kindex®
< Scan QR to view this original record online, or visit https://ezratclark.kindex.org/s/212681

Title: **Chapter VII: FIELDING ACADEMY**
Provenance:

Category: **Document**
Person: **Walter Edward Clark**
Date:

MY MEMOIRS RECOLLECTIONS OF PIONEER LIFE IN BEAR LAKE VALLEY Written by Walter Edward Clark Chapter VII FIELDING ACADEMY In 1906, the year after I graduated from elementary school, I enrolled in the

MY MEMOIRS

RECOLLECTIONS OF PIONEER LIFE

IN BEAR LAKE VALLEY

Written by Walter Edward Clark

Chapter VII

FIELDING ACADEMY

In 1906, the year after I graduated from elementary school, I enrolled in the Fielding Academy, attending the winter course which was taught for farm boys who could attend only the winter months. Fielding Academy, and L.D.S. secondary school, was located at the head of Main Street on a hill in Paris, Idaho. It served Bear Lake and part of Bannock (now Caribou) Counties in Idaho, Rich County in Utah, and Lincoln County in Wyoming.

Paris, the oldest community in the Valley, seemed to be a lively, prosperous community. Having two wards with separate chapels, the stake tabernacle, which is still a beautiful substantial building, the court house, and a large business building with a grocery store, a clothing store, and a hardware store –all operated by the Shepherd family, a second grocery, several smaller places of business including a printing establishment that published a weekly newspaper called the Post, –Paris seemed like a cultural center and a business center.

We judge by comparison. I shall never forget my impression of Salt Lake City when I returned from my mission in the Northern States. I labored in Detroit, was in Omaha and Chicago several times, and I had just completed a three week sight seeing tour including Washington, D.C., Boston, Palmyra, Niagra Falls, and Kansas City. The buildings in Salt Lake City seemed so flat and low, as if a heavy roller had lowered everything.

When I entered Fielding Academy there were four grade levels: seventh through tenth. The junior year was added when I was a sophomore and the senior year the following year. The winter course in 19-6-07 lasted seventeen weeks and was taught by LeGrand Humphrey. I enjoyed mechanical drawing and had a start in debating, as Mr. Humphrey wanted to match his class against the regular students. He coached Oscar Tom Parker and me for a debate.

I was self-centered, extremely bashful, self-conscious, and often despondent. Mr. Passey reported my mental attitude, or was it emotional anguish, to Principal Earnest Bramwell who called me to his office. He was able to inspire me with a desire to continue in school. Roy Welker, my boyhood idol, who was not a teacher at Fielding, told me my face was as long as a dash churn. I must have gone to school day after day without speaking to a person. I did take part in class. Roy Welker once commented “Walter has a craving for information.”

I lived with the Richards family in Paris. Uncle Wilford Richards was a brother to Aunt Wealthy, and Aunt Emily Randall Richards was my mother’s sister. The family moved to Georgetown on Father’s recommendation. Wilford was soon called as Bishop of the Georgetown Ward.

Emily distributed the mail and took a leading role in dramatics as well as church organization. Their oldest child, Laura, was in the first eighth grade class in Georgetown. Uncle Wilford Richards was called to be a counselor to President Joseph Shepherd of the Bear Lake Stake and they moved to Paris. Their son, Wilford, was a grade behind me. Laura and Wilford were popular, so I had the advantage of being in good company. Many Bishops, General Authorities, and other prominent people were often in their home. There were no hotels or public eating houses in those days.

It was necessary for me to go home many weekends to haul hay in the barn or to saw wood, so that Melvin could be free to do the chores and go to school. Many times I have walked from Paris to Montpelier (ten miles) after school on Friday where I would meet my folks who had come to Montpelier to shop. A letter would tell me when to come home. On the return I have walked from Bennington Hill north of Montpelier, where the folks dropped me off and returned home with the tender-footed team so they could complete their chores before midnight.

