

8

California Clarks

Myral and Loa were torn about their new life on the Mainland. They had loved Hawaii so much, but they knew they needed to leave the war zone and be closer to family. A good substitute for tropical paradise was found in San Luis Obispo, California, where Myral and Loa continued teaching school and sharing music, and raised three children to adulthood. Loa and Myral were just as social as ever and just as happy to be living life together.

San Luis Obispo

The Clarks arrived in San Luis Obispo only four days before school began and stayed at the “Sleep Off the Highway” Motor Court.¹ Myral rushed around preparing himself for teaching junior high school, and Loa rushed around trying to get Margene and Robert ready to attend school. Thankfully their stay at the motor court wasn’t long. A member of the San Luis Obispo LDS branch had just finished building a two bedroom house at 864 Mission Street, and the Clarks bought it and moved in on September 18, 1944.²

At work, Myral became acquainted with Arthur Godfrey, a high school agricultural teacher and the local LDS branch president.³ Arthur



Dick riding a tricycle in front of the Clark's home in San Luis Obispo at 864 Mission Street. They lived here 1944 - 1972.

invited the Clarks over for dinner, and thus began a close friendship between the Clarks and the Godfreys that lasted for decades.

The novelty of Hawaiian residents in San Luis was very exciting. Myral showed his slides at nine different venues in 1945, including the PTA and the Masons.⁴ Loa spoke about Hawaiian history, geography, and customs to the Soroptimist Club, a charity organization of professional women. Loa must have felt so special standing in front of these sophisticated ladies, talking so knowledgably about such an exotic land. She showed them slides of colorful hibiscus flowers and of native people—even garbage men—sporting leis around their necks and hats. It must have been a surprise to those ladies to hear that far-away Hawaii had such familiar things as tennis, golf, baseball, polo, and swimming, as well as a symphony and theatre.⁵ She also spoke about Hawaiian flowers to the Garden Section of the Monday Club.⁶

Life in San Luis Obispo was great, but they certainly missed Hawaii. Loa commented, “Sometimes I have to remind myself of why we left”. Things they were glad to leave behind were the rigid and worrisome war-atmosphere, in which many rules were imposed and many fresh foods were hard to come by; the daily rain that made hair frizzy and unmanageable; and the huge bugs and cockroaches that hid all over the house. They crawled to the center of the rooms when the lights were off, and scurried away when the lights turned on.⁷



*Loa and Richard leaving
Mt. View Hospital, Aug 1945*

Joyously, right about the time they moved to San Luis, Loa found out she was pregnant with another child. Richard Myral Clark was born on July 25, 1945, eight years after Robert was born. It was so wonderful to have another baby in the family. The attack on Pearl Harbor had completely disrupted their lives, and it seems that Loa and Myral may have waited until their lives were stable again before having another child. Dick often thought, “If it weren’t for the war, I would be three years older!”⁸ Loa

commented about Richard, “He was a joy to all of us. The other two children helped raise him and we had a very happy family of five.”⁹ Even though she was asked to be a substitute teacher in the schools, Loa declined because she felt that she should remain home with little Dickie until he began kindergarten.

In September 1949, when Dickie was four, Loa started a cradle roll class of the neighborhood kids, telling them stories, teaching them songs, and letting them paint with their papers on the floor.¹⁰ She had participated in a class

like this in Hawaii when her first children were young. She loved teaching and being with children, so this was a wonderful way to entertain Dickie and herself.



Myral and Dickie, early 1946



The Clarks at 864 Mission St, SLO, early 1946

Myral Teaching in SLO

Myral spent his first school year back on the Mainland, 1944-45, teaching English, music, and social studies at San Luis Obispo Junior High School. For some reason, it didn't go well and the school board considered not renewing his contract. Art Godfrey stepped in and vouched for Myral, explaining that he was an excellent teacher, but perhaps needed to be put

in a different age group.¹¹ So for the 1945-46 school year, Myral was moved to the Senior High School where he taught three photography classes, and possibly others.¹²



Myral (rear right) in his Hawthorne Elementary Classroom with 4th graders during the 1946-47 school year.

