

# Clarke, Joseph

## (1818–1908)

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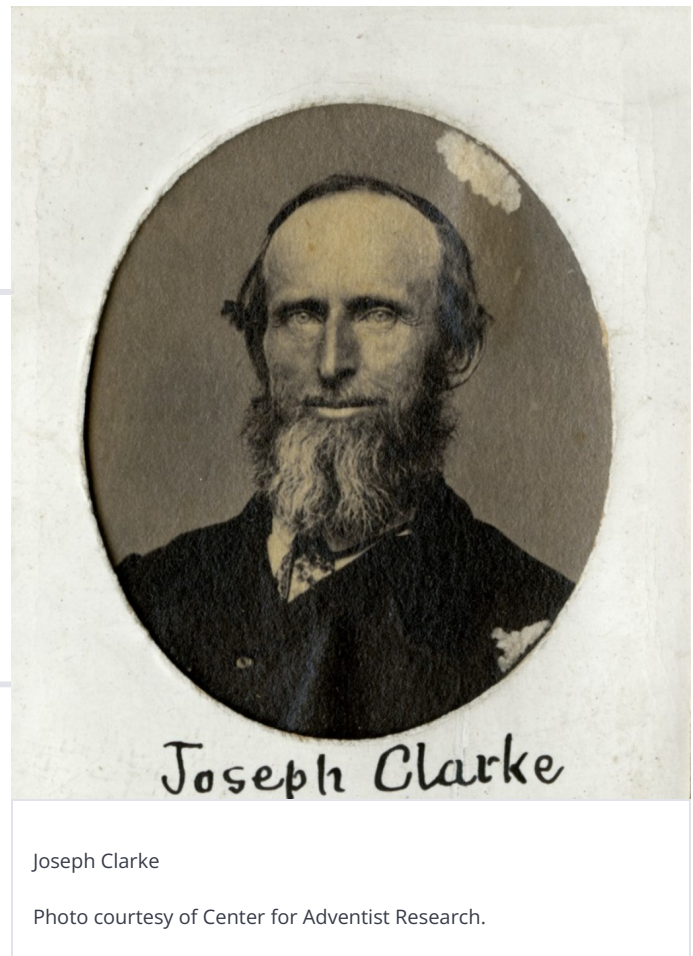
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Joseph Clarke was one of the most influential Adventist laypersons in the nineteenth century. A gifted writer who published hundreds of articles in denominational periodicals,<sup>1</sup> he was a radical reformer who advocated for the abolition of slavery, equal rights and righteous voting, among many other reforms.

### Early Life (1818–1845)

The second of seven children, Joseph Clarke was born on February 18, 1818, to Samuel Clarke VI and Ann Stebbins in Northampton, Hampshire County, Massachusetts.<sup>2</sup> Sometime later, the Clarkes moved to Gorham, Maine,<sup>3</sup> and when Joseph was about 15 his family moved west and settled in Wood County, Ohio, near Jackson. After a year or two in that location the family moved north about ten miles to Milton and in 1836 they moved another ten miles northeast to the township of Plain.<sup>4</sup> Ann Clarke passed away in Plain on October 26, 1853,<sup>5</sup> and Samuel married Aurelia Woodbury on October 4, 1854. Samuel and Aurelia moved about six miles east to Bowling Green about this time and in May 1855 Samuel sold his 80-acre "Prairie Farm" in Plain.<sup>6</sup>

Samuel Clarke was a farmer of modest means, but also valued education and religion highly. In the mid-1840s, Clarke erected a log cabin on his farm in Plain as a school for the community.<sup>7</sup> Clarke was a minister as well and wanted his son, Joseph, to follow suit.<sup>8</sup> As soon as Joseph was able, his father "induce[d] him to read the Bible by giving him premiums"<sup>9</sup> and had him memorize *The Shorter Catechism of the Westminster Assembly of Divines*



In about 1827, when Joseph was nine years old, he was reciting the catechism to his father when he came to question 59, which asked, “Which day of the seven hath God appointed to be the weekly Sabbath?” The stated answer asserted, “God appointed the seventh day of the week to be the weekly Sabbath; and the first day of the week ever since . . . which is the Christian Sabbath.”<sup>10</sup> Dissatisfied, Joseph pressed his father with questions, but was not convinced by his reasoning. This continued for some time until “inquiries and scruples gave pain to [his] parents” and began to strain their relationship.<sup>11</sup>

Joseph Clarke later told a story of a young “boy of ten or twelve years” who became “dissatisfied with the plans of his parents as to his education and future life,” which was likely a recounting of his own past. If so, then Clarke rebelled against his parents and “professed himself an infidel in his principles.” Not willing to tolerate disrespect, his parents induced their son’s tutor to “apply the rod” until he “recanted his principles, and professed clearly his confidence in the word of God.”<sup>12</sup> Joseph Clarke “joined the Congregational church of Gorham, Maine, Sept. 4, 1831, at the age of thirteen.”<sup>13</sup>

