kindex®
< Scan QR to view this original record online, or visit https://ezratclark.kindex.org/s/23835

Title: **The Abbreviated Life Histories of Charles Rich Clark (1861-1933) and Ann Elizabeth Waldron (1862-1936)**
Category: **Document**
Person: **Charles Rich Clark**
Date:
Provenance:

Charles Rich Clark was born in Farmington, Utah, in 1861, the eighth of eleven children of Ezra Thompson Clark and Mary Stevenson. As the son of Ezra T. Clark, Charles was born into one of the most p

Charles Rich Clark was born in Farmington, Utah, in 1861, the eighth of eleven children of Ezra Thompson Clark and Mary Stevenson. As the son of Ezra T. Clark, Charles was born into one of the most prominent families of the area. Ezra was a successful farmer, businessman, colonizer, missionary, and banker. He instilled in his children a strong work ethic and encouraged great devotion to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. While growing up, Charles engaged in family enterprises by learning to ride a horse, guide a plow, take care of stock, and cultivate crops. All the Clark family possessions were organized into a family cooperative patterned after the United Order and called the Clark Firm.

Amidst the family farming operations, Charles managed to attend school, where he enjoyed mathematics, history, religion, and elocution. He also participated in singing groups and took part in church and school programs. Charles attended the University of Deseret and, at age 20, began teaching school in Centerville. The next year, he attended Brigham Young Academy, where he was offered a teaching position, but his father talked him into remaining with the family business in Davis County. Returning home, he married Emma Woolley, the daughter of one of the trustees of the Centerville school where he taught. A few years later, Charles moved his little family to Morgan, Utah, where he managed the grain mill belonging to the Clark Firm.

After considerable pondering, Charles accepted "in his own mind the principle of Celestial Marriage," meaning plural marriage. This led to his entering into a second marriage with Ann Elizabeth Waldron, a young woman from Morgan, three years after his first marriage. People called her Annie.

Annie was the third of thirteen children of Gillispie Walter Waldron and Ann Dewhurst. She was born in Richville, Utah, in 1862, and was, therefore, about one year younger than Charles. Her parents were of humble circumstances. Academics were her delight, both as a student and a teacher. She also studied at the University of Deseret for one year and taught school in Milton, Utah.

Charles and Annie believed that the principle of plural marriage was ordained of God, but, in practice, it was a difficult principle for them to live. This stemmed from the inherent difficulties of managing two marriages, two homes, lots of children, and the financial responsibilities associated therewith. In addition, polygamists were in violation of U.S. law. Any man found with plural wives could be fined and go to prison for cohabitation. Therefore, the true nature of their relationship was kept secret for many years.

When Charles proposed marriage to Annie, he was a virtual stranger to her. They had had minimal contact with each other at the University of Deseret, and Annie recognized him to be an upright man in the community, but that was all she knew of him. She states that they danced one dance at a party and had a conversation together the next night at her home, during which Charles "wielded a good influence with me." Other clandestine late night visits followed, as well as a few occasions when they saw each other in the community and pretended to be strangers, but that was the extent of their contact before getting married. Their en-

tire "courtship," from first meeting to wedding in 1886, was less than three weeks.

In many ways, their courtship established the pattern of the next four or five years. Everything was done in secrecy. Even on their wedding day, they traveled to the Logan Temple separately. They stayed in the same hotel, but didn't see each other. The sealing was attended by only a few and, afterward, Annie could not be seen in public with Charles. Indeed, it was necessary to go to great lengths to not let others, even their own siblings, know they were married.

For a short period of time, both Charles and Annie taught school in Morgan. Teaching was Charles' first love and he pined for the opportunity to go east and gain more education. When her first pregnancy became apparent, Annie moved to Farmington to live with her in-laws, where she was known as Alice Smith. Charles only visited at night for fear of alerting neighbors to the fact that she was his plural wife; he came about once a month. Neighbors were left to speculate as to the cause of Annie's repeated pregnancies. She did not return to Morgan until five years later, by which time she had three children. The issuance of the Manifesto in 1890 relaxed scrutiny by the U.S. Marshals and polygamists were allowed to live openly, but in Charles' case, he continued to live primarily with Emma.

Annie's personal reflections during the course of her married years demonstrate the hardship and burdens of being a second wife, one that clearly wasn't the favorite. Charles visited occasionally, but his visits were infrequent and usually unannounced. Annie was jealous of the time he spent with his first family, but she rarely complained or criticized. She was true to the principle of plural marriage and accepted as her lot the fact that Charles favored living with Emma, not her.

Annie and Charles had nine children. Charles and Emma had seven. The two wives strived to live in harmony with each other, especially during the years from 1891 to 1901 when both families lived in Morgan. They appear to have coexisted amicably. Their children often played together and Annie and Emma watched after each other in times of need. During Charles' first mission in to the Southern States Mission 1891, Annie cared for Emma's children while Emma rode the Utah Territory selling encyclopedia subscriptions to support Charles in the mission field.

