

Minnie Lawley was born 3/03/1894 -

Parents: WILLIAM (BILL) & AGNES (nee SINCLAIR) CLARK

Her childhood was spent at Nowra, NSW.

Her parents, Bill and Agnes came to Maleny in 1911 with 5 of their children: Bell, Lizzie, Nellie, **Minnie (at age 17)** and Billy. Bill Clark purchased "Rockview"- 60 acres of land at the end of Flesser's Road, behind "Howle's Knob" Reesville, had a house built and commenced dairying.

Minnie Almira Catherine Clark married Ernest Downes Lawley on 4/07/1917. They moved to the 84 acres of scrub land which they called "Arley", at Reeseville, and turned it into prime dairy farm land, breeding AIS (Illawarra) cattle, and playing a large part in the development of the State's Dairy Industry.

Children; Evelyn, Alan and Val. Evelyn was born at home before Maleny had a hospital. Minnie was a small woman with a big heart and strong of character, and not afraid to put anyone in their place when warranted. She continued to help on the dairy, feeding calves etc until she retired herself from the dairy in her 70s. She died 23/08/1988 aged 94.

Her memoirs compiled by daughter Val, now presented by grandchildren Robyn (Webster) and Ed, is a great memory for all who remember her. Happy 128th Heavenly Birthday lovely Minnie Lawley



MINNIE CLARK'S CHILDHOOD MEMORIES

* Minnie's earliest recollections are from when she was four years old. Brother Billy was due, so her father sat her in front of him on the horse to take her to stay with her Aunts and Grandmother at Nowra. They were riding down a hill when Minnie started crying - she wanted to go to the toilet, so Father Clark put her down near a bush and held the horse to hide her when, horror of horrors, somebody on a horse came around the corner. Poor Minnie remembers being most embarrassed!

* After baby Billy was born, Mother Clark was very ill and thought she was going to die. She had all her family gathered around her bed and holding hands while she prayed. Minnie was only four at the time but remembered it very clearly.

* When Minnie started school she was only small and had trouble keeping up with the older children. The teacher suggested she be taught at home by her sister Lizzie who, according to Minnie, was a very capable teacher. Minnie started school between the ages of 7 and 8 and left when she was 14.

* Minnie was always good at spelling. At Minnie's school, spelling bees were conducted on Friday. Victor Mortimer was her spelling "enemy" - they mostly tied with first (threepence /three cents as the prize) Their teacher couldn't find enough words to trick them so he resorted to the Bible and the word "Aaron". Minnie said "aaron", Victor said "AAaron" - Joy of joys - a smile on the teacher's face - they were both wrong - for once!

* A teacher would get a dish of water and somehow electrify it. Coins were put in the water and if you could get the coins out, you could keep them!

* Minnie remembers being carried to school on her sister Bell's shoulders. There was a very steep hill that was a shortcut (if you went around it, it took much longer) so when they walked, Bell would put her up on her shoulders and run with her in that position for the last half mile. They had to walk 3 miles to school: sometimes after the older children had milked, Father Clark would take them in the horse and cart. The older children went to school at Nowra, but Minnie went to school at Lindendale near Lismore. There were a number of small schools all around with a limit of about 30 children per school. The starting age was a minimum of 6 and if there were younger ones starting next year they were allowed to come to school for a week before the end of year school holidays, to help them settle in. Schools were usually one large classroom, sometimes with "dividers" placed to separate the classes.

* The leaving age was 14, but sometimes the teacher would tutor those who wanted to study a little more, mostly boys and including his own son who also wanted to be a teacher. Occasionally he would let him take a class. A few of the girls were selected to go to the Lismore Superior Public School one day a week for cooking lessons. A teacher would come out in the sulky, stay the night with Mother Clark's cousins and Minnie would go back with the teacher to attend the school.

* Boys sat together and girls sat together, all at long desks, sitting on long stools. When the girls had to put their hands together behind their backs, the boys would try to hold them just to tease! Blackboards and slates were the order of the day, but Minnie did manage to salvage one exercise book with the most beautiful exercises and writing in it. Homework was given every night, done by the light of the kerosene lights or lanterns.

* School started at 9am, a half hour break at 10am, back in until 12.30pm, when there was an hour's break for lunch, and then school finished at 3.30pm. Most of the children rode horses - there was a shed for the saddles and a paddock for the horses.

* Breathing exercises were done before going into school and drill was the order of the day, every day. They used dumb-bells and did all sorts of exercises and also had a "single stick" squad. Sometimes in drill Minnie had to get out in front to lead the others. She did not like it very much as she was only small and had to stand on a stool! Their "single stick" squad was quite renowned - a stick of cane with a "basket" on the end of it. Minnie's dress for this was a blue serge outfit with white braid.