Joseph grew to manhood learning to balance hard work on a farm with critical study and spiritual growth. In the fall of 1843, he continued his formal education at Western Reserve College in Hudson, Ohio (now Case Western Reserve University). The college was affiliated with the Presbyterian Church and was widely recognized as “the Yale of the west.”<sup>14</sup> Joseph attended classes for two years with his brother John. During their first year they were in the preparatory department in the classical program and in the freshman class during their second year. According to the college *Catalogue*, students were only admitted into the freshman class after passing examinations “in English Grammar, Geography, Arithmetic, Andrews and Stoddard’s Latin Grammar, Andrews’ Latin Exercises, Cicero’s Select Orations, Sallust, Virgil, Sophocles’ Greek Grammar, the Four Gospels, and Jacob’s, Colton’s or Felton’s Greek Reader.” Students accepted into the program spent their freshman year studying Xenophon’s *Cyropædia*, Livy’s *The History of Rome*, Homer’s *Iliad*, the works of Horace, and Charles Davies’ *Elementary Algebra*, *Practical Geometry*, and *Elements of Analytical Geometry*. Though John Clarke continued for a third year in the sophomore class, Joseph ended his formal education after two years to begin his career as a farmer and teacher.<sup>15</sup>

## A Farmer-Teacher (1845–1851)

Joseph Clarke worked as a farmer and served as schoolmaster during the winters his entire working life. His teaching career began in the winter of 1845–1846, probably in the log schoolhouse that his father built on his land about the same time.<sup>16</sup> Clarke was a member of the Teachers’ Institute in Wood County, Ohio, and served as an officer in 1868.<sup>17</sup> In 1868, Wood County, Ohio, had 67 certified teachers and Joseph and John Clarke were two of the four first-class teachers in the county. This meant that they received a two-year certification—the highest at the time—as opposed to teachers who received a six-month (33 teachers), 12-month (26 teachers), or 18-month certification (four teachers).<sup>18</sup> Evidently, Joseph and John Clarke were two of the most educated men

in the Wood County, Ohio.

In about 1849, Clarke started his own farm between Portage and Liberty (near New Westfield) in Wood County, Ohio,<sup>19</sup> and became a successful and respected farmer in his community. "By 1849, Ohio produced more corn than any other state, and ranked second in wheat production."<sup>20</sup> Corn and wheat were Clarke's primary cash crops, but he was also an innovative farmer who cultivated a variety of new crops in his region. In the 1840s, for example, he conducted a lucrative four-year experiment in which he planted 112 kinds of peaches, 83 of plums, 115 of pears, 112 of apples, 60 of cherries, 15 of nectarines, 12 of apricots, 4 of figs, 30 of grapes, 4 of strawberries, and 8 of raspberries on only five acres of land.<sup>21</sup> His farm continued to grow and in 1860, it was valued at \$1,500 and he employed three workers.<sup>22</sup> In addition to managing his own farm, Clarke was a founding member of the Wood County Agricultural Society that was organized in Bowling Green on June 9, 1851, and participated in the society's agricultural fairs.<sup>23</sup>

On February 28, 1850, Joseph Clarke married Sarah Haskins in Portageville, Ohio. Rev. Thomas Holmes, a Christian Connection minister, performed the ceremony.<sup>24</sup> The Clarkes never had any children.

## Conversion to Seventh-day Adventism (1852–1857)

The Sabbath question continued to agitate Joseph Clarke's mind until about 1852, when he finally "laid aside [his] infant baptism, and Papal Sunday, and was baptized by immersion, and adopted the true Sabbath." Clarke was not baptized into a Sabbath-keeping church, however, and in his isolation he became discouraged and backslidden "for a year or more." In the early spring of 1855, he met a Seventh-day Adventist lecturer, who gave him a copy of the *Review and Herald*.<sup>25</sup> In April, he wrote to the *Review* and inquired about Adventist views regarding the immortality of the soul and asked the editors if they knew of any other Sabbath-keeping Christians. The editors informed him of the Seventh Day Baptist *Sabbath Recorder*,<sup>26</sup> which he immediately subscribed to as well. Clarke compared the two periodicals over the next few months, but found the *Recorder* to be "rather lukewarm in its support of the Sabbath" and let his subscription lapse.<sup>27</sup> By late summer, Clarke was distributing Adventist literature and doing his part to keep the "little band of First-day breakers" in the Portage-Liberty community united.<sup>28</sup>

Clarke became a Seventh-day Adventist in 1855, but he did not embrace all of the church's teachings immediately. He took his time and commenced "a systematic study of the Bible" through the aid of Adventist literature. As late as 1857 he still believed in universal salvation and "could not see the sense of the Sanctuary and Third Angel's Message at all."<sup>29</sup> Nevertheless, he gradually "laid by many errors, and joyfully embraced the present truth on all points."<sup>30</sup> Clarke remained an active Adventist for the rest of his life, seeking every opportunity to share his faith.<sup>31</sup>

## A Radical Reformer and Influential Layman in the Church (1857–1877)

Joseph Clarke began his writing career for the Adventist Church in 1857 with an article titled, "You Will Vote at Our Spring Election, Won't You," which was published in the *Review* on April 23. Clarke introduced himself as a progressive thinker with "no party to build up, nor sectarian views to uphold." He spoke out as a radical abolitionist and perfectionist. He railed against the law that stated that African Americans in the South were only three-fifths of a person and castigated the 1850 Fugitive Slave Law as "a damning feature of this our vaunted free government."<sup>32</sup> The United States had "from the first sanctioned" slavery and "from the first been destructive of the true interests of the unfortunate Red Man." For these (and other) reasons, Clarke condemned the national "government as antichristian" and advocated political comeouterism and righteous voting, stating, "If I enter the lists as a voter, I do in fact endorse this government as worthy of fellowship. . . . Let me 'come out and be separate,' and 'have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness.'"<sup>33</sup>