The next school year, 1946-47, Myral was moved to Hawthorne Elementary School where he excelled at teaching sixth grade. Over the next 14 years—from 1946 until 1960—he taught sixth, fifth, and then fourth grade at Hawthorne Elementary. Then he taught fourth grade at Emerson School for a year (1960-1961) before transferring to Pacheco School where he instructed fourth graders for three years until 1964.¹³ He taught his students all about Hawaiian culture and history, and even organized pen pals with students in Hawaii.¹⁴ Loa once wrote of Myral, “He still gets a bang out of teaching – so I’m sure it is the profession he was made for.”¹⁵

The family’s dining room table was always stacked high with his students’ papers. Before Sunday dinner, he always had to clear them away to make room for the plates and the food.¹⁶

He was always thinking about his students. In his diaries, Myral jotted down ideas for his classroom: paper mache mask patterns, interesting science facts about the earth’s magnetic field, bulletin board layouts, recipes, maps, and insect jar & mount plans.¹⁷ He told the students to keep their Thanksgiving turkey wishbones. They brought them to class and fashioned them with wire and tape to look like reindeer. They then put them in front of a large turkey breastbone as Santa’s sleigh for the Christmas display. For a Christmas gift, Myral took photographs of each student, developed them himself in his kitchen-turned-darkroom, mounted

the photographs on pieces of wood, and decorated them as a Christmas tree ornament.¹⁸

In May of 1958, Myral was elected the first treasurer of the county's chapter of the Association for Childhood Education.¹⁹



Myral at USC in July 1946

As he had done in Hawaiï, Myral took occasional courses to improve his teaching skills and his salary. He took secondary education courses at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles, and brought Robert along for part of the stay. He also attended many local workshops about science, art, education, and mental hygiene.²⁰

Myral continued to take photographs in San Luis Obispo. In addition to documenting his growing family and their activities, he was especially interested in the construction of new buildings and the destruction of old buildings in town. Myral donated an album full of his photographs of notable buildings and people to the San Luis Obispo History Center in 1958.

Music

Myral continued his involvement with music and teaching of music in San Luis Obispo. Some afternoons after teaching at the Elementary school, Myral led the band at the junior high school. He also organized piano summer schools, and the end-of-summer performances were dazzling. In 1949 four students performed at the same time on two pianos.



Myral (left) with his Piano Summer School students in 1952

And three years later, eager to “top” the prior performance, *four* pianos were brought out with *three* students at each!²¹ Additionally, Myral taught piano lessons at their Mission Street home on Saturday mornings, and during the week stopped by students’ houses to give lessons on his way home from school.²²

In Hawaiï, Myral had been ward organist for all fourteen years of his stay there. Upon his arrival in California, he continued playing the organ

for church for twenty more years. Beginning in December of 1946, Myral also played organ at the Methodist Church Sunday mornings at 9:45.²³



Myral's carrying case and sheet music.

summer of 1945, he played piano there each night from 6 to 11.²⁴

Another musical opportunity Myral had for many years was playing for the men's Rotary Club on Mondays during their lunch meetings. When he left the Elementary School at lunchtime recess to perform, the school principal stepped in and taught Myral's students for part of the time he was gone.²⁵

Myral occasionally played for dances at the Cotillion Club on Saturday nights, but as recorded music grew in popularity, the need for live dance bands dropped significantly. At Christmastime each year, Myral got busy again with playing music for holiday parties and dances.²⁶ On New Year's Eve of 1962, a few years before he passed a way, Myral sadly wrote in his dairy, "Didn't play for a dance"²⁷ He had been playing for New Year's Eve dances every year for decades.