In a day when we gave pupils a ride to school in a heated or cooled bus and provide a gym for physical exercise, this seems like an effort, but with teachers holding up President Lincoln as an example and my mother telling of B.H. Roberts' struggle to get an education, I seemed to have it easy. I don't think my mother ever recovered from the feeling of sympathy she had for B.H. Roberts after she saw the hurt feelings he had when she was called on to explain a school problem he had failed on. It is said that Roberts, poor, but proud, would not allow anyone to enter the attic he lived in while attending the University of Utah. Everyone knew he was destitute.

While attending school I learned from a personal experience why the Church Authorities advise against card playing but not such games as Rook and Flinch which we students played in our homes. One Sunday evening, instead of going to church, I went with some boys and we played cards. Of course I lost. One of the boys said, "If it were not Sunday, we would take the drinks on you." Never had I heard such a comment in other games played with cards.

One day some of us were throwing a basketball in the basement which served as a gym until an addition was made to the Academy providing a gym on the top floor. A window was broken. I could not understand why all but me scampered from the scene. I took part in a squabble between the junior boys and others that resulted in breaking down a classroom door. I recall no attempt to punish. We did pay for the door replacement.

The junior class was pitted against the inactive majority. The senior class had only one boy –Seymour Spencer. The junior class included older and husky boys. Dan Rich, married and much older, was not involved. Ezra Price, Coulson Rich, and Hugh Finley were older and stronger than I. I was with the junior boys who met in the building tower to plan the school election which was railroaded through as we planned. But at the end, David Shepherd, a sophomore, rose and moved the junior class run the school! The election was over.

My junior year I was business manager for the Search Light, the school paper. Seymour Spencer was editor. It was my job to seek ads and take the material for the paper to the local printer. The setting of the type one letter at a time fascinated me.

In my senior year I was teamed with Judge David C. Kunz, a Probate Judge who was attending school, and Calvin Allred from Afton, Wyoming in a debate with another school. While working with me on the debate, David Kunz said with disgust, "Walter, you can talk; why can't you write?" Due to the sudden death of Calvin the debate was canceled. The senior class went as a group to the funeral, a day's trip one way in a horse-drawn carriage. I experienced a disappointment and it was a shock to learn that a classmate I admired did not live up to what he pretended.

In the spring of my senior year the school went to the lake resort at Fish Haven. The senior class went in a three seated carriage with a lead team, the

two teams in tandum. A short time after, the boys, including me, went into the willows where a bottle was passed around. On the second round I declined. I was never embarrassed or offered another drink by that group. At the time I took it as a compliment that the girls came and asked me to do the driving home, but have since decided that it was because I was too bashful to put an arm around a girl, evern to keep her from freezing.

In 1948 I met Professor Aaron Backum on the street in Logan. He asked if I were Walter Clark and added, "I remember you were good in math and showed me how to work a problem." I spent most of one weekend on the problem: A stone is dropped down a well. In five seconds the sound is heard. How deep is the well to the water level?

It was not until I transferred my credits to the B.Y.U. that I discovered I had not received a credit in geometry. I knew I did not get my final examination paper back, but that had not concerned me, for I knew I was one of the top students, as I did not take the class until my senior year. The instructor handed out cheap blank paper for the problems to be worked on. After working one wrong, the solution was evident to me. I hastily erased the work and worked the problem on the same paper. In fact, I copied it on a piece of scrap paper and slipped it across the aisle to a young lady, a top student who had not need of my help. Her paper was on the desk when I handed mine in. The instructor left the room and left me in charge. What conclusion was he to draw but that I had copied her work?

Graduation exercises were held June, 1910, with David O. McKay as commencement speaker. The graduation class consisted of five boys and four girls. At the age of twenty-one, I was the youngest boy, and the next to youngest in the class. One girl had sickness and graduated the next year. Calvin Allred, who had died, was honored, and his parents given his diploma.

Leona Rich of Star Valley, Wyoming was valedictorian and Nina Welker, the youngest class member, gave a prognostication. She forecast Coulson Rich and I in contest against each other. She had probably heard that the boys had drawn lots to see which girls they should ask to accompany them to a class party. The penny was tossed between Coulson Rich and I. The girl involved was Stella Pugmire, whom I silently admire. He won the toss, and he later married her. It was more than chance that kept me unmarried until I met Violet Christensen.