During the Civil War, Clarke assisted the Union cause by growing sugar on his farm. Prior to this time, the North had imported much of its sugar from slave plantations in the South. When the war broke out, however, Clarke began to experiment with Chinese sugar cane to reduce the need for domestic or foreign imports. Once he had successfully harvested his first crop, he published instructions so that other Ohio farmers could follow suit.<sup>34</sup> Clarke also encouraged men to enlist in the military, and asked God's blessing upon the Union Army. He wrote in the Republican *Weekly Perrysburg (OH) Journal*, "Let union against southern perfidy pervade all hearts. May the God of battles speed the arrow to the heart of treason, and give aid and comfort to the Chief Executive and his true hearted supporters, in the present great struggle."<sup>35</sup> At first, he also wanted to see "a regiment of Sabbath-keepers" enlist in the army, but by the fall of 1862 he had given up this dream, though he continued to maintain that the Civil War was a just war.<sup>36</sup>

During Reconstruction, Clarke expressed his radical political views through another article in the *Review* on righteous voting. Though slavery was abolished, the Radical Republicans were losing power in Washington and the polls indicated that it was a close race between Republican Rutherford B. Hayes and Democrat Samuel J. Tilden. Clarke recognized that Hayes needed a clear victory if Reconstruction were to continue and he reminded his fellow Adventists that "God's people are free to stand up in defense of freedom and of right" and that God "likes to see them outspoken as possible, with prudence, in behalf of the truth, and in defense of the oppressed." Since the cause was just, Adventists "may deposit a ballot quietly in the box in behalf of freedom."<sup>37</sup> Unfortunately, though Hayes narrowly won the 1876 presidential election, his victory was determined by the Compromise of 1877 which effectively brought an end to Radical Reconstruction.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church organized during the Civil War and Clarke played an important role in that process in the state of Ohio. In the late 1850s and early 1860s, Sabbatarian Adventists in Ohio were particularly divided regarding denominational organization and the name "Seventh-day Adventist." Clarke was an ardent supporter of both and spoke out against the anti-organization Adventists in his state<sup>38</sup> and helped organize the Ohio Conference in 1861. He was elected conference secretary at this time,<sup>39</sup> but due to disunion among Adventists in Ohio, the conference had to be reorganized in May 1863. Clarke was an elected member of the

executive committee,<sup>40</sup> but in 1864 he became conference secretary again and held that position until the eighth annual session of the Ohio Conference met in September 1870. At this time, Clarke continued to serve Ohio as an elected member of the auditing committee for another conference year.<sup>41</sup>

Joseph Clarke was a layman and never received ministerial ordination. In February 1862, however, he was elected (and likely ordained) elder of the Portage, Ohio, church.<sup>42</sup> In 1864, he attended the General Conference in Battle Creek as an official delegate for the Ohio Conference.<sup>43</sup>

Clarke remained a radical reformer his entire life.<sup>44</sup> He was one of the first, among Sabbatarian Adventists, to advocate women's rights through dress reform<sup>45</sup> and promote education. Speaking to those who defied the need for schooling, Clarke wrote, "Learning is not a god, to be worshipped, but rather a pickaxe for the reformer, as he cuts a passage through the mountains of error, and clears away the rubbish in his search for truth."<sup>46</sup> Throughout his life, he urged Adventists to economize their time and use moments of leisure for thinking, research, prayer, and Bible study.<sup>47</sup> He recommended that Adventists study a wide variety of subjects, including nature, history, philosophy, astronomy, the sciences, legal matters, and of course, the Bible.<sup>48</sup>

In 1864, Clarke read some of Dr. James C. Jackson's writings and adopted health reform. Joseph and Sarah promptly gave up tea, coffee, meat (aside from "a very small quantity of fish"), "hog's lard," and "highly seasoned food," in exchange for "grains, fruits, and vegetables," and the "two meal per day system." Joseph Clarke, now in his mid-40s, enjoyed his lifestyle change so much that he stated, "I feel as if I were entering upon a new life, with new strength of hope and faith."<sup>49</sup>

He also stopped relying on the traditional medicinal drugs, such as opium, morphine, and quinine. In about 1847, Clarke suffered from "terrible shakes" and his doctors prescribed so much "quinine, and calomel, and morphine" that the drugs eventually lost their effectiveness. He eventually recovered in spite of his doctors' advice, but, as Clarke stated, he had to pay "the doctors enough to buy a small farm."<sup>50</sup> On another occasion, his doctor prescribed "small powders of opium and large powders of quinine" when he was sick. Clarke accidentally mixed up his powders, however, and took a large dose of opium and a small amount of quinine. This concoction made him drowsy and came near putting him in "his final sleep." A friend noticed his predicament in the nick of time, but had to violently shake Clarke's body for about an hour to keep him from slipping into a coma. The shaking caused "a sound bruising," but spared Clarke's life.<sup>51</sup> In August 1866, when Clarke received the first issue of *The Health Reformer*, he took "all the old papers of powders, drugs, pills, &c." in his home and threw them into the stove. According to Clarke, "This resulted in an explosion, knocking the loose furniture from the stove, and filling the room with smoke, soot, and ashes." Though some things were damaged, Clarke quipped, "this was much better than if the explosion had taken place internally [after ingestion]."<sup>52</sup>

