CLARKDALE, ARIZONA
Built Environment, Social Order, and the City Beautiful Movement, 1918-1920
by Helen Peterson

Clarksdale, Arizona, was a company town, planned and built to provide housing for workers at the United Verde Copper Company (UVCC) smelter. Constructed between 1913 and 1919, it was the special project of UVCC owner William A. Clark. In an area far away from large population centers, Clark built the town to keep workers happy and close to his smelter. A study of Clarksdale's built environment reveals how the City Beautiful movement and UVCC-implemented social and labor control converged in a remote and isolated environment.

Built environment is a term architects and designers use to "read" the buildings, structures, and other constructed objects in the landscape. Essentially, the built environment encompasses human-made structures, including both the exterior and interior spaces created by the structures. These edifices embody cultural constructions well. Any building is a physical representation of social and cultural influences present during its design and construction. Public buildings and spaces, in particular, reflect the power of the society that creates them. For example, the imposing facades of federal buildings in Washington, D.C. represent the power of the federal government of the United States to its citizens and to the world.

The City Beautiful social movement, at the turn of the twentieth century, promoted the belief that beauty, order, and a well-designed urban environment could improve society. The movement's success in Clarksdale is exemplary of how City Beautiful principles were applied in smaller communities with limited resources.

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planned and well-constructed town creates an environment capable of influencing human thought and behavior. Perturbed by urban squalor, proponents of the City Beautiful movement promoted hope and optimism, blended with the conviction of their own righteousness, to restore a sense of community and improve the lot of the less fortunate. The movement advocated comprehensive planning that incorporated open spaces and parks; up-to-date facilities; neat, clean dwellings; and aesthetic streets and walkways.²

While concerned with the aesthetics of urban architecture, proponents of the City Beautiful movement overlooked the underlying social inequities that formed the basis for the urban ugliness they deplored. They believed that the order and beauty their renovation projects created would uplift the attitudes of the lower classes and instill the desire to improve themselves. In this regard, City Beautiful was an elite movement that imposed a top-down ideal on lower economic and social classes and ignored racial considerations. Its primary influence came from the 1893 World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago, where architects, city planners, landscape designers, and sculptors collaborated to create their image of a perfect urban environment. Called the “White City,” it represented perfection in design as well as the perfection of Anglo society. Displays of Native American and foreign cultures, such as Moroccans and Moors, were relegated to the midway. Similarly, City Beautiful designers of the 1901-02 McMillan Plan for Washington, D.C., disregarded the squalor of the city’s back alleys and the plight of its African American residents in their efforts to perfect the Capitol Mall and other public spaces.³

Through the City Beautiful movement, the powerful attempted to shape the built environment in order to solidify their authority over subordinates compelled to live in the social, cultural, and political landscapes they fabricated. This was particularly true in early-twentieth century western mining communities, where company towns became created landscapes sculpted by powerful corporations and their owners to contain and control workers.

Mining caused rapid urbanization of remote areas in the American West. This unprecedented experience in a new environment set in motion rapid social, cultural, and political adjustments. Built environments in mining areas were significant because the overpowering physical appearance of mining district landscapes exhibited profound levels of environmental and social control. Mining and company towns exaggerated social interactions where so many individuals lived in a small, urban, isolated space. This compression of time, space, and location resulted in the formation of complex labor, class, and race relations.⁴

Historians debate the influence of company towns on social control. Towns that depended on a single company were dominated by that company, while social stratification was less rigid in areas where multiple companies operated. Company towns, through their built environments, emphasized social structure. However, company towns were more than just an arrangement of buildings;
they were also dynamic entities, shaped both by the industry that owned them and by social and class struggles among the inhabitants. As a company town constructed and controlled by a single enterprise, Clarkdale, Arizona, exhibited convoluted social and labor relationships. Its built environment not only influenced how employees reacted to UVCC, but also was a physical representation of how UVCC regarded its employees. William Clark planned and built a town that conveyed social concern at the same time that it enforced labor and social control. To this extent, Clarkdale was a western representation of City Beautiful concepts.5

