

MARY ADELINE NOBLE

Mary Adeline Noble was born the 15th of February, 1879, in Bountiful, Utah. She was the oldest child of Benjamin Noble and Rachel Lee. When she was nine years old, the family moved to Nutrioso, a small settlement in northeastern Arizona. Seven years later the family returned to Utah and settled on a farm in Milton, Tooele County. It was there she met Joseph William Clark, who later became her husband. It took "Joe," as he was called, two years, however, to convince Mary's parents that he was the son-in-law they wanted. The Nobles had no intention of giving up this much-coveted daughter until her suitor had proved himself worthy of her on many scores.

Mary and Joe were married in the Logan Temple October 29, 1891. A year later with their month-old daughter, Afton, they headed for Arizona, across the Colorado River at Lees Ferry, and via the tortuous climb over "Lees Backbone" county. Afton, lulled by the jogging wagon slept all day and cried all night. Provisions ran low and their meals often consisted of only beans and rice. In Wickenburg, Arizona, they were able to buy some flour and Mary eagerly started to make bread, but the flour was full of weevils and had to be discarded. Mary was not one to despair, however. Even in Arizona's scorching summers at Lehi, before the days of refrigeration, she made the best of what she had, uncomplainingly. Knowing how important fresh milk was for her babies, in that hot country and without ice, she always kept a cow close at hand and would go out and milk it several times a day for their food.

Industry was possibly the predominating characteristic of Mary's life. Hard work never daunted her enthusiasm for life. Charitable and considerate of others, her anger would, at times, flash at some poor neer-do-well neighbor. "Poor people have poor ways" she would say. She always felt that a person with just a little vision and who backed it up with plenty of hard work, seldom became a burden on the community, or had to beg for bread.

Mary and Joseph were the parents of nine children. Their second child and oldest son, Joseph, lived only three months, and their fourth child, a daughter, Ione, died when she was two and a half years old, while the family was on a trip to Salt Lake City. The other seven have all married in the temple and have raised honorable families.

Mary's home in Arizona was headquarters for both relatives and friends. She lived in a close family unit, sharing her life with her parents and younger sisters and brothers, and her husband's father in his later years. Holiday dinners for family and relatives were usually eaten at her table, and she considered it a privilege to entertain visiting Relief Society General Board members and other delegated Church authorities who visited Mesa for conferences and special occasions. Her children grew up in an atmosphere of generosity and hospitality.

Besides being a marvelous cook with a gourmet's talent for seasoning, Mary was an immaculate housekeeper and an able seamstress. With five girls to sew for, she always had piles of material stacked in shelves and drawers, and the sewing machine was always handy. She frowned on "ready made" clothes, and used to quote Brigham Young, "Let the beauty of your garments be the work of your own hands."

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Mary put her home and children first in her life, but she always had time to help others. On one occasion she took a young girl into her home whose step-father had refused to keep her, and she had no place to go or no one to turn to. She was treated like a daughter and lived with the Clarks until she married. Her wedding dress was even made by Mary.

The Church was the outlet for her public service. She was a good organizer and possessed the rare gift of working with people, of getting things done, of improving methods and innovating new programs. She became the first president of the Religion Classes in Mesa, worked in the Y.L.M.I.A. for several years, and was president of the Maricopa Stake Relief Society for 19 years. While serving in this later position her board was asked to contribute \$1000 towards the erection of the Arizona Temple. They made handwork, and sold it at bazaars, cooked meals for civic clubs, and some of them even picked cotton to raise money for this project. Later, the women of her stake, under her supervision, contributed over 1800 hours of labor by embroidering, crocheting, and otherwise making handwork and linens of high artistic quality for the Arizona Temple when it was completed.

When Mary's husband was called on a mission to England in 1909 she took in boarders to help support the family, and kept Afton in college during the two years her husband was away. And, in 1931, when her son-in-law, Howard Peterson, suddenly died, she invited Afton, with her five small children, into her home, where they lived for five years while their mother attended and taught school. She cared for them all as if they were her own children. Probably the most tiring time in her life came when she took care of her own invalid father, who had suffered an accident, and her father-in-law, both of whom shared her home in their last years.

At her death, on March 2, 1943, Mary Adeline Noble Clark was regarded as one of Arizona's most outstanding women. No one had contributed more to the welfare of the city she loved; no one ever left her presence without being touched by her personality and her testimony of the goodness of the Lord. Her children still feel her influence on their lives, inspiring them with her high ideals and her sense of justice and service.