

WILLIAM BELL CLARK



William Bell Clark was the son of Benjamin Thomas Clark and Ann Shuker. He was born August 6, 1834, in Cambridge, England, the eighth child of a family of twelve. Susannah, his sister born June 15, 1838, died January 1, 1841. All other ten of his brothers and sisters lived to raise large families of their own.

William Bell was an active lad, quick in movement and temper. He had curly hair and loved to sing and dance. When he was ten years old he was working with his father in their carpenter shop and brickyard. He enjoyed working with tools and became a good shoe cobbler, carpenter, and an expert hand at masonry. Together with his older brothers they built several houses for their father which he leased out on long-term rentals. While working in his father's brickyard one day he fell and crushed his collarbone. He

was 16 years old. Doctors said he must have a cast put on his neck and shoulders, and would be laid up for several months. William Bell rebelled. He said to his father, who had joined the Mormon Church the year before, "Don't you believe in the Bible?" "Yes, I do," answered his father. "Well, then," said William, "in the Book of James it says that if any are sick among you, let them call for the elders and have them anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord, and through faith they will be healed." "Have you sufficient faith to be healed that way?" asked his father. "Yes, I do," replied William Bell. "Send my brother out to find the Mormon missionaries, for I believe the Bible to be the Word of God."

The elders came and poured oil on his head and blessed him to be healed from his accident. While they had their hands on his head and were praying for him, William Bell later testified that he heard and felt his collar bones grate as they went back together. He was immediately healed, to the astonishment of all his family, and was baptized shortly thereafter, September 8, 1850.

William Bell now desired, above all else, to join with the Latter-day Saints in the valleys of the Rocky Mountains. Just before he turned 18, alone and among strangers, he crossed the Atlantic Ocean on the sailing ship "Kenebec," January 10, 1852, with John S. Higbee and his company of 300. The trip took six weeks. Provisions and water ran out, and they had to boil and condense salt water to survive. The Emigration book on the boat listed William Bell as a "carpenter and mason." The ship arrived at New Orleans March 11, 1852. A company was organized for immediate departure for Salt Lake City. Because of the experience he had received in his father's hostery, William Bell was chosen to drive a team. He drove his wagon and ox team all the way across the plains, arriving at Salt Lake City on August 13, 1852. The trip was slow and dusty. William was chosen to help keep the camp in fresh meat. Buffalo was plentiful and they were able to have all they needed, but bands of unfriendly Indians added to the hazards of the trek.

When William was ordained an Elder he was blessed with the gift of healing. This gift proved to be a blessing, not only in behalf of his own family but for others who called upon him as needed. Later, both as a Seventy and High Priest, he exercised his faith and used his Priesthood many times for the benefit of those who were stricken and sick. Faith in the Priesthood to heal his own

infirmities was unquestioned right up to his last years. When he was 84, and visiting his family in Utah, he became entirely deaf. He could not hear a word no matter how loud one shouted. He would not submit to treatment but said that he would ask the Stake Presidency to administer to him when he returned to Arizona. "A blessing from the Lord never failed me yet," he said. Accordingly he was administered to for his deafness and testified that he was able to hear the last portion of the ordinance prayer.

William B. was among those who fought against the Indians in their uprisings in Utah. Two especially dangerous encounters being the so-called "Black Hawk" and the "Walker" wars. He served as a cavalry officer. When asked if he had ever had to kill an Indian in all his clashes with them he said, "Well, it was this way, my boy. I just pointed my gun at them and for some dog-gone reason they fell down and didn't get up." He was also called to defend Salt Lake City against Johnston's Army. Because he was an expert rifleman he was subsequently appointed as one of Brigham Young's bodyguards and held that post several years.

One of the most interesting things he did in this period of his life was in connection with the pony express. His designated duty was to help protect and build or rebuild stockades as mail stations, but he was often called on to substitute for a rider. He was a small man, full of spirit and endurance and was ready to go at any time, so he took an active part in that exciting drama of American history.

He later filled a short-term mission to the Indians. During this time he not only taught them the Gospel but showed them how to build their homes.

