

Biographical Sketch of J. Reuben Clark, Jr.

David H. Yarn, Jr.*

Joshua Reuben Clark, Jr., was born in a rock house built by his father about three miles north of Grantsville, Tooele County, Utah, on 1 September 1871. His father, born and reared in Indiana, was a Union soldier in the Civil War, came West, mined in Montana, and was converted to "Mormonism" soon after arriving in Salt Lake City. His mother was born in an overnight camp of Mormon pioneers in what is now Keith County, Nebraska. She was a daughter of Edwin D. Woolley, who was a friend of the Prophet Joseph Smith and later bishop of a Salt Lake City ward for twenty-eight years.

Young Reuben was the eldest of ten children, and, being reared in a rugged pioneer environment under austere conditions, was given many responsibilities very early in life. Simultaneously his physical and moral stamina began to manifest themselves. Even as a youth his was the life of a participant and not merely that of a spectator. He was actively involved in the Church programs in his community: attending meetings, giving recitations and talks, holding office appropriate to his age, making contributions to the poor, and accepting labor and other assignments in which he could render service. He also developed an appreciation for and some personal skills in both music and drama as he faithfully used his talents in those arts throughout the years of his youth.

Reuben had a deep thirst for learning but did not become a classroom student until he was ten years of age. Prior to

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that time he was tutored at home by his mother. Although economically a very poor man, his father liked books and whenever he was able would add a volume to his small library and would also, on occasion, buy a significant book for his son Reuben. The highest grade of instruction that was available in Grantsville was the eighth, so when Reuben finished it, rather than shouting, "Hurrah, I'm through with school," as did many a boy, he repeated the eighth grade two more times trying to learn all that he could.

At nineteen he left home and went to Salt Lake City where he enrolled at the Latter-day Saints College, which met in the old Social Hall. He was there only from September of 1890 until January of 1891, doing excellent work that impressed the principal, Dr. James E. Talmage.

In order to sustain himself, and later, to support his father, who had been called on a Church mission to the Northern States, he discontinued school and secured employment as clerk for the Curator of the Deseret Museum. The curator, also, was Dr. James E. Talmage. Reuben's duties as clerk included being secretary and stenographer, a janitor, aid, showman, custodian, and cataloguer and arranger of specimens.

In September of 1894, having turned 23 years of age, he entered the University of Utah, where Dr. James E. Talmage was then not only professor of geology, but had recently been appointed president. Reuben had not been able to go to high school but by 15 June 1898, he had been able to complete both his high school work and all of the requirements for the Bachelor of Science degree which he received that day. Furthermore, while he was doing six years of academic work in four, he was also able to serve as a secretary to President Talmage, as president of the Field Club, as president of the student body, and as managing editor of *The Chronicle*, the student newspaper. He was also Valedictorian, graduating first in his class. And, hardly incidentally, he continued to work as clerk at the Deseret Museum all during that time.

On 14 September 1898, three months after graduating from the University of Utah, and at 27 years of age, Reuben Clark married Luacine Annetta Savage in the Salt Lake Temple, Dr. James E. Talmage officiating in the ceremony. Luacine was a daughter of the prominent pioneer Salt Lake City photographer, C. A. Savage.

A few days after their marriage the Clarks were in Heber, Wasatch County, Utah, where Reuben began a year's stay as the first principal of the Heber High School. The next year he taught English, Latin, and Civil Government at the Latter-day Saints College in Salt Lake City, and then, as head of the Shorthand Department at the Salt Lake Business College, taught typing and shorthand. From the fall of 1900 until June of 1901, he was the acting principal of the Southern Branch of the State Normal School (now Southern Utah State College) in Cedar City. During the following two years he was back in Salt Lake City on the faculty of the Salt Lake Business College.

For a number of years Reuben Clark had wanted to specialize in mining law and finally, in September of 1903, at the age of 32, he was able to make the financial arrangements to take his wife and two small children to New York City where he entered the Law School at Columbia University. The quality of his work was of such excellence that at the beginning of the second year he was one of the first three second-year students elected to the editorial board of the *Columbia Law Review*. At the end of that year he was admitted to the New York Bar. Also at that time he was made editor of the "Recent Decisions Department," of the *Review*, which post was his until he was awarded his L.L.B. degree in 1906.