An industrialist, philanthropist, and former U.S. senator from Montana, Clark was seventy-three years old when construction of Clarkdale commenced. Because the United Verde Copper Company was primarily family owned, Clark could direct the construction as he pleased—and he made the most of the opportunity. As historian Jeanette Rodda points out, “compromise and consolidation were not his style.”6

Clark acquired Jerome’s United Verde Copper Company in 1888. With Clark’s infusion of capital, it became one of the richest individually owned copper mines in the world. Subsidence of the ground under the existing smelter, the increasing depth of the copper deposits, and unquenchable fires in the mine eventually convinced Clark to build a new smelter. Between 1910 and 1912, the copper magnate purchased about 1,200 acres of ranch property along the Verde River, east and almost 2,000 feet below Jerome. Clark chose the site for its flat terrain and its proximity to water and construction materials—sand and gravel, along with clay deposits for making brick. Work began on a new smelter.7

Meanwhile, Clark decided that UVCC would build a model town at the site. He envisioned the new community as a bold contrast to Jerome, with its hodge-podge construction and haphazard layout typical of burgeoning mining camps. Unlike the usually company-built town, Clarkdale’s buildings would feature several architectural designs and brick, rather than wood, construction. UVCC chose brick because of the availability of raw materials, the reduced risk of fire—a constant fear in Jerome—and Clark’s desire to construct more substantial homes than those typically found in company towns. After initial layout and planning, town construction began in 1913. T.C. Roberts, chief engineer for UVCC, took on the job of directing the project. The company envisioned a community that would eventually accommodate about 7,000 inhabitants.8

UVCC hoped that Clarkdale would attract a more reliable and better class of worker than the transient population characteristic of most mining camps. R.K. Duffey, manager of the Upper Verde Utilities Company that serviced the town, explained that UVCC “realiz[ed] that a well-house, contented employee [was] an asset to the company.” UVCC denied the appearance of paternalism, arguing that its efforts to attract permanent residents simply made good business sense and that the benefits to the worker were byproducts of its corporate acumen.9

Despite the company’s statements to the contrary, Clarkdale’s built environment plainly represented Clark’s paternalistic attitudes toward labor and social control. It also conformed to the City Beautiful movement’s concept of aesthetic beauty that disguised social restriction, wrapped in the rhetoric of social betterment. While the town was aesthetically pleasing and solidly built, its design and architecture enforced a rigid social order on UVCC employees.

The specific elements of Clarkdale’s built environment underscore the influence of the UVCC corporate culture and City Beautiful concepts. The town consisted of three districts: upper Clarkdale,
comprising houses for supervisors and professionals, the business district, and a central park; lower Clarkdale, that accommodated the smelter workers; and Patio Park, where the company’s ethnic Mexican workers resided. The segregation of residents by job classification and ethnicity reflected UVCC labor and social policies, even as the design and quality of construction demonstrated the company’s desire to erect an aesthetically pleasing model town.10

The upper Clarkdale business district exhibited several prominent elements of the City Beautiful movement. A wide Main Street created a parkway effect, while cross streets and the central plaza provided vistas that accentuated both the town and the beauty of the surrounding mountains. Street lights, parking arrangements, sidewalks, and coherent facades displaying columns, pediments, and other neoclassical elements all referenced the City Beautiful movement.11

"Presentable shops" housed the usual assortment of stores. While the town was under construction, UVCC offered businesses the opportunity to apply for permission to operate in Clarkdale. The company eliminated competition by deciding in advance on the types of businesses it would allow. Once approved, successful applicants submitted a drawing of their floor space requirements. According to T. C. Roberts, the buildings were then "designed according to the individual’s requirements and were grouped according to class of business, but also with regard to scenic effect" (emphasis added). Following City Beautiful tenets, UVCC architects placed offices and lodge rooms on the second floors, so that buildings in the business district were relatively uniform in height, even though their interior and exterior designs varied.12