## Mission to the Freedpeople in Texas (1877–1878)

On March 19, 1875, Elbridge Rust arrived in Rice, Navarro County, Texas, and declared the state to be “one of the very best fields in the country for missionary labor.” He then described the land and people and encouraged those “thoroughly imbued with the spirit of truth” to move there and form the “southern wing of the great army of the Lord.”<sup>53</sup> In the fall, the Alfred and John Rust families joined their brother and in the spring of 1876 established a permanent residence in Deckman (now Grand Prairie).<sup>54</sup> A few other Adventists had joined the Rusts in Texas, including the sixteen-year-old Edward Capman. In the spring of 1876 Capman started the first known Adventist ministry for blacks in the south, teaching them to read in a small 12x14 log cabin that was erected near the Rust homes in Deckman, Texas. In May D. M. Canright observed Capman’s work and was so impressed that he declared, “[T]he time has come for labor among the freedmen” and asked, “Can a man and his wife come among them with a tent in which to hold school for the younger ones and meetings for the others, I am sure many would embrace the truth readily.”<sup>55</sup>

Joseph and Sarah Clarke had expressed interest in evangelizing the slaves before emancipation. In 1859 Joseph Clarke encouraged Adventists to move to Ohio and make “a general systematic effort” to spread Adventism west and south and he was particularly interested in using the river system all the way to the Gulf of Mexico so that “the message may find its way to the slave.”<sup>56</sup> The Clarkes’ continued to follow the plight of the freedmen after the close of the Civil War and Joseph publicly criticized President Ulysses S. Grant and northern Christians for not establishing “schools for the Freedmen in every town and village in the South” as well as for tolerating “every kind of lawlessness” against African Americans.<sup>57</sup>

Presumably, the Clarkes were also aware that Congress passed legislation that ended the Freedmen’s Bureau’s educational work in 1870 and that the work was now left with philanthropic and church societies.<sup>58</sup> The Clarkes were therefore primed when they read Canright’s call in the *Review* and further convicted when they read Alfred Rust’s report on the freedmen that was published in August.<sup>59</sup> On November 5, 1876, the church in Bowling Green voted to send the Clarkes on a “mission to the freedmen of Texas.” Though the General Conference Committee endorsed this decision, the Clarkes had to pay “their own expenses” and donate “their time and labor.”<sup>60</sup> Ready to make the necessary sacrifices, the Clarkes purchased a 12x16 foot tent and traveled by train fifty-six hours from Toledo, Ohio, to Dallas, Texas, arriving in Deckman on February 17, 1877.<sup>61</sup>

The Clarkes were both trained teachers and about the time they arrived Edward Capman resigned and returned to his home in Wisconsin.<sup>62</sup> While Joseph worked to establish their home, Sarah began to teach the freedpeople under their tent. Upon their arrival, two former slaves, Parsons Green Medlin and Fayette Jordan, began to build a schoolhouse for blacks.<sup>63</sup> The “humble” structure was soon completed and by May the Clarkes, who now both taught part-time, “averaged about 12 or 15 pupils” with a total of 24 names on the books.<sup>64</sup>

The Rusts and Clarkes were all laypeople and in early April 1877 they requested that “an experienced preacher” come “set things in order, organize churches, and fill the calls for aid.”<sup>65</sup> Elder R. M. Kilgore, former Civil War captain of the 71st U.S. Colored Infantry and son of an Underground Railroad operator, arrived about a month

later to take charge of the Texas mission.<sup>66</sup>

The Texas mission to the freedpeople was appropriately regarded as a “labor of self-denial and Christian philanthropy.”<sup>67</sup> During Reconstruction it was dangerous for a white person to work among blacks in the south. Canright called it “a distinct mission” because a white person could “not labor for [blacks] and for the whites too, as the white[s] would not associate with” anyone if they did so.<sup>68</sup> This prejudice was rooted in class rivalry as well as racism as there was no adequate public school system in Texas and many whites were also poor and illiterate. For this reason, many Texans feared that if blacks learned to read, they would gain power over the whites. The Clarkes had no desire to cater to the Texans’ prejudices, but reluctantly did so primarily because the freedpeople they were serving insisted upon it for everyone’s safety. They were unable to remain perfectly silent, however, and Clarke admitted that he and his wife had occasionally publicly condemned these discriminatory practices. The Clarkes were worried about the fate of Adventism, believing that prolonged labor in the south would entice Adventists from the north to bow down to “the Great Goddess ‘caste.’” He explained to Uriah Smith, “[W]e have found that northern people become tinctured with a fondness for the aforesaid Goddess of Caste, and as we are situated, it becomes our duty to speak out sometimes so plainly that the dignity of caste is compromised.”<sup>69</sup>

The Clarkes’ radicalness upset the local residents, who threatened to banish or murder R. M. Kilgore (the leader of the mission) and the Clarkes if they did not serve this “Great Goddess.”<sup>70</sup> These threats were serious: Ku Klux Klan violence had escalated in Texas since 1868 so that one citizen lamented, “The murder of negroes is so common as to render it impossible to keep accurate account of them.” Whites who endeavored to assist the freedpeople were also targets of hate crimes. According to historian Alton Hornsby, Jr., “The abuses suffered by the northern teachers who manned many of the Negro schools remained a grievous matter. These teachers, who came south with their aims of compassion and mission, strove to educate the blacks under almost impossible circumstances.”<sup>71</sup> The Clarkes stated that they “would gladly die for [the freedpeople],” but became convinced that it would be best to end their mission prematurely for the safety of everyone involved.<sup>72</sup>

Though somewhat discouraged, the Clarkes believed that “the progress of the pupils in their studies was good” and affirmed that they “shall never regret the year we spent in Texas.”<sup>73</sup> On June 12, 1878, they left for Missouri after serving the freedpeople about sixteen months.<sup>74</sup>

## Serving the Church in Missouri (1878–1898)

The Clarkes moved to Lowry City, St. Clair County, Missouri, in June 1878 and Joseph resumed his farming/teaching career. Shortly after their arrival, the Clarkes planted a new church in their neighborhood, which was officially organized with ten members in 1883.<sup>75</sup> During their sojourn in Missouri, Sarah Clarke became heavily involved in tract and missionary society work while her husband served in various conference positions as well.