Dr. James Brown Scott, a professor at the Columbia Law School, was particularly impressed by the industry and work of Reuben Clark, so, during the summer of 1905, he acquired his assistance in compiling and annotating materials for a case book on quasi contracts. Reuben's work was done so well that the following summer, 1906, he was employed by Dr. Scott to compile and annotate the major portion of two volumes of cases on equity jurisdiction.

By this time Dr. Scott had been appointed Solicitor of the State Department. Theodore Roosevelt was President, Philander C. Knox was Attorney General, and Elihu Root appointed J. Reuben Clark, Jr., Assistant Solicitor on 5 September 1906. Soon after his appointment Mr. Clark prepared a monograph entitled, "Judicial Determination of Questions of Citizenship," which the Chief of the Division of Naturalization of the State Department called "a masterly compilation."

A few months after becoming Assistant Solicitor he was also appointed Assistant Professor of Law at George Washington University where he taught classes until 1908.

During the latter part of his period of service as Assistant Solicitor he was the Acting Solicitor. Then on 1 July 1910, under the administration of President William Howard Taft, Mr. Clark was appointed Solicitor of the Department of State. Soon after this appointment he finished preparing the case of the United States in the Alsop Arbitration with Chile. Mr. Clark's arguments for the United States occupy 350 pages, and a two volume appendix of evidence, plus a 200-page counter case for the United States with a one volume appendix of evidence. The king of England was the Amiable Compositeur and, ruling in favor of the United States, made an award of \$905,000, which was one of the largest international awards made up to that time.

Another important Clark publication during his solicitorship was his "Memorandum on the Right to Protect Citizens in Foreign Countries by Landing Forces." A New York Supreme Court Justice said it was "wonderfully expressed and exhibits the most extraordinary industry." Another said it was the "classic authority on the subject."

While Solicitor, Reuben Clark was appointed by the International Relief Board of the American Red Cross to be chairman of a committee to make a study and prepare a report on the assistance of Red Cross Societies in civil warfare. He proposed a plan for assistance to both sides where there was insurrection, civil war, or revolution. He was also appointed chairman of the American Preparatory Committee to represent the United States on the International Preparatory Committee for the Third Hague Conference.

On 23 October 1912, Mr. Clark was named a member of the Board of Directors of the American Peace Society, representing the American Society for the Judicial Settlement of International Disputes. And on 15 January 1913, about six weeks prior to the termination of his solicitorship, he was appointed Counsel for the United States before the Tribunal of Arbitration under the Special Agreement of 18 August 1910, between the United States and Great Britain.

In April of 1913, J. Reuben Clark, Jr. announced the opening of offices for the general practice of law, both mu-

nicipal and international, in Washington, D.C. His work included being adviser to the Japanese Embassy, adviser to Philander C. Knox, Counsel for the Cuban Legation, Nicaragua elections, the Guatemalan Minister, J. P. Morgan & Co., and the Equitable Life Assurance Society. On 1 January 1914, the law firm was expanded when it was announced that "Clark and Richards, Attorneys and Counsellors at Law," were opening an office in Salt Lake City in addition to the existing office in Washington. Preston D. Richards, who had worked with Reuben Clark in the Solicitor's office, managed the Salt Lake office.

Among the appointments he received while Woodrow Wilson was President and William Jennings Bryan was Secretary of State, was Special Counsel for the United States before the American-British Claims Arbitration Tribunal. Later he was designated Counsel in Charge of the United States Agency.

Another expansion of the Clark firm occurred on 31 December 1915, when he opened an office for the general practice of law, with special reference to matters involving international law and practice, at 120 Broadway in New York City. At that time he also commenced an eight year retention as Counsel for the American International Corporation in New York City.

When the United States became involved in World War I, J. Reuben Clark, Jr., was commissioned Major in the Judge Advocate General's Officers' Reserve Corps. There he assisted in the preparation of the original Selective Service Regulations. At the request of the Attorney General, Major Clark was assigned to his office on active duty where he prepared "Emergency Legislation and War Powers of the President." A State Department official spoke of it as a fine example of Major Clark's "matchless thoroughness and industry and . . . splendid ability." After the war he was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal for the "exceptionally meritorious" and "distinguished services" he rendered during the war.