Commercial properties in lower Clarkdale received less careful attention. These included a pool hall/barber shop and a Chinese restaurant. A hotel, used as a boarding house for bachelor smelter workers, was located adjacent to the Chinese restaurant. All these
buildings were plain and rectangular, and lacked the decorative detailing of commercial structures in upper Clarkdale.\textsuperscript{13}

Regulation of commercial enterprises demonstrated UVCC's paternalism, as well as the economic and social control it exerted over the community. Clark permitted only three saloons in upper Clarkdale (although they are noticeably absent from business listings by T. C. Roberts in 1917 and by R. K. Duffy in 1930) and prohibited the operation of a red light district within the city limits. Men looking for that type of female companionship would have to travel to Jerome or Cottonwood.\textsuperscript{14}

The physical environment reflected UVCC's corporate hierarchy. To accommodate its supervisors and professional employees, the company situated upper Clarkdale higher than the rest of the town, a visible reminder of their social and economic advantages. Moreover, upper Clarkdale homes were sited on the largest residential lots in town. Streets were wide, leaving plenty of room on both sides for parking and sidewalks. Although the streets were initially dirt, the company installed paved crossing paths at the corners. UVCC planners placed larger homes on corner lots to anchor individual blocks. Decorative iron fencing enclosed each lawn-covered lot. Architecturally, the homes constructed in upper

Clarkdale between 1913 and 1920 were either four-room Bungalow or five-room Craftsman. Variations in brickwork and building style gave each home its own distinct character.\textsuperscript{15}

Upper Clarkdale homes also displayed superior quality of construction and careful attention to detail. Floor plans show that both the Bungalow- and Craftsman-style homes sported front porches, decorative fenestration (the arrangement, proportioning, and design of windows and doors in a building), ornamental columns, and architectural detailing. Facades of the homes were not flat,
but had variations in depth, such as bay windows, dormers, and porches, that indicated enhanced quality of design and construction.

A sleeping porch extended across the rear of each building. Interior amenities included a bathtub and a large kitchen counter, in addition to ornamental details such as arches and columns.\textsuperscript{16}

The 1920 U.S. census records confirm that upper Clarkdale residents indeed represented the higher echelons of society. They included the school superintendent and high school principal, smelter engineers and supervisors, and trades people. Very few residents took in boarders, and several listed housekeepers living on the premises. Only one smelter worker, Leslie Jolly and his family, lived in upper Clarkdale. But this is somewhat deceptive. Although the census lists Jolly only as a smelter laborer, a\textit{Yavapai Magazine} article from 1918 identifies him as the Clarkdale postmaster; his twenty-year-old daughter served as the post office clerk. Racial diversity was virtually non-existent; the handful of immigrants living in upper Clarkdale came from northern Europe.\textsuperscript{17}

As evidenced by the built environment, UVCC designed Clarkdale to favor the elite company employees. They lived farthest away from the smelter, their homes sat on the largest lots and were furnished with premium amenities, and they were only a stone’s throw from shops and the central plaza. Despite the unique and individualized architectural details, the upper Clarkdale neighborhood was both socially and racially homogenous.

Lower Clarkdale provided a different picture. Designed to house the smelter workers, the homes in lower Clarkdale exhibited little variation in exterior design and sat on lots 30 percent smaller than their upper Clarkdale counterparts. Even though duplexes were interspersed with single-family homes, all the lower Clarkdale residences were rectangular and displayed a uniform neoclassical design typical of City Beautiful installations nationwide. Fenestration, while adequate, did not rival the architectural detailing of the windows in upper Clarkdale. As in upper Clarkdale, sleeping porches stretched across the backs of lower Clarkdale homes, but front porches were absent. Bathrooms contained a shower, rather than a bathtub, and kitchen facilities were limited. Simple architectural details and sparse amenities reduced the original cost of construction by 30 percent when compared to a similar-sized home in upper Clarkdale.\textsuperscript{18}