In 1880, Sarah was elected secretary of the Missouri Tract and Missionary Society.<sup>76</sup> She was reelected to that position in 1881 and 1882 and in the latter year also became an agent for the International Tract and Missionary Society, working out of the branch office in Lowry City.<sup>77</sup> The Clarkes' farm sustained the family financially and as a result, Sarah refused to be compensated for her work.<sup>78</sup> Though she worked for free, Sarah was diligent in her duties and the society distributed tens of thousands of pages of tracts as well as thousands of periodicals during her tenure. In 1881, for example, the Missouri Tract and Missionary Society distributed 86,913 pages of tracts and 4,717 periodicals.<sup>79</sup> Some of the targeted recipients of Adventist literature were local college and public school libraries.<sup>80</sup>

Joseph Clarke remained active in church work as well. In 1882, he was elected secretary of the Missouri Sabbath School Association, secretary of the Missouri Health and Temperance Society, and secretary of the Missouri Conference.<sup>81</sup> Clarke was reelected to these positions in 1883 and after relinquishing these responsibilities, he served as the acting secretary of the Missouri Conference beginning in July 1885 because the elected secretary was suffering from poor health.<sup>82</sup>

In April 1885, the Clarkes took charge of the St. Louis Mission in its second year of operation and each received a colporteur's license at the Missouri Conference in November.<sup>83</sup> The mission was located at 2339 Chestnut Street in "a very pleasant, healthful, and central part of the city" and served the St. Louis community in a variety of capacities. One of the most significant goals of the mission was literature distribution. According to Joseph Clarke, "Much good has been done in placing the *Signs of the Times*, and other good reading matter, on board the passenger boats, and in the hotels of the city; and some good souls have embraced the truth."<sup>84</sup> Another significant goal was to build up the St. Louis Reading-Room in the public school library. Within a few months, the Clarkes had deposited several bound volumes of Adventist periodicals in a variety of languages, including *Good Health*, *Herold der Wahrheit*, *Present Truth*, *Review and Herald*, *Sanhedens Tidende*, *Sanningen Harold*, *Signs des Tempes*, *Signs of the Times*, and *Stimme der Wahrheit*. Once deposited, the Clarkes ensured that the reading room received new issues of these periodicals weekly and monthly.<sup>85</sup>

Superintendence of the mission also placed the Clarkes in charge of the Sabbath School and church services.<sup>86</sup> Within eight months of their arrival, Joseph Clarke stated, "Our little congregation on the Sabbath day numbers about twenty," seven of whom were new converts.<sup>87</sup> Though city missions like this one in St. Louis were sustained by the Adventist Church, Clarke encouraged Adventists around the world to get involved in mission work. He stated, "I see nothing to hinder any family of Seventh-day Adventists from beginning this noble work. Teach your neighbors by using the forms provided; thus each family becomes a mission."<sup>88</sup>

The Clarkes were accustomed to farm life in rural settings and remained at the St. Louis Mission less than one year. On January 25, 1886,<sup>89</sup> they resigned their post and probably returned to Lowry City at this time, remaining there until at least the late 1890s.<sup>90</sup> The Clarkes resumed their lives as farmer-teachers and struggled through the droughts and depression in the 1890s in this place. As always, the Clarkes drew strength from God during



times of trial and Joseph gained literary inspiration from such experiences. The Clarkes organized numerous seasons of prayer for local farmers, fervently pleading with God for rain. Clarke reminded Adventists that when Americans faced a similar crisis in the 1870s, people from all denominations gathered for fasting and prayer. “We had help in the seventies, in answer to prayer,” he stated, “and shall we not need rain in the year 1891? Shall we not make it a special subject of prayer?”<sup>91</sup>

## Joseph Clarke’s Last Years (1898–1908)

Depression finally ended in 1897 but Joseph Clarke soon faced a greater challenge: his beloved wife Sarah died in early 1898 and he was now alone without any immediate family. After her death, Joseph moved to Hamilton, Missouri,<sup>92</sup> and within a few years or less was residing in Battle Creek, Michigan.<sup>93</sup> He wrote his final article for the *Review and Herald* from Battle Creek. In this article, Clarke, a lifelong reformer, railed against advocates of Sunday blue laws. According to Clarke, those American Christians legislating for these laws did not realize that there was “death in the pot.” Adventists, like Elisha of old, needed to introduce them to present truth, otherwise the “terrible effects of the poison will be realized by and by.”<sup>94</sup>

Sometime after residing in Battle Creek, which may have just been a temporary stay at the sanitarium, Clarke moved to Ypsilanti, Michigan, to live with his nephew. In April 1908, illness brought Clarke to the West Side Hospital in Detroit. He passed to rest there on April 12 at the age of 90 years, 2 months, and 5 days.<sup>95</sup>