After six weeks of courtship with Frances Davies, who had arrived in the Salt Lake Valley from Wales the previous year, William Bell and Frances were married on the 9th of February, 1862, in Salt Lake City, and were sealed in the Endowment House on August 11, 1866. They settled in the Sugar House Ward, built a large home and lived there for the next thirty years. All of their eleven children were born there.

In 1880 he was afflicted with cataracts on his eyes, and, as a result of the operation lost the sight of his right eye. This handicapped him considerably in his building trade. He and his wife opened the first mercantile store in Sugar House and Frances managed it for the next 12 years. William took care of their orchard and small farm. When Frances's health began to fail they sold their store and all their holdings and purchased a 500-acre farm at Milton. This move was not entirely to the liking of the children who had grown up at Sugar House and who had to leave their friends and the social life Salt Lake City afforded them. However, the family had a very comfortable home. William and Frances were happy there for almost 20 years. In back of their house was a small lake fed by springs which they kept stocked with fish and on which they went boating. Many of their grandchildren were born at this place which was generally known as E. T. as well as "Lake Point."

About 2 years prior to the death of his wife, William B. decided to live in Mesa with his son, Joseph. He had previously made a few trips to Mesa during the winter, for he had rheumatism and found that the warm sunshine made him feel good and able to work outside. Being the exceptionally friendly and social fellow that he was, it wasn't long before he was regularly

visiting the sick, aged, and needy of his ward, cheering them up, singing and dancing jigs for their amusement, and counseling with his bishop about those who required help.

He was always an active participant in the annual Old Folks party and one year was crowned King. On Sundays his Church duties came first. Because his hearing was bad he always took a seat on the speakers stand for Sacrament Meetings, and would mince on a few dried figs which he always carried in his pocket so that he wouldn't go to sleep. He put his heart and soul in his songs, especially the one he liked to sing best, "O Woodman, Spare that Tree--Touch Not a Single Bough."

He especially delighted in being with groups of children and would often tell them stories and sing and dance jigs for them. He generally ended his visit by giving them candy mints. After his wife's death he decided to make his final home with his son in Arizona. A special room was built for him attached to the garage where he could have his own things just where he wanted them. He had a special table for his Bible, Book of Mormon, and Doctrine and Covenants and writing materials. He would spend many hours each day reading, often using a magnifying glass to take the strain off his one good eye. Being an early riser he would read his scriptures, then after breakfast with the J. W. Clark family would weed the garden or trim the fruit trees and vineyard, which were his pride and joy. Afternoons were reserved for visiting his friends. After supper he would sing songs and tell stories to his seven grandchildren, who would beg him to retell some particular incident or sing their favorite song. One day he told them he would plant some peanuts in his garden. The children loved peanuts. They considered them a special treat; but never realized that they grew underground until they saw their grandfather pull up the plants with the peanuts clinging to each root tendril.

William Bell was small stature with a fringe of white curls around his bald head. His abundant vitality which enabled him to work out in the hot sun and to sing, step dance right up to the time of his last sickness, was amazing to all who knew him. At age 86 he had an intestinal strangulation (having had a bad hernia for many years) and underwent an operation. Never having been confined to his bed for any prolonged illness in his life he developed pneumonia and died within a few days, on March 22, 1921. His passing left an empty place in the Clark home in Arizona where he had lived for 9 years. And there was not a child for miles around who did not miss him. At his funeral the children of the ward expressed their love in song and with banks of flowers while the oldsters testified to his service and friendship for them.

William Bell Clark—1834

Children of William Bell and Frances Davies Clark

Name	When Born	Where Born	Died
Alice Ann	25 January 1863	Salt Lake City,	15 October 1942
Joseph William	14 November 1865	"	1 September 1948
Elizabeth Shuker	24 November 1867	"	19 November 1952
Fanny Maria	3 January 1869	"	5 April 1932
Eleanor	3 December 1871	"	9 April 1936
William George	13 October 1873	"	25 February 1965
Susannah	13 January 1875	"	9 Jun 1972
Violet Ada	8 January 1877	"	31 January 1966
Olive Edna	12 April 1879	"	8 May 1965
Lois Edith	12 November 1882	"	5 July 1952
Daisy Dell	25 March 1884	"	