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1 By Mary C. Bennion

Farmington

SKETCH OF THE LIFE OF MARY STEVENSON CLARK

Joseph Stevenson, the father of Mary Stevenson Clark, was born October 19, 1787, in the village of Barsby, Ashby, Folville parish, Leicestershire, England. When he became of age he entered the Coopering Trade (the business of making casks, barrels, etc). In 1808, he was appointed Cooper to attend the Field Train of Artillery on Foreign Service under the command of The Duke of Wellington. The English made an expedition through Spain and Portugal during which Joseph was attacked by jaundice and was confined to his bed for nearly three months. At the age of 25 he met Miss Elizabeth Stevens at London, where they were married June 28, 1812. He had improved greatly in his trade and had become a Master Cooper.

Joseph and Elizabeth lived in London for the next four years during which time two of their boys were born. William was born June 10, 1813; Joseph Jr. was born March 11, 1815. In 1816, Joseph Sr. was appointed Master Cooper of the English Colony of Gibralter (now Gibralter, Spain) . At Gibralter the growing family prospered.

On September 11, 1817, Henry D., their third son, was born. While they lived on the Rock three other children arrived; these were: Edward, born May 1, 1820; Elizabeth, February 11, 1823; Mary, August 29, 1825. The family was assimilated into the Methodist congregation at Gibralter where they became quite active in the church. In his spare time Mary's father Joseph made a bass violin and a violin both of which he played in the church; in addition, he sang in the choir.

Because the climate on the Rock caused Joseph (Mary's father) to have attacks of "the fever" which he contracted while serving with The Duke of Wellington and because he desired to live where his growing family would have more room and greater opportunities to learn a trade, in 1827 the family emigrated to Albany, New York. Here James, their seventh and last child, was born August 12, 1830.

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Soon Mary's father Joseph moved the family westward over the Erie Canal to Detroit which then was little more than a vlllage. They remained there only a short time but long enough for Joseph to donate one of the bass viols which he had made at Gibralter to the Methodist Church.

Moving to Waterford, Mich., Joseph bought an improved farm of 240 acres. They were quite happy here until Joseph Sr. died in September, 1832, following a brief illness. Mary's youngest brother James was then two years old; Mary, the sixth child, was seven years old. Edward, Mary's brother, relates how the mother of the Prophet Joseph Smith came to Pontiac, Mich., (near Waterford) in 1832 to visit her brother. While there she came in contact with a Presbyterian minister, a Mr. Ruggles, who sneeringly and scoffingly asked, "Are you indeed the mother of that poor, foolish, silly boy, Joe Smith, who pretended to translate the Book of Mormon?"

"I am, sir, the mother of Joseph Smith, but why do you apply to him such epithets as these?"

"Because," said his reverence, "he imagines he is going to break down all other churches with that simple Mormon Book."

"Did you ever read that book?"

"No, it is beneath my notice."

"But," rejoined Mrs. Smith, "the scriptures say, 'prove all things.' Now, sir, I tell you that (that) book contains the Everlasting Gospel, and it was written for the salvation of your soul, by the gift and power of the Holy Ghost."

"Pooh," said the minister. "I am not afraid," said he, "of any member of my church being led astray by such stuff. They have too much intelligence."

Earnestly, Mrs. Smith answered him: "Mr. Ruggles, mark my words. As true as God lives before three years we will have more than one-third of your church. And, sir, whether you believe it or not, we will take the very deacon, too."

This prediction was fulfilled literally; the deacon was the first man baptized.

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That same year, 1832, Mary's mother, Elizabeth, heard and received the Gospel and was baptized. Edward, Mary's brother, was baptized in 1833. Mary's three older brothers, however, would not receive the Gospel and instead went to Cincinnatti, O., where they worked at their trades as printers and coopers.

In 1835, the remainder of the family moved to Liberty, Mo., where they lived until the Saints were driven to Quincy, Ill., and then again with them to Nauvoo. The family next moved across the Mississippi to Montrose, Ia., where they lived in a room adjoining Brigham Young. They decided to move to Clarksville, a small settlement, where Edward built a cabin for them and then found work to provide their living. Mary and her sister Elizebeth worked for gentiles, because the Saints were too poor to hire them.