## Joseph Clarke, the Writer (1857–1901)

Joseph Clarke is best remembered for being a prolific writer. He began writing for Adventist publications in 1857. His first article appeared in the *Review* on April 23 of that year and his last published piece appeared on July 9, 1901. He was a regular contributor to the *Review* throughout his lifetime and also frequently contributed to the *Youth’s Instructor* (including the series of Sabbath School lessons he wrote in 1868–1869<sup>96</sup>), *Health Reformer*, and *Signs of the Times*. Other articles (sometimes reprinted from the *Review*) also appeared in the *American Sentinel*, *Present Truth*, and *The Gospel Sickle*. Clarke also wrote for non-Adventist periodicals, though less frequently than he did for Adventist publications.<sup>97</sup>

Clarke considered it his “weekly responsibility” to write for the *Review* and encouraged other Adventist writers to do the same.<sup>98</sup> Though he did not always meet his goal, he often did, publishing several hundred articles during his lifetime.<sup>99</sup> Many of Clarke’s submitted articles were not published, however, and the precise scale of his corpus will never be known.<sup>100</sup> Nevertheless, Arthur W. Spalding remarked that Clarke’s frequent publications “made him in effect a corresponding editor” of the *Review*.<sup>101</sup> Spalding’s characterization was not unfounded. At one juncture, when James White was trying to urge Adventist ministers to write more for the *Review*, he linked Clarke with this paper, stating, “J. Clarke of the *Review*, is not a minister, and he seems always full of something good to write for the *Review* and *Instructor*.”<sup>102</sup> At times, Clarke’s articles appeared with just his initials, “J. C.,”

which was standard practice for employed editors. Typically, however, his articles were written under the name “Joseph Clarke,” “Jos. Clarke,” or “J. Clarke.” Though some of the articles written under the latter name might be attributed to another J. Clarke (such as Joseph’s brother, John), Joseph Clarke authored the overwhelming majority of them.

Most of Clarke’s articles were short, but they covered a wide variety of topics including, matters of doctrine and theology, practical spirituality (e.g., worship, prayer, or devotion) health and reform, education, world religions, and history. He also wrote poetry on occasion<sup>103</sup> and oftentimes concealed his own experience, or the experiences of those he knew personally, within his articles under an anonymous identity or through the use of allegory.<sup>104</sup>

Aside from the Bible and numerous Seventh-day Adventist writers, some of Clarke’s literary influences included the Apocrypha,<sup>105</sup> John Bunyan,<sup>106</sup> Cotton Mather,<sup>107</sup> Jonathan Edwards,<sup>108</sup> Charles Buck,<sup>109</sup> Jean-Henri Merle d’Aubigné,<sup>110</sup> Thomas Babington Macaulay,<sup>111</sup> Charles Rollin,<sup>112</sup> and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.<sup>113</sup> Clarke regularly read local newspapers<sup>114</sup> and other popular periodicals, including the *New York Tribune*<sup>115</sup> and *Puck*.<sup>116</sup> He also read popular books, such as Fanny Kelly’s *Narrative of My Captivity among the Sioux Indians*.<sup>117</sup> Clarke’s diverse reading tastes and commitment to publishing reflected his belief that if Adventists were to effectively spread the truth, they needed to continually study history, stay up-to-date with current events, and share their knowledge with others.

## Contribution

Even if most Adventists never met Clarke personally, his contemporary, J. H. Rogers, affirmed late in Clarke’s life that his “standing in the message is well known to many of our old brethren.”<sup>118</sup> Many of Clarke’s contemporaries had a high regard for his articles, often thanking him publicly or directly quoting one of his eloquently crafted phrases.<sup>119</sup> Indeed, Clarke wrote so frequently that some Adventists mistakenly assumed that he was an ordained minister and at least one article appeared under the name “Eld. Joseph Clarke.”<sup>120</sup>

Like many of his Adventist contemporaries, Clarke was an active radical reformer. Before the Civil War, he was a radical abolitionist who advocated righteous voting and equal rights. He criticized the nation’s leaders when Radical Reconstruction ended in 1877 and was one of the first Seventh-day Adventists to educate the freedpeople in the South. He fought for women’s rights through his advocacy of dress reform and temperance and championed the cause of health reform. Clarke also lashed out against religious intolerance, especially when Americans were imprisoned for working on Sundays in the late nineteenth century. For these reasons, Michael Edward Dunn was correct in his characterization of Clarke as “one of the most important moralists and ethicists during his time in our denomination’s history.”<sup>121</sup>

