One Hundred Years of Highlights

By Lucy Rigby McCullough

(Speech given on the occasion of the 100th birthday of Bishop Amasa L. Clark)

> My light is but a little one
> My light of faith and prayer
> But lo! It glows like God's great sun
> For it was lighted there!

Even as a child he stood tall and listened while time told of eternal principles and their application, while history recorded great events and quiet happenings. With a spirit tuned to appreciate both equally, he dreamed and worked and learned.

At the hour of his birth, the noises of Civil War had scarcely died away, and almost could be heard the hoofbeats of Lee's horse leaving Appomattox.

Pioneers were plodding westward, sometimes under stormy skies and sometimes over moonlit parries.

California gold had been discovered a few years earlier, but the gold he used was hammered by hard work and consistent effort as he helped to carve a Utah that would be his home.

The church into which he was born had moved its headquarters into his beloved valley in 1847, and it was to be his privilege to shake the hand of every one of its presidents except that of the Prophet Joseph Smith.

His activities in the Church have been varied and each assignment he has conscientiously executed. He was Farmington's bishop for 16 years. His keen interest to share his faith with others has prompted him to provide the means whereby 14 missionaries could spend time teaching its tenets. Five of the missionaries have been members of his own family.

When Leland Stanford lifted his sledge to strike the Golden Spike, as a boy nearly four years of age, he was learning to help his mother set the table and dry the dishes. Only he remembers how hard it was to do this after nightfall for then the sun was down and their only light came from a string floating in a dish of tallow.

He recalls still how very proud his mother was when she was able to have candle molds. Yes, then real candles were possible and the little boy could see much farther.

In a starched white shirt with piercing eyes, the little boy stood close while a far-reaching and stirring event took place. Aurelia S. Rogers believed that children should be taken from streets in idleness and given an organization that would put a song in their hearts and treasurers in their hands. Thus the Primary was born.

With a twinkle of eye and a wry smile, he recalls that the Clarks were the first people in Farmington to have water in the house coming from a tap.

As a shy young man of twenty with an understanding heart, he had asked Alice Charlotte Steed to be his bride. And Alice Charlotte had said “yes” and so they had dreamed and worked and prayed together. As an old adage expressed it, “they had worked like everything depended upon them during the day and then at night prayed like everything depended upon the Lord.”

But Alice Charlotte could not stay long and so, as he bad her good-bye, his dreams were wrapped carefully as he wept softly and took his children by their hands and told them they must keep their mother’s light still shining.

Then a few years later, from the wings of his stage, stepped another charming lady, and as Susan Duncan smiled, he dusted off his dream and knew that life was good.

She was scholarly, confident and ambitious. She taught their children that winning battles was important and that he who wins must work.

She made for them beautiful flower gardens, told them stirring tales, and read them soothing poetry. A favorite selection of hers, “Song from Pippi Passes” expressed her philosophy of life, so she reached Browning while she stepped up life’s ladder for a better look at the distant fields.

> The years at the spring;
> The days at the morn;
> The morning’s at seven;
> The hillside’s dew-pearled;
> The lark’s on the wing;
> The snail’s on the thorn;
> God’s in his heaven;
> All’s right with the world.

One day Aunt Susie’s brilliant mind will be set free to soar again to beckoning mountain tops.

As one looks at the program today, he is startled by the achievements of one man; he is astonished by the happenings that have occurred in one man’s life. Bishop Clark has seen many things happen and heard of many more during his richly filled 100 years.

He has seen 14 States come into the Union.

He has thrilled with the exploits of Teddy Roosevelt and his RoughRiders in the Spanish-American War.

He has watched the happenings of Two World Wars and has stood at attention with barred head while the Stars and Stripes has been displayed, and men have marched to duty and sometimes death.

The news of the sinking of the “Luthsana” has saddened him; and he was filled with pride when he heard of the heroism displayed at the raising of the flag at Iwo Jima.

During his life Hawaii and the Philippines and Guam became American Territory, the Panama Canal was leased, and the patience of Dr. Gorgos in attempting to eradicate yellow fever and the steadfastness of Col. Gothels have become legend.

Sadly he has bowed his head as the news of the assassination of three presidents has come to his ears.

Many inventions have added comfort to his life.

The Atlantic Cable was laid in 1866; the typewriter was perfected in 1867; the telephone was exhibited by Bell in 1876; the electric light was invented in 1880. He has seen the development of the phonograph, of radio and TV.

He has delighted in the stages of transportation, of ox team, horse, train, automobile and plane.

He loves the story of James J. Hill, the railroad and empire builder, of Henry Ford and his gas buggy; of a young man with a few sandwiches, a candy bar, and a roaring motor, who said simply as he landed in Paris, "I'm Charles Lindbergh." And then there was John Glen, and today the Gemini Twins.

With a love of beauty, he has been stirred by the band music of Phillip Sousa, by the light opera of Victor Herbert, by the news that the New York Philharmonic Orchestra had been established. He has loved the strains of "After the Ball" and the "Rain in Spain." He saw the magnificent Mark Twain become America's best humorist, saw the Barrymores become America's Royal Family of the Theatre, witnessed the birth of Mickey Mouse in 1928.

He saw the Industrial Revolution and watched while America becomes a world power.

People, events, people, history, people, progress, people, love, ideals. But people-first and foremost always people.

And so each year on a simmery summery days, the ladies of this community who have lost their husbands will look out on their porches on lawns and each will see a shining green-watermelon and each will know that A. L. Clark has renewed his token of friendship with her.

As we set at the bier of our father some ten years ago, our door softly opened and A. L. Clark stepped into the room. With dramatic simplicity he told us a story which we shall always cherish. He recounted how our father had made a daring rescue of a neighbor whose team was running away. And most of you here assembled could tell of similar incidents when he has come to a house of mourning and left a message at a house of hope.

In St. Matthew 5:16 we read: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

"Shine on
Shine on
Shine on
Bright and clear
Shine on
Shine on
The day is near.