don’t tell anybody I said that.

Laughter

L.O.: There’s ways to get around everything in life.

B.B.: And, um to finish this off. To finish this off is there, uh, like a fondest memory that you have from your career?

L.O.: I have too many. I don’t have one that stands out that I’d say this is it, no matter what.

B.B.: Can you share some of your favorites if you have multiple ones?

L.O.: Well, when I became the A.P. administrator, the A.P., I thought that was a biggie for me, because I thought the A.P. program was fantastic. Um. I did summer school principalship a couple of times and that was interesting. I didn’t want to be a principal after I did that, but it was interesting to do. And um, I loved counselling because I did both teaching and advising in counselling. And so, I could do both of my areas of interest. I just loved being a teacher. Period.

The End. I made the right decision from the time I was yay high and my Mom said, “Don’t you want to look at something else?” I said “No.” I wanted to be a teacher. And I, that’s what I did. And I loved every minute. I would even go back now to teach if they’d let me.

B.B.: Wow.

L.O.: Yeah. I love it. It’s, it’s not boring. At all. At all. Now sometimes you reach the point where you say “Ugh. Why did that happen?”

Laughter

L.O.: But most of the time you say “That was great. That was great. Do it again. Do it again. Try again.” It really is exciting, it really is. I would not have done anything else. One time, the only other time I wanted to do something else I wanted to be an aviatress. I wanted to be Amelia Earhart, again. But other than that, teaching was it. It’s a great profession. It doesn’t pay very well.

Laughter

L.O.: You don’t get... there’s no teacher in this world that gets the amount of money that a student will he or she does. No way. Even the highest paid teachers, they’re not paid enough. No one is paid enough but that’s not why you go into it. You don’t go in to become a millionaire, you go in because you want to deal with another human being and help that human being develop into a greater human being. It’s a fantastic. Have you ever thought about going into teaching?

Laughter

B.B.: No. No.

L.O.: Do you know anybody that’s a teacher?

B.B.: Uh, my mother-in-law is actually a teacher.

L.O.: Oh!

B.B.: So.

L.O.: What grade level does she...

B.B.: Uh, she actually teaches Special Ed.

L.O.: Oh! That is... That’s a tremendous, tremendous job. But you need to, you need to be a million different kinds of people all at the same time. Does she like it?

B.B.: She likes it, yeah.

L.O.: Oh wow. I, I admire that. People in Special Education. I really do. And for a long time, Special Ed students were not given the attention. And...how should I... not attention necessarily but the help that they needed. But now I think there’s more and more emphasis on: This is a special person and he needs special help can be successful. Let’s work with him. I think there’s more emphasis on that now than there was when I first started. Because we didn’t have Special Ed classes when I first started.

B.B.: Ok.

L.O.: Yeah. Everybody was in the same, ya know, same group. But there are no dull days in teaching. I can tell ya that. And even when I sit here and think I’m retired I can remember some of those days and think “That was exciting! I liked that!”

Laughter

L.O.: I wish I could start all over again. But I can’t.

Laughter

B.B.: Well um, thank you for sitting down.

L.O.: Oh, you’re welcome