Unfortunately, Loa's involvement with musical things was reduced early in their stay in San Luis when she began to have difficulty with her thyroid. It swelled until she had to have the goiter removed in the late 1940s.²⁸ During the surgery, her vocal chords were damaged, and her strong, angelic voice became weaker. She no longer sang like she used to, but she didn't give it all up. She still sang in informal female quartets and mothers' groups, and helped with singing at church. And of course she still sang to her children.²⁹

The summer after they arrived in San Luis, Myral got a job playing for the local USO—the United Service Organization—that provided both musical and comedy entertainment to troops. The war was over in Europe, but still going on in Japan, so there were still troops and veterans in San Luis to entertain. In the

The Tolmans in California

Myral and Loa were very sociable people. They loved going out to dinner with friends and enjoyed keeping in touch by phone and through cards with those they loved. Ever since their multi-state journey on their honeymoon, they loved taking road trips to see people, too. While traveling from one city to another, they took detours to visit any friend who lived even remotely nearby.³⁰ As they were both teachers, Myral and Loa had time in the summer to take the family on fun trips around the West, and drive to Utah to visit Clark and Tolman family members.



The Clarks camping in Yellowstone, July 1947

Loa and Myral really enjoyed living in coastal California. They praised the cool, clear, and unfluctuating climate. The green hills in wintertime reminded them of Hawaii. They even thought the earthquakes were exciting.³² Loa and Myral especially enjoyed the stimulating atmosphere of the college town, where concerts and art shows were always happening.³³ Loa's parents enjoyed visiting them in California to escape the cold Utah winters. Emerett loved to recite poems that she memorized while working in the Logan temple. She and J.I. loved talking about the Gospel and always shared their testimonies before leaving.³⁴



Robert, Myral, and J.I. in April 1945

Myral had a garage built behind the house, and Judson made the back of it into a bedroom. He also added an additional bedroom onto the side of the house. Margene and Robert loved designing and constructing temporary play houses in the yard with the scrap lumber from the building additions.³⁵



Robert and friend with a structure built from spare wood.

Loa's mother, Emerett, only visited a few times before passing away on January 12, 1949—only four and a half years after the Clark's arrival in California. Judson lived another seven years, passing away on November 8, 1955. In those seven years he visited the Clarks often, for long periods of time during the winters. Margene remembers going to his room and hearing amazing stories from his mission to the Southern States about miraculous conversions, casting out devils, and being delivered from persecutors.³⁶



*The remaining 5 of the 13 Tolman children at their father's funeral
Loa, Inez, June, Bion, Clifford in November 1955*

Loa Teaching

Richard was born nine months after the Clarks moved to San Luis, and Loa wanted to stay home with him. Although she was asked during that time to be a substitute teacher, she didn't return to the classroom until



J.I. and Loa at Nipimo Mesa School where she taught 1950-51

Dickie entered kindergarten in 1950. Loa then began teaching at Nipimo Mesa School—a school for the children of migratory workers who came for a short time to pick crops. After one year at Nipimo she transferred to teaching first grade at Pismo School (1951-1952).³⁷



Margene and Ed, Newlyweds at the Salt Lake Temple, June 26, 1952

The following summer, after her second year teaching full-time in California, Margene was married to Ed Remund on June 26, 1952. They had known each other in the San Luis Obispo LDS branch since his family moved there in 1946, two years after the Clarks had moved there. They had attended school together since Margene was in 8th grade, and their families were good friends. After their marriage, Margene and Ed lived in San Luis for a few years, so Loa enjoyed having her married daughter nearby.

From 1951 until 1968, Loa taught at Pismo School to which she and fellow teacher Gladys Forden drove together each morning.³⁸ She was phenomenal at teaching

children how to read, so in her last few years before retirement in 1971, she became a reading specialist at the school who met with children individually outside of their classroom. She taught full-time for twenty years in California.³⁹

Myral's idea of womanhood came from his own mother—an independent woman with incredible strength and intelligence. He saw his own wife that way, too. He

gave her a lot of freedom and trusted her with her own life. When she wanted to join a club or an ensemble, or take educational classes, Myral let her without hesitation.⁴⁰ Loa displayed her freedom shortly after she began teaching full-time again. She spent three summers in the 1950's living in San Jose while taking classes at San Jose State and working towards her Bachelor's Degree. She roomed with other ladies who were taking classes, too.⁴¹



Loa working in her Pismo School classroom



*25th Wedding Anniversary,
June 6, 1954*

In 1956, when Cal Poly in San Luis Obispo became co-ed after excluding women for 26 years, Loa enrolled and completed her BE—a Bachelor's Degree in Education. She was on the stand with the first group of women who received their diplomas from Cal Poly in nearly 30 years.⁴² The switch from San Jose State to Cal Poly was welcome, as Cal Poly was a mere three minutes' drive from the Clark home. As Loa had an endless thirst for knowledge, she later took graduate courses on nights and weekends.⁴³

Loa was initiated into the newly-formed San Luis chapter of The Delta Kappa Gamma Society—an international society for key women educators—on April 11, 1959. She was the chapter’s first president from its foundation in 1959 until 1962.⁴⁴



Delta Kappa Gamma reunion in 1979. Loa is 4th from left.

