THE CLARK FAMILY 7

LINWOOD LINCOLN CLARK (BORN 1867) – FAVORITE HORSES

 About here while I think of it is about time to tell of my favorite saddle and driving horses. When the folks back in Illinois went to Kentucky to buy some brood mares, as I have told you, to bring to California in 1852 at one place where they stopped an bought a fine mare that had had her leg cut in a wire fence bad enough to keep her from racing, but not hurting her for general travel and breeding. They were invited for dinner and there was a pretty girl there named Dorcas that Uncle Thomas kept casting sheep’s eyes at, he was prone to that anyway. Well the rest of them to tease him called the mare Dorcas, and he was the horse he was riding when the wagon train was jumped by Indians and killed Grandmother Clark and Uncle Hodgson. That was the reason that this horse arrived safely in California with about a dozen others that were being driven by other members of the party somewhere behind.

 Dorcas was kept for years in Petrolia and she raised many colts. While out in the hills she was shot and an Indian boy found her and brought her in, but she died. One of her colts was also named Dorcas, and she was my father’s favorite riding horse for several years. When I came back from the East she had become quite old. One of her colts was a dark dappled brown named and she had become my father’s horse. All of

the horses worked on the farm and were not small but generally were from fourteen to sixteen-hundred pound horses. This Dorcas has three colts when I came upon the scene. One, Spot, another brown horse we called Chance, and a three-year old who was also named Dorcas. Father had ridden the other Dorcas to Modoc County the first trip and left her there. He brought back a beautiful cream mare, but this mare proved to be balky and stopped in the middle of the Salt River ford one night with the tide coming in. My stepmother, father and I were in the buggy. We finally got out after the water was nearly up to the seat of the buggy. That settled the cream horse and father sold her to the stage driver, where it did her no good to halt in a six-horse team. Father could not stand a balky or mean horse and despised a mule.

 Well, of those three horses, Spot was broke to work of course, but Chance was only half broke, and Dorcas had never been driven. She was such a beauty that I immediately claimed her to take the place of my pony that gave out on the way home from Modoc County that summer. We hitched her with Spot to the running gear of the wagon with a rope through the bellyband and tied to her front foot. When she would try to cut up all I had to do was to pull the rope and it would bring her to her knees as we rode on the wagon, and she broke quite easily. She was also very affectionate. We farmed out two of the horses we brought back from Modoc to a neighbor to break, and I was figuring on one of them named Harry after my first old horse, to mate to Dorcas for a driving team. He was a beautiful sorrel with a black mane and tail and full of life, but while driving back from Hookstown after taking a load of grain to the steamer some boys scared the team of Spot, Chance, Harry and his mate, Prince, and they ran away and that was when I broke my leg. It was the fault of Chance, but Harry and Prince were in the lead and full of pep and ready to run at the drop of a hat, so they got most of the blame and our hired man who drove them while I was in bed told my father that they were treacherous, so he sold the pair for $400 so I had only the third Dorcas left for myself. She would come clear across the ranch when I whistled to her, and I broke her

to ride myself by riding Spot in from the field alongside of her and petting her on the back and leaning on her until she got used to it. One day when she was tired I slipped over from Spot’s back onto her and came home that way much to my father’s surprise. Though Dorcas was broken to ride, father made me ride Chance to Modoc next year as Dorcas was too young for that hard trip.

 My father picked out a horse for me to ride but it was scary in a stall and afraid of her head. Probably some fool puncher in Modoc had beat her over the head and spoiled her. One time she threw herself back in the stall and broke her neck, as I recall we called her Daisy.

 The year that I broke my leg I was not much good around the ranch and I went to the signal station at Cape Mendocino which at that time was under the jurisdiction of the Army under General Hazen and was a part of the Signal Corps. I did not learn much here except to read the instruments, telegraph a little bit and to wig-wag with signal flags, but I had a lot of fun hunting and fishing. However the observer was a periodical drunkard and mean under the influence. He was the ugliest man I ever saw, so finally I left him and the next year I went to Modoc with father.

