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MY MEMOIRS RECOLLECTIONS OF PIONEER LIFE IN BEAR LAKE VALLEY Written by Walter Edward Clark Chapter XI ATTENDING BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY The summer of 1923 both Melvin and I were home. Only one was n

MY MEMOIRS

RECOLLECTIONS OF PIONEER LIFE

IN BEAR LAKE VALLEY

Written by Walter Edward Clark

Chapter XI

ATTENDING BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY

The summer of 1923 both Melvin and I were home. Only one was needed to care for the cattle in the winter. He had been drafted into World War I, then went on a mission, but he was now home and suggested that I was entitled to leave for the winter.

Violet and I were in the Logan Temple when the thought came, "Why not go to college?" This was the first time in my life I was not needed at home. Enroute home we talked about the idea. Ideals change. At one time I desired to be a cowboy, capable of picking my hat from the ground on a galloping horse. Then the day dream was of being an orator. But for an occupation I longed to be a construction engineer, and I now decided to spend the winter brushing up on carpentry.

My mother, to help her children through school, had rented a large house in Provo, and was cooking for boarders. She returned to Georgetown to keep house for Melvin, and Violet and I moved to Provo. Maurine was a senior, Bryant a junior, and Rhoda was teaching at Spanish Fork. We all stayed together. In addition to the housework, Violet registered for study in dramatics and home economics.

In spite of President Rich's advice, I did not plan on more than one year at B.Y.U., and I registered for courses with advanced students. Before spring came I decided to continue, and registered for correspondence courses during the summer. I wrote my lessons and Violet typed them, correcting grammar and spelling. Because I received credit for past experiences in teaching, in theology because of my mission, and credits for debating, I was able to secure the required credit for graduation by the spring of 1926.

A few years before entering college, Violet and I were in Provo visiting Mother, and we went to a debate in which my cousin, Edwin Baird, was a participant. I had the feeling that I would like to have had his material and be in his place. That I would some day be on the same platform was not even a dream.

As a freshman I did not wear the traditional green cap until I entered the class debate with John L. Clarke, later President of the College, and Sherman Christensen, later a Federal Judge in Salt Lake City. We won both the negative and affirmative sides of the question against the sophomores. Of more interest were the triangle debates which I tried out but lost, as did Juanita Pulsipher. We both tried out and won for a debate with the University of Southern California. The latter, now Juanita Brooks, is today an historian and writer of renown.

The second year I teamed up with Orval Hafen and Alonzo Morley against the University of Utah. We lost. I was also teamed with Hafen and A. C. Lam-

bert, the latter being, in my opinion, the most polished and capable student at BYU. I also teamed with John L. Clarke in a non-decision debate. The last year I was associated with Raymond Holbrook, now a Salt Lake attorney, in a trip to Montana accompanied by Dr. Christian Jensen. My last debate with Raymond was a non-decision against the University of Southern California. It was a wonderful experience to be associated with such outstanding scholars and gentlemen. My grammatical errors were an embarrassment to all, but I felt they had respect for my ability to find, select, and use information.

Debating at this time was popular and drew large audiences. To a previous generation it was the spelling bee that furnished the school competition. When I entered college the gymnasium was a luxury, but it soon became a necessity, resulting in structures such as the Astro-Dome in Houston, the Marriott Center in Provo, and the Coliseum in Los Angeles.

In debating, last minute information is sometimes important. In the first debate we were defending the Court of the League of Nations as opposed to the Court of Arbitration. The day of the debate I received a copy of the rules and regulations of the Court of League of Nations. One rule, allowing the Court to use arbitration, took the props from under our case. I went to Dr. Christian Jensen and asked how that could be answered. He replied, "I do not know." Our opponents argued that the League of Nations was not flexible. In the final rebuttal I read the provision providing for arbitration. A debater on the opposition snapped his fingers and jumped, but they were through, and we won.

Just before Raymond Holbrook, Dr. Jensen, and I left for Montana to argue against a constitutional amendment to prohibit child labor, I spent my time in the law library of the Utah State Capitol reviewing recent state statutes prohibiting or limiting child labor. We were thus able to show that the conditions of which the affirmative base is argument were already being corrected.

I also had some interesting experiences acting as a debate judge. I went to Springville with Dr. Jensen and John C. Swensen, where we rendered an unanimous decision in favor of Springville. Later in the year the Springville debating coach came to class and asked me to go to Spanish Fork to judge a debate. After we left, he told me I was to be the sole judge and would be expected to analyze the arguments. I learned later that my decision in favor of Spanish Fork made them the district champion.

