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MY MEMOIRS RECOLLECTIONS OF PIONEER LIFE IN BEAR LAKE VALLEY Written by Walter Edward Clark Chapter X YEARS OF DESPONDENCY AND A BLESSING From the time I left Fielding Academy in early June, 1910, un

MY MEMOIRS

RECOLLECTIONS OF PIONEER LIFE

IN BEAR LAKE VALLEY

Written by Walter Edward Clark

Chapter X

YEARS OF DESPONDENCY AND A BLESSING

From the time I left Fielding Academy in early June, 1910, until the time of my departure for a mission in December, 1913 were, with a few exceptions, unpleasant years. In Paris I had lived with Aunt Emily Richards and her husband Wilford. Of their children, Laura was a grade above me and Wilford a grade below. They were both popular and I, being a cousin, had the advantage of the association of their friends, but I was shy and lacked self confidence in social situations.

Georgetown had one girl with refinement that I admired. To return from church in the dark of the night we would have to walk on a dirt street past our house. To take the part of a gentleman I felt I should and would like to have asked for the privilege of accompanying her home, but could not utter a word.

At Fielding I met a young lady I very much admired. It was a one-sided affair, or at least I thought so. Two years or more later, I was in her home at a welcome home for a return missionary, and I assumed she was engaged. I was disappointed, but accepted defeat.

Before my mission, as an M.I.A. worker and the chairman of the Amusement Committee I was associated with young ladies, but had no interest in any of them. The last year or more of my mission I corresponded with a young lady and I stopped at Provo to see her on my way home. I felt she was disappointed in me, as well she could be, for I was still an uncouth (not vulgar, just unpolished) individual and I returned to Georgetown with a wounded pride and a tongue that seemed no longer "loose."

I overworked and was tired and discouraged. The next three years I tried to work myself to death. As I approached thirty, my mother worried that I would never marry.

I attended General Conference and Mission reunions. There were girls who offered me encouragement, but I had little interest. One young lady asked if I had a place to stay and asked if I would go to their home in the suburb of Salt Lake City. I declined, and stayed in Farmington. I did exchange a few letters with a return missionary in the Ogden area. In fact, I joined her and friends on a picnic in Ogden Canyon on the 24th of July. She let it be known she had killed and dressed the chickens we were eating. The words President Ellsworth had whispered in my ear entered my mind with force: "My Alice would make some man a good husband." (For the story, see Missionary Experiences in Iowa.)

I can not explain why I had such a violent reaction to her comments. My thought was: Do I want a wife who can do what I can't? It was very hard and still is for me to kill an animal or fowl for food. I lost all

interest in the girl. As I look back I must have been looking for refinement.

I called on another young lady in Paris several times. Then a widower accompanied her to church one Sunday. I never asked for another date. She and the widower married and have appeared to have a pleasant life.

I wrote to an exceptionally fine young lady who had been in the Northern States Mission and asked if I could call. She granted me the privilege. January, 1919, enroute to her home in Richmond, Utah, I changed trains at McCammon, Idaho where a young man in a soldier's uniform was pacing the platform. He asked if I was from Idayo, and asked me my name, and where I was going. I did not answer the last question. I though he was getting too personal. That evening, in Richmond, Utah I learned the reason for his curiosity. The night before this same young lady, with whom he too had corresponded, had let him know he was disappointed in him, and they had decided to go their separate ways. I only visited her this once. She soon married a widower, a Bishop. I think he had no family.

From Richmond I went on to Farmington and to Provo to visit Herald R. Clark and family. On the way back to Farmington, February 4, 1919, I stopped in Salt Lake City and went to the Presiding Patriarch, Hyrum G. Smith, and asked for a blessing. He had previously given me my patriarchal blessing the day I left for the mission field six years earlier.

I had given up teaching, thinking I was a failure; I detested farmings; and I had no prospect nor desire for marriage. I doubt the patriarch had ever seen a more discouraged man. In part, the blessing reads, "Therefore, be not discouraged nor allow the spirit of melancholy or despondency to come into thy soul, for these are only tricks of the adversary to place barriers in thy pathway." It changed my outlook on life. As a side remark he added: "A faint heart never won a fair lady."

When I returned to Farmington, a letter awaited my arrival, requesting that I return to Georgetown and complete the teaching year of a teacher who had not returned after the Christmas holidays. It was the flu year and very little school was held. The board only paid me for the days taught.

In 1919 I went to June M.I.A. Conference and as usual, stayed in Farmington. Uncle Amasa invited me to accompany him to Davis County High School commencement exercises in Kaysville. Adam S. Bennion was scheduled to give the address. As I approached Uncle's home to leave I noticed his wife, Aunt Susan, drive off in the automobile. When she returned, a young lady, Violet Christensen, was in the car. When the four of us returned from Kaysville to Farmington, Uncle Amasa was nearly "out of gas" –so he said. My ford was very close. I drove the young lady home, and nine months later, March 3, 1920, she and I were married.