



Cornelia Clarke Obituary – Grinnell Herald October 1, 1936

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When Cornelia Clarke died Tuesday afternoon, scientist throughout the world lost a person whose services they had sought for many years. She has been one of the best scientific photographers known in the field of insect and plant life, and her photographs- all of them made in her own backyard or within a short distance of Grinnell – have been used far and wide to illustrate scientific papers, books and magazines.

The kitten episode, which started her on her career, is only one of many interesting events in her life. Cornelia, whose mother had died when the daughter was born, had been reared by her father, a retired farmer, student, traveler, and amateur photographer. They were inseparable, and the girl learned to know and love nature and had watched her father in every step of his photographic work. But she was forbidden to touch the camera. During his absence one day, the urge to take a picture of her kittens got the better of Cornelia. She took the forbidden camera from its place, lined the kittens up for their picture, and was just in the process of finishing the developed plate when her father came home. The excellence of her work brought immediate forgiveness and from that moment she was encouraged and helped by her father in the art of picture making.

Photography was just a hobby for the next nineteen years, taking the place largely of the companionship of other people. Then in 1912 Miss Clarke put her work to “practical use” by publishing a children’s book

(Peter and Polly; Doubleday, Page & Co.) illustrated with many pictures of kittens. Since then the photographs of animals, insects, and flowers which Miss Clarke has made have appeared in Sunday newspapers throughout America, England and Australia. Nature magazine has used her pictures for years. A year or so ago she was sent the manuscript of a book with a blank order for photographs with which to illustrate it. That book, a popular yet authentic scientific work which appeared last year, "The parade of the animal kingdom," contains seventy of Miss Clarke's photographs. A recent number of Natural History, the journal of the American Museum of Natural History, was profusely illustrated with Clarke's photos, and as a result she received just a month ago an order for a series of pictures for the London Illustrated news. She was, however, too ill to do the work.

Miss Clarke was born July 4, 1884, the daughter of Ray Alonzo and Cornelia Shepard Clarke. She was tutored by her father, was graduated from Grinnell College and then spent a year abroad in travel and study. She was honorary curator of the herbarium of Grinnell College. Severely injured several years ago in an automobile accident, she had been in ill health since. She died Tuesday afternoon, September 29, from the effects of cancer. Funeral services were conducted at the home this afternoon by the Rev. Robert Inglis (?), pastor of the First Congregational church, and burial took place at Hazelwood Cemetery.

Pallbearers were A.J. Breeden, Ben Tarleton, Professor J.D. Stoops, Professor H.S. Conard, C.L. McNally and W.L. Corrough.

The followings paragraphs descriptive of Miss Clarke's life are of special interest in that they were written by her a few days before her death:

"Cornelia Clarke, only child of Ray Alonzo Clarke and Cornelia Shepard Clarke, was born July 4, 1884. Three hours after giving birth to this daughter the mother passed away. Folks told the father that he couldn't raise a baby. He replied that he would show them. He invited his mother to come from Ohio and keep house while he took care of his farm and his baby. The mother and grandmother died twelve years later, leaving the father and daughter alone again. For many years they were almost inseparable companions and had many wonderful and happy times together in study, travel and photography. The father sold his farm and moved with the daughter to a pleasant home in Grinnell. Here new pleasures were enjoyed, until a sad automobile accident and subsequent suit wrecked the life of both. The father slowly worried himself to death, and the daughter developed cancer. She waged a losing battle with it at hospitals in Iowa City, Newton, Rochester, Grinnell and Des Moines, but after a few months of better health steadily grew worse again."

#### A Related Tribute - Grinnell Herald – October 5, 1936

It is an old saying that a prophet is not without honor save in his own country. The application is easily made in this instance. In Miss Cornelia Clarke, whose death was recorded in these columns last Thursday, Grinnell possessed a genius whose peculiar talent was not realized or appreciated.

That this is the case was probably due in large measure to the retiring modesty of Miss Clarke herself. No one could have been more unassuming. No one could have been less assertive. Miss Clarke lived with beauty. She saw the world through her camera lens rather than through the more distorted medium of

public praise and empty distinctness. She took her pictures, not because she sought reputation as a fine photographer, but because there was that in her which sought self-expression in this way. She was a born artist, but her medium was the camera rather than the brush and palette.

Probably very few of us realized the wide renown which her nature photographs had attained. It needed her death to bring these things to mind because she herself would never have mentioned them. It was left to those who knew and loved her and who understood her accomplishments to tell at least a part of the story after she had departed.

Miss Clarke loved nature as exemplified by animal life and flowers and insects. All out of doors was her studio and what she accomplished pointed out the beauties which we miss by not looking for them, for her photographs were taken in the same setting in which all of us move day by day. But we are blind, and Miss Clarke had the seeing eye.

We are glad that in the past we mentioned her achievements as much as we did. We would have mentioned more of them if we had known. All that we knew of her work was supplied by her pictures which occasionally appeared in rotogravure sections and magazines which we saw, but these were only the superficial reflections of her genius and incidental manifestations of her rare talent.

