

= Clara Clemens =

Clara Langhorne Clemens Samossoud , formerly Clara Langhorne Clemens Gabrilowitsch (June 8 , 1874 ? November 19 , 1962) , was the daughter of Samuel Clemens , who wrote as Mark Twain . She was a contralto concert singer and , as her father 's only surviving child , managed his estate and guarded his legacy after his death . She was married twice ? first to Ossip Gabrilowitsch , then (after Gabrilowitsch 's death) to Jacques Samossoud . She wrote biographies of Gabrilowitsch and of her father . In her later life she became a Christian Scientist .

= = Childhood = =

Clara was the second of three daughters born to Samuel Clemens and his wife Olivia Langdon Clemens in Elmira , New York . Her older sister , Susy , died when Clara was 22 . Her only brother , Langdon , died as an infant before she was born . Her younger sister was Jean . Clara had a serious accident as a child , while riding a toboggan she ended up being hurled into a great oak tree . This resulted in a severe leg injury that almost led to amputation .

= = Early career = =

She spent the period from September 1897 to May 1899 living in Vienna with her parents . While there , she cultivated her voice for the purpose of going on the concert stage . Her voice was characterized as unusually sweet and attractive . She also studied piano in 1899 under Teodor Leszetycki . In December 1900 , she was invited by the people of Hartford to perform at a grand concert given by the Boston Symphony Orchestra . She studied for several years under masters in Europe , before making her professional debut in Florence . Her American debut , assisted by violinist Marie Nichols , as a contralto concert singer was on the evening of September 22 , 1906 at the Norfolk Gymnasium. in Norfolk , Connecticut where in 1905 she rented Edgewood , Clemens used the proceeds from the concert to purchase a memorial window for her mother in the Norfolk Church of the Transfiguration , Episcopal . Charles Edmund " Will " Wark (1876 @-@ 1954) , a classical pianist originally from Cobourg , Ontario , Canada , became Clemens piano accompanist from the winter of 1906 to late in 1908 . Clemens and Nichols also continued to perform together , including a series of concerts in London and Paris in 1908 . On May 30 , Clemens debuted in London at a benefit concert , raising money for American girls to attend Oxford and Cambridge Universities .

= = Accident and marriage = =

At 10 : 00am on December 20 , 1908 in Danbury , Clemens went for a sleigh ride with Russian concert pianist Ossip Gabrilowitsch who was staying with her father at his residence , Innocence at Home , in Redding . While passing through Redding Glen , the horse took fright at a wind @-@ whipped newspaper and bolted with driver Gabrilowitsch losing control . At the top of a hill , next to a 60 @-@ foot (18 m) drop , the sleigh overturned , throwing Clemens out . Gabrilowitsch leaped to the ground and caught the horse by the head , stopping it as it was about to plunge over the bank , dragging Clemens with her dress caught in a runner . Having only sprained his right ankle , Gabrilowitsch returned Clemens to home , unharmed except for the shock of the accident . Twain biographer Michael Sheldon doubted the truth of this heroic tale and supplied a motive for why the story might have been planted in the press , namely , to quiet rumors that Clara was having an affair with Charles E. Wark , her former accompanist , a married man .

Clemens had been introduced to Gabrilowitsch in 1899 in Vienna by Theodor Leschetizky who was also training Gabrilowitsch . At noon on October 6 , 1909 , she subsequently married Gabrilowitsch in the drawing room at Stormfield , the Clemens home with Rev. Dr. Joseph H. Twitchell presiding . (Twitchell was a great friend of her father .) Her father said that the engagement was not new , having been " made and dissolved twice six years ago . " He also said that the marriage was sudden

because Gabrilowitsch had just recovered from a surgical operation he had undergone in the summer and they were about to head off to their new house in Berlin where he would begin his European season . Her sister , Jean Clemens , drowned in the bathtub on December 24 , 1909 after having an epileptic seizure . On April 21 , 1910 , her father died and left his entire estate to her in a will dated August 17 , 1909 which provided for quarterly payments of interest to keep it " free from any control or interference from any husband she may have . " On July 9 , she announced that she was giving practically the entire library of her father , comprising nearly 2 @, @ 500 books , to the Mark Twain Free Library . On August 19 , 1910 , her only child was born in Connecticut at Stormfield .

Nina Gabrilowitsch (1910 @-@ 1966) , the last known lineal descendant of Mark Twain , died January 16 , 1966 in a Los Angeles hotel . She had been a heavy drinker , and bottles of pills and alcohol were found in her room .

= = Later life = =

On April 23 , 1926 , she played the title role in a dramatization of Joan of Arc written by her father at Walter Hampden 's theater . This adaptation and her performance were not very well received by critics . It was again produced in 1927 , opening on April 12 and for a series of special morning and afternoon performances at the Edyth Totten Theatre .

Gabrilowitsch was conductor of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra from 1918 until 1935 , when he fell ill . He entered the Henry Ford Hospital on March 25 , 1935 , where he stayed until September 28 , 1935 , at which point he was released to his home to convalesce . He subsequently died at his home on September 14 , 1936 , aged 58 .

On May 11 , 1944 , Clara and Jacques Samossoud , a Russian born symphony conductor 20 years her junior , were married in her Hollywood home . She died at age eighty @-@ eight in San Diego , California .

Clara explored eastern religions for a few years , and then eventually became a Christian Scientist , although there is some question as to her seriousness and commitment to it . She authored a book on the subject : Awake to a Perfect Day , published by Citadel Press , NYC , 1956 After originally objecting to the release of her father 's Letters from the Earth in 1939 , she changed her stance shortly before her death in 1962 and allowed them to be published . She also published biographies of both her father (My Father , Mark Twain in 1931) and of her first husband (My Husband : Gabrilowitsch in 1938) .