Loa was also a member of the San Luis Obispo Monday Club—a group of women who met for monthly educational luncheons, and served around the community to enhance its educational, social, civic, and cultural quality. They met in a building which architect Julia Morgan designed for them in 1934, free of charge.⁴⁵ Loa was the chairman of the Monday Club’s Music Section, for which she organized concerts and other musical events. Once, she hosted Ingrid Nelson, a child piano prodigy. Afterwards, “Mrs. Clark was honored by the [Monday Club] tea committee with a request to pour [tea] for the event.”⁴⁶ Loa once performed the hula for the Book Section of the Monday Club.⁴⁷



The MONDAY CLUB



Participation in the Growth of the Church

The Clarks moved to San Luis Obispo when the Church had only a branch there, and that was under the leadership of the California Mission. But membership in the area was growing quickly; it was a very exciting time for the Clarks to arrive. Art Godfrey—the Clark's good friend who was an agricultural teacher at the school where Myral first taught—was the branch president in San Luis. Myral was his counselor in the branch presidency at one time.⁴⁸ When the Santa Barbara Stake was created in March 18, 1951—the 184th stake of the Church—Myral played the organ at the service. Art became the stake president. He served 18 years and was released in 1968 to become stake patriarch.⁴⁹

At the same time the stake was created, the San Luis Obispo Branch became the San Luis Obispo Ward. Gilbert Hutchings was called as bishop, Myral was called as the first counselor, and Edgar A. Hyer was



*San Luis Obispo Ward's first bishopric
March 1951 – Dec 1955*

Ron Davey, Edgar Hyer, Gib Hutchings, Myral Clark

second counselor. Gilbert (Gib) was the south coast regional supervisor of the California Bureau of Agricultural Education at Cal Poly, and Edgar was the head of the Cal Poly farm management department.⁵⁰ The Clarks and the Hutchings became good friends as they served together.

For four years this bishopric faithfully served the members in San Luis Obispo. When they were released in November 1955, the ward held a party for them. The three men were given initialed briefcases and their wives were given corsages. The ward played a game called “I’ve Got a Foible” in which the humorous imagined foibles of the exiting bishopric were revealed. After the 150 guests had dinner, Myral led them at the piano in a community sing.⁵¹

In their time in San Luis Obispo, Myral was a counselor in the branch presidency and the bishopric, and was also the Sunday School superintendent⁵²—all the while the ward organist, too. Back when the various quorums met during the week and not on Sundays, Myral sometimes held high priest group meetings at his home.⁵³

His son, Dick, remembers Myral sitting him down one day and telling him, “There are lots of people: the bishop, the stake president... I just want you to know that your father is the high priest group leader and that is an important calling.” Myral wanted his son to see the importance of all callings in the Church—that in each responsibility there is the opportunity to serve and to bless.⁵⁴

Myral attended General Conference in Salt Lake City in 1953. Someone let him into the Tabernacle so he could hear the world famous organ being played. One wonders if he thought about whom he’d need to ask to get permission to play that organ. He arrived at one conference session early enough that he sat 8 seats back from President David O. McKay.⁵⁵



*Myral dressed for
Fiesta Days, May 1946*

Myral was also involved with the Boy Scouts of America program. His twelve years with the Hi-Y youth of Hawaii prepared him well for this. He now also had two sons, Robert and Dick, who were in scouting with him. Because of his back injury while playing volleyball in Hawaii, he could not do many outdoor camping events with the Scouts.⁵⁶ Myral did participate in Scout leadership and he was the pianist for the annual meetings and recognition dinners for the Santa

