THE CLARK FAMILY 10

LINWOOD LEBOEUF CLARK (BORN 1907) PICKS UP THE STORY AGAIN

The preceding pages are basically the story of the Clark Family as my Dad remembered and told to me. I often wished that I had been more curious and had asked more questions of my parents about their lives when they were young and so with that thought I will try and remember and write down what I can recall of conditions, etc., when I was young as maybe our children or grandchildren may sometime want to know.

When Mother and Dad first went East I think that they lived in a flat on Kingston Avenue in Brooklyn. We have pictures that Dad took of their flat and some of the furniture shown we still have. I think that it was during this period that they met George and Hattie Chesebro and Alice and Mark Thurlow. These were very close friends and I called them Aunt Hattie and Uncle George, and Aunt Alice and Uncle Mark, as in those days children did not call their elders by their first names. I would guess that in about 1903 or 1905 Mother and Dad bought the house at 461 Putnam Ave. in Brooklyn, New York. This area was known as the Bedford-Stuyvesant District and was an old respectable neighborhood that the existing families had lived in for generations. The adults had gone to the same schools that we children were going to.

Mother must have made several trips back to California to visit since we have pictures of her and her sisters that were taken in 1898-99 and later. In January 1906 her Father, Theophile LeBoeuf, died in Georgetown, California and Mother went back to be with her mother, dispose of the property and things, and bring Grandmother back to New York. They must have left Georgetown the day before the San Francisco Earthquake and fire because they had only gone as far as Oakland at the time of the quake. Their train was routed to Los Angeles as they would not let them go to San Francisco where they expected to visit. They went to El Paso Texas where my aunt, Esther, and her husband Lavelle Davis were living. He was a Lieutenant in the 7th Cavalry I believe, and stationed at Ft. Bliss. Dad, in New York, had heard nothing about Mother and Grandma, and was frantic trying to get some word of their whereabouts. He got hold of Uncle Lavelle and so some way through military channels Uncle Lavelle found out that they were okay and en route to Ft. Bliss. Mother and Grandma visited for quite a while at Ft. Bliss and while they were there on one of the trips to Juarez in Mexico was where Uncle Lavelle smuggled the serape that is up at the Lake of the Pines across the border by wrapping around him under his shirt. Anyway from that time on my Grandma LeBoeuf lived with Mother and Dad.

During World War I Dad was in charge of shipping meat overseas from New York Harbor. As a result of this I had the opportunity, through this affiliation to visit New York harbor wharves. One of the deepest impressions that I can recall is seeing casket after casket, rows of them in the warehouses with the bodies of our soldiers, each casket draped with our flag. After the war Dad did not think that he had enough work to do to earn the pay he was getting, which as I remember was equivalent to that of a Major in the Army, which was apparently the authority that he had. Anyway he resigned and went to work for Swift Meat Packing Co. and was in charge of the New York Office. Somewhere along the line after this Dad must have become ill, though I don’t remember him ever being sick, anyway Dr. Collins told him that if he did not get out of New York and into a milder climate he would die. Just about that time the Jews began to infiltrate our neighborhood and the old families of which my folks were now considered got panicky and sold out. Mother and Dad sold our house and we moved back to California. I will have to check dates but right now I am guessing that this was in the Fall of 1920 and we went up to a town in central New York state called Canisteo and stayed with my Aunt Esther and Uncle Lavelle Davis until after Christmas and then continued out to California.

I was born, according to the records at 3:00 a.m. on Friday, July 12, 1907 in my parent’s home at 461 Putnam Avenue, Brooklyn, New York. The doctor was Dr. John Collins who lived and had his office in the same general area. I have no idea why my folks had him as the doctor but he became the family physician for as long as we lived in Brooklyn. As is evident I was named after my Father and my middle name was my Mother’s maiden name.

As mentioned before our house was located in what was known as the Bedford-Stuyvesant District of Brooklyn. The houses were all four-story Brownstone Front, and there was no separation between them, the wall between them was common to the adjacent houses. This was an old respectable area of Brooklyn and many of the parents of my playmates went to the same grammar school that we did. Our house was in the middle of the block between Throop and Tompkins Avenues. Across Throop Avenue on the corner of Putnam and extending a block up Throop to Monroe Ave. was the four story red brick grammar school, Public School No. 44, that I went to from Kindergarten to graduation at the 8th grade. The other cross street, Tompkins had a street car (trolley) line on it.

As I remember the lots were probably thirty feet wide and one hundred fifty feet deep, and I would guess that there was twenty to thirty feet from the front fence to the face of the house and that the back yard was forty to fifty feet deep. I have drawn floor plans of each floor of the house as I recall. The scale is not correct but I believe that just about everything else is. The house was heated by two coal burning furnaces, one, the smaller, was a water heating furnace and radiators were under the windows in the library, the other was hot air and vents went to each room. The fireplaces in the dining room, parlor and Mother and Dad’s bedroom above the parlor were not used to my knowledge except maybe during the holidays.

On back of the parlor was what was called the music room, mainly because it had a piano and pianola which was a separate piece of furniture that you pushed up against the piano and wood and felt keys fit over the piano keys and then you pumped with your feet like a player piano and the felt covered keys struck the piano keys. You put rolls of music in the pianola just like you did on a player piano. This room was furnished with mahogany and a green mohair material. We had this chair reupholstered with a good material and it is in the den at Rossmoor. In back of the music room was the library that stretched clear across the width of the house. I would guess that this room was thirty feet wide by twenty feet in depth. It was furnished in black leather and mahogany. We still have three pieces of that furniture, the big chair on the deck at Rossmoor that has the mahogany arms and back, the winerette and the rocker that are at the Lake. I forgot to say that the parlor and the music room were separated by sliding doors so the whole parlor floor could be opened from the front of the house to the back to make one great big long room. And, oh, off the music room to the left was a boudoir that had a toilet and wash basin. The parlor furniture was a silk print tufted upholstery and we still have four of those pieces at Rossmoor though they of course have been reupholstered. They are the two arm chairs and the settee or sofa in the living room and the chair in the bedroom. Also the gold legged, marble table in the living room at Rossmoor was also in the parlor. The platform rocker on the deck was my grandmother LeBoeuf’s and came from Georgetown and the loveseat in the Rossmoor living room belonged to my Great Aunt Lenora Stanton, and it came from Georgetown. The lighting on the parlor floor was by gas lighted crystal chandeliers. The only way to light the chandeliers was by a stick with a wax taper similar to the way they light the candles at church, and at the end of this gadget was a slot that you used to turn on the gas jet. There were fireplaces in the Parlor, and dining room, and mantles above the fireplaces. I do not remember the fireplaces being used except for special occasions like Thanksgiving, Christmas or special parties.

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