* Minnie had male teachers, Mr Percy Peard and a Mr Moffitt who could sketch, sing, and play the violin. They had a school choir, used to sing "rounds" (Three Blind Mice) once a week and put on a concert at the end of each year. One year they performed "Who Killed Cock Robin?" One of the girls used to sing very flat so the teacher took her out of the choir and let her sketch and paint, at which she was very talented.

* Games too were the order of the day during the lunch hour with "rounders", cricket, "red rover", egg bouncing, hopscotch and not forgetting marbles and "jacks".

* Once a year there was a big sports day in Lismore, which all the small schools attended.

* The 12 to 14 year old girls were taught sewing by a sewing mistress who came to the school. All the stitches including feather-stitch, back-stitch, thread-drawing (which Minnie didn't like), were done on samplers. They were taught how to crochet as well.

* One of the hardest things Minnie had to do at school was to write a letter to an unknown person, somewhere in Australia. She really couldn't get enthusiastic about writing to a fictitious stranger!.

* The children all worked at home while they were going to school. All had their special chores to do. Every Saturday Minnie had to scrub the kitchen chairs. The cane seats had worn out and Father Clark had them replaced with pine. Minnie had to take them outside and give them a good scrub!.

* After Minnie left school at 14 her father bought an "Estey" organ from "Mortimer's" for 5 pounds and Minnie had organ lessons at home for about 12 months. Not many people had pianos in those days, mostly organs and Minnie's teacher taught organ, piano and violin. None of the other children played, but her sister Lizzie could sing and had singing lessons from Mrs Gibson after they came to Maleny.

* Her brother Billy was sick one day - quite bilious. Minnie piped up and said that she knew why he was sick - he'd been smoking cigarettes!! There was some trouble over that, but he didn't smoke any more - or very little anyway!

* Minnie remembers an incident her brother told of his days at war. Stan enlisted in October 1914 in the A.I.F. He was Driver M.D.S.Clark No. 2636 in the 4th Light Horse Ambulance. He left for France from Kangaroo Point on the "Borda", on May 11 1915 and returned to Australia in May 1919. He trained horses to pull the field ambulance, it had two horses in the shaft and one horse out in front. Stan rode the front horse when they went out to pick up the wounded, and one night his horse's rump was shot away. Luckily Stan was not hurt.

**ERNEST EDWARD DOWNES LAWLEY
AND
MINNIE ALMIRA CATHERINE CLARK**

THEIR MARRIAGE AND THEIR FAMILY

Ernest was born at Brisbane on 6 November 1893.

Minnie was born at Berry NSW on 3 March 1894.

They married at 11 o'clock, July 4, 1917 at the Ann St. Presbyterian Church, Brisbane. When they were first married, the property that is now "Arley", was 84 acres of standing scrub. "Arley" was named after a county/area in England of the same name. Ernest used to make tea by boiling the water on the primus, go into Grandfather Lawley's (Edward) farm and milk, then come home and work. He had a house cow with a bell around her neck, but the bell used to get tangled up in the bushes, wouldn't ring and of course couldn't be found. Aplin's were their closest neighbours then and they used to walk to see them.

The hospital had not been built when Evelyn was born. Deliveries were at home and a nurse had been engaged, but Evelyn decided to come early. Mother's neighbour, Mrs King (presumably John's mother) who was also expecting at the time, came and sat on the bed making paper sheets ~ newspapers sewn together ~ while she waited for the doctor. She helped with the delivery and there were no complications, but no anaesthetic either or scales, and the doctor said that the baby would have weighed about seven pounds. She cried all night ~ Grandfather Lawley said "She had come early so would cry until she was due. Or maybe she's like her father and doesn't like her mother's milk!". The nurse arrived early the next morning. At that time there was a place in Brisbane, a "Rest Home for Retired Nurses". These nurses would come out to the country and look after the women when their babies were due. Sometimes the mother's would engage the same nurse as each of their children came along (Mrs McLean was one). There was a doctor who stayed at the boarding house.

Auntie Lizzie was at home when Alan decided to make his appearance about six weeks before he was due. The ladies had been very busy picking up the wood that was lying at the pig run and brought it home to make a fire. Mother awoke in the middle of the night and realised that things were not as they should be, so Dad had to get the horse, harness him up, get Mother in the sulky and take her to the hospital in the wee small hours of a beautiful morning. The hospital had been opened in 1920. It is interesting to note that three generations of Lawley's were born at the Maleny hospital. Alan in 1923, his son Edward in 1955 and Edward's son Adam in 1978.

Val was also born at Maleny hospital. When Val was born, Mother kept saying "Oh my back, my back!". The nurse couldn't make out what was wrong. However, she found out the next morning, because Mother had a burn on her back about the size of a twenty cent piece. The nurse had spilt some anesthetic and Mother had lain in it. The nurse apologised!

