

A HISTORY OF THE LIFE OF



Martha Irene Clissold Chisholm

WRITTEN BY HER SON, DARRELL E. CHISHOLM

INTRODUCTION:

If you were to ask the question, "Has this world been a better place for Irene Clissold having been in it?", everyone who knew her would have to say, "Yes!". It was a brighter, more cheerful and more musical place. How such a voice could come out of a 4 foot, 11 inch woman was one of the wonders she brought to this world. How she could be so cheerful and positive in the face of all the troubles that beset her in her marriages is another. She was truly like the rising sun on a beautiful spring day with the birds singing and the flowers blooming. All this she loved. I was always covering my head with a pillow as she would come into my room bright and early each morning and imitate the revelry bugle to get me up. "How can she be so happy?", I would ask myself. She sang everywhere in her high soprano voice - weddings, church, funerals and in the Tabernacle Choir for 6 years. She was here to serve people and brighten their lives, and that she did.

BIRTH AND EARLY YEARS:

It all started on March 19, 1906, when she was born the 4th child and only daughter of her father, Albert George Edward Clissold, and her mother, Charlotte Irene Thomson. She was 20 minutes ahead of her twin brother and last child of the family, LeRoy Eugene. Her parents had married on August 20, 1896, in Salt Lake City, Utah, in a civil ceremony. She was preceded in the family by her oldest brother, Albert Orson - born December 27, 1896, then by her brother, Edward LaVaun - born April 11, 1898, and by her brother, David - born June 15, 1903, but who died the same day. Being the only girl in the family, she was, no doubt, watched over by her 3 living brothers and cared for like a cute little sister should be. I don't know where the Clissolds lived in those early years, but they must have lived at or around the Thomson home on Coatsville Avenue, between 3rd and 4th East, to be acquainted with the Chisholms while growing up. She was baptized into the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints on June 6, 1914, and continued to progress in the Church and in her life. When she was 11 years old, her parents got a divorce and each remarried - her dad to a Mararettta Baumert and her mother to a Thomas Baggaley. Apparently, as she told me, her father, Albert George Clissold, had trouble with alcohol, and that made for an unhappy marriage for her mother. Thomas Baggaley joined the Church in Australia and

moved to Salt Lake, but his wife was bitter against the Church and refused to join - making for another unhappy marriage. Mr. Baggaley and Charlotte Clissold met each other while singing with the Tabernacle Choir, and a romance ensued. They divorced their spouses, married each other and produced Thomas Emerson Baggaley, born July 22, 1917. Mom was very much involved in tending Emerson as he grew up, and a close bond developed between them. When it came time for her to graduate from high school, she graduated from West High, so the family was living on Salt Lake's west side or, somehow, she was. She took singing lessons at some time in her life, but I know not when.

MARRIAGE TO HARROLD:

I wish I knew something about how they met and how their courtship went. To be a "fly on the wall" and see how your parents interacted with each other would be very interesting. I really wonder how Mom reacted to Dad's decision to not go on a mission - apparently at his mother's request. On June 25, 1930, when Mom was 24, she married Harrold Fitzgerald Chisholm, aged 26, in the Salt Lake Temple. They began their lives together and were both working - Dad was a file clerk and Mom was a cashier, so says the marriage license. Three years later, my sister Martha Dorene, made their union a family (born August 16, 1933) and I, Darrell Edward, followed three years after that (June 11, 1936). When I was born, they were living in a frame house at 317 Westminster Avenue and soon moved around the corner to Garfield Avenue and 3rd East (south-east corner). They lived in the Belvedere Ward, Wells Stake. A year and a half later, they moved to Lake Street and 21st South. They lived by the railroad tracks, and Mother was constantly worried about my favorite thing of sitting on the tracks.

Our next residence was in a duplex on 4th East and 9th South. Mother would take Dorene and me on walks to Liberty Park, and we would play on the lawn among the trees. As I was nearing my 5th year, while at this residence, Mother had her last child, Mary Irene, born April 26, 1941. By the next fall, we moved yet again to the upstairs apartment in the home of Wil and Ruby Summers on 7th East nearly to South Temple Street. It was here that I became aware that Dad was having a problem with alcohol. I don't know exactly when it started, but Mom told me it started while he was working at the Standard Furniture Company and when I was just a baby. Dad had become inactive in the Church early in their marriage, and the alcohol wasn't helping that situation. Mother, on the other hand, kept us all going, and she always tried to stay involved and do the right thing.

