

Hyrum Lorenzo Clark

by Suzanna Mae Clark Grua

(see note at end of text)

Hyrum Lorenzo Clark was born in Pleasant Grove, Utah, on November 7, 1866, on his own father's fiftieth birthday. He was the son of George Sheffer Clark and Susannah Dalley, and was the youngest of the family of six children. He was christened "Hyrum Lorenzo" in honor of Hyrum Smith, brother of the Prophet Joseph Smith, and of Lorenzo Snow, who became the fifth president of the Mormon Church.

As a boy, Hyrum attended the schools of Pleasant Grove and completed the grade school work that these pioneer schools offered. In his beginning teens he and his brother, William, attended the old Brigham Young Academy at Provo. Here he came under the influence of Dr. Karl G. Maeser, and a fine friendship with Dr. Maeser was one of the greatest influences in his life. A report card dated March 30, 1883 shows that he was making great progress in all of his studies, but that he excelled in elocution, a subject that Dr. Maeser stressed for all of his students. Since Susannah Dalley Clark was a gifted linguist and a gifted dramatic reader, it is plain that Hyrum Clark inherited ability in this field from his mother.

The autumn of 1885 saw him registered at the old University of Deseret, the former name of University of Utah. Here he studied with Dr. John R. Park for English, Prof. Joseph B. Toronto for Mathematics, Professor Joseph Kingsbury for Physics, and Dr. Joshua H. Paul for elocution and geography. The University was then located on the southwest corner of the present West High School campus and part of the time he boarded at the home of his Aunt Mary Campbell at 344 East South Temple St. and part of the time lived in the Mellon home at 273 North 3rd West St, both addresses in Salt Lake City. A report card of 1887-88 shows "A" grades in English, Physics, and Geography, the rest of the card is too blurred to be read.

On April 27, 1892, Hyrum Clark married beautiful Mary Ellen Ward, daughter of Edwin J. Ward and Mary Alice Backhouse Ward. The marriage took place in Provo, before a judge and then the couple traveled to Salt Lake City, spent some time in the Templeton Hotel, climbed the scaffolding atop the highest pinnacle of the Salt Lake Temple, just being completed, to look at the statue of the angel Moroni, and then traveled on to Morgan, Utah for a honeymoon trip and a visit with favorite Campbell cousins.

Back in Pleasant Grove, they made their first home in the home of Hyrum's father, George Sheffer Clark, and the bride took over the house keeping for not only her husband, but also for her father-in-law and a brother-in-law, William E. Clark. Later, when William E. Clark went on a mission to England for two years, Heman E. Campbell, a cousin, became also a member of the household and clerk in the store while William was away.

Just after the birth of their first child, who was named Suzanna Mae, Hyrum and May moved into the east half of the large house, which at that time was divided into two apartments, with George S. Clark and William E. to live in the west half and Hyrum and May and their family to occupy the east half of the house, this division prevailing for both the first and second floors.

However, shortly after this division, George S. Clark deeded the entire house to Hyrum, with the provision that he would have the west side for his home as long as he should live. He died Aug. 28, 1901, but William E. continued to live there for some time and when he married, brought his bride, Cora Melinda Bromley to live there, also. This joint tenancy went on until just before the birth of William and Cora's second child, and often became a trying situation as more children came to Hyrum and May and it was difficult to keep up a friendly relationship.

From his late teens, until about 1904, Hyrum was associated with his father and brothers in the business. The family firm included the large General Merchandise business, with a lumber, hardware, and feed business connected and also a coal yard and a furniture salesroom. A small General store was conducted at Lindon, and completed the business activities. There was also a large farm on Provo Bench under the joint ownership and was worked by all of the sons of the family by turn, at first, until the homestead time was completed. On Sept. 10, 1880, they received Homestead Certificate # 1237, signed by President Rutherford B. Hayes for their application for 160 acres of land which was virgin territory when they began working it and producing crops. Each son in the family took his turn at living on this land, with Heber building a small house there and being the one who spent the most time on the property to prove up the claim. Deeds were filed and recorded on Jan. 10, 1883 in Book 0, page 253 of Utah County land records, giving them ownership of the land.