 This time we went by way of Bridgeville and over Low Pass to Red Bluff, about the route that the road now follows. From Red Bluff we went north, but this time we went to the east of Mt. Shasta to avoid the Lava Bed. Once was enough for them. We came in by Glass Mountain. Oh yes, on this trip I killed my first deer on Buck Mountain back of Bridgeville. I used an old gun which weighed 16 pounds, and I had to lay down and rest it on my knee to shoot. But it only took one shot and after I was sure he was dead, I stuck my bandana on the ramrod so I could find it again, and struck out for the house yelling at the top of my voice at every jump, “I got him, I got him”. Father came with the horse and we packed it in. I don’t know who was proudest, myself or my father. This time we caught one of Modoc horses for me to ride and after we got one of the

boys to top her off a few times I took over. She was a dandy cow horse. This time we rounded up all our cattle and horses into a band and after we had found all we started them and the thirty-five remaining horses for Humboldt. It was a long trip by way of Calahan Ranch and Weaverville where we were arrested for setting a forest fire, but they found some tramps instead so we got off. These cattle were as wild as deer at the time of starting, but they got so tired we almost had to kick them to keep them going. By the time we got to Rio Dell we left them with a man until spring, bringing the horses home and selling them off at about $300 per head. In the spring we took the cattle to the Clark ranch in Petrolia and traded them off for two-year-old heifers and leased the place to a dairyman, and we went to Oakland. I went to high school there and lived with the principal’s family named McChesney for the first two years, and learned to be civilized. I went two and a half years to high school and graduated May 28, 1889. (Note by Linwood Le Boeuf Clark, Linwood Lincoln Clark’s son - I gave his high school diploma from Oakland High School to the Oakland Museum in 1972-73. Then I went to the University of California. My father became sick and died in March 1890 and I quit college.)

 During this period Uncle Charles bought a place at what is now Oxnard of about a thousand acres. Uncle Thomas had returned from a venture in Fort Fairfield, Texas and took over the Oxnard place. Before that he lived for a short time at Mountain View, which is a short distance south of Palo Alto. I used to spend my vacations there for a while watching the trotting horses at Stanford and driving around the country. When Uncle Thomas decided to go to Ventura County he sold out in Mountain View and he and I drove down overland with five horses and my saddle horse Dorcas and his horse Gypsie. Uncle Thomas also brought along a stallion he had bought from the Stanford’s. It was the son of the celebrated Guy Wilkes, one of the world’s greatest trotting horses. The college of Stanford had not as yet been started. Uncle Thomas rode in the cart and let the stallion, and I rode Dorcas and drove the five horses. One was a pacing mare that could make the mile in a little better than two, ten. We had a fine trip going about 25 miles a day as the young stallion colt was not very well.

About San Louis (Obispo) Uncle Thomas decided he had better give the little horse a rest of a day or so. He sent me on ahead with the loose horses. I hit the top of San Marcos Pass that night about 9:00 p.m. It was a grand moonlight night and the sea looked like a silver lake with the Channel Island in plain view. I was tired and hungry but there seemed to be no place to stop, but just as I was starting down the mountain I happened to look back and there was a light. I drove back to it and found a bee keeper and his wife and grandson. They took me in and put the horses in a corral, and gave me a fine supper of which the principal part was hot biscuit and honey. Oh boy, was it good. They would not take any pay for the meal or putting up the horses. The next morning after a good breakfast I piked on through Santa Barbara. Just below Carpentaria where the concrete causeway now is, one had to drive through the breakers to get by the point. I was delayed here a bit because the tide was high, but I finally got through and a few miles beyond came to a little Spanish Rancheria where they put me up and gave me a feed of beans and hot biscuit, mutton, etc. It tasted better than anything I have ever eaten at the Waldorf. As I remember they charged me for my supper and breakfast and hay for the six horses, 65 cents. The next day I made the ranch at Springville as we called it then and stayed the rest of that summer vacation driving the different horses all over the country. It was a great place for sand storms at that time as the wind was so strong. However now they have planted wind breaks and it is not so bad. They raised grain at that time. (Note by Note by Linwood Le Boeuf Clark, Linwood Lincoln Clark’s son: As I recall in the thirties this whole country was given over to the production of beans.)