

CHAPTER 37

END OF AN ERA

The 1960s begins the closure of our Ora and Maggie Clark story. Ora was 74 years old at the beginning of the decade, and Maggie was 69. Farming was hard work; even keeping the farm home running and feeding people was an everyday chore. It had taken a toll on them.

Maggie and Ora's Health

Maggie wrote a card to her sister Nora, dated Feb 2, 1960.

Dear sister, How are you? Feeling fine I hope. I am in town to the Dr. I have been sick all winter takes shots every other day everybody has the flue. I have had my teeth all pulled they will fit my plate this Wed. I'll be glad when I get them. I am going to have my eyes operated on before long if they are ready. I hope I can see better then. This has been a nice day I washed. I was bit by a possum tonight when I gathered eggs not very bad I didn't see it. It was in a nest. This is all. Keep well to all with Love, Maggie.

Maggie was diabetic, had cataracts and other challenges; the shots she mentioned were probably insulin. Yet she was still doing farm chores at nearly 69 years old,

Ora had problems with his teeth for years. In Cecil Clark's personal history, he wrote this about Ora:

Dad smoked a pipe all his life, and when it wasn't lit he just chewed on it. Well, by the time he was in his 40's his teeth were wore down to the nerves from chewing on the pipe stem. On two different days, he had all his teeth pulled by a dentist in Conway Springs. The charge was one dollar a tooth.

False teeth were made for him, but he was never able to wear them comfortably as they would make him gag. He would occasionally try them again after taking a file or grinding stone to them, trying some homemade modifications to get them to fit. As a final desperate attempt, he even used a hack saw to cut off the back teeth. But this did not solve the problem and he never was able to eat with a full set of teeth again. The last I saw of the teeth, he put them in a Prince Albert can, where they stayed on a shelf in the shop.

I can attest to his lack of teeth in the late 1950s. While staying on the farm for a week or so in the summers with my brother and a cousin, meals included baked steak or stewed meat that was very soft, which he would still cut into small pieces. Plus, he put hard vegetables and possibly some meat into a small chopper with a plunger mechanism, then chopped the food into very fine pieces.

Farming Did Not Get Easier

Besides the challenges of aging, farm help was becoming scarce. Soon, the two youngest boys got married and left the farm. Don married on August 10, 1961, into a ready-made family of three children. Bob married in January 1962. So, after 1962, the farm consisted of Maggie, Ora, and Ernie.

Recent research into the farmland revealed that son Don bought nearly seven acres of the farm in June of 1961.²⁸ Essentially, this was the house, shop, barn, and surrounding area. The purpose is unclear, possibly simply to prevent Ora and Maggie's home from being sold to others. Don (and his wife Carolyn) then sold the farm in early 1963, just before Ora and Maggie moved into Clearwater.

Retirement from Farm Life

About this time, it appears Ora retired from farming the land but still lived in the house. The 1964 article titled *Our Senior Citizens* mentions their "retirement a few years ago", and it implies Bob took over the farming.

At the same time, they probably gave up their small herd of milk cows. In the 50s, I recall that after Ora milked the cows at daybreak, he would put the tall stainless-steel milk cans on the road next to the mailbox for the dairy company. Maggie always had a chicken coop, and she made extra 'egg money'. They also raised hogs for consumption and sale. Ora and Maggie were nearing the time when they could no longer tend to all the chores.

The sons were becoming more scattered, also. Cecil Clark and his family moved to Arkansas in 1965. Kenneth and his family moved to Enid, Oklahoma, about the same time, and Donald and his family soon moved to New Mexico, then Texas.



Ora and Maggie in the garden on the farm, one year before moving to Clearwater.

Another anniversary celebration was held in January 1964, marking their 55th wedding anniversary. The following was recreated from an announcement in *The Clearwater Times*, January 2, 1964. (The photo is probably from the 1959 50th Anniversary collection.)



Our Senior Citizens

A belated family Christmas dinner will mark the fifty-fifth wedding anniversary of Mr. and Mrs. Ora Clark on Jan. 5 at the home of their youngest son, Bobby Clark of Clearwater.

Mr. and Mrs. Ora Clark were married Jan 6, 1909 at Caldwell where they lived until moving south of Clearwater in August 1920. They have lived here for the past 44 years. Mr. Clark has been a farmer all his life until his retirement a few years ago, but still likes to get out in the field and help Bob when he can.

