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Title: **Martin Harris and the Clarks**

Provenance:

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Person: **Amasa Lyman Clark**

Date:

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The "last witness" of the Book of Mormon was a man well known in the home of the Ezra Thompson Clark family.

Martin Harris, who was the last man to personally see the angel and touch the golden plates of the Three Witnesses, was a man with strong links to the Clark family.

Edward Stevenson, brother of Ezra's wife Mary Stevenson Clark, was the man responsible for bringing Harris west after the former Palmyra farmer had left the church and the body of the church had moved west. He re-baptized Harris into the church.

Harris and Stevenson met a number of times during Stevenson's many cross-country journeys, and at one point the Rock of Gibraltar native bore his testimony to Harris in the Kirtland Temple and then softened the witness on the idea of coming west. Stevenson actually led the fund-raising drive that brought Harris to Utah in 1870.

Once in Utah, Harris was nursed back into the love of the church he felt had left him, according to Amasa Clark. Amasa, the 10th child of Ezra and Mary Clark, said Harris traveled from community to community when he first came west, and while in Farmington stayed at the home of Ezra Thompson Clark.

"He stopped all night at my father's home here in Farmington. He went to Sabbath the next morning and he stood up in school, Sunday School, and

bore his testimony as it is recorded in the Book of Mormon," Amasa said.¹

Amasa's exposure to Harris was not limited to the one Farmington visit. Amasa, then just a young teen-ager, was in Salt Lake visiting the home of his Uncle Edward Stevenson and came down to break-fast one morning and ended up breaking bread with Harris.

"As we sat at the table my aunt said, 'this is one of the witnesses of the Book of Mormon.'...That was in the 14th Ward, that's where I first saw him, (in the 1870's) because he was visiting at the home of my uncle, Edward Stevenson of the 14th Ward, when I was a boy, well, we were cousins together. Edward Stevenson (son of his uncle) and I were about the same age and so I visited that home quite frequently during the year, at least off and on. That's where I saw him first when he came one Saturday morning," Amasa told an interviewer.²

When he re-located to Utah, Harris moved to Harrisville, then to Smithfield, Utah (where he saw Caroline and their son Martin Harris, Jr.), and in 1874 to Clarkston, Utah, where he died on July 10, 1875.

Harris passed away a poor man as to worldly means. Sixteen years later when Edward Stevenson found that the last witness had only a plain cedar post to mark his grave, Uncle Edward called on Amasa and his older brother Timothy Baldwin to contribute to a more fitting monument. They were among a group of 16 who donated for a marker. Donors included Wilford Woodruff, Joseph F. Smith, and Nathan Porter.³

Written by Antone Clark

May of 2001

1 Oral History Interview with Amasa Clark, June 26, 1964, page 36

2 Oral History Interview with Amasa Clark, June 26, 1964, page 37

3 Stevenson Family History, Vol. 1, page 168