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\textit{Lower Clarkdale, March 9, 1914, J84 13 125, Elliott photo, Jerome State Historic Park.}
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Census records reveal that most lower Clarkdale residents worked as mechanics, clerks, and laborers. They often took in roomers, including teachers and the town nurse. Lower Clarkdale also displayed wide cultural diversity, with residents representing more than fifteen different countries in Asia, northern and southern Europe, Canada, and Mexico. However, only four of the more than one hundred households in lower Clarkdale represented ethnic Mexican families. Curiously, the census lists a smelter foreman residing in lower Clarkdale, possibly due to a shortage of housing in upper Clarkdale; certainly the reverse was not true. While UVCC officials expressed pride in the quality of housing in lower Clarkdale, the built environment—with its smaller lots, lack of paved roads, and uniformity of housing design—clearly reflected a lower social order imposed by the company.\textsuperscript{19}

UVCC constructed Patio Park, some distance from lower Clarkdale and below the smelter, to house its ethnic Mexican workers. In fact, the neighborhood fell outside the town limits, across Bitter Creek and the railroad tracks from lower Clarkdale. While the neighborhood’s official name was Patio Park, residents referred to it more commonly as Patio Town, a derogatory refer-
ence to its residents and to distinguish it further from the “town” of Clarkdale. Where streets in upper and lower Clarkdale were named First North and South and Second North and South, and extended between upper and lower Clarkdale, Patio Park streets sported distinctive names, such as Fiesta and Siesta. Significantly, T. C. Roberts described Clarkdale as arranged in two districts, upper and lower, showing that he did not consider Patio Park part of the community. Despite its nebulous existence, Patio Park effectively was part of the larger community, since UVCC owned and controlled the neighborhood in the same way it did upper and lower

Patio Park homes, ca. 1917, J84-13-153, Jerome State Historic Park.

Clarkdale. UVCC demonstrated its control when it platted Patio Park streets to provide a “view” of the smelter, thereby creating a constant visual connection between the workers and their employer. Close proximity to the smelter most likely made living in Patio Park uncomfortable and unhealthy.20

The layout of houses in Patio Park was utilitarian. Each building, with its plain exterior, contained five two-room apartments, all under one roof and separated from one another by enclosed and covered breezeways (patios). Besides the patio, each apartment featured a sleeping porch. While UVCC employees complimented the apartments’ “pleasing appearance” and commended the company for providing its ethnic Mexican workers with homes that alleviated the summer’s excessive heat, the WPA Guide to 1930s Arizona disparaged the Patio Park apartments as “barracks.” The lack of exterior architectural detailing and the barracks-style arrangement contrasted unfavorably with the aesthetic arrangement of upper—and even lower—Clarkdale residences. Windows were few in Patio Park buildings and the lattice covering the patios appeared to have been tacked on as an afterthought.21

Floor plans show that each unit consisted of a living area and a dining/kitchen combination. The bathroom was situated off the
screened porch, and contained a shower/bath and toilet combination. Kitchen facilities were limited and there were no bedrooms. Workers and their families must have slept outside on the patio. While considerably larger than other Clarkdale residences, the five-unit patio homes cost 70 per cent less per square foot than the much smaller upper Clarkdale homes, suggesting substantially lower-quality construction.22

There is a commonly related story that Patio Park was a more pleasant place to live than upper Clarkdale because of the shade provided by trees along the Verde River. However, photographs taken after 1915, but prior to the construction of the second smelter smokestack in 1922, suggest otherwise. They show Patio Park situated in a treeless area (described as “sandy fields” in the 1930s’ WPA Guide), some distance from the river. Patio Park clearly held no environmental advantage over the rest of Clarkdale. If anything, because of their proximity its residents probably suffered more from whatever pollution the smelter emitted.23

According to the 1920 census, the families who lived in Patio Park were primarily of Mexican descent. The men worked as laborers in the smelter or in other low-level jobs. While the housing units were the smallest in town, more people occupied them. It was not uncommon to find six, or even ten, people living in one two-room unit. More so than the rest of town, Patio Park apartments were likely to house extended families and roomers. Among the residents who were not U.S. citizens, the majority had entered the country after 1910 and did not speak English. Many of them had children who were born in Arizona or elsewhere in the United States. Two African American families resided in Patio Park, the largest concentration of blacks in any of Clarkdale’s three neighborhoods. An upper Clarkdale family may have employed a “mulatto” servant, while another African American family worked as cooks in a lower Clarkdale restaurant and roomed with the owner. Other African American families, as well as Native Americans, lived in scattered settlements on the outskirts of Clarkdale and outside of town.24