Eight Children were born to Mr. and Mrs. Clark — one girl and seven boys: Mrs. Ira (Gladys) Wolfe, Bentley, Kan.; Everett,

Clearwater; Kenneth of Enid, Okla.; Cecil and Merle of Wichita; Donald of Hobbs, N.M.; and Bobby of Clearwater. One son, a twin, Beryl died in 1929 with pneumonia.

They have 18 grandchildren: Ira Lee Wolfe, Bentley, Roy, Paul and Dale, Clearwater, Mrs. Gaylene Griffin, Allen Steve and Jimmy Clark of Enid; Mrs. Shirley Saxton, Gary and Larry Clark, Mrs. Judy Penner, Harold and Linda Clark, all of Wichita, Larry, Glenda and Terry Clark, Hobbs, N. M.; and Darrel Clark Clearwater.

Their three great-grandchildren are Michelle and Jeff Saxton and Craig Armstrong.

No Longer on the Farm

Shortly after the 55th anniversary celebration, Ora and Maggie moved into Clearwater. A short note in *The Clearwater Times*, in an appropriately named column “MOVES ABOUT CLEARWATER” provides us with an approximate date Ora and Maggie moved to town: July 1964. (The newspaper used his local name as Orie.)

MOVES ABOUT CLEARWATER

Mr. and Mrs. Orie Clark moved from the farm to 126 S Gorin in Clearwater. Their telephone number is JU 4-6843.

The Clearwater Times, July 16, 1964

This was a significant change from the wide-open spaces they had known all their lives, but the house was neat, modern, and not too small. Plus, it was only ½ block south of the main street, Ross Avenue, in the heart of Clearwater.



Ora and Maggie Clark home 1964 – 126 S. Gorin, Clearwater, Kansas



Maggie, Ora, and Ora's sister Mabel in their Clearwater home around Christmas, 1964.

They brought with them the tall curved-glass secretary cabinet with a lifetime of keepsakes—some remembrances of the farm. My dad received this from the estate, and now my brother has it.

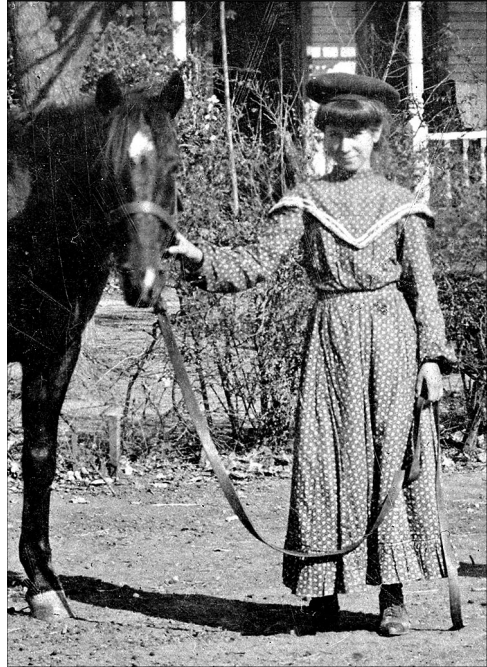
Remembering Maggie – Died September 25, 1965

Maggie enjoyed retirement and life in Clearwater for a little over a year. However, various ailments overwhelmed her at the age of 74. She had more unique experiences and memories than most people, and a lifetime of people surrounding her with love.



From Struble family portrait, c. 1905

Maggie on Struble farm c. 1902 -->



Maggie and her wood burning stove, a Home Comfort Model AE. c. 1950s

<-- Maggie with Shirley Clark, August 23, 1942.

This was a nice tribute in *The Clearwater Times*.

A TRIBUTE
published in the pages of

THE CLEARWATER TIMES
CLEARWATER, KANSAS
SEPT 30 1965

Memorial Obituary

Entered Into Eternal Rest
Saturday, Sept. 25, 1965

MAGGIE CLARK SERVICES CONDUCTED MONDAY

Mrs. Maggie L. Clark, daughter of Jacob and Nancy Struble was born March 6, 1891 in Caldwell, Kan., and passed away in Wellington, Kan., September 25, being at the time of her death 74 years, 6 months and 19 days.

Services were held on Monday, September 27, at the Clearwater Methodist Church with the Rev. Virgil Young officiating. Burial was in the Clearwater Cemetery. Webb Mortuary was in charge.