In the administration of President Warren G. Harding with Charles Evans Hughes as Secretary of State, J. Reuben Clark, Jr., was appointed Expert Assistant to the American Commissioners, Conference on the Limitation of Armament, in Washington, D.C.

Having moved his family from Washington to Salt Lake

City in August of 1920, he was finally able to close the offices in Washington, D.C., and New York City on 1 June 1922. The work he continued to get from the East not only occupied much of his time locally but required him to be away a great deal, so on 24 January 1922 the firm of Clark and Richards became Clark, Richards, and Bowen, with the addition of Albert E. Bowen.

Mr. Clark received a number of government appointments in the administration of President Calvin Coolidge, among which were Special Counsel for the United States before the American-British Claims Arbitration, Agent of the United States on the General Claims Commission, United States and Mexico, and on the Special Claims Commission, United States and Mexico. Later he was appointed Counsel for the American Agency for both commissions in arbitration between the United States and Mexico. A Clark memorandum written some ten years earlier so impressed Dwight W. Morrow that when Morrow was appointed Ambassador to Mexico by President Coolidge he personally retained Reuben Clark as his legal adviser. Mr. Clark devoted his attention to studies of Mexican oil claims, and agrarian problems.

He left Mexico City when he was appointed Under Secretary of State by Calvin Coolidge on 17 August 1928. Although he served in that post only ten months, he served under both Coolidge and Secretary Frank B. Kellogg, and President Herbert Hoover and his Secretary of State, Henry L. Stimson.

It was while he was Under Secretary of State that the Department of State published what is perhaps his best known government document, his Memorandum on the Monroe Doctrine. It evoked such responses as "it will stand as a monument of erudition to its author," a "classic commentary on the Monroe Doctrine," and a "masterly treatise." In June of 1929, at the cessation of his service as Under Secretary, he resumed his work as legal adviser to Ambassador Dwight W. Morrow in Mexico City.

Having previously been appointed Special Representative, with the rank of Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, to attend the inauguration of Pascual Ortiz Rubio as President of Mexico, on 3 October 1930 (when Morrow had resigned to enter the United States Senate), J. Reuben Clark, Jr. was named by President Herbert Hoover as Ambassador Ex-

traordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Mexico where he served until 3 March 1933. Of Ambassador Clark's work President Hoover said: "Never have our relations been lifted to such a high point of confidence and cooperation, and there is no more important service in the whole foreign relations of the United States than this."

Upon resigning as Ambassador to Mexico, twenty-six years after graduating from law school, and at sixty-two years of age, J. Reuben Clark, Jr. embarked upon a new career in which he was to serve valiantly for twenty-eight years. On 6 April 1933, he was sustained as the second counselor to President Heber J. Grant in the First Presidency of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Even with the strenuous demands of his new calling, he made time to continue to serve his country in significant ways. He accepted several appointments that came to him while Franklin D. Roosevelt was president and Cordell Hull was Secretary of State. One of these was to membership on a committee to create an adequate and disinterested organization for the protection of American holders of foreign securities; the committee organized the Foreign Bondholders Protective Council, Inc., in New York City. Another Roosevelt administration appointment he accepted was to serve as Delegate of the United States to the Seventh International Conference of American States at Montevideo, Uruguay. One of the fruits of that conference was a Commission of Experts on the Codification of International Law, to which Reuben Clark was appointed on 17 April 1936. A few weeks after being named U. S. Delegate to the Montevideo Conference, he was named in rapid succession, Director, Member of the Executive Committee, Acting President, and then President of the Foreign Bondholders Protective Council, Inc. About that time he also prepared a brief for the Foreign Relations Committee of the United States Senate "on the Entry of the United States into the World Court." It was called a "scholarly examination" and an "epochal brief."

