Clarence Hancey was born 8 March 1897, at Hyde Park, Utah, the youngest son of James Hancey and Annie Marie Christophersen. He lived all his life in the family house located on the lot at 33 West 2nd North in Hyde Park.

He had 20 half brothers and sisters, and 10 full brothers and sisters, 7 older and 3 younger than he. At that time, parents picked the child’s name, but a member of the bishopric usually blessed and named the baby. This had been true for all of Dad’s brothers and sisters, but his father decided that his last son would be blessed by himself. Besides raising a family of 10 Children, his mother was kept very busy as a midwife. (She delivered her first baby 2 months before she gave birth to Clarence.) Thus the children of the family had many responsibilities around the home. This increased for him and his brothers and sisters when their father died in 1913, when Clarence was 16 years old.

He learned to work at an early age, as there was much to do at home. It seemed that his father’s philosophy, “Anything worth doing, is worth doing well,” was engraved in all the family and Dad was no exception.

Clarence helped with the family garden and there formed his love for gardening, which lasted his lifetime. He didn’t however, love to pick raspberries. In fact, he hated it so much as a boy that when he was older and on his own, he took out all the raspberry bushes in his garden. They were later replaced by his father-in-law. One of Dad’s first paying jobs was taking cows to the pasture. Each morning in the summer he would walk, and drive the cows out of town, across the highway, and over the railroad tracks to the pasture. At night he would go and bring them home to be milked. It was about a 3 mile round trip twice a day for which he was paid 80 cents a month.

Like his brothers and sisters, Dad attended school in Hyde Park until he completed the 8th grade. His formal education ended there, as he quit school to go to work in order to help with the family expenses.

At a very young age, he showed amazing ability to work with his hands. When he was just a little guy, his father laid down with him for a nap. While Grandpa slept, Clarence proceeded to take his father’s pocket watch apart to see what made it tick. As a youth he learned carpentry from his brothers, and he had inherited a love for building from his father. This was to become his lifelong occupation.

Dad’s interest in electricity developed as this new science came into the Valley. He took a correspondence course and taught himself how to repair appliances and how to wire houses. He worked for Logan City, when they installed electricity in the city. During his lifetime he did repair or wiring of some sort in almost every home in Hyde Park. Much of it in the evenings after a full day of carpentry work. One of the boys remembers being with him when he fixed a refrigerator for Brother Frank Lee. When he had finished, Brother Lee said to his wife, “Now pay that man for what he knows, not for what he did, but for what he knows.”

Clarence’s work experience was varied from farm work as a young man to construction. But before he settled to building homes, he worked at several jobs. In 1923 Uncle Les bought a new Ford. Uncle Les and he drove to Los Angeles, California, to look for work. They spent about 4 months there building a hotel. Years later he remembered that trip with much fondness. In 1924 he and Uncle Les worked for Utah Power and Light Company, helping to build Cutler...
Dam in Bear River Canyon. He also helped build a number of bridges in Logan Canyon, when the roads were improved. He and Uncle Les worked on all phases of construction for the decorative concrete handrails on all these bridges and always had pride in the craftsmanship of their work. In 1987 three of the bridges are still intact.

He also worked for the Amalgamated Sugar Co. On the maintenance crew at the factories at Logan, Smithfield, (Amalga), Lewiston, and Whitney, as well as supervising building and maintenance of the 33 beet receiving stations located throughout the valley. His time book shows that he drove anywhere from 35 to 140 miles a day and worked 10 to 14 hours per day during October through January campaign. (Harvest and Processing.) He was an expert in installing the large Fairbanks Morse scales that were used to weigh the beets purchased from the farmers. This skill was also used during later years when there were scales to be installed for other industries in the area, such as grain elevators, mills, etc.

Clarence worked with and for his brothers in the beet fields of the area. Their reputation was well known, “When you hired a Hancey you knew that the job would be done right and on time.” It seemed that they were never in need of a job. He liked to tell of thinning beets in a field below the highway west of Hyde Park and seeing 5 cars drive by in one day. That was heavy traffic in those days.

In 1922, he worked for the Phoenix Utilities Co. Building a large wooden flume that carried water from 2nd dam in Logan Canyon. He used a 5 pound “Single Jack” hammer to drive the 60 penny nails (approximately 9 inches long.) That were used in this project. This hammer is in the possession of the family today.

His talents ranged from electrical wiring, plumbing, mechanical work, to carpentry which became his major occupation. He possessed the ability to logically solve problems in many of these areas.

He always enjoyed seeing any major construction job that was in progress throughout the area, road construction, dams, power plants, large buildings, bridges, or mining operations. He always had an interest in “How they were doing it” and “What the result would be.” In later years, his sons had the opportunity of being with him on some of the trips and noting his interest as well as his knowledge of it all.

During his building career, Clarence contracted and built homes with George Ashcroft, then with Uncle Les and later with Ephraim Falslev. He was a master carpenter and always used only the best materials and the finest workmanship. One man they worked for said that they could build a better home using a hatchet than most contractors could using a good saw.

He always took pride in pointing to homes throughout the Cache Valley that he had helped build. Although he had worked with his brothers most of his life, he and Uncle Les founded a joint partnership and their reputation as builders was known throughout the area. Most homes they built were negotiated rather than bid—although many early homes were built on a time and material basis. Later, some home contracts were on a bid basis but there never was a sacrifice in quality because of price. Jim remembers that on such a home even though they were not the low bidder, the owner agreed to pay the difference out of his own pocket just to have them be the builders. During the years that he and Uncle Les worked together we never remember there being a major discord between them.

