THE CLARK FAMILY 6

LINWOOD LINCOLN CLARK (BORN 1867) – WRITTEN BY HIMSELF

When I was about ten years old my father married again and sent for me. This was in the winter of 1877 – 78. I traveled out here with a lady Powers and as she was only going to around Dutch Flat, I stopped off there with a family names Nichols, no relation. (This is Dutch Flat, California, not the Dutch Flat on the slopes of Mt. Bachelor. It was a gold mining town about 60 miles northeast of Sacramento. - editor) He was a banker of the town and I believe some of the family still live there. Dutch Flat was a very active mining community at that time and I remember burning my finger badly on a lump of gold in the assay office that seemed to me as I remember to have been about as big as my head. Father sent for me at the mole (Oakland) with my stepmother. Note: My father never mentioned who his stepmother was. We found an article in a book “Along the Books of Salt River” by a Denis P. Edeline, that her name was Francis. We know very little about her. We have a letter that Dad wrote to his Grandmother that said his stepmother was very good to him. In an article that my Father wrote to the Ferndale Enterprise in the July 6 1951, edition a statement is made that his stepmother was the sister of the founder of the Ferndale Enterprise, W. G. Jones.

After a few days we went to Humboldt in a little steamer not much bigger than a good sized ocean tug (the Coquille?) and it took fifty-four hours to go to Eureka. The steamer was reported as being lost. We went to Ferndale then in a mud wagon, and that took six hours. We crossed the Eel River on a flat boat strung to a cable, which was an experience. In those days the roads were all hub deep in mud. It took half a day to go to Ferndale the ranch, so we only got mail once a week. I was given a horse named Harry, he was a little old, about 25 years, but safe. He was the horse that packed Will, Mary and Sarah from Oregon. However after I learned to ride Will Clark

traded him to an Indian for an Indian pony, a gray roan with big white pinto spots on him.

My first year I did not have much work to do but by my second winter I had learned to drive a team and I began to push a plow handle and follow the harrow after my father as he seeded by hand. In those days seeders were unknown in Humboldt and father was the only one who could sow with both hands making a double swath, and lots of the people used to try and hire him because he could sow so evenly with never a missed space. At that time he was nearly sixty years old and very active. He could ride anything that had four legs and was also good with a four and six-horse team. When I was twelve he let me take the old shotgun and shoot the pigeons off the fields to keep them from eating all the grain as he sowed it. They came in flocks so large that they would cover five or six acres at a time. Quail were so abundant that it was not trick at all to shoot three to a dozen at one time with a single shot. Since powder was expensive and fresh meet scarce, we generally ground sluiced them when we could. Ducks would come into the slough back of the house and in the winter time we had lots of game. A rainy spell was always welcome for we could not farm the land when it was wet, and I could go hunting. My first dog was named Beecher, an old shaggy black and white shepherd dog that had been poisoned. My father saved his life, but he was not rugged enough to stand cattle driving. Uncle Charles had given him to me, but after two or three years of an easy life he got much better, and one day Uncle Charles passed by with a band of cattle and whistled him away from me. However the next time he came by he brought me a smooth haired shepherd, nearly all black, that he had stolen and was afraid to keep as the owner would have found him. I had this dog until I was nearly fifteen years old when he got poisoned. He was the smartest dog I ever saw, he would point like a pointer at game, was a good retriever, and a wonder at cattle. I would send him from one end of the ranch to the other after the cattle or horses, he would nip a horse’s heels, and then lay flat as the horse would kick right over him and then do it again.

While I had a good time around the house hunting, fishing and going to school, the greatest pleasure was the one or two times a year that we went to Petrolia, generally when we took the horses back to the hills to pasture after the spring farming and then in the fall to get them back for the harvesting. We would often bring a small band of cattle to pasture on the stubble of the grain after it was cut. The life on the Petrolia place seemed to be so much more desirable than the farm, possibly because there was not so much manual labor to do and more riding and cattle driving. It used to be fun to spear salmon in the river in the fall with an Indian spear. This is a bone spear head fitting at the end of a long pole loosely and tied to the pole by a strip of buckskin long enough so that the spear head would come off in the fish and it could be towed to shore by the pole and string. The fish would shoot up the shallow places so fast that it was very difficult to hit them and a miss might damage the spear. At that time the house and barn stood across the river near the original old log cabin not far from Otto’s house (this was in Petrolia). The trip from Ferndale took all day in a wagon or buckboard. As I grew older I was allowed to make the trip alone on horseback and drive the band of work horses. Once I left all the horses there and walked home up the beach all the way instead of by the road. This was quite some trip, but I had a good time.