Mary and Elizabeth were baptized at Far West, Mol, in 1837, by Apostle David Patten; Mary was then 12 years old. As Mary relates, "I have always been taught to keep the Sabbath Day holy, and I have had a testimony of the Gospel from childhood. The testimonies that I have heard from the Prophet Joseph and members of the Twelve and others of the Saints have always stayed me. And I can truly say that I rejoice in the Gospel of Life and Salvation. It will continue to be a joy in this life and in the world to come if we will keep the commandments of the Lord."

Mary's mother was very handy with a needle and helped Sister Emma Smith and the wives of other church authorities, and so became well acquainted and received much instruction ("and intelligence").

Mary was married to Ezra T. Clark May 18, 1845, a fine young man who likewise had been witness to many a wicked deed done by infuriated mobs. When Ezra was twelve years old, his father joined the Mormon Church. After living in Independence, Mo., they were forced to move to Nauvoo. Ezra had witnessed and felt such persecution to which the Saints were subjected. At Nauvoo, when the cornerstone to the Temple was laid in 1841, when Ezra was eighteen, the Prophet had asked for contributions to forward the Lord's work. After the meeting, Ezra stepped up to the

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Prophet Joseph and handed him all the money he had. The Prophet looked at the money and then at the giver and said, "Young man, you will never lack for the necessities of life nor for money." This promise was literally fulfilled during his lifetime.

Originally, Mary and Ezra were married by William O. Clark. Now, later, they received their endowments on New Year's Day, 1846, and were sealed by Apostle Brigham Young. They lived for nearly one year in a log house located seven miles west of Nauvoo and about one mile southwest of Charleston, IA. Here Ezra James Clark was born March 30, 1846.

Since Mary's father-in-law had a good supply of horses, they often went to conferences and celebrations in Nauvoo. Mary recalls that it was a beautiful sight to see the Prophet Joseph riding at the head of the Nauvoo Legion in the 4th of July parade. They took great pride in the development of the city. Each man gave of his time one day out of ten to work on the Temple. To the women of the Relief Society was given the task of furnishing the glass and the nails. Mary took great pride in the sisters' penny contributions for this purpose.

Ezra and Mary were among the mournful throng that went to meet the bodies of Joseph and Hyrum being carried from liberty Jail. Mary said that such a vast procession of weeping Saints would never be forgotten. They were also at the meeting when the mantle of the Prophet Joseph fell on Brigham Young.

When the call came in January of 1845 to leave Nauvoo, Ezra and Mary prepared to leave. They soon moved to Sugar Creek, Ia. In 1847, Mary's brother Edward left for Utah in the first company. Ezra, Mary, and their baby were to leave in the second company; however, Mary's (only) sister Elizabeth was suddenly left a widow when her husband Job Bailey became violently ill and died. Mary's brother James and Ezra returned and settled Elizabeth's affairs, then brought her and her children with them; fortunately, they were still in time to leave with the second company. On the journey to Winter Quarters Mary narrowly escaped death when she attempted

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to jump from a moving wagon. Not jumping far enough she fell in front of the rear wheel. Ezra very quickly grasped the wheel and held it up to prevent its rolling over her while her mother was able to stop the front team of the three yoke of oxen.

After crossing the river in ferry boats of their own construction, they lived at Winter Quarters during the spring and summer of l847. There Ezra had charge of a large tract of land and was kept busy working it; his reward was an abundant harvest. They also plowed and planted, so that the incoming immigrants would find provisions on their arrival from the east. It was here that a second son Timothy Baldwin Clark was born November 21, 1847.

Ezra, Mary, and their family, with their company, left Winter Quarters in June, 1848, and arrived in Salt lake City October 12, 1848. During the long journey Mary saw many herds of buffalo and many indians but wasn't frightened. She was kept very busy caring for her children and cooking; they would stop for a day occasionally and do their ·washing and cook as much as they could. For fuel they used buffalo chips. Mary kept a good supply of dried bread which by putting in milk she was able to use for meals and thus avoided cooking supper over a campfire. The group was happy, because all believed they were going to a place of safety, where they would not be persecuted again.

Two days after arriving in Salt Lake City Ezra and Mary moved to North Canyon, now near Bountiful, "where they spent two winters." At first they camped in a wagon box set off the ground; but since the weather was cold and there were no stoves available, Mary would place a "baking kettle" full of live coals in the covered wagon to keep her babies warm. Ezra James was during this time less than three years old and Timothy was less than a year old. later Ezra there built a log cabin.