On January 13, 1943, Mother got her Patriarchal Blessing, under the hands of John V. Bluth, at age 37. We were living in the Emigration Stake. Her lineage is of Joseph through Ephraim. I quote a paragraph from that blessing thus: "In days of trial and illness, and in the discouraging circumstances that may come unto you, you shall have full faith in our Father's promises, invoke His aid and receive benefit and blessing therefrom." Her days were days of trial, and she had to have a lot of faith to get through them. I don't know how often she read that blessing, but it had some great promises for the future upon her faithfulness. Dad is mentioned in those promises too, so we will have to see how that works out!

THE CALIFORNIA DAYS:

How Dad got a job with Pan American Airlines in San Francisco as a mechanic is also a mystery to me, but that he did. In the spring of 1944, after nearly 14 years of marriage (nearly 8 years of dealing with alcohol), Dad left for his new job without us. We moved in with Grandma and Grandpa Baggaley (the old Thomson residence on Coatsville Avenue) to finish off the school year and await Dad's sending for us. Mom got suspicious that Dad was trying to get away from his family responsibilities when she wouldn't hear from him for weeks. Finally, she packed us all up, put us on the Greyhound bus, and we set out to find Dad. She had a cousin who lived in San Jose, California, about 70 miles south of San Francisco. We went there, and her cousin helped us find an apartment and get settled. I don't know the details of Mom finding Dad, but it wasn't long before he was back in the home. We lived in San Jose for 2 1/2 years, and I think it was the most trying time for Mom. She was far away from family and very often destitute for money to live on. Dad was drinking up everything he made, unless I could find him in the local bar on payday and get him home in time to save some of his money. I got pretty good at that as a lad of 9 and 10 years old. Mom stayed close to the Church, and more than once they had to step in and save us from eviction or starvation. Dad's sister, Lois, was such a help to us, sending us money for our subsistence. She was often responsible for our Christmas. Dad got worse and worse, and all efforts medically as well as other efforts didn't work. But, through it all, Mom kept her chin up, stayed in the home with her little family, and tried to give us the best home life she could.

Finally, Mother decided to take us home to Salt Lake City and leave Dad to the life he desired. In January, 1947, we caught the train home and left behind many friends who had helped our family in times of need. Mom had done all she could, friends had helped, the Church had helped and a doctor had helped all he could, but it was time to go home and get on with our lives.

THE DIVORCE:

We moved in with the Baggaleys at 651 East 5th South in Salt Lake and occupied the upstairs apartment. It was to Mom's closeness with Emerson that she looked for help when we returned to Salt Lake. She filed for a divorce from Dad (Salt Lake County case # 83642), and the case was signed on August 28, 1948 to become effective February 28, 1949. She required nothing of him- not even alimony! Dad returned to Salt Lake City a few weeks after we did and went to live with his parents and sister at the old homestead below 17th South on 4th East.

I believe it was the same year of 1948 when Mother met Elliott George Carlson and began dating him. Elliott was a cousin to Uncle Emerson's secretary at work, and Mother met him through them. He was a member of the Church, but not active. He had been an alcoholic, but was reformed. He was divorced with no kids, and he smoked. The billing didn't look very good, but I didn't think their relationship would ever be serious. Also during that year, Mother got a job playing the piano for The Martell Marvel Dance Studio and had to have surgery to remove her gall bladder. Mary was soon enrolled at the studio to learn tap dancing and ballet.

As time went on, Elliott became a more prominent figure in our lives, and he did things for us that Dad had never done. He introduced us to the outdoors - hunting, fishing and camping- which has been a part of our lives ever since. In spite of all our reservations concerning Mom's marriage to Elliott and our move to his home on Center Street below the State Capitol Building, she desired that we have our own home. On December 8, 1951, she and Elliott were married by Bishop Child of the 10th Ward at the Bishop's home. Mom had been single for 5 years, and we hoped this would be good for her.

THE ELLIOTT ERA:

You have heard the expression, "out of the frying pan, into the fire"? - well that is what happened when Mom married Elliott. We had it good to start with at 416 North Center Street in Elliott's big two-story home. But, when his sweet little old Swedish mother died, he began a down-hill trend that surpassed anything we experienced with Dad. He began drinking again, became addicted to sleeping pills, and required various punishments of Mary and me, like not turning any lights on when it got dark. We had to hurry and get our homework done before it got dark. Dorene was now married, so she escaped this era. He took all our money to support his habits and took away all the privileges he promised us to lure us into the marriage. We lived under a heavy cloud of tyranny for about 2 years.

During this time, Mom launched a new career as Secretary/Treasurer of the Utah Telephone Employees' Credit Union, with her brother, Emerson, as the manager. She would retire from this job on January 8, 1971 after 18 years of service.