Lucia Area Council. On the song lyric sheet for one of these dinners, Myral simply scribbled the keys of the songs, and played by ear with no sheet music.⁵⁷

Myral's testimony of the Church and his loyalty to the leaders were demonstrated one day when Robert spoke disapprovingly of a member of the Seventy. The man had spoken about his teenage daughter chatting for hours on the phone, and Robert was concerned that Germans, who were poor and never chatted at length on the phone, would be offended. Robert wished the man hadn't told that story. Myral said, "You're right. But don't say it." Meaning, that even if one thinks criticism is warranted, one should not speak poorly of the Lord's servants.⁵⁸

In his diary, Myral jotted down an unlabeled list that gives insight into his testimony. The list was 1) Faith in God, 2) Sleep, and 3) Enjoy good music.⁵⁹ Whatever this list was, it is clear that Myral placed great priority on his faith.



Loa (2nd from left) with Relief Society sisters holding a craft sale

Loa was equally involved in the Church. Around 1948 she was the Relief Society President. She was also a Sunday School teacher for nine-year-olds, the MIA (Young Women) President in 1951, and the junior Sunday School coordinator (the Primary President).⁶⁰ This was a fulfillment of her patriarchal blessing which read, "You shall do a great work in teaching the youth of Zion, and shall find joy and satisfaction in this labor."⁶¹

Church members were also blessed by Loa's musical talents when she was the stake music director and the ward choir director, with Myral accompanying the singers at the piano. Many Thursday evenings, a group

of six singers from the ward came to the Clark home to rehearse for the Sacrament Service numbers.⁶²

Myral and Loa were blessed to be living in California when the first temple in that state was completed. The Los Angeles Temple, the tenth working temple of the Church, was announced on March 7, 1937 when Myral and Loa were still in Hawaii. But construction was significantly delayed because of World War II. The groundbreaking was finally held on September 22, 1951, almost fourteen years after the announcement.⁶³ Once complete, the Los Angeles Temple was the largest temple in the Church. It was dedicated by President David O. McKay during a few services, ending on March 14, 1956. Myral and Loa attended that last dedication service and Myral wrote that “It was a real thrill to mingle with the large crowd.”⁶⁴



The Los Angeles Temple, dedicated March 1956

During the temple’s construction, the Clarks donated several hundred dollars for its construction⁶⁵—an amazing sacrifice considering that one could purchase a new car for under \$1000 in those days. After the temple’s completion, Myral and Loa went almost every month to perform ordinances for family members and for other deceased persons. Often they went with the Godfreys and other ward friends, filling a car on their 400 mile round trip on the narrow, bumpy roads that existed before freeways.

They would do a session and then stay for a night at the Seagull Motel before returning back to San Luis Obispo.⁶⁶ Because the Clarks had a teenage son, and because they served in callings with the youth, Myral and Loa were able to participate with them in performing baptisms for the dead. Once Myral went with sixteen young men and sixteen young women and performed baptisms for 640 people.⁶⁷



Leah and Art Godfrey

When the Clarks first arrived in San Luis, the LDS branch members met in a small, two-story chapel that was built in 1920.⁶⁸ Shortly after the San Luis Obispo Ward was organized in 1951, fund raising and planning activities for building a new meetinghouse were in effect. In 1955, part of the lot was purchased by members of the bishopric, Myral included. The rest of the lot was purchased by the next bishopric later that year.



Feb 1947. The San Luis Obispo branch met at the chapel on 2747 Broad Street from 1931 to 1960.

Groundbreaking services were held on October 25, 1958.⁶⁹ This large building was to house two wards and the brand new institute program for Cal Poly students who had to walk only five minutes from campus to the new chapel.



The new San Luis Obispo Ward chapel before completion, Feb 2, 1960

The local members, including the Clarks, did most of the construction themselves. Myral noted in his diary one Thursday, “Loa, Dick, and I went over to work on the new chapel. We put stain wax on the pulpit of Junior Sunday School.”⁷⁰ It was on July 23, 1960.” Myral and Loa both participated musically in the dedication services.⁷¹ This new chapel was located at 55 Casa Street, which was only a three minute drive from the Clarks’ house on 864 Mission Street. The Clarks were extremely active in all Church activities.