In the spring of 1849 Ezra purchased a farm on Clark's lane in Farmington. But since he had obtained a lot in Salt Lake City on which he intended to live, he rented this farm to a man who on it built a cabin. The man went back on the contract, however, so Ezra moved his family to Farmington, April 3rd, 1850. Prior to this time

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Mary Elizabeth was born in North Canyon, November 25, 1849. In the spring of 1850 Ezra planted with five bushels ten acres of wheat. The enormous yield was five hundred bushels. And so it came to

pass that the wilderness and the solitary place did rejoice and the desert did blossom as the rose.

At October Conference Ezra was called to help settle Iron County. When he inquired of George A. Smith as to the necessary preparation, he was told that they needed wheat more than men. When Ezra told him how much wheat they would send, he was excused from going, although he did go.

The Utes and Shoshones were friendly indians whom the pioneers taught to till the soil and to plant squash and corn. Whenever the indians visited the Clark farm they came away with their ponies loaded with meat, flour, potatoes, and warm clothing for their children.

On January 12, 1852, William H. Clark was born, and on March 21, l852, their fifth child Joseph Smith Clark was born. When Joseph was five weeks old, William died of the croup. That year the grasshoppers came and devoured the crop of wheat, so they planted corn and somehow managed. Their sixth child was born February 13; 1856; he was named Hyrum Don Carlos Clark. When he was seven months old, Ezra was called on a mission to England. Mary had a lot of responsibility in caring for the five children (William had died), but "they were obedient and didn't get into any trouble."

At a picnic in the canyon during July, 1857, Mary learned of the coming of Johnson's Army: Ezra and the other elders were called home from their missions, but, Mary had to leave her home clean (or empty) and ready for the match before moving south. Ezra found her and the family at Payson. The word soon came that they were to move back to their homes. Blessed with health and strength they had a pleasant journey home, arriving July 9, 1858.

In anticipation of Johnson's Army entering the city the basement of the Temple had been filled with dirt. It was promptly removed and work on the Temple resumed.

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Mary felt a desire to make a donation to the work, so she had the boys take one of their best cows to the authorities.

On April 7, 1859, Edward Barrett Clark was born, and on April 1, 1861, Charles Rich Clark was born. Shortly afterward a Sister Susan Leggett came from England and lived with them and became Ezra's second wife. By him she had ten children. One lovely son died in Palestine on a mission. Later Ezra was also instructed by President Brigham Young to marry Nancy Porter Stevenson. He did so on July 11, 1870.

On February 2, 1863, Wilford W. Clark was born, and on June 6, 1865 Amasa L. Clark was born. During this time Ezra was called away on missions both to preach the Gospel and to help settle and build industries in different places. Ezra had built an adobe house in which they now lived; often they entertained visitors and church authorities in their home. Mary's great diversion was in service to the Church. She taught a Sunday School class and was always interested in Relief Society work. She was chosen to be one of the Presidency of that Organization when the Davis Stake was first organized. In her absence her home affairs were looked after by hired help. For a girl to be her helper for one to five years was not unusual, since Mary was so kind and made working so pleasant that such work was very desirable.

Ezra went to New York in the spring of 1869 to bring home the body of Ezra James who had died while returning from a mission in England. The Union Pacific Railroad had reached Ogden, and he traveled on the first eastbound train leaving Utah. Mary and Ezra had been terribly dissappointed [disappointed] the year before when Ezra had sent a four mule team to a Union Pacific terminal 500 miles east to greet his son and the converts. They had received word that the boat had arrived safely from England, but they did not know that Ezra James had died from sunstroke while homeward bound on the train.

On May 18, 1895 Mary and Ezra celebrated their

Golden Wedding Anniversary in the Social Hall in Farmington. An elaborate program and banquet were enjoyed by the guests who filled the hall. Many of these guests came from the east and from

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California. President Wilford Woodruff and other distinguished guests were in attendance. Mary was true to principle, and it can be truthfully said by children of each family that they never heard their mothers argue. Mary's later life was filled with many duties as mother to all her boys and as hostess to the many visitors her husband was fond of entertaining, in addition to which were many church duties to which she faithfully attended. It was said by her children that she was a wonderful mother. After the passing of Ezra on October 17, 1901, her sons and daughters were a comfort until her death November 24, 1911.

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