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MY MEMOIRS

RECOLLECTIONS OF PIONEER LIFE

IN BEAR LAKE VALLEY

Written by Walter Edward Clark

Chapter II

THE CLARK LEGACY

For a sociology class I took in 1925, an assignment was made to write a paper on the social strata of some community. I chose my hometown of Georgetown, Idaho. As I analyzed the activities, accomplishments, and what seemed to be the goals of the various groups, I decided the Ezra T. Clark clan were a "particular people."

I divided the community into four groups. It could have been more and there were exceptions. The first group I called the "intellectual group" or leaders. The Hesses, Hoffs, and in-laws furnished the early scholars, school teachers and businessmen. They were restless and liked recognition. David Hess was the leader.

The "husbandry group" -the Hayes, had good, well-groomed teams, clean yards with gardens, and produced the best crops. They were contented and desired social security. Alma Hayes was a patriarch to his families.

The "entertainers" or "aesthetic stratum" consisted of several families without a definite leader. The Tippets were graceful in movement, friendly, and helpful to the sick. The John Dunn family furnished the musicians for our part of the valley. The Barkdulls, Blacks and later the Munks, were the athletes. The Sorensons and Smiths were good followers.

The fourth group, to which I belonged, were called the "religious class" or just "Clarks." Like the Hayes, they liked good horses, but specialized in driving teams and saddle horses for quite a different reason. The Hayes wanted to produce crops. The Clarks wanted to get from one place to another with dispatch, –rapidly and efficiently.

Ezra T. Clark had a team of horses that he drove many times from Farmington to the flour mill he built in Morgan under the calling of Brigham Young. The animals could make the distance of thirty miles in three hours. His son, Wilford, in Bear Lake Valley, had a span of blacks that he drove from Montpelier to Georgetown over bad roads in one hour, and would return in the same time. The road at that time was not well marked, but he trusted his team in darkness and blizzards. He made many trips to Paris and Afton to take Church Authorities to quarterly conferences. Melvin, my brother, had an equally good team. Two or more great-grandsons have been breeders of race horses. Father raised, trained, and sold a driving team to Joseph Shepherd when he was called to be Stake President in Bear Lake Stake. Don Clark won the national chariot race in Pocatello, Idaho. However, it was cattle on which the Clarks depended for their income, and the Clarks have been adversely criticized for securing land to pasture their livestock.

The fourth generation of Georgetown Clarks, (the grandchildren of Wilford, Charles, and Edward) produced a large percent of the surprising number of professors and professionals coming from Georgetown. The Clarks did not furnish much in the entertainment field, nor were they very interested in the entertainment provided in a rural community. They would travel a distance to attend a lecture, musical, pageant, or church meeting.

Grandfather Ezra Thompson Clark bears testimony that Brigham Young's voice, gestures, and even appearance was that of the Prophet Joseph Smith when he presented the line of authority in church leadership as opposed to Sidney Rigdon's claim that he should be sustained as Guardian of the Church. From that day to the day of his death he never questioned the validity of church instructions. He traveled with Brigham Young and admired him as a man and a leader, and interpreted his advice to stay close to the land so literally that he encouraged his sons to farm or raise livestock. Many of them had ability and interest in other fields and were not a success as farmers. Those who knew Uncle Timothy Baldwin thought he would have been a genius in the field of science. His nephews remember him "fooling with bees." Charles was a born teacher, if ever there was such a person, and neglected his work to talk to friends and strangers. Brother Maeser wanted Charles to remain at the B.Y. in Provo and teach. His father replied, 'No boy of mine is going to be a teacher." Preceding the day of the motel, tourists camped on the Georgetown Public Square, and Charles contacted them all to encourage them and to look for a "golden contact."

I once asked Uncle Wilford, who had been a popular senator and representative if he would accept the nomination as a candidate for county commissioner. He replied, "I have not been successful enough with my own affairs to be a commissioner." As Bishop in Montpelier when there was hostility between Mormons and Gentiles, he was a success. As a legislative representative he was successful. At his elder daughter's funeral in the Grace Tabernacle I remarked that his greatest success was in rearing his family. He later told me he appreciated that compliment. I once heard him say he would have gone into the sheep business, but he did not want his sons to be sheepherders.

Joseph and Edward were reasonably successful as farmers and exceptionally good with cattle. Father's banker told me that he should have "spent his time 'milking a deal' instead of milking cows," and added: "people in Farmington have to ask Eddie's opinion before they will build a chicken coop."

The Clarks were easy going, extremely patient, did not profane, or take the time off for fishing and hunting. They were called "night hawks" and the moon was spoken of as "Clark's lantern." My father was the exception, and I have followed in his footsteps. At age 86, we still eat breakfast at 6 a.m. or earlier.

Father, like his father, and perhaps all fathers of that generation, assumed the children would accept the same occupation as their forebearers. My ambition was to be a construction engineer, supervising the Georgetown ranch. Father squelched the desire by saying, "If you had any outstanding ability it would have manifest itself before this [time]." He did not know I disliked farming and had completed a year's work in woodwork at Fielding Academy in the seventeen week winter term, and the next year earned my spending money repairing furniture the instructor, Edward Passey, turned over to me. Nor did he know I excelled in mechanical drawing and that geometry was my favorite subject. Why did I turn to teaching? Because of the Clark tradition of following the advice of the Church Authorities. I then expected to study carpentry, but when I asked Stake President Edward C. Rich about a release as a bishop's counselor, he looked at me after a pause and said, "Walter, prepare to teach." I accepted that as a mandate. I firmly believe the school organization as it exists in Bear Lake County, Idaho was due to my vision and tenacity in blocking substitute plans.

It was devotion to the Church that characterized the Georgetown Clarks, in fact, all of Ezra's descendents. Bishop Hayes once commented, "The

Clarks like to do church work; let them do it." I have held six positions at one time, and I was no exception.

An elderly man, a Stake Patriarch, told me of this incident. After first asking me if I knew how many descendents my grandfather Clark had in comparison to his brother William O. (the former is numerous, the latter is perhaps zero.)

The prophet Joseph Smith met the two brothers in Nauvoo and remarked, "It would please me if you Clark boy would observe the Word of Wisdom." William O. thought it none of the Prophet's business what they ate and drank, but Ezra T. said, "I am going to comply." Ezra had influence enough with his children and grandchildren that they complied not only in non-use of the forbidden, but in the use of cereals, vegetables, fruits, and not excessive use of meat. His son Amasa would like to have seen whole wheat bread used for the Sacrament in church service. He always felt the long life of the Clark family was due to eating wheat, and of course other wholesome food, and limiting drinking to milk and water.

My brother Bryant reports that he indulged in the use of tobacco with his crowd of young people, but when he realized that he knew of no other Clark who used tobacco he decided he would not disgrace the family and stopped its use. That is only one example of the influence of the family tradition. We all prized and emulated that tradition.