MINNIE'S MEMORIES OF HER WEDDING DAY

Ernest Lawley and Minnie Clark were married at 11 o'clock on July 4 1917 at the Ann Street Presbyterian Church Brisbane. Her bridesmaid was Ettie Lawley, Ernie's sister, the bestman was George Trail.

Both frocks were the same - white crepe-de-chene. At that time Bayards of Brisbane were very big way - they carried all materials (as well as veils) and had dressmakers. You chose your materials and style and Mrs Klump, the dressmaker made all the bridal wear and also Minnie's travelling outfit. Her head piece and veil came from there as well. The veil was lent to six other brides.

Ernie's suit was black and he had a white shirt, white bow tie and white kid gloves. Minnie's travelling outfit was a navy suit, (mid-calf length, pink crepe-de-chene blouse and black shoes). There were no coloured shoes or stockings at that time.

Ettie always had trouble getting shoes as she had a very high instep. Her father Edward said she nearly broke him buying shoes - three nights dancing and they were worn out. You could look behind the door and see the pile of 'dead-heads'.

The first time Ernie saw Minnie: he decided that she was the girl he was going to marry. At the time he was fencing for the Trails' at Maleny. Dunlop owned the land. Ernie was busy fencing (he had to dig the post-hold very deep), when Minnie came walking along the road heading for town, he saw her and said to himself "There she is. I'm going to marry her". They officially met later at the "Good Templer's Lodge". Ernie was like that all his life - he made up his mind to do something then proceeded to get it done.

In those days, Ministers preferred the middle of the week for weddings so that week-ends were free for their other duties. Reverend Watts, who officiated at their wedding, was stationed at Nambour and travelled to Brisbane for the service which was on a Wednesday.

WILLIAM (BILL) & AGNES (nee SINCLAIR) CLARK

THEIR FAMILY STORY AND MOVE TO MALENY

Bill Clark and Agnes Sinclair were married at Shoalhaven on the 26/04/1883 and lived at Kangaroo Mountain, Nowra where their 6 children: Bell, Lizzie, Nellie, Stan, Minnie and Billy were born.

In 1902 they left Nowra and moved to the Hawkesbury River, Northern New South Wales. They stayed with Bill's brother, Dan Clark. There was a drought when they reached the Hawkesbury and they lived near a common where there were gypsies. Minnie did not like the gypsies very much or having to pass by them to get to school.

Bill and Agnes came to Maleny in 1911 with 5 of their children: Bell, Lizzie, Nellie, Minnie (at age 17) and Billy. Stan travelled separately. He had gone to Kingaroy first, as everyone in Lismore seemed to be heading that way. He got a job with the Christensen's, Danish people who were clearing the land and growing what they could.

They travelled by steamer to Brisbane then by rail to Landsborough - where they stayed at "Trail's Boarding House" overnight. They had breakfast, left at 8am and arrived at "Rockview" Flesser's Road, Reesville at 4pm. They walked most of the way ~ Bill had a horse and buggy, but the track was very rough with boulders and big dips and ups and downs that Agnes, who was not very well, got out and walked and eventually they all walked. They had a timber home to come to at "Rockview", but it had taken 6 months to build as the weather had been so wet.

Alec Bryce had selected the land at "Rockview" and Bill Clark had borrowed 600 pounds from Mortimer in NSW to buy the land, which was 60 acres and partly cleared. He bought a mixed herd of milkers (25-30) and a separator. The cream was carted by pack saddle around Howell's Knob to the factory at Maleny 3 or 4 times a week.

Agnes, who had not been well when she left NSW, had not told the family how sick she was and died of breast cancer on the 15/8/1912. Bill Clark died in 1916 and was buried with her at Witta Cemetery.

"Tytherleigh's" were in Maleny when the Clark family first arrived in 1911. They stopped to have a look at the shops and couldn't think how to pronounce the name. Stan told them.

The Gardners were the Clark's nearest neighbours when they first came to Reesville ~ they used to ride through their property when going to Maleny. Tom Porter Snr came after the Gardner's and one day when Bill Clark was doing some fencing prior to starting up the dairy, Tom Snr rode through and said "And how are you today Father Clark?"

Neighbours in the early days either walked or rode horses to see one another.

Alex Bryce Snr grew corn which the children used to pick at the weekends. After they had picked it, they would knock down the corn stalks and play soldiers with them!

There were 8 children in the Alex Bryce Jnr family : Bill, Gordon (who died when young), Vernie, Jean (Shuttlewood), Nellie (Guthrie), Ethel (married and went to NZ, Joy and Colin who was a member of the Maleny community for all his life and passed away 13/06/1996 aged 73.