(This chapel functioned well for the members for 47 years until the hospital next door wanted the land for its parking garage. The building was old and full of oddities, so it was not a huge loss to sell and demolish it in 2007. A new chapel was built about a mile west.⁷²)

As Parents and Grandparents

As parents, Myral and Loa were very kind. They expected a lot of their children, but weren’t too hard on them. When Dick got a ticket for driving an unlicensed motorbike without a license, Loa took him to the courthouse, paid the fine, and simply said to Dick, “Ignorance is no excuse for disobeying the law.” When Dick broke a window with a stick he intended to throw on the roof, all his father did was say, “Why were you



Dick and Myral, Sept. 1955

throwing the stick on the roof?!” Similarly, when he dented the back of their car, Myral was disappointed, but not angry.⁷³

Having grown up in a family with no father present, Myral had never experienced how a father could be involved with his children. Myral certainly was a kind and happy father, but, following the pattern he grew up with, he didn't spend a lot of time out with his children. It was mostly Loa who took the kids to their various activities. She sometimes took Dick and a friend to Reservoir Canyon outside of town and read under a tree while the boys fished.⁷⁴



*The Clarks picnicking with friends, ca. 1949
Robert (left) Myral, Loa, Dick (right side of group)*

Myral was a calm man who rarely became angry. When Loa would raise her voice and go on about something, Myral sat quietly and listened. Eventually, he would go over to the window and say, “Excuse us neighbors” or open the door and say, “Hello, Art!” as if Art Godfrey was stopping by for a visit. In Hawaii he did the same thing—he’d lean towards the window and pretend the neighbor was there and would say, “Oh hello Mr. Clissold” Myral was the master of using humor to diffuse any undesirable situation.⁷⁵



*Myral and Dick posing with statues
at Knott's Berry Farm, Aug 1956*

Once while driving down a two-lane road, Loa upsettingly said, “Did you see that person cut us off?” to which Myral chuckled, “Pull a face at him, Mother!”⁷⁶ He didn't take himself seriously and helped others to take themselves lightly, too. On his 50th birthday, he wrote in his diary, “My weight is 179 lbs. Fat and sassy. Another happy birthday.”⁷⁷

With that humor, he loved to give odd names to things. The family's cats were named Gersha and Toohey. One of those cats, instead of saying "Meow", said "Myral!" If Margene ever complained about her name, Myral would say, "Don't complain! We almost named you De-pewk-a-wat-let!" And on top of their water heater for years was a warty paper mache mask named "Lumpalard Nelson".⁷⁸ He enjoyed hearing about any other odd names. He noted one day in his diary that he saw a motel called The Butcherknife Motel.⁷⁹



Myral with cat, Sept 1961

Myral kept little diaries every year of his life in which he sporadically wrote appointments, events, and lists. It is impressive to see what he recorded:

yearly income growth, taxes, expenses, tithing, money given to the Tabernacle fund and the L.A. temple fund, photography supplies, health records for all family members, weight and clothing measurements for all family members, Christmas cards sent and received, gifts received, notes taken during church, teacher training notes, birthdays, longest Hawaiian words, poems, immunizations, Rotary Club presidents, TV purchasing info, history of teaching positions, names of people he did temple work for, his Priesthood authority line, Life & Church News magazine subscriptions, and vacations taken. Myral was detail-oriented his whole life, and his posterity will be forever blessed by his records.

One loose page of Myra's diary had the heading "List some things you'd like. Some personal gifts—in order of choice—now be sensible" Myral's response provides a wonderful insight into his wishes: 1) a car, 2) an electric razor, 3) a large check for savings, 4) school clothes, 5) shoes, 6) the book entitled "Traditions Hero" about Benedict Arnold, and 7) a trip to Hawaii.⁸⁰

When the Clarks still lived in Hawaii, it was not a state yet; rather it was just a territory of the United States. In 1940, there was a campaign to begin the process of making the territory into the 49th state. The Clarks saw many advertisements in the newspaper about it, and most likely participated



Fritz Kraft and his wife and son visited the Clarks in SLO during the campaign to make Hawaii the 49th State. He was so enthusiastic about it, that he painted his car, "Hawaii for 49th State" (Robert on bike)

in the vote. Almost twenty years later in 1959, the admissions act was finally voted on. That election drew the largest turnout in Hawaiian history, and 93% of the voters approved statehood. By the time of the vote, Alaska had achieved statehood first, thus making Hawaii the 50th state.⁸¹ More than anyone else in San Luis Obispo, the Clarks were thrilled about this.

