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Booklet of Joseph Smith Clark

CENTENARIAN—Joseph Smith Clark recalls colorful past as he prepares to observe his 100th birthday anniversary. Mr. Clark is reported to be Utah's oldest man. [photo included]

Utahn Looks Back On Full 100 Years

By EDWIN O. HAROLDSON

Joseph Smith Clark, a kindly gray-haired old man with a razor-sharp memory, looked back on his 100 years of experience Wednesday and confessed that the way to be happy is to "live the gospel."

Mr. Clark, believed to be Utah's oldest man, will be honored on his 100th birthday anniversary March 21 at a program in Farmington Ward, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

The way to live to ripe old age, he said, is to honor one's parents "that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." (Ex. 20:12.)

Ask Him Later

But he wasn't sure where to shoot for his second hundred years.

"I'll tell you about that a month from now," he chuckled during an interview at his residence, 1216 E. 13th South.

Despite his years, Mr. Clark follows the news and radio programs with the avid interest of a youth.

A subscriber to the Deseret News since 1876, he followed with great interest the recent mission tour of President David O. McKay.

Recalls Names, Dates

Names, dates, places and what have you—he can recall them all with great exactness.

He has a good appetite and eats three meals a day.

Given a lot of time to reflect about the past and think about the present, Mr. Clark believes the word "can't get much worse. It's in bad condition."

The solution to the world's ills, he said, is in "spirituality," and adds that "if people would only use the gospel they'd be all right."

Mr. Clark says he can recall as vividly as if it were yesterday his youth 85 years ago as a cow herder in Farmington, the time Brigham Young ate at his father's table, and the Clarks' call to help settle the Bear Lake section of Southeastern Idaho in the 1870s.

Farmington Native

He was born March 21, 1854, in a little log cabin in Farmington which had been moved from the canyon east of Bountiful where his father had settled in 1848.

He was the fifth of 11 children born to Ezra T. and Mary Stevenson Clark.

Apart from a few precious days he spent at school in Farmington, Mr. Clark got his education from his own experiences and efforts.

He herded stock, drove teams for grading of the Utah Central Railroad, and followed a walking plow.

In 1870, his father and about 200 others were called by Brigham Young to settle the Bear Lake section.

Lived in Saddle

The Clarks' large herd of cattle was wintered in Farmington and trailed to Georgetown, Ida., in the spring to spend the summer there. For years Mr. Clark practically lived in a saddle.

He helped survey and locate Georgetown and hauled the first load of logs into the town.

On Jan. 17, 1878, he married Lucy Maria Robinson, a daughter of Oliver L. and Lucy Milley Robinson.

The newly married couple moved to Georgetown shortly after. And for the next 15 years Joseph operated a ranch there which provided beef and dairy products for the Ezra T. Clark family, who were following the patriarchal order of family.

Worked Together

Starting with very little, the Clark family "all worked together," Mr. Clark recalls. And when his father died, one could walk from the Bamberger Railroad station in Farmington to Great Salt Lake and not get off Clark property, he adds.

His wife and three children remained in Farmington while he served a mission to the southern states from 1882 to 1884, the first missionary called from Georgetown.

Mr. Clark has been busy in church work throughout his life.

As a young man he was active in the first Young Men's Mutual Improvement Assn. organized in Farmington. And he was the first president of the Y M M I A there.

He was called to serve in the bishopric and continued in that position during all of his years in Georgetown.

Returned to Farmington

In 1891, the Joseph Smith Clark family moved back to Farmington.

Three years later he was called to serve as a counselor in the Davis Stake presidency under John W. Hess. He continued in that position from 1894 to 1904. Later he was president of the Stake High Council.

Mr. Clark spent several terms as a member of the Farmington City Council and was instrumental in getting the town telephoned, electrified and water systems installed.

In 1921, he and his wife were called as ordinance workers in the Salt Lake Temple. That was their work until Mrs. Clark died in 1944, when she died at the age of 84.

Nine sons and daughters were born to the couple, five of who are living.

They are Joseph Smith Clark Jr., Murray; Mrs. W. O. (Lucie) Robinson, Leroy R. Clark, and Mrs. Parley A. (Iris) Ryan of Salt Lake City, and Irwin Clark, Los Angeles.

1 RET NEWS AND TELEGRAM, Salt Lake City/Wednesday, March 10, 1954.