

CLARA MAY YOUNG

Clara May Young was born 5 April 1870 in the small community of Richville, Tooele County, Utah. Richville was one of the first settlements in Tooele County and until 1861 was the county seat. It was located on Twin Spring Creek in an area where there existed a number of natural springs providing adequate water for the operation of the several mills that sprang up in the locality. It was situated south of the south shore of Great Salt Lake and about twenty miles west of Salt Lake City near the junction of the highway leading south to Tooele or further west to Grantsville.

Her Father, Lorenzo Dow Young and her Mother, Hannah Ida Hewitt were married 29 April 1856. She was a youthful English girl who had migrated to Utah from Wymondham, Norwich, England with her parents. Each of them were converts to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints in their native land. She became the third polygamous wife of Lorenzo Dow Young and when Clara May was born Clara was the youngest of Hannah Ida Hewitt Young's five children.

"When she (Clara May Young) was about two years of age the family moved to Salt Lake in the First Ward at ninth south and ninth east where she spent her girlhood. Mother's immediate brothers and sister were Perry LeGrande, Brigham Willard, Harriet Josephine and Feramorz Little.

At this time the home in Salt Lake was a forty acre farm, and while Mother was still a young child Grandfather built a double house for two of his wives, Hannah, my Mother's Mother, and Joanne Larsen Young (Aunt Annie) Mother of Dr. Harry A. Young, Francis Marion, and Albert F. Young. The two families lived harmoniously side by side.

Due to the fact that Francis Marion, better known as Uncle Frank, and Mother were almost the same age, their birthdays being only three days apart, they were great pals in their youth, and enjoyed a much closer companionship than Mother had with any of her own brothers or sister. Mother recalls that Uncle Frank called her Cowey because he couldn't say Clara. And I remember he was still calling her Cowey at the age of sixty-three when he was visiting us in California and compiling material for a text book he was writing. Uncle Frank often referred to Mother as his twin, and sometimes

wrote letters Dear Twin. When children, the two went to school, Sunday School, M.I.A., and many parties together. All through the years they always corresponded where ever they were and before dear Uncle Frank passed away a few years ago it was a rich experience to listen to the two reminisce.

Mother went to school in the First Ward and graduated from the eighth grade. She recalls she was only seven when Uncle Brigham Young passed away, and remembers her Father lifting her up in his arms so she could view the elder statesman and church leader lying in state.

Mother remembers the Arsenal Hill Explosion, which occurred on her sixth birthday, the 5th of April, when two poor young boys presumably took a shot at the door of a powder magazine on Arsenal Hill, at a point near the present Capitol Hill. Walls were blown down, roofs torn off, doors and shutters flung from their fastenings, and window glass shattered and strewn broadcast. A rock went through Grandfather's roof in the Eighteenth Ward. Many people were killed and injured but none of our family was hurt.

Mother remembers that her own Mother did almost all the weaving for the whole family for years. Carpets, rugs, bed spreads, towels, cloth for ladies dresses and also knit stockings for all her children and for Grandfather. In some instances she washed, carded the wool, spun the yarn and then wove the cloth or carpet. The large carpet on the floor of Grandfather's room was one Grandmother made in this way.

Aunt Annie Larsen Young was a very fine seamstress and tailor, and my Mother recalls that Grandfather hired a man tailor to come every fall and help Grandmother and Aunt Annie, and sometimes the three sewed for days preparing clothes for the whole family, even suits for Grandfather and the boys.

They dried apples, apricots, peaches and corn, besides canning almost everything. Aunt Annie and Grandma dried enough fruit and corn to take bushels and bushels to the market, and trade for sugar, clothing and other supplies. They had regular customers where they took butter, eggs and chickens. Mother recalls that once Uncle Harry was called upon to deliver butter up in town to one customer, and when he arrived at the place, and enquired where the lady lived, he was told the lady lived in the back house. Whereupon he became indignant and went right home with the butter and informed his

Mother that he would not deliver butter to anybody who lived in a back house.

When Mother was still very young, only about fifteen, she met a handsome young man by the name of Thomas Speirs, son of George and Adeline Harris Speirs of the Tenth Ward. They were Latter Day Saints, Grandfather Speirs having filled a mission in the Sandwich Islands. (Now Hawaii) About two years later the young couple wanted to get married and they applied for recommends to go through the temple (endowment house) but Adam Speirs, Uncle of Thomas, who was bishop of the Tenth Ward, denied my Father the privilege. He was a severe task master and said he wanted Father to live up to all the requirements before he got the recommend. So Grandfather Young said they were very youthful and could go through the Temple later and that he would marry them himself, which he did.