We always have been amazed at how much he enjoyed being with his brothers and sisters; there was always so much love between them. Even after they were all married, he and
all his brothers would get together each Labor Day and go on a trip for the long weekend. He always looked forward to these occasions.

Clarence had the first radio in Hyde Park. It had 4 tubes and was powered by rechargeable “A” and “B” batteries. It required a ground wire which was a rod driven into the earth. It had an “in the air” antenna which was a length of wire 30 to 40 feet long, which was placed outside between the house and another building. You listened to the radio through a separate speaker or a set of headphones. Some of the early stations were: WLS-Chicago, KOA-Denver, KOB-Albuquerque, KFI-Los Angeles, and KSL-Salt Lake City. The radio furnished entertainment for relatives and friends as they joined him for an evening to listen to this new invention.

Clarence married Bessie Bingham 25 Nov. 1936, in Smithfield, Utah. Their marriage was later solemnized in the Logan LDS Temple. Although they had met before, Aunt Leda was the matchmaker who got them together for their first date. After their marriage, they went to Southern Utah and Nevada on their honeymoon. They stopped in Salt Lake City on their way home to purchase furniture for their home. They had a happy marriage and set a fine example for their children. After his son, Jim, was married, Jim recalled to his wife that he had never heard his parents quarrel.

They had a family of 4 children; Wayne Clare, Jeffery Bingham, James Parley, and Luanna Eleise. As each child came along, he was proud of them and was a good father to them. He left the discipline to Bessie, though, because he said that whenever he got mad enough to spank them, she would give him a dirty look and he didn’t dare do it. He also used say about his children as they grew up, “It isn’t the initial cost of a child, but the upkeep that mounts up.”

One of their favorite activities as a family was Sunday afternoon rides. They would often stop at Uncle Alfred’s store in North Logan for an ice cream cone to eat during the ride. The family took a number of vacations: Craters of the Moon National Monument, Yellowstone National Park, Dinosaur National Monument, and other surrounding areas of interest. They often had to assign seats in the car with mother in the middle of the back seat to keep peace. Everyone still enjoys remembering these fun times shared together by all.

Evan after his retirement, Clarence kept up his large garden, both vegetable and flower, and he always had an immaculate yard. Luanna remembers helping him plant potatoes and how exact and careful he was about planting the rows. When he irrigated, every row was watered with equal care, and the water reached the bottom of all the rows simultaneously. Anyone who has ever irrigated a garden knows there is a real trick to this. When he weeded his garden, he always carried a bucket and picked up the weeds as he hoed. He once said, “Waterweeds are the worst pests—you almost have to eat them to get rid of them” so he fed them to the pigs.

He loved to do the harvesting of the vegetables, and would bring in buckets full of beans and peas, then he would help shell or snap them. But he never did the cooking. Once, before he was married, he picked and shelled some peas, dug and cleaned some potatoes, then took them down to Aunt Nettie to cook for him. He enjoyed sharing his produce with his neighbors and would take a bucket of clean potatoes or fresh ears of corn to someone who didn’t have a garden.

Most years he would raise a couple of pigs, one to put in the freezer for the winter’s meat supply and the other to sell to pay for the feed and butchering. He also raised chickens. But he only had a cow for a short time. Like his father, he had no love whatsoever for cows. When he told Bessie he was going to sell the cow, he said he would rather spend his time doing electrical
work to buy the milk than to milk the cow. He was active in civic affairs. He was charter
member of the Hyde Park Lion’s Club and served in many offices including Pres. Of the Club.
The Lion’s Club did many service projects in the town during the time he was a member. He
was also Pres. Of the Hyde Park Cemetery Board for a number of years.

Clarence was not an active participant in sports, but enjoyed watching baseball games as
well as boxing and wrestling matches. In the summer time, Saturday afternoons were usually
spent watching a baseball game. He followed the Hyde Park team to the surrounding towns to
watch them play and cheer them on. He and Uncle Les usually planned 2 or 3 trips to Salt Lake
to attend a Salt Lake “Bees” (Pioneer League) baseball game. In his later years after he retired,
he spent many hours watching TV and enjoying sports of all kinds.

He was a very rich man, when it came to friends. He maintained a lasting friendship with
people he had worked with or for, and always had a kind word for them. It was amazing how
many people knew him throughout the area.

Clarence truly learned to serve his fellow man in many ways, as he gave of himself, his
time, and materials to help others. He must have learned the lesson from his father’s book-
keeping method in the shop. As he would say: “Dad would write on a board that hung in his
shop how much a person owed him. When he was paid, he would draw a line through the name
and the amount. When he reached the bottom of the board and needed more space, he would
plane the names from the top half of the board saying that he guessed all had paid who could.
Then he would start over. If they paid, that was fine; and if they didn’t, that was fine, too, let’s
go on.” Clarence had this same attitude—he was always ready to help no matter what.

Up until the time of his death, he had a straight, tall, handsome appearance. Bessie said
she could always spot him over the crowd along the street. He always wore long-sleeved shirts,
but his face and hands were tanned from years of working outdoors.

Clarence died on 17 Dec. 1973 at the age of 76. He was a honest man, a good husband
and a kind father. He valued his family and friends and showed it in his words and deeds.

By his example, one of the most important lessons he taught his family was the value of
work and pride in a job well done.

Written by his family and taken from the book JAMES HANCEY AND HIS FAMILY
that was published 1988.
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