When Charles returned from his first mission in 1893, he failed to appropriately reconnect with Annie. She wrote:

"It is a very trying time for me. I should like to remember Charley's return with pleasure, but I cannot—either through my own imperfections or those of some others—I am severely tried. I receive a short visit every once in awhile from Charley, but I do not feel satisfied in my feelings for some reason. I feel like it is necessary for us to be more united and congenial in our feelings. I feel like the reason we are not is because we have associated so little that we are not acquainted with each other."

Annie enjoyed few bright days and endured great loneliness. On the occasions when Charles visited, she felt bliss. In-between his visits, she longed for him and wondered when he would come again and possibly stay longer. However, even after there was virtually no further risk of imprisonment for polygamy, Charles did not live with Annie except for a few days here and there.

In 1901, a few months before Ezra Clark's death, the Clark Firm was dissolved. To facilitate the distribution of his estate, Ezra wrote descriptions of the Firm's property and livestock on pieces of paper and put them into a hat. Each paper included combinations of primary property, secondary property, stock, personal items, cash, and livestock. Each slip of paper had nearly equal value. Ezra's children drew the papers out of the hat to determine what their inheritances would be from among his vast holdings.

Charles received property in Morgan, Utah, and in Georgetown, Idaho, along with some horses and cattle. He decided to move to Georgetown with

Emma and her children, leaving Annie and her children in Morgan. His visits to Morgan became less frequent, sometimes amounting to only twice per year. Annie's children had virtually no intimate relationship with Charles from this time forward. One son, Myral, who was born the year Charles moved away, characterized Charles as a "misfit father" in his biography.

An excerpt from Myral's biography further describes what happened to Annie and her children when Charles moved his first family to Georgetown in 1901:

"With seven children from ages thirteen to one month, Annie began a different life in Morgan, 200 miles away from her husband. Her first two sons, Wallace, age 13, and Lawrence, age 11, took over running the farm. Wallace remarked, 'Since around fourteen years of age, the responsibility of providing for my parents' family mostly rested upon me.'

"The 1910 U.S. Federal Census lists Annie as 'head of household,' and certainly she was. She tirelessly ran the house, ran the farm, and taught her children the Gospel. People in town commented that Annie was the hardest worker they ever saw, and that she often worked beyond her body's capabilities.

"As head of the household, Annie worked hard to keep her children physically and spiritually strong. Her son, Carlos, recalled, 'When she would call us for the morning meal, the chairs would be turned backward, ready for family prayers. As we grew up, we had to take turns leading the prayer. The faith of that little Mother of mine was something to behold. She had a real testimony of the gospel.'"

In Georgetown, Idaho, Charles tended to the property he had inherited, but was considered a "poor farmer"; people said he had missed his calling as a teacher. He taught religion classes in Georgetown, raised a large garden, and worked as a blacksmith. He escaped death several times, once when he fell into a waterfall at Yellowstone Park and twice when he fell into the water while cutting ice on the Bear River. He was famous for his walking prowess; he could walk through Weber Canyon nearly as fast as a horse drawn carriage could make the passage. He was lean, strong, and agile, and noted for his elocution abilities in reciting poetry and scriptures. His memory was excellent and he was a good singer. He was generous to the poor and widows and was jokingly accused of caring more for others than his own. He gave liberally from his garden.

In 1916, Charles was called on another mission to the southern states. During this time, of her penury, Annie sent Charles $10 per month to support him. Largely, however, Charles was a stranger to Annie after 1901. She was devoted to him because he was her husband and she believed in the principle of plural marriage, but she was never completely reconciled to his neglect of her.

In her diary, Ann affectionately referred to Charles as Charley until 1901. Thereafter, the only mention of him was in 1911 when she recounted her courtship, wedding, and early marriage; she referred to him by this time as "C.R." It appears that she moved beyond feeling sorry for herself by the last decades of life. She became immersed in helping her children and grandchildren, often hopping from one family to another in the greater Utah area. She found great fulfillment in her role as a grandmother.

Charles died in 1933 while living with one of Emma's children. He is buried in Farmington, the town of his birth. He was 72. Ann died at age 74 in 1936 while living with one of her children. She is also buried in Farmington.

My Connection: Charles Rich Clark and Ann Elizabeth Waldron begat Lela Clark who begat Mardon Clark Lamb who begat Stephen E. Lamb

Sources:

Ezra Thompsons Clark's Ancestors and Descendants, Robert F. Gould, 1975, 118-19

The Diary and Life of Ann Elizabeth Waldron Clark, 1862-1936, Ann Elizabeth Clark

Biography of Loa Tolman and Myral Clark, Charlotte Clark Barnes

"The Boyhood Days of Myral Gillispie Clark," Carlos W. Clark, 1978

August 2016