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## NOTES

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3. Joseph Clarke, "The Judgment," *ARH*, May 20, 1875, 166.
4. *Commemorative Historical and Biographical Record of Wood County, Ohio . . .* (Chicago: J. H. Beers & Co., 1897), 320, 387, 427.
5. "Ann 'Annie' Stebbins Clarke," Find A Grave, March 26, 2011, accessed January 30, 2020, <https://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GRid=67468385&ref=acom>.
6. Samuel Clarke, "A Fine Chance for a Prairie Farm," *The Perrysburg (OH) Journal—Extra*, April 21, 1855, 2; Samuel Clarke, "A Fine Chance for a Prairie Farm," *The Perrysburg (OH) Journal—Extra*, May 12, 1855, 1.
7. *Commemorative Historical and Biographical Record of Wood County, Ohio . . .* (Chicago: J. H. Beers & Co., 1897), 323.
8. Ralph Stebbins Greenlee and Robert Lemuel Greenlee, *The Stebbins Genealogy*, vol. 1 (Chicago: Printed Privately, 1904), 286.
9. J. Clarke, "Deacon Cognatus," *ARH*, January 7, 1858, 70; cf. J. Clarke, "The Third Angel's Message," *ARH*, January 7, 1858, 72; J. C., "Experience and Observation," *ARH*, December 19, 1865, 21; Jos. Clarke, "It Is the Work of God," *ARH*, July 3, 1879, 13; Joseph Clarke, "A Cure for Infidelity," *The Gospel Sickle*, December 15, 1886, 182.
10. *A Key to the Shorter Catechism . . .*, 9th ed. (Edinburgh: James Gall, 1829), 105.
11. J. C., "Experience and Observation," *ARH*, December 19, 1865, 21.
12. Joseph Clarke, "A Cure for Infidelity," *The Gospel Sickle*, December 15, 1886, 182.
13. Joseph Clarke, "The Judgment," *ARH*, May 20, 1875, 166.
14. Though this institution was reputable, Samuel Clarke had apparently hoped that his sons would attend Oberlin College, which was closer to home and cheaper to attend. Cf. J. Clarke, "Deacon Cognatus," *ARH*, January 7, 1858, 70; *Catalogue of the Officers and Students of the Western*

*Reserve College, 1843-4* (Hudson, OH: Charles Aikin, 1843), 21; *Catalogue of the Oberlin Collegiate Institute, 1843-4* (Oberlin, OH: Evangelist Office, 1843), 29.

15. *Catalogue of the Officers and Students of the Western Reserve College, 1843-4* (Hudson, OH: Charles Aikin, 1843), 10; *Catalogue of the Officers and Students of the Western Reserve College, 1844-5* (Hudson, OH: Printed at the Office of the Ohio Observer, 1844), 13, 17-18; *Catalogue of the Officers and Students of the Western Reserve College, 1845-6* (Hudson, OH: Printed at the Office of the Ohio Observer, 1845), 13.
16. Jos. Clarke, "Prejudice," *ARH*, May 11, 1869, 157; cf. Joseph Clarke, "Rewards for Children and Youth," *ARH*, September 17, 1867, 211; Jos. Clarke, "Light," *The Health Reformer* October 1874, 308; Michigan, Certificate of Death no. 2053 (1908), Joseph Clarke, Department of State Division of Vital Statistics, Lansing, Michigan.
17. *Commemorative Historical and Biographical Record of Wood County, Ohio . . .* (Chicago: J. H. Beers & Co., 1897), 174-175.
18. D. A. Avery, "Teachers' Certificates," *The Perrysburg (OH) Journal*, November 27, 1868, 2.
19. Cf. *Commemorative Historical and Biographical Record of Wood County, Ohio . . .* (Chicago: J. H. Beers & Co., 1897), 394.
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21. "A Rich Fruit Farm," *Columbus Ohio State Journal*, August 28, 1848, 2; "A Rich Fruit Farm," *Brattleboro Vermont Phoenix*, September 22, 1848, 1; cf. J. Clarke, "The Farmer," *ARH*, May 8, 1866, 181; Joseph Clarke, "Our Need of the Spirit of God," *ARH*, October 21, 1890, 644; J. Clarke, "Present Truth," *ARH*, July 10, 1866, 45.
22. 1860 United States census, Wood County, Ohio, town of Liberty, roll M653\_1053, FHL microfilm 805053, page 36, digital image, "Clarke, Joseph," Ancestry.com, accessed June 19, 2017, <http://ancestry.com>; cf. Joseph Clarke, "Notice," *The Weekly Perrysburg (OH)*, April 17, 1862, 2.
23. *Commemorative Historical and Biographical Record of Wood County, Ohio . . .* (Chicago: J. H. Beers & Co., 1897), 178; "Election," *The Perrysburg (OH) Journal*, vol. 2, no. 15, June 17, 1854, 117; "[Appointed Committee for the Wood County Agricultural Society]," *The Perrysburg (OH) Journal*, August 25, 1855, 114; "Sixth Annual Fair of the Wood County Agricultural Society . . . [Garden Vegetables]," *The Perrysburg (OH) Journal*, August 21, 1856, 2.
24. Ohio, County Marriages, 1789-2013, Joseph Clark and Sarah Haskins, February 28, 1850, Family Search, accessed January 30, 2020, <https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:2QCJ-ZQL>.
25. J. Clarke, "The Third Angel's Message," *ARH*, January 7, 1858, 72.
26. "Business," *ARH*, April 17, 1855, 216.