So my Father was never a very good church member but Mother and I often recall the fact that Dad said jokingly, 'They wouldn't let me in the church but they never fail to ask me for donations.'" 1/

So it was that Thomas Speirs and Clara May Young were married in Salt Lake City by her Father, Lorenzo Dow Young, 27 July 1867. It is presumed they left for Ashley Valley a short time later because their first daughter, Vivian, was born there in the spring, however, they were back in Salt Lake City a year later because they attended the fireworks there on July 4th according to a letter written to her son, Fera, July 15, 1868. Nevertheless, they settled down to raising their family of their own in Ashley Valley in the Maeser Ward. After having lived in a nice, comfortable home in Salt Lake City it was a hard thing to begin her married life in a log cabin with a dirt roof but having come from hardy pioneer stock she endured it and had all of her family in two different log cabins. Her children were Vivian (1868), Claire (1890), Kenneth (1892), Thelma Naomi (1898) and Naida Deon (1908).

Without doubt she and her husband struggled through hard times and considerable privation, denying themselves much as they sacrificed so that their children might enjoy the best they could possibly give them. Vivian and Claire both left home to attend the University of Utah and Brigham Young University qualifying themselves to become school teachers. Kenneth had little interest in higher education and remained in Vernal. Thelma chose to specialize in hair dressing and Naida, the baby of the

family, stayed longer with her parents.

As Thomas advanced well into his fifties he began to suffer from poor health and the doctors surmized he might fare better in a warmer climate. Their four daughters having all ready preceeded them to California, Tom and Clara left Vernal in 1925 for Southern California to live. The warmer climate proved to be of no particular benefit to his health and 27 February 1927 Thomas Speirs succumed to the disease which was troubling him in Pasadena, California leaving his wife, Clara, a widow at fifty-seven. She continued to reside with her daughters nearby except for Thelma and her family with whom she lived for another thirty six years in the Golden State. Most of them were useful, productive years during which she occupied herself doing many different tasks.

I well remember the anticipation with which we looked forward to receiving her Christmas packages. In the top of the package was included some native greenery and red berries which always offered a festive appearance in the top of the box. As we worked our way down into the depths of the carefully packed individual gifts we were each handed our own exotic, beautifully wrapped presents. They were always exciting because they came from so far away and they were different from the plain, mundane gifts one found in the stores of Vernal. We would find such things as figs and dates. Sometimes the dates were stuffed making them ever so luscious and taste-tempting. The thing best of all was when we found the home made fruit cake which Grandma Speirs had made for the family, ^{nestled in the box among the gifts.} I think I have never found anything to equal the succulent, mouth-watering delicacy of her delicious fruit cakes. *

When I left home to go to college she continued to send me a fruit cake for Christmas. I selfishly guarded and cherished every morsel for weeks until I ate the last treasured piece around the latter part of February. I learned later that Howard Hitchcock, another grandson, received a similar gift from her while he was in college.

She made woolen quilts and though I do not recall ever having seen them I do remember that on some of her infrequent visits to Vernal she would sit by the hour and card the wool to put into her quilts. She would stack each little woolen batting into neat piles to take back to California with her.

Ward McCarty, a nephew by marriage, remarked in his opening prayer given at her funeral what "tremenduous courage, fortitude, hope, faith and joy" she had. On the same occasion William S. Erekson mentioned "her wonderful sense of humor, bouyant spirit and hearty laugh." He also related an experience she had told his family some years earlier about a time when she was young she entered a bus in Salt Lake City and paid Brother Crabtree, the conductor, for her transportation with a quarter, as she thought, and was quite surprised when he gave her change for a \$5.00 gold piece.

She reached the age of ninty-three years, four months and twenty-four days and was the last surviving child of Lorenzo Dow Young and Hannah Ida Hewitt Young. Her death occurred 29 August 1963 in Los Angeles, California as a result of complications following many years of arterio sclerosis. Her remains were returned to Salt Lake City where she was buried in the Salt Lake City Cemetary beside her husband, Thomas Speirs 3 September 1963.

Compiled and written
by Harold K. Speirs, Grandson

1 - Brief history written by Thelma S. Speirs