About 1880 or 1881 I went with my father to Modoc County after the crops were in to look after the cattle we had there. It had been a severe winter and the mountains were still full of snow in June. We went by horseback of course as there were no roads farther north than Trinidad, or farther east than about thirty miles from the coast except the one to Bridgeville. (Note: Dad speaks of a road down the coast through Alder Point and over Bell Mountain after which time it took the general course of the road now used. I don’t *know* just what he means. End of note.)

We went through Arcata and Kneeland Prairie and through the redwoods for two or three days straight north until we struck the Klamath River at the Klamath Ferry. Then we followed the river all the way to Sawyers Bar over trails hardly fit for a goat. There were lots of Indian villages along the river in those days, and I remember father teaching an Indian girl how to braid straw hats, and was introduced to a sweat house by an old Indian without a stitch on and a crooked knee. We stopped at Sawyers Bar one night with some friends of father’s, and I decided to go downtown and see the sights as it was a very busy town at that time as there were lots of mines there. As I came home about ten o’clock a man ahead of me kept looking back and finally pulled a knife about a foot long out of his boot, so I stayed farther behind. It was pretty rough country in those times. At Sawyers Bar we left the river and crossed over to Yreka. The Klamath River at that time was running twenty or thirty feet higher than ordinary and it roared like Niagara Falls, you could hear it from eight or ten miles away. From Yreka we went across Shasta Valley to the Soda Springs the next day. From there it took one day to a point West of Mt. Shasta, another day to the Boise Ranch, another day to cross the Lava Beds. The Lava Beds was where Dr. Thomas and General Canby were killed by Captain Jack in the Modoc Indian War. The Lava Beds were full of little blinds of bush where the troops had hid to watch and we found old shoes and army clothes that had been cast off even though it was twenty years or more after the war. The next night we camped at what had been a peninsula back in the 1850s where father used to keep the cattle at night when he was driving them through that country. By keeping the camp on the neck they were safe from molestation by the Indians and could not stray. At this time however instead of a peninsular there was an island as Tule Lake was slowly rising. From Tule Lake we went to Langell Valley the next day where we stayed and took part in the spring roundup of what cattle were still alive. It seemed that every juniper tree had from one to twenty carcasses under it as the snow came early in October that year and they could not get the cattle protected areas. I sure enjoyed that summer in the excitement of the rodeos and we, with the rest of the ranchers, combed

the country over an area of nearly 150 miles across. It was sure discouraging for out of 400 beef steers and two or three hundred head of cows that we had had there the year before, there were only about thirty head of steers and about 100 head of cows. One hundred of brood mares had dwindled down to thirty five. One of my companions on the round up was Lee Laws, who was under indictment for murder, sometime later he was taken from the sheriff by a mob and hanged. We had a pretty good idea that many of our cattle had been rustled, but of course there was no way to prove it.

The country had lots of mule deer and nearly every day we would see several antelope. There were lots of bear signs and Tule Lake and Clear Lake were full of wild ducks and geese and lots of other water fowl that I had never seen or heard of before. It was not at all uncommon to jump a flock of sage hens of fifty or a hundred, so tame that you could walk up to within ten feet of them.

On the way home we brought five head of horses with us. I don’t remember exactly which way we came but think it was through Happy Camp and Round Valley, to Redding and over to Calahans Ranch, Douglas City, Hayfork and then over the Trinity Mountains. My pinto pony gave out about here and I walked most of the rest of the way back to the home place as the horses were too wild to ride and I was too small to break one, and my father was too old to risk this out in the mountains away from any help. It was the next year that two of the horses with two others ran away with me, and I broke my leg. They were only about half broke. That broken leg kept me in bed for three months and on crutches for nearly a year, and that leg always bothered me when I rode horseback, and from that time on I was never a ranch rider. (Note by Linwood LeBoeuf Clark, son of Linwood Lincoln Clark: The following is quoted from the Ferndale Enterprise of December 8, 1882. “Runaway Team – Last Friday the son of James Clark while driving a four-horse team. Returning from Hooktown, we believe was thrown from his seat, one foot catching in the brake, and was dragged a half mile or more before being rescued from his perilous position. The leg was badly broken but was soon set by Dr. Glasscock, who now reports the young sufferer as doing well. The team was made up of colts and was hardly a safe outfit for a boy 14 years of age to handle, though we believe he has several times driven them to Hooktown. We hope he may soon recover.” I remember my Dad telling me that if it hadn’t been for Dr. Glasscock, who was a doctor for the Confederate Army during the Civil War, he would have lost his leg. There was a compound fracture of the leg and Dad always had an ugly scar about halfway between the ankle and knee. During his sojourn back East from about 1897 to 1920, a Doctor John Collins, who was the family doctor, had to open the area several times and scrape the bone. Dad said that Dr. Collins told him that one day he would have to cut Dad’s leg off. However the good doctor died many years before my Dad did, and when Dad died he still had the leg. End of Note. Linwood Lincoln Clark resumes below.)