While UVCC officials believed they had provided well for the tenants in Patio Park, it is apparent that social controls existed. Ethnic Mexicans and African Americans rarely lived in lower Clarkdale and did not live in upper town, unless they were servants. The built environment, city plan, and quality of home construction defined living spaces for each class and race of employee.

In addition to housing, Clark provided public facilities for his employees. Once again, Clarkdale’s construction reflected its builders’ adherence to the City Beautiful ideal of utilitarian, but graceful, solutions to sewage disposal, power and water supply, and recreational amenities. For waste removal, UVCC installed underground lines running to a septic tank and gravel purification beds that disposed of sewage in a sanitary manner. Electricity flowed from an Arizona Power Company plant to meters on each home. Water was piped from a spring, approximately three miles away, to a 500,000-gallon reservoir located about a mile above the town and then distributed to individual homes. The reservoir, an aesthetically elegant but utilitarian structure, held enough water
for domestic use and fire suppression. The sewer lines, water lines, and reservoir continue to serve Clarkdale today.\textsuperscript{23}

City Beautiful proponents stressed the importance of public parks as places where lower classes could mingle casually with the elite and experience the natural desire to better themselves. The absence of "keep off the grass" signs and the staging of city band concerts were expected to enhance the elevating experience for the masses. UVCC expanded on this belief by providing extensive recreational facilities for its Clarkdale residents—although probably more from the realization that the company had to provide such amenities in order to attract and retain quality workers than from any desire to elevate the masses. Even here, UVCC exercised social control by deciding where the city's public facilities were located and who could use them.\textsuperscript{24}

Clarkdale's recreational amenities included two swimming pools, two clubhouses, community playgrounds, a golf course and recreational area at Peck's Lake, a baseball field and grandstand, horseshoe courts, and four tennis courts. The plaza was the town's centerpiece. Featuring a bandstand, and planted with grass and trees, it was proudly intended "for [the] use of the people."\textsuperscript{26}

Here and elsewhere UVCC practiced both overt and subtle forms of segregation. Ethnic Mexicans swam in their own pool, located near Patio Park, while the remainder of the community used the pool provided for "Americans" (even though many Clarkdale residents of Mexican descent were U.S. citizens). The fact that UVCC officials expressed pride in providing a pool and clubhouse exclusively for its Mexican workers reflects the overall prejudice toward ethnic Mexican immigrants extant in Arizona, and Clarkdale in particular, at the time.\textsuperscript{28}

The golf course and clubhouse on Peck's Lake also enforced segregation, both by race and class. Membership was restricted to upper-level company employees; workers from lower Clarkdale and ethnic Mexicans from Patio Park were equally unwelcome.\textsuperscript{29}

The location of some amenities, while not technically segregated, implied social and racial segregation. The central plaza, with its bandstand, was situated in the almost exclusively white upper Clarkdale neighborhood. Going there would be intimidating for lower Clarkdale inhabitants, let alone the ethnic Mexican residents of Patio Park. The tennis courts stood across the street from the central plaza, while the playground—described by the company as a place for childish enjoyment—was adjacent to the golf course at Peck's Lake, where ordinary workers were unwelcome.\textsuperscript{30}

