

Excerpt used with author's permission, from *1000 Years of Memories: The Remarkable Life Stories of Ten Individuals Who Have Reached Age 100 and Beyond*, by David Cohen

Clara's grandparents were from Wales and Germany and immigrated to the Akron, Ohio area in the early 1800s. Her parents divorced when she was just a youngster and she and her little were raised and nurtured by her mother. During this period of her life her mother remarried, and her step father entered her life. He was very nice and cared for her deeply. Life was good. She attended the Canton, Ohio public school system but in the second half of her junior year she decided that school was no longer important to her. She says to this day she does not regret not graduating.

Her first job after dropping out of high school was working in a flower shop in downtown Canton, Ohio. She loved meeting the public and the few dollars that she was earning at that time. Clara also played the piano and along with a saxophone and an accordion player they formed a three-piece band that played at a local dance club on Saturday evenings. She also was a good dancer and her specialty was the Charleston. On many occasions she and her girlfriends would roll up the carpet in their living room, turn on the Victrola and dance away. This all occurred in the late 1920s – the roaring 20s.

Because of prohibition it was difficult to find alcohol for sale. Being resourceful her family decided to make their own beer, They used real glass bottles with caps and her neighbors really enjoyed consuming as many beers as possible. This enterprise was not-for-profit, it was for consumption. It seemed that everyone was making beer and thought that theirs was the best.

Finally, by 1929 the good times had come to an end. The stock market crash had plunged the economy into the Great Depression of the 1930s. Clara said that it did not affect her family because they never had any money to invest in the first place. She never felt poor because they always had everything they needed, food and a roof over their head.

During the depression of the 1930s the government issued coupons for items such as coffee, Crisco, flour and the other basics of life. On many occasions she would stand in line to receive a coupon which she could in turn use to acquire the necessities of life. On a few occasions they even gave out coupons for silk hosiery. To her this was a real treat.

In the early 1930s Clara met her future husband Harold and they married in 1933. Clara was almost 21 and Harold was 36. They moved to Newark, Ohio after they were married in Wheeling, West Virginia. She remembers vividly driving to and from Wheeling in her husband's Model A Ford. It was winter time and they almost froze to death but apparently their love for each other kept them warm. In 1938 they welcomed their son Philip. Clara was a stay-at-home mom and did not work outside their home until Philip started college.

Harold worked for the Ohio Power Company as well as dabbling in the jewelry business. He was transferred to Mount Vernon, Ohio but eventually moved back to Newark in 1949. Since that date Clara has been a permanent resident of Newark.

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Beginning in 1955 Clara worked at the downtown Newark WT Grant department store and then the John J Carroll department store. She stayed in the retail business for the next 10 years. Eventually Clara got into genealogy as a volunteer at the Newark library for almost 30 years helping people discover their ancestors. People came to the library from all over the United States wanting to find out about their families – this was a very exciting phase of Clara's life. She says it was great fun to help others discover their past.

Her beloved Husband Harold passed away in 1978 and for 40 years she lived in and maintained their family home by herself. When Clara was 90 years old she was shocked when her dear friend Lori Brown asked her to accompany her on a single-engine Cessna airplane ride over Newark, Ohio. She had never been in an airplane before (and none since) and her only request was not to fly over Buckeye Lake because she was afraid of the water. This one-hour flight was both scary and exhilarating. To this day she and Lori have remained best friends. Today Clara spends her time as a resident of an assisted living facility in Granville, Ohio. She is a fellow member of the writing club as well as an expert euchre player. Clara has formed strong friendships and the residents and staff think the world of her