A huge event happened fifteen years after the Clark family arrived in San Luis and seven years after Margene and Ed were married. Myral noted proudly in his diary on February 2, 1959, "Today we became grandparents. Margene and Ed went to L.A. to get sweet little Matthew Clark Remund, born Nov. 30, 1958."⁸² Margene and Ed adopted two boys and then had a girl. By 1963, Loa and Myral had three wonderful grandchildren living in Ojai, California, and they enjoyed driving down and visiting them there.

Around this time, Robert graduated from the University of California at Berkeley and was called to the South German mission. How thrilled Loa and Myral must have been to see the first missionary in their own family. They both had fathers and siblings who had served missions, so they were well-aware of the challenges and adventures Robert was set to have. Loa's older brother Ivan had served in Germany years before and had captivated Loa with stories of his adventures. But Ivan had been there before World War I, so the country was sure to be very different now, a few decades after the *Second* World War. Although the country had received millions of dollars in aid to rebuild, in what condition was it now? Was it dangerous at all? What was the church like there? Loa worried and

wondered. Robert packed up his white shirts, his ties, and his scriptures, and then entered the mission home in Salt Lake on January 2, 1961.



*The Clark Family ca. December 1960, right before Bob's mission to Germany
Back: Myral, Dick, Bob, Ed, Matt, and Front: Loa, Margene, Ron*

Dick was fifteen when Robert left, and still had a few years at home with his parents as he finished high school and prepared for his mission. He and his parents traveled all over the West seeing sights and visiting friends. In 1962 they visited Logan again—35 years after Myral and Loa met there and 42 years after Myral and his mother first moved there. Myral nostalgically wrote, “Logan looked as beautiful as ever.”³¹

During this time, Myral and Loa were continuing their involvement in Church, their teaching at Pacheco Elementary School and Pismo Elementary School, respectively, and their support of local musical events. They also enjoyed visiting Margene’s children. Life for them was simple and enjoyable—that is, until Myral became sick.

In 1963, Dick graduated from high school and Robert returned from his mission. When Robert saw his father for the first time in 2 ½ years,

he hardly recognized him for his health had drastically declined in that time.⁸³

Myral's Passing

Sometime in 1963, Myral's right hand began to shake and the doctors confirmed it was Parkinson's disease. If he was holding his hand still while reading the newspaper, after a while it would begin to shake. If he put the paper down and held his hands up for a moment, the shaking would stop for a while. Reading a shaky paper was a nuisance, but Myral learned to adjust without too much complaint. That is, until the shaking began to affect his piano playing. His left hand remained still enough to play the bass part on the piano, but his right hand



Loa and Myral, Feb 1962

could not stay properly on the keys. This devastated Myral. Reading, driving, teaching—all these things he could do without; but piano playing—he could not live without that.⁸⁴

During the 1963/64 school year, he took many days of sick leave. During that school year he traveled to the San Francisco Bay Area to have surgery; by this time, both his hands were shaking. After the surgery, things seemed fine. The doctors asked him to count from 30 to 3, by threes. While he was counting, his hands began to shake again.

He had a second surgery, this one more intrusive, using liquid nitrogen to kill parts of his brain that were affected. The surgery was successful in stopping the tremors, but he lost power to move his leg properly. He dragged it and used a cane. Additionally, his ability to play the right hand on the piano was limited by the partial paralysis of his right hand.