Mr. Herman Williams sang "The Old Rugged Cross" and "Sweet Bye and Bye" accompanied by Mrs. Larry Light, organist.

Pallbearers were Fred Popp, Edson Hall, Lloyd Light, Clyde Light, Marvin Love and Gordon Light.

When a young girl she united with the Fall Center Methodist Church which was between Caldwell and Drury.

Maggie Struble was united in marriage with Ora Clark in

Caldwell, January 6, 1909. They resided in Caldwell until moving to the Clearwater community in August, 1920, where they lived until they retired and moved into Clearwater in July, 1964. To this union eight children were born. A son, Berle Cleo preceded her in death at the age of six in 1929.

Survivors beside her husband, include a daughter, Mrs. Gladys Wolfe, Bentley; six sons, Everett and Bob of Clearwater, Kenneth, Enid, Okla., Cecil, Pine Bluff, Ark., Merle, Wichita, and Donald, Herford, Tex.; two brothers, Vergil Struble, Caldwell, and Ernie Struble of Clearwater; a sister, Mrs. Nora Ford, Emporia, Kan.; 18 grandchildren and five great-grandchildren, many other relatives and friends.

For many years she had been in failing health and failing eye-sight. However, she was always generous in heart and mind, for she was always considerate of others.

Life Continues

Ora and Ernie stayed in the Clearwater house for several years. They had been together for many years as brother-in-laws, Ernie as a farmhand and living with Maggie and Ora for nearly 20 years. They went back a long time, even if they were sort of an odd couple.



Ernie Struble and Ora Clark c. 1920.

Ernie lived to be 88. He died on October 21, 1975, in a Clearwater retirement home. He lived a long life, despite the fact that he almost died as a youngster from heatstroke chasing little pigs around the farmyard.



Ernest Struble and horse, c. 1910s.

Remembering Ora – Died October 17, 1971

Ora Elmer Clark was born July 18, 1886, probably in John and Ada's newly-built sod house on their homestead in Haskell County, Kansas. Records list Santa Fe as his birth place, but we know the closest town to a rural birth was usually listed. Santa Fe was 11 miles from their homestead, and it probably did not consist of much on July 18th. "*The new town site was platted June 12, 1886 and officially recorded on July 31, 1886.*"²⁹ However, Ada had several family members nearby, including her mother and a sister, who were seven miles away, to help her.

Like Maggie, Ora also had a variety of age-related ailments, which claimed him at 85 years old while he was in the Wellington Hospital.

He too saw and experienced a lot of changes in life, yet unlike Maggie, he lived in and traveled to a wide variety of places, including:

- 1886 Born Santa Fe, Haskell, Co., KS
- 1890 Barnard, Lincoln Co., KS
- 1894 Falls Township, Sumner Co., KS
- 1898 Nardin, Kay, Co., OK
- 1899 Drury, Sumner Co., KS
- 1906 Braman, Kay Co., OK (with Baggetts)
- 1908 Oatville, Sedgwick Co., KS
- 1909 Walla Walla, WA
- 1913 Caldwell, Sumner Co., KS
- 1916 Falls Township, Sumner Co., KS
- 1920 Illinois Township, Sumner Co., KS
- 1948 London Township, Sumner Co., KS
- 1965 Clearwater, KS

October 18, 1971, *Wichita Eagle* -->

ORA E. CLARK

Ora E. Clark, 85, longtime Clearwater resident and retired farmer, died Sunday in a Wellington, Kan., hospital. Services will be at 10 a.m. Tuesday in Webb Funeral Home, Clearwater. Burial will be in Clearwater Cemetery.

Born in Santa Fe, Kan., he moved to Clearwater in 1920 from Caldwell, Kan., His wife, Maggie, died in 1965.

Survivors include six sons, Cecil, Wichita, Merle, Derby, Everett, Clearwater, Kenneth, Enid, Okla., Donald, Hereford, Tex., and Bob, Bentley; a daughter, Mrs Gladys Wolf, Bentley, a brother, Ray Clark, Pryor, Okla., and a sister Mable Blue, Wichita.

