

HOME

ABOUT US

PUBLICATIONS

MAIL & FAX ORDERS

RESEARCH TIPS

QUERIES

DATABASES

SURNAMERS

FAMOUS KIN

BIOGRAPHIES

PHOTOGRAPHS

NATIVE AMERICANS

AFRICAN-AMERICANS

NORTHEASTERN U.S.

MIDWESTERN U.S.

SOUTHERN U.S.

WESTERN U. S.

BRITISH ISLES

EUROPE

UPDATES

SHOW ORDER

INFO

HELP

SEARCH

INDEX

Y! SHOPPING

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[Return to [introduction](#)]

LAFAYETTE W. CLARKE

LAFAYETTE W. CLARKE is the owner of one of the fine and productive farms of Grayson county not far from the city of Denison and his property presents a splendid and attractive appearance because of the excellent crops produced along agricultural and horticultural lines. It is an indication of man's triumph over nature or rather shows how the two forces may go hand in hand, producing the best results.

Mr. Clarke is a native of Michigan, born in 1840, and is a representative of one of the oldest families of New England, his original American ancestor having come to the new world on the Mayflower. His parents were **Ebenezer** and **Sarah A. (Wood) Clarke**. The father was twice married, his first union being with **Miss Jemima Beviere**, of New York, by whom he had two children, one yet living, **Henry G. Clarke**, who resides in Michigan. By the second marriage there were seven children, namely: **Lafayette, Sarah, Jemima, Charles, Burdette, Jennie** and **Clemence**. The father was a lawyer by profession but not finding practice at the bar congenial, he turned his attention to merchandising and became one of the early prominent and honored settlers of Oakland county, Michigan, the village of Clarkston being named in his honor. He died in Michigan at the age of fifty-six years, the mother passing away in Texas at the age of sixty-five years while visiting her son Lafayette, her remains being interred in the cemetery at Sherman.

Lafayette W. Clarke was reared under the parental roof, his boyhood days being divided between play and work, and after the outbreak of the Civil war he responded to the country's call for troop, enlisting in 1864 in the Ninth Michigan Cavalry as second lieutenant. He was promoted to the rank of first lieutenant in the same regiment and served for eighteen months as a loyal defender of the Union cause, being mustered out in North Carolina on the 21st of July, 1865.

When the war was over Mr. Clarke became a resident of Missouri, where he purchased a farm and made his home for a few years. On the 12th of November, 1872, he arrived in Denison, Texas, and was soon afterward joined by his family, at which time they took up their abode in Sherman. There he was engaged in the ice business for ten years and with others established an ice plant in Denison under the firm name of the Arctic Ice Company, Mr. Clarke becoming general manager of the business. He established ten different agencies in as many towns in this part of the country and traveled quite extensively for the company in introducing its

product and managing its business interests. He was the active member of the firm and it was largely due to his capable control that an extensive and profitable business was developed, but at length he retired from that line of manufacture. In 1880 Mr. Clarke was engaged in contracting and building in Sherman and so continued successfully until 1883. In the latter year he removed to where he now resides, about two and a half miles southwest of Denison, where he has one hundred and twenty acres of valuable land, of when ninety acres is under cultivation, being largely devoted to fruit raising. This farm is conveniently located two and a half miles from Denison in the Hyde Park district and Mr. Clarke has one of the finest apple orchards in the southwest, containing about three thousand trees. These are seven years old and bear a good crop almost every year. He also has five thousand peach trees; and in fact forty acres is devoted to fruit growing, including pears, apples, peaches and plums. Around the greater part of his farm he has a hedge fence of plum trees, which bear a good crop each year, so that he usually markets several hundred bushels annually. He sent several bushels of Jonathan apples to the Texas exhibit at the Louisiana Purchase Exhibition at St. Louis in 1904 and they received flattering attention from fruit growers from all parts of the country, being pronounced as fine as any shown. Mr. Clarke produces practically everything that can be grown in any country and obtains a profitable yield of everything which he plants. His land is very productive, lays well and is well watered and drained. He is gradually improving the farm and continually adding to his orchard and berry production and at the same time he annually sells a large amount of garden produce.

On the 9th of December, 1863, was celebrated the marriage of Lafayette W. Clarke and **Miss Helen R. McClennan**, a daughter of **William E.** and **Emeline (Miller) McClennan**. Her mother, who was born September 4, 1809, is still living, making her home with Mr. and Mrs. Clarke, but the father, who was born January 18, 1804, died in 1881 at the age of seventy-seven years. Mr. and Mrs. Clarke have two sons and three daughters: **Grace**, who is the wife of **George Odell** and has one child, **Florence; Burt S.**, who married **Leonia Lallier** and has three sons and two daughters, **Gladys, Leon, Frank, Kenneth** and **Esther; Florence**, who is at home; **Henry N.**, who married **Emma Leslie** and has three children, **Margaret, Joan** and **Nelson; and Nellie L.**, who is the wife of **Samuel R. Hollingsworth**.

In his political views Mr. Clarke is a stalwart and earnest Republican and was nominated for the legislature by his party in the fall of 1904. He is a member of Oglesby Post, G. A. R., of Dallas, Texas, and also of the Masonic fraternity. He is doing much to demonstrate the value of Texas soil for fruit production and is promoting the general prosperity while advancing individual interests. His salient characteristics are his strength of purpose, his unremitting diligence and his determination to carry forward to successful completion whatever he undertakes, for in his business career he brooks no obstacles that can be overcome by determined energy and honorable labor.

B. B. Paddock, *History and Biographical Record of North and West Texas*, Vol. I (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Co., 1906), pp. 585- 586.

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