For several years William E. and Hyrum Clark usually took turns running the Lindon store, Joseph B. Clark seemed to be the one most interested in the farm, Heber supervised the coal yard and the feed, lumber, and ice departments, while John F. William E. and Hyrum L. ran the main store. The Lindon store was very small and Hyrum and William worked there in turn, each taking a week and then back in the main store. This store was sold to Albert Cullimore about 1903 or 1904. Albert had been serving as a clerk in the main store for some years. He always spoke of the fine training in merchandising that he had received under George S. Clark and his sons. The name of the store which was at first "George S. Clark and Sons" was changed to "Clark Brothers & Co." probably prior to 1883, when George S. Clark became inactive in the business and devoted most of his time to gardening on the home place and to attendance to his church duties.

In 1905 or 1904 the firm was broken up, when John F. and William E. took over the entire operations and shut out Joseph B., Heber, and Hyrum L. Details of all of the trouble that resulted, no one alive today and aware of the hardships that came to those shut out was heart-breaking.

When the Clark Brothers firm was broken up Hyrum L. Clark went to work for the Telluride Power Co., holding a supervisory position under L.L. Nunn and P.N. Nunn who were in charge of building the large power plant at the mouth of Provo Canyon and also the electrical school that the Nunns maintained in connection with the Provo Canyon plant. This school was organized to train young men in the skills of operating the many Telluride plants in Utah and Colorado (Wayne W. Clark, son of John F. Clark, and Reynard Swenson and some other Pleasant Grove boys were trained in this school with Wayne being sent to Cornell University in New York for his college work as a protegee of L.L. Nunn.)

After the Power Plant and school buildings were completed, Hyrum L. Clark went to work for the Utah-Idaho Sugar Co. as a bookkeeper at the Lehi factory. He continued in this position until he opened his own grocery store in Pleasant Grove in the spring of 1914. This store had been begun in a small way in one section of the Millinery store which had been operated by his wife who passed away Oct. 19, 1913. This store enabled him to be at home more and to supervise and care for his children. Winfield and Eva were most active in helping to run this store and he hired skilled women to care for the Millinery section for a number of years and then discontinued it. As always, he made friends rapidly and in a short time had a good business. He had marked business ability and was always progressive and an untiring worker in all that he chose to do. He was ever ready to extend a helping hand to anyone to who he could render a service. He was generous to a fault and kind and courteous and loved by all who dealt with him. He was recognized in the community for his square dealings and his interest in making the community a better place in which to live. He took intense delight in keeping a beautiful garden, and his flowers were the most beautiful in the town, while his flair for vegetable gardening led him to experimentation with many vegetables not often grown in Utah.

Hyrum L. Clark was an ardent Democrat all of his adult life, though he never aspired to public office, he served his community well in many development projects. Paving of Main Street, being one of the first sponsors of Strawberry Day, Church building, and working for better schools being among his outstanding efforts, in addition to War Bond sales. He was alert, energetic, and had tremendous ambition. His strong determination to carry every project through to a successful completion won him much respect, and he was known in the community as a man who never carried a grudge, but who worked unceasingly to overcome obstacles, through persistent, earnest effort.

Devoted to his mother and very fond of his only sister, Susanna C. Gamette, he was always deeply in love with his beautiful wife. She was beautiful as a woman and most beautiful in character. She was his world and he loved to buy a beautiful dress, or a coat, or a hat whenever he was in Salt Lake City, and bring them home to surprise her. He had a real gift for knowing just what would please her best in clothes and he had excellent taste. His pride in his "Lovely May" was known to all their friends and they made a most handsome and popular couple.

Editor's note:

This history was among several others given to me by my grandmother, Suzanna Mae Clark Grua, daughter of Hyrum Lorenzo Clark. No author is listed on the original typewritten copy that I used for this current version. However, since the other articles and histories were written by Suzanna Mae Clark Grua, and all appear to have been typed on the same typewriter, I have assumed that this also was written by my grandmother about her father.

I scanned this into a computer and made some minor corrections. However, the paragraph and sentence structure is as she originally typed it.

(Roger E. Grua, roger@rogergrua.com May 2004)