The fact that UVCC owned every property in Clarkdale strengthened the company's social control over its employees. All Clarkdale residents rented their homes from UVCC at a rate of five dollars per room per month, plus electricity and water; regardless of location, on a pay scale that ranged from $3.20 to $6.75 per day, depending on position worked and the price of copper. The company regulated what renters could do in the homes, prohibiting such things as nails in the walls, defacing of finishes, chopping wood inside the houses, and putting garbage down the sink. UVCC representatives inspected the properties monthly and made necessary repairs, so long as the damage reflected normal wear and tear. The company charged all other repairs to the tenant. Renters were forbidden to construct outbuildings, garages, or fences without company approval. Residents who took in lodgers were not allowed to charge more than the amounts set by UVCC. Company officials controlled the behavior of unruly children by threatening to evict their parents. Clark expected his town to be peaceful and respectable. Residents who did not follow company policies found themselves evicted and out of a job.\textsuperscript{31}

Although Clark and his town planners did not reference the City Beautiful movement directly, this analysis of Clarkdale's built environment suggests that much of its design and construction reflected not merely the cultural context of a company town and the social order imposed by UVCC, but also the influence of the
City Beautiful movement. It clearly reveals how the movement, and William A. Clark, while professing concern for the lower social classes, disguised social control and racial segregation within the rhetoric of beauty and aestheticism. Using the umbrella of the City Beautiful movement, Clark and other industrial magnates erected “model” towns that enabled them to impose their standards of conduct, cultural mores, and social values on employees who had little recourse except to submit or move on. For the residents of upper Clarkdale, perhaps life in a company town was not so difficult. But for the less fortunate inhabitants of lower Clarkdale, and especially the residents of Patio Park, Clarkdale may have been something less than a “city beautiful.” For them the community’s outward charm concealed an underlying social rigidity imposed by UVCC and William A. Clark.

NOTES


4. Francaviglia, Hard Places, pp. 99, 101. Since the City Beautiful movement primarily addressed class barriers, the article has focused on that topic. Obviously, gender issues also developed in a company town, but they are beyond the scope of this study.


6. Wilson, City Beautiful Movement, pp. 284-88; Don W. Ryden, “A Historic Resource Survey of Clarkdale, Arizona” (August 1988), p. 61. For other references to company towns, see Linda Carlson, Company Towns of the Pacific Northwest (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2002); Linda Gordon, The Great Arizona Orphan Abduction (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998); Peter Bacon Hales, “Topographies of Power: The Forced Spaces of the Manhattan Project,” in Wayne Franklin and Michael Steiner, eds., Mapping American Culture (New City: University of Iowa Press, 1999); John Harner, “Place, Identity and Copper Mining in Sonora, Mexico,” Annals of the Association of American Geographers, vol. 91 (December 2001), p. 660; Keith C. Petersen, Company Towns: Politic, Idaho, and the Pictorial lumber Company (Pullman: Washington State University Press, 1987). Although records do not indicate Clark’s direct use of City Beautiful design, use of its concepts is evident in more than the built environment of Clarkdale. In the Southwest alone, there were several examples of the City Beautiful influence: William Douglas of Phelps Dodge and Jack Greenway of the New Cornella Copper Company were Clark’s contemporaries and associates in copper mining in Arizona. In 1905, planner Warren H. Manning designed a new town of Warren, Arizona, for Phelps-Dodge using City Beautiful concepts. Shortly after Clark commenced the planning and construction of Clarkdale, Douglas hired the firm of architect Benjamin Goodhue to design and supervise the construction of a new company town, which became Tyrone, New Mexico. Goodhue was the principal architect for the 1915 Panama-California Exhibition, where he worked with Frederick Law Olmsted Jr., a landscape planner and proponent of City Beautiful ideals. In 1917, Greenway retained the architectural firm of Reney and Main to design a mesh for Ajo, Arizona, following City Beautiful models. A formal town center with plazas surrounded by formal public buildings became the standard for mineral mining towns. With the outbreak of World War I, the U.S. government assigned nearby Camp Hackberry to the U.S. Army. A small number of black soldiers were stationed there during World War II. In 1942, the U.S. Army took over the town of Hackberry and then returned it to the miners. With the end of World War II, most of the miners left Clarkdale and the town was abandoned. The town was not reoccupied until the 1960s, when it became a center for the copper mining industry. Today, Clarkdale is a vibrant community with a rich history and a unique character.


11. Wilson