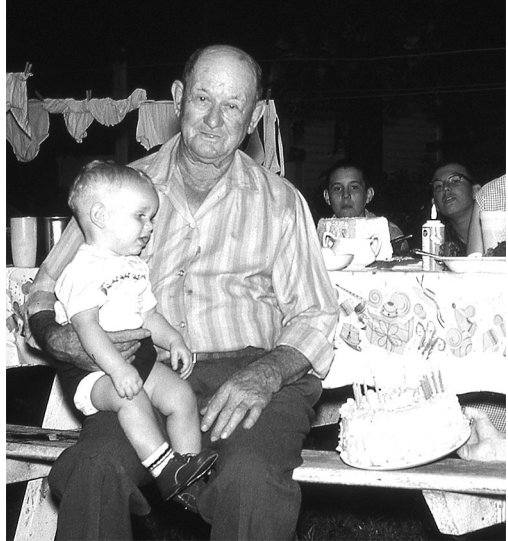


Ora and Maggie Clark, Clearwater Cemetery.

Ora lived in Clearwater for nearly six years after Maggie's death. His kids were all grown, and some were scattered about the country. However, he was close to many old-time acquaintances in Clearwater. A domino player, he would walk downtown (a mere block away) to visit with and play the game with a variety of friends. He was not alone.



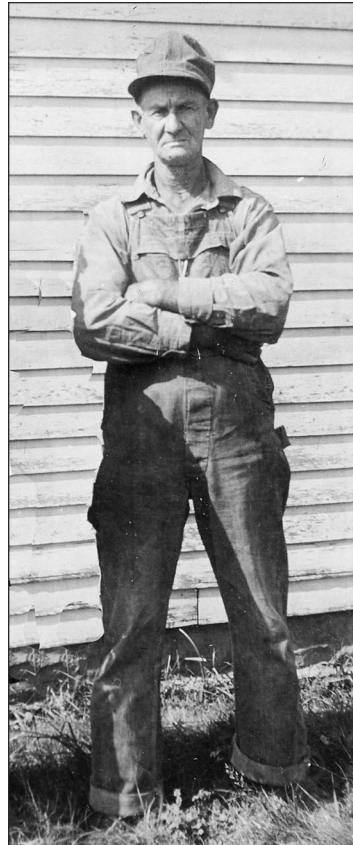
Ora Clark, c. 1898



Ora's 77th Birthday 1963



Ora & Everett 1927



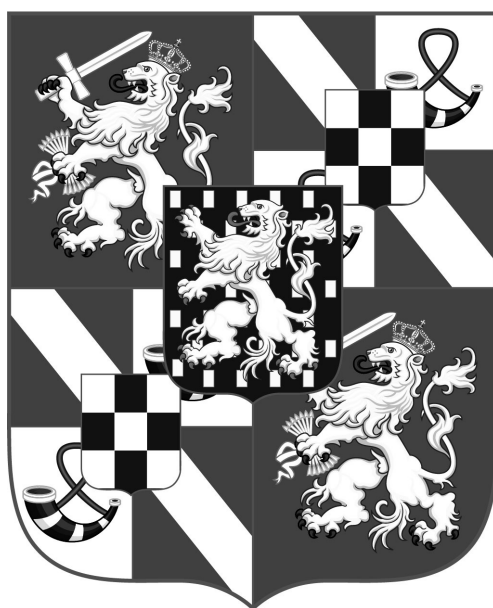
Ora 1942

Clark Survival

Our Clark ancestors likely did not have a Coat of Arms, which was usually the privilege of wealth or royalty. Our ancestors were among those who rented their land and sometimes their lives from the wealthy.

We do however, owe some allegiance and tribute to Prince William of Orange, who to this day, many people in Ulster and America celebrate his leadership in providing a future for the Scots-Irish citizens 400 years ago, and hence us today.

Genealogical timelines are fragile—without his deeds, we might not be enjoying Clark history and our lives. Our recent ancestors understood this, as my great-great-grandfather was named Orange Clark, and subsequent descendants were named Ora.



Prince William of Orange Coat of Arms³⁰

Clarks Continue *ad infinitum*

From the earliest days in Ulster to the farms of Sumner County, the Clark blood continues in countless families and individuals. It would be futile to try and estimate the number of people who descended along the way from the 10 generations of large families studied in this work. They are not all named Clark today, as the maternal descendants took on another's surname—but they are Clarks just the same.

Histories are never complete; fine nuances get lost and then found, new information arises, and corrections beg attention. Hopefully, this book inspires others to continue the story as it relates to themselves and their immediate families, and offer new or corrected information to this book.

The End