27. J. C., "Experience and Observation," *ARH*, December 19, 1865, 21; cf. Joseph Clarke, "The Review," *ARH*, May 19, 1863, 200.
28. "Extracts of Letters: [Jos. Clarke]," *ARH*, August 7, 1855, 24.
29. J. Clarke, "The Third Angel's Message," *ARH*, January 7, 1858, 72.
30. J. C., "Experience and Observation," *ARH*, December 19, 1865, 21; Joseph Clarke, "Spiritual Gifts," *ARH*, November 26, 1867, 381.
31. Cf. J. Clarke, "Calling Things by Their Right Names," *ARH*, September 26, 1865, 136.
32. Joseph Clarke, "'You Will Vote at Our Spring Election, Won't You?'," *ARH*, April 23, 1857, 198-199; cf. Joseph Clarke, "The War! The War!," *ARH*, September 23, 1862, 134; Jos. Clarke, "Days of Fasting," *ARH*, March 28, 1865, 133-134; J. Clarke, "The Punishment of the South," *ARH*, January 23, 1866, 61-62.
33. Joseph Clarke, "'You Will Vote at Our Spring Election, Won't You?'," *ARH*, April 23, 1857, 198-199. See Douglas M. Strong, *Perfectionist Politics: Abolitionism and the Religious Tensions of American Democracy*, Religion and Politics, Michael Barkun, ed. (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1999).
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35. Joseph Clark, "The Present Crisis," *The Weekly Perrysville (OH) Journal*, October 3, 1861, 4.
36. Joseph Clarke, "The War! The War!," *ARH*, September 23, 1862, 134; Joseph Clarke, "The Sword vs. Fanaticism," *ARH*, September 23, 1862, 135.
37. Joseph Clarke, "Politics," *ARH*, December 14, 1876, 186.
38. J. Dudley, L. E. Jones, and J. P. Fleming, "Secession," *ARH*, April 9, 1861, 164-165; Joseph Clarke, et al., "Letter from Portage, Ohio," *ARH*, April 23, 1861, 181; J. W[hite], "Seventh-day Adventists," *ARH*, April 30, 1861, 192.
39. H. J. Kittle and Jos. Clarke, "The Ohio Conference," *ARH*, June 10, 1862, 13; H. J. Kittle and Jos. Clarke, "The Ohio General Conference," *ARH*, November 12, 1861, 191.
40. H. J. Kittle and H. F. Baker, "Conference in Ohio," *ARH*, March 10, 1863, 118; H. J. Kittle and H. F. Baker, "Report of Ohio Conference," *ARH*, June 16, 1863, 24.
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42. M. E. Cornell, "Report of Meetings in Ohio," *ARH*, vol. 19, no. 13, February 25, 1862, 101.
43. Ohio Committee, Delegate Credentials of the 1864 General Conference, 1864 GC Delegates (13721d), General Conference Archives; cf. J. Clarke, "The Meeting at Battle Creek," *ARH*, June 7, 1864, 14.
44. Cf. Jos. Clarke, "It Is the Work of God," *ARH*, July 3, 1879, 13.
45. Joseph Clarke, "Dress," *ARH*, October 29, 1857, 205; J. Clarke, "Hoops," *ARH*, July 14, 1859, 62; "Hoops," *ARH*, August 4, 1859, 88.
46. Joseph Clarke, "Learning," *ARH*, March 15, 1864, 126; Joseph Clarke, "Mental Improvement," *ARH*, March 16, 1869, 91.
47. Joseph Clarke, "Labor and Capital," *ARH*, December 18, 1894, 787; Joseph Clarke, "Work," *The Youth's Instructor*, March 17, 1880, 50.
48. J. Clarke, "The Farmer," *ARH*, May 8, 1866, 181.
49. Jos. Clarke, "Influence of Diet," *ARH*, March 27, 1866, 133; Jos. Clarke, "Eating and Drinking," *The Health Reformer*, February 1867, 109-110; Jos. Clarke, "Extract from a Letter to a Friend," *The Health Reformer*, June 1867, 173-174; cf. Joseph Clarke, "Health," *ARH*, February 11, 1858, 106; "Items for the Mouth: Appreciative," *The Health Reformer*, August 1868, 40.
50. Jos. Clarke, "Light," *The Health Reformer*, October 1874, 308.
51. Joseph Clarke, "More Opium," *The Health Reformer*, April 1876, 104.
52. Jos. Clarke, "Better than Pills," *The Health Reformer*, June 1872, 165.
53. E. G. Rust, "Letter from Texas," *ARH*, April 29, 1875, 142.
54. G. Tom Carter, *The 19th Century Odyssey of John and Judith: From the Battlefields of the Civil War to the Spiritual Battlefields on the Texas Frontier* (Silver Spring, MD: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Ministerial Association, 2007), 61-63.
55. D. M. Canright, "Texas," *ARH*, May 25, 1876, 166.
56. J. Clarke, "Ohio," *ARH*, July 21, 1859, 72.
57. Jos. Clarke, "The Freedmen," *ARH*, September 14, 1876, 91; cf. Jos. Clarke, "Genuine Liberality," *ARH*, August 15, 1871, 65.
58. Alton Hornsby, Jr., "The Freedmen's Bureau Schools in Texas, 1865-1870," *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 76, no. 4 (April 1973): 414.
59. A. B. Rust, "The Freedmen," *ARH*, August 3, 1876, 47.
60. C. W. S., "Testimonial," *ARH*, December 14, 1876, 192.

61. Jos. Clarke, "Our Field," *ARH*, March 1, 1877, 72; J. and S. Clarke, "Texas: Deckman, Dallas Co.," *ARH*, March 22, 1877, 94; Jos. Clarke, "Texas: Deckman, Dallas Co.," *ARH*, May 24, 1877, 166; Joseph Clarke, "Notes By the Way," *ARH*, September 26, 1878, 111.
62. "Wanted," *ARH*, April 12, 1877, 120.
63. Jos. Clarke, "Texas," *ARH*, March 8, 1877, 78; J. and S. Clarke, "Texas: Deckman, Dallas Co.," *ARH*, March 22, 1877, 94.
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