Mom finally realized that we were going to have to leave Elliott. Her dream of a home for us was shattered. On a Saturday, around the 1st part of April, 1954, the truck came again - we were moving. The next time we saw Elliott was at his funeral 6 months later. His continued mistreatment of himself had caused a blood clot in his heart and he died.

THE HOLLADAY PERIOD:

And where did we go to live? - with the Baggaleys again. What would we have done without the Baggaleys? Emerson and Oveda and kids were in a new house at 1927 Longview Drive in Holladay, and they had us move into a maid's quarters on the east side of the house. It had one bedroom, a bathroom and a kitchenette/sitting room. I will never forget the first night we spent there. We turned on every light in the place, put some nice music on loudly and just sat and enjoyed it while eating goodies. It was a wonderful new freedom we felt. Mom was always like one of us kids, and she was right in there with us.

We stayed at the Baggaley's for a year, then moved into a basement apartment at 2009 East 48th South, further south in Holladay. I left from that apartment to go on my mission to Western Canada, paid for by Dad's sister, Lois. I tried to teach Mom to drive my car, but failed. She had never learned to drive and probably thought she was too old now. If the car had been an automatic shift, she might have succeeded, but it was a standard shift '41 Plymouth, and she just couldn't coordinate the clutch and the gas.

MOM REMARRIES DAD:

When I had been on my mission about six months, I received a letter from Mom announcing that she and Dad were remarried on January 26, 1957, in Henefer, Utah, by Dorene's Bishop Stevens. Apparently, Dad had become very ill, and it was reported to Mom, by Uncle Emerson, that he was not being properly cared for. Mom went to the house with her brothers, Emerson and Gene, got Dad from his room in the basement and took him to our home. It took about a month to nurse him back to health, at which time she decided that he couldn't go back to his dad's house again. They married so that Mom could take care of him for his remaining years.

When I returned from my mission, there was Dad in his place in the family. His alcohol problem had mostly subsided, except we could smell some on him ever once in a while. The next summer that I was home, we went on our first trip together - Mom, Dad, Mary and I. We drove to San Diego, California, and stayed in a motel down by the wharf. I went for long walks with Dad to see the ships, and Mom and Mary would go shopping or something. We had a great time for the first time in our family's history. It was a good thing we had that time together, for Dad died in an industrial accident 5 months later - just before Christmas. Mom had given him every chance to improve, and we had seen him improve to where he was the secretary of the Seventies Group in the ward and was holding down a regular job. But that was Mom - never a cruel or malicious bone in her body - always having her arms stretched out still.

MORE SINGLE YEARS:

Mom was single for 12 years after Dad's passing. I had married three weeks after Dad died, and her grandchildren, through me, began to appear on the earth. Dorene had already produced several grandchildren and was still producing. Mary got married two months after I did, so Mom was really alone. She lived in the Holladay area where we were living, and when Mary and Gene Hintze got a house out on Redwood Road, she moved in with them. She lived in that house alone while Gene and Mary were on active duty with the army, then moved to Sandy when they returned. I had moved my family out to Sandy, and she lived in a house a few blocks away. When Mary and Gene went to New Zealand and then Australia to train horses, she would go there for extended visits. She was very much involved with her children and grandchildren, and our children remember her with fond memories. She was a fun baby-sitter - always bringing some goodies with her.

TIME WITH "TEX":

The same year Mom retired from the credit union, she married C. J. "Tex" Winslow on July 2, 1971. He was not LDS, but of the Church of England. They met at work and knew each other for years. He was a strange little man - I could look him straight in the eye. I don't know much about him, but he worshipped Mom and, as far as I know, treated her well. They lived in a trailer park at 1287 El Sendro in Murray for 5 years until she died. She got Tex involved in her family, and he really liked Dorene and her family.

A TRAGIC PASSING:

Mom was diagnosed with intestinal cancer sometime in the spring of 1976. They had the very best doctor working with her, but she was too far along for treatment. Tex tried to care for her the best he could, but she soon became more than he could handle. I went and got her and brought her to my home. She hardly weighed anything, as I carried her into the house and laid her on a bed. I could only feel bones in my arms. She was at our house about a week, when on the morning of August 31, 1976, she died at age 70. Tex was sitting by her side when she went. Her funeral was held at the South Cottonwood 13th Ward chapel, and the viewing was at the Neil O'Donnell Mortuary on 372 East 100 South in Salt Lake City. Interment was at the Wasatch Lawn Memorial Park on Highland Drive and 33rd South, right next to Dad.