On another occasion Professor John C. Swensen, Orval Hafen and I went to Pleasant Grove to judge a debate. A two-one decision against Pleasant Grove resulted. The Pleasant Grove coach cornered Hafen and me. Hafen could not stand the pressure and stated he voted for Pleasant Grove. I was with satisfaction I learned that I agreed with Professor Swensen.

The first year, after presenting an outline of a gospel talk to President Brimhall, I was excused from taking theology. During the second year I was studying in the library during theology hour. I saw President Brimhall's secretary come into the room and leave. He soon returned to tell me Brother Brimhall wanted to see me. President Brimhall asked why I was not in theology class. I replied, "I did not register for theology." "Who is your Dean?" he asked. I replied, "L. John Nuttal." I was instructed to go to the Dean's office to find out why I was not taking theology and report back. Dean Nuttal uttered the words, "What am I to say?" "Nothing,' I said, and I left. To Brother Brimhall I said, "The Dean is sorry and regrets he made a decision without your approval." My comment seemed to please him and he replied, "It is all right." The third and last year I took a course on Old Testament Philosophy under Hugh Woodward out of my own choice.

The second winter I helped with tickets at football and basketball games. The fall of 1925 I was again selected to help with the ticket sales. We would sell the tickets at the bottom of Maeser Hill and the patrons would then go up the hill to the football field. One day we locked up the cash box and were preparing to leave our station when another car approached. "Collectors –keepers," one of the other ticket-sellers commented. That did not ap-

peal to my sense of justice. A few days later I found a dollar in my overcoat pocket. I thought it was mine, and knew I hadn't intentionally pocketed any money, but I gave my conscience the advantage of a doubt and took the dollar to the office where I commented, "I suppose I could have kept this, and been a dollar better off." Apparently I was not to be tempted again, for my services were immediately discontinued.

With other debaters and athletes I was initiated into the Block Y Club. The initiation consisted of a week's activity culminating in a chicken dinner. The candidates were called skunks, and were expected to steal the chickens. We were divided into groups. To me, A. C. Lambert, who was directing the activity, said, "Keep them as orderly as you can." One of the boys said, "My parents would not have me steal for a thousand dollars." One of the boys saved the day by going to his brother's and getting two hens. "What are we going to do with them?" asked one of the group. I replied, "My folks know where I am and why; I will take them." Violet cleaned and cooked them. The other group led by Knight Allen went to the butchershop. I am of the opinion the custom of stealing chickens stopped in their midst.

The final act of initiation was to run the gauntlet. The lead boy, Owen Rowe, received a terrible blow on the buttocks. I instinctively yelled, "That is enough of that!" Now another hit was made that evening.

My senior year I corrected papers in both economics and sociology at 50¢ per hour. In the fall I picked apples at 4¢ a bushel or $4.00 a day. One day I picked 100 bushels in ten hours.

I was fortunate in having some of the best instructors: William J. Snow in history, Dr. Christian Jensen in political science, John C. Swensen in economics and sociology, and L. John Nuttal in School Administration. The last name had the greatest influence on my future activities. I caught a vision of school consolidation from him, and for a quarter of a century I became a champion for reorganization and consolidation in Bear Lake County.

I had been in a nominating group for school offices at Fielding Academy but at the "Y" I thought that school politics would be foreign to my interest. Elwin Potter of Idaho was nominated for an office. The report was in circulation that he was failing in his class work. I arose in a student body meeting and said, "Where there is a lot of smoke, there is usually a little fire. I is true Mr. Potter received a condition, but that has been removed. It is not true he has failed." It was assumed I was his campaign manager. He was not my choice and he was not elected. I guess I have always been in defense of "fair play."

The next year I was asked to nominate Ross Pugmilre from Idaho. That was before the trip to Montana with Raymond Holbrook. Raymond was nominated before I nominated Ross Pugmilre for the same position. By the hush that followed after I spoke, I realized the student body considered I had done an unethical thing. There was no ill feeling. I had made a promise and compiled, but my sympathy was with Raymond, who was elected.

I went to Georgetown to help seed the spring crops for a week, and returned with a scarred face received in a run-a-way on a leveler, and I kept myself out of circulation other than classes. Raymond, years later told me it was assumed I felt I had made a mistake and withdrew myself.

In justice to my children who received top grades and honors, I should record that I graduated with high honors. I suppose it was because of my debating experience and my age as well as good grades that I was selected to be valedictorian. As you know, I cannot write coherently, nor can I memorize. I tried both, and going from the audience to the platform I experienced stage fright and failed to deliver a credible talk. I was embarrassed. I still dislike having reference made to the fact that I was valedictorian.

I have never since then written a talk, and I seldom do any reading when delivering a talk. I do study and make notes, but do better if I leave my notes in my pocket. I have given many talks –some good,

others not so good. I have been told I do my best when I depend on inspiration for the occasion and select material from the storehouse –my memory.