Cornelia Clarke should be remembered here not only as a photographer of superb achievements, but as a humble and unassuming lover of beauty. Her garden was an illustration in point. It has been mentioned before in these columns. During these last years of failing health, when she was forced in large measure to lay aside her camera, her love of beauty exemplified itself in her flowers. No more beautiful flower beds have existed anywhere. Her lawn was always lovely with fragrant blossoms and her greatest pleasure was in showing her treasures to those who came to admire. Many of us are sorry now that we did not go more frequently, for here was a shy and retiring nature, full of beauty and charm which was ready to expand and spread its petals at every friendly touch, just as her flowers did.

She has left us now, but she has left a legacy of accomplishment of which many older persons might have been proud and she has shed upon this, her home community, the effulgence of a rare spirit, devoted to beauty and expressing itself beautifully through its own chosen medium.

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(Continued on page 3)

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Cornelia Clarke should be remembered not only as a photographer of superb attainments, but as a humble and unassuming lover of beauty. Her garden was an illustration of her art. It has been mentioned before in these columns. During these last years of ill health when she was forced in large measure to lay aside her camera, her love of her beautiful flower beds have existed anyway. Her lawn was always lovely with fragrant blossoms and her greatest pleasure was showing her treasures to those who came to admire. Many of us are sorry now that we did not go more frequently, for here was a retiring nature, full of beauty and cheer which was ready to expand and spread its perfume at every friendly touch, just as her flowers.

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## Grinnell Herald-Register

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By  
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A. LOWRIE FRISBIE

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### A RELATED TRIBUTE.

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### LOOKING FOR A MOSES.

People of the most widely varying political faiths will find plenty of opportunity for self expression during the coming general election on November 3. The official ballot contains the names of nine parties. In addition to the two old standbys, the Republican and Democratic parties there will appear also the Farmer-Labor, Communist, Prohibition, Socialist, Socialist-Labor, Union and Independent. At least partial tickets have been filed under eight of these heads. The Independent column is reserved for eccentric voters who still are not satisfied and want to write in the names of some candidates of their own.

The number of tickets on the ballot is in itself an index of the confused political thinking of the present day. Every one is looking for a Moses to lead to the Promised Land and there seem to be many eminent citizens who are willing to be cast in that important role.

The thing for the American voters to do is to line the candidates up, look them over, ponder with fasting and prayer and then pick their Moses according to their individual inclinations. We have ours all picked out. The sun flower is a fine flower. We've always liked it.

When we picked up our copy of The Montezuma Republican the other day, sort of hoping against hope that we would find some news in it, we discovered something that moved us deeply. There on the first page was the picture of some fat guy, and when we looked closer to discover what it was all about, we were thunderstruck to find that it was a picture of us. We are uncertain whether to thank our friend Dave for the delicate compliment or to sue him for libel, for surely we are better looking than that picture indicates. In one thing we are sure that Dave is correct. "Not Miss Iowa" is the caption. He's right. We're not.

### SUSIE-



7:00 p. m. Community Singing led by Mrs. Verne Raffety.

7:30 p. m. Fifth degree conferred by Poweshiek Pomona Grange.

8:30 p. m. Sixth degree conferred by Iowa State Grange Officers. Announcing of Awards Closing of Labors of the 67th Annual Grange Session. Note Program subject to change, without notice.

Playlets, Duets, Quartets, Debates and other interesting entertainment, by the Granges of Poweshiek and Jasper Counties, will be interspersed during the afternoon and evening sessions. (Note 2; these Granges are asked to hand in their entertainment number, to the State Lecturer, the first morning, if they have not already notified her.)

Convention committees are as follows. The one named first on the list will act as Chairman. If he is not present the next one named will be Chairman.

Credential—Dess Martin, Arthur Bark, Reno Appleby, Floyd Knickerbocker, Chester Kline, Mrs. James Carradus, Mrs. Robert Ashby, Mrs. Arthur Cope, and Mrs. Walter Goreham.

Agriculture—A. P. Arp, James Leonard, Leslie Steen, C. W. Fraidley, J. S. Knight, Walter Goreham, L. E. Raffety, Chas. Curtis, Mrs. Elmer Iverson, Mrs. C. T. Baker and Mrs. Carrie Quire.

Taxation and Legislation—Chas. P. Starrett, W. G. Greenwald John Tiedge, Homer Burham Everett Wilson, Clifford Robinson J. D. Ryan, Mrs. Chas. Curtis Mrs. Arthur Bark and Mrs. C. W. Fraidley.

Resolution—Earl E. Campbell Otto Hatfield, Ralph Sparks, N. R. Paulson, Perry Turner, Mrs. Reno Appleby, Mrs. J. S. Knight Mrs. Clifford Robinson, Mrs. Elmer Achtemier.

Good of the Order—Donak Whittaker, Robert Ashby, Curtis Benskin, Elmer Iverson, Chas. T. Baker, Arthur Cope, Mrs. James Leonard, Mrs. N. R. Paulson, Mrs. Jetson Adams and Mrs. Curtis Benskin.

Auditing and Finance—Jetson Adams, Henry Lauber, Elmer Achtemier, James Carradus, Chas.

Waterloo Laundry

Tigers Tie Roosevelt

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