Prior to the Semi-annual General Conference of the Church in October 1934, Anthony W. Ivins, President Grant's first counselor, died, and on 6 October 1934, J. Reuben Clark, Jr. was sustained as first counselor, and David O. McKay was sustained as second counselor in the First Presidency. At President Grant's death, when George Albert Smith became President of the

Church, Presidents Clark and McKay were retained as counselors, and when David O. McKay succeeded George Albert Smith as President of the Church, J. Reuben Clark, Jr. served first as second counselor, and then as first counselor until his death, 6 October 1961.

During those twenty-eight years as a member of the First Presidency, he gave of himself intensively and extensively in his sacred calling. But with his vast legal, government, diplomatic, and business experience it was inevitable that not only would he have interest in Church matters, but also that great numbers of groups and individuals would call upon him to benefit from his experience and wisdom. Consequently he was named to the boards of directors of many businesses; government, political and private committees; government commissions; academic journal and educational boards. He also maintained a farm and ranch operation in Grantsville, his boyhood home, and always took great pride in identifying himself as a farmer. A deep student of the life and teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ, he was author of several significant scholarly religious books. President Clark was described in his lifetime as being the foremost supporter of the welfare plan of the Church, and the chief helper in placing the Church finances on a budget plan.

He was a great speaker, and, as one of his close associates said, he spoke "with a driving force which . . . [left] . . . a long impression upon the listener." He raised his voice with constancy in behalf of freedom, his country, the inspired Constitution, chastity, work, and integrity.

He and his beloved wife, who died seventeen years before his passing, in 1944, were the parents of four children. He cherished them and was, indeed, a father to them as long as he was here. They are: Louise (Mrs. Mervyn S.) Bennion, Marianne (Mrs. Ivor) Sharp, Luacine (Mrs. Orval C.) Fox, all of Salt Lake City, and J. Reuben Clark III, of Provo, Utah.

This is but the barest sketch of his long and distinguished career, but it is appropriate to conclude with tributes to J. Reuben Clark, Jr. from three men who worked with him at close range and knew him well.

The Honorable Huntington Wilson, who was Assistant Secretary, and often Acting Secretary of State, said: "I was closely associated with Mr. Clark, and had every opportunity

to observe his works during the entire time he was in the Department of State. I never knew a man whose high character, sound judgment, and splendid ability won for him a more extraordinary position in the absolute confidence of those in charge of the department and of all with whom he was associated."

The Honorable Philander C. Knox, said to be one of America's greatest lawyers, and who served as Attorney General, Secretary of State, and United States Senator, declared of Reuben Clark: "I am doing him but justice in saying that for natural ability, integrity, loyalty, and industry, I have not in a long professional and public service met his superior and rarely his equal."

Finally, there is the tribute of Elder Albert E. Bowen, an intimate friend and business associate, who upon analyzing President Clark's personal endowments and the qualities which made possible his varied and distinguished achievements, summarized them as follows:

First: A vigorous and discriminating intellect. His is the rare power of penetrating through all confusing, superficial envelopments to the root and marrow of a confronting problem.

Second: A prodigious power of work—a constitution which seems able to respond to any draft that may be put upon it. Work is his vocation and his avocation, his pursuit and his pastime.

Third: An uncompromising, undeviating honesty—intellectual and moral honesty. "Face the Facts," is a characteristic expression of his. He spends no time working on schemes of evasion. Having been surrounded with abundant opportunity for graft and acquisition, he has come through without the smell of fire upon his garments. No opprobrium has ever attached to his name. To him sham and pretense are an abomination.¹

Thus from very humble economic circumstances, an austere environment, and a deeply religious home life, J. Reuben Clark, Jr. developed traits of temperament and character that produced in him attributes and abilities which brought him opportunities so unlikely to come to a Latter-day Saint at that time. Disciplined as he was in mind, will, initiative, industry, loyalty, virtue, and integrity—yes, and in spirituality—the power was always in him to meet any demands placed upon him. Finally, after an illustrious government and public service

career, in which he no doubt was serving the Lord as well as his country, and at an age when most men would happily retire, J. Reuben Clark, Jr. was called into the full-time service of the Lord and became one of his anointed. From the perspective of a Latter-day Saint, he was truly one of the very greatest ones of this or any other dispensation.

¹Bryant S. Hinkley, *Hours With Our Leaders*, p. 31.