In September 1964, his sons Robert and Richard headed eastward by car. For the past year, Dick had lived at home and attended Cal Poly for his freshman year, and Robert had completed a master's degree at Stanford University. After crossing through Nevada, Robert dropped Richard off in Salt Lake City at the LDS Mission Home prior to departing for his mission in the North Central States Mission, headquartered in Minneapolis,

Minnesota. Then Robert continued east to begin his doctorate at Princeton University.⁸⁵



Myral and Loa pose for a SLO newspaper to remember Pearl Harbor on Dec 7, 1962. They are holding a lock that a diver retrieved from the battleship Arizona, a shell casing, and their scrapbook from Hawaii.

Ever since the Clarks left Hawaii, Myral had wished to return for a visit. As his health was failing, in 1964 they decided to go while they still could. They visited every landmark they had loved and every friend who

still lived there. But their trip was cut short when Myral contracted a high fever. They returned to the mainland to find the cause of the high temperature, but no doctor could find it.⁸⁶ While in the hospital, Myral passed away on October 1, 1964. He was only 63 years old. Loa wrote, “He died quite suddenly. Even though we knew he wasn’t in the best of health, we had no idea of losing him so soon.”⁸⁷



On Loa and Myral's trip to Hawaii in 1964, they visited St. Andrew's Priory where she had taught in 1942

Since her son Richard was on his mission, and her other son Robert was in Princeton on the east coast, they could not return home for the funeral. So Loa wrote them a beautiful letter in which she described the days immediately preceding and following his passing.

“...Daddy had Bacterial Endocarditis—which involves the valves of the heart which are attacked by the bacteria. The valves had been sluffing off into the

blood stream causing his fever. He said the immediate cause of death was acute, overwhelming heart failure. His lungs were full of fluid, they had filled up quickly. I don't believe he suffered any pain, only anxiety because of the weakness of his body... He was taken quickly without undue suffering. He didn't have to linger on as a helpless invalid and be unhappy. We will never know in this life just what his thoughts of the future were as he sat there alone waiting for me to come home from school [each day for months].

“Leah said that he told Art one night, when we drove out to Morro Bay, that his teaching days were over and talked about his life insurance and finances. I'm sure none of us realized just how weak and low he felt. He greeted me each afternoon with a smile and sometimes opened the door for me to come in. We were very close and I spent as much time with him as I could after you boys left. I'm sure everything possible was done for him. He looks so wonderful now, dressed in his temple robes. His expression is peaceful and pleasant. It makes me feel peaceful inside to look at him...

“Wallace said that he would much rather Myral had gone now than to live on and not be able to play the piano, teach, or do any of the active things he had always loved to do.

“The nurse said that she helped Daddy to the bathroom at 6am and when she was getting him back to bed, he said, ‘If I have to go on feeling this way I’d just as soon die.’ He died at 6:15am.

“[During the family get together afterwards] Clifford said, ‘Loa I’d like you to sing “There is a Home Eternal” I said I’d try, and had the strength from somewhere to sing all the verses with him.

“It is hard for me to write the first letter, but I must tell you how full of gratitude I am to have had such a loving, cooperative, quiet natured, righteous husband for thirty-five years. He had the capacity to love so many people. Everyone was his friend. He just instinctively expected to be accepted and greeted as he so warmly greeted others, and he always was.”⁸⁸



Friends and family after Myral’s funeral

When Myral was three months old, his dying grandfather, Ezra T. Clark, gave him a patriarchal blessing. Myral’s grandfather asked Heavenly Father four times that Myral be given “great wisdom and power to do good ... in his day and generation upon the earth.”⁸⁹ Consider for a moment all the people whom Myral influenced for good in his school teaching for 38 years, his service in the Church, his service in Hi-Y and scouting, his performing and teaching of music, and his ability to socialize with anyone he met. In his day, Myral was indeed blessed with the wisdom and power to do much good in the lives of thousands of Heavenly Father’s children.

But greater than all his teaching and service in the Church and the community, was his raising of three children in the Gospel, so that they could pass down the gospel’s truth and blessings to their children and their children’s children. The sacrifices that Myral’s parents and grandparents made for the Gospel of Jesus Christ were not in vain. He lived the gospel

to the fullest, and the legacy of faith that Myral inherited and then passed on still continues today, four generations later.



Loa and Myral, July 1944