

HISTORY OF CLARISSA WILKINS MANWARING

Born 1857 – Died 1914

By granddaughter, Marie Manwaring Anderson, in 1998

Ury Welch was born in 1842, and became the 2nd wife of Charles Wilkins. She was 15 years old when she married him. She had a bad knee all of her life and limped. She died at 50 years of age, in 1891. Their first child was named Clarissa and she was followed by 14 other children. Two of them died in infancy. So Clarissa was her mother's helper for 19 years.

Clarissa Wilkins was born to Charles Wilkins and Ury Welch Wilkins in Willard County, Utah, in 1857. She was the oldest of 15 children and her youngest sister Nettie was born when Clarissa was 28 years old. Five of Clarissa's sons are older than her youngest sister, Nettie. Nettie remembers spending two summers with Clarissa. When she was ten years old and there were six boys and Clarissa was expecting another one, I'm sure that Nettie's visit was very helpful and needed.

Clarissa was in poor health the last years of her life. She and her husband, Herbert, moved to Idaho to be with 5 other of their sons who farmed in Blackfoot and Rexburg. Sister Nettie came to Idaho to visit them and it was the last visit she had with Clarissa. Clarissa died 4 years after they had moved to Idaho. Her youngest son, David, was 18 years old and unmarried at the time of her death.

When Clarissa was 19 years old she married Herbert Manwaring who had come to America from England by himself when he was 18 years old. He was 28 when they married. They lived in Granger and farmed at first. The school was too far for the boys to always attend. She was sick a lot and the oldest son, Hyrum was her main helper and had to stay out of school. Herbert was struck by lightning while plowing and was left somewhat deaf. We don't know when Clarissa lost her hearing, but she was also hard of hearing all during their marriage.

Clarissa and Herbert were married in Salt Lake City in the endowment house, or the temple, whichever it was then. They were the parents of eight sons; Hyrum, born 23 June, 1877; Levi, who is still living, born 5 May, 1879; Charles Herbert who died when 5 days old, 25 April, 1881; Orson, born 2 July, 1882; Walter Henry, born 23 March, 1884; Arthur, born 14 April, 1886; Horace born 12 August, 1888; David Heber, born 29 June, 1896. Levi, who was 91, is still living and takes care of his home and yard and cooks for himself.

Clarissa and Herbert were never very well-off financially, but did nearly always have what they needed. The boys' hair used to get quite long before they would get it cut, but the boys were always to their church meetings and always to school. The oldest boy, Hyrum, was always desirous to go to school, but didn't get to as often as he should, but always went when possible. He was older than the kids in his class, but attended anyway. His teacher recognized his desire to learn and helped him all she could so he could attend the academy. He finally filled a mission for the church and went on to school and became president of Ricks College. We know from this that Clarissa instilled in her boys the desire to learn, to have courage, and determination in the face of difficulty and also to love the gospel. All of her sons have been fun-loving men and have worked in the church and have raised sons and daughters who are the same.

The Manwaring boys have all lived good, clean lives, examples of their father and mother. They never had much musical training in their home, but loved music, both singing and musical instruments.

Clarissa has 14 grandchildren. One of her great granddaughters, daughter of Leonard Manwaring of Idaho Falls, who lived in Massachusetts, after her marriage, did some genealogy there and found histories telling of the immigration of 32 families from England who came on the same ship and settled in Dunstable, Mass., before coming out west. Among the family names she found those of the Wilkins family and also those of the Cummings family (her mother's people). She was real excited that her father and mother had brought these two families back together again by their marriage.

Clarissa used to bake bread every day to keep those seven boys filled up. The times have never been known when Clarissa became hard of hearing, but grandfather Herbert was struck with lightning and he was deaf from then on. The sons tell the story of how, when they were kneeling for family prayer, Grandfather Herbert called on Clarissa to say the prayer, then waiting a few moments and not hearing anything, thought maybe she didn't hear him ask her so he started saying the prayer. Imagine the picture of seven little boys kneeling and trying to keep from giggling too much while both parents are saying the prayer.

The boys used to scrub the floor which was a board floor and each boy had so many boards to do. When they came to the finish the middle board always had a line down the center where the two boys ended.

Clarissa was a neat and clean lady. Although she never had many clothes, they were always clean and well kept. She always kept her garments well repaired and always clean. She never went out in public too often, because of her hearing defect.

All of the Manwaring families who came from England finally made a tremendous effort and spent several days at the temple, getting all of their endowments and sealings done. This is when Herbert and Clarissa and sons were sealed, 15 years after their marriage.

They had so much trouble with their farm that they sold it and moved to Mapleton, Utah and built a little home. The boys worked at the brick yard for the bricks and they installed them themselves. They now had 6 sons. 8 years went by and no more sons. Then they realized that another baby was coming. Clarissa was 39 years old now. These six young boys were so excited! (I don't know about Clarissa??). Surely this one would be a girl and they would have a sister!

Poem written years later by a son

The house was all excitement. The midwife on the go
She said "I think it won't be long, oh just an hour or so."
A little girl, a little girl, twas all that they could think.
It couldn't be another boy. They'd throw him in the drink.
At last the crucial moment came, that little girl to see.
"Good gosh, oh darn. Of all the luck, 'Twas only little me."
--by youngest son, David Manwaring.

Clarissa and Herbert's oldest son, Hyrum, was in the 5th grade when they moved to Mapleton, but he should have been in the 8th grade. He had missed too much school. But a kind lady teacher helped him catch up and graduate. He eventually served a mission, married, and became president of Ricks College in 1930.

All but Dave of the Manwaring sons had served missions and were married. They all decided to sell out and move to Groveland, west of Blackfoot, Idaho. The parents decided to go with them. They mostly built homes near each other and the parents built a home just north of son, Arthur and wife Teresa (my parents), Youngest son, David, was a teenager and not married.

Clarissa got to go back to Utah once, about a year before she suffered a stroke and died at age 57. Her youngest son was 18 years old and stayed with his brothers and attended Ricks College until his marriage. I was a year old when she died Sept. 1914.

We don't know much about Clarissa except that she baked 8 loaves of bread a day. My mother said she was very careful of her garments and kept them clean and mended. At that time, most of them were made at home so we know they required extra care. But being the oldest child of a 16 year old mother who raised 15 children, we know her teen years were spent "Mothering". Then, marrying at 19 years and raising 7 sons, her main occupation for a long time would have to be "Mothering."

While we don't know too much about our grandmother Clarissa, we do know that she was a wonderful wife and mother and was the kind of person we would all like to be like, and she raised a fine family, in spite of all the hardships and handicaps they were familiar with. May it be our lot to be like, or desire to be like, the same people she helped raise in her family. May we carry on to the best of our ability the heritage that she left us with and blessed us with.

We salute our grandmother, Clarissa. Her sons were not great money-makers, but were good, sweet men and faithful in the church. They all loved their families, books, music, education, and life in general.

Her husband, Herbert was left alone for 22 years and spent his winters in the St. George Temple after selling his home. He stayed with his sons in the summertime and helped out. We appreciate our heritage and hope we are doing and will do as well.

Marie