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Date:

The Formation of Primary and the Clarks

The largest children's organization in the world had its beginning roots in Farmington and the Clarks were part of it.

Founded officially in 1887 by Sister Aurelia Rogers of Farmington, the Primary Association of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints included one of the children of Ezra Thompson Clark among its first participants and just a few years later one of the daughters-in-laws of Ezra Thompson Clark was among its first leaders.

The need for some sort of structured program for young children, especially boys, became apparent to Bispo John W. Hess of Farmington in Utah's early years and in 1877 he expressed his concerns to all of the Sisters of the Farmington Ward. The advice came at the appropriate time for Sister Rogers, who had been wrestling with some of the same concerns.

In her book "My Farmington 1847-1976", Margaret Steed Hess said that Aurelia Rogers went home from her meeting with Bishop Hess and couldn't sleep for thinking of the responsibility of training little minds. It seemed to prey on her mind day and night. In March of 1878 Sister Eliza R. Snow and Emmeline B. Wells of Salt Lake City came to Farmington to attend a Relief Society Conference. After the meeting on their way to the train depot, they stopped in Sister Rogers' home in company of Nancy Black, Mary S. Clark and Lorinda Robinson. In the ensuing conversation, Sister Rogers asked Pres. Snow what their little girls would do for good husbands, if the boys were allowed to roam without structure. Eliza Snow was impresses by the question and promised to bring the matter to the First Presidency.

Even the death of Brigham Young on Aug. 29, 1877 did not stop Eliza R. Snow from dealing with the issue, first brought to her attention by Sister Rogers. Even though a new president had not been sustained,

[photograph with caption] Amasa Lyman Clark, shown in the dark suit, was among the first participants in Primary. This is a small portion of a mural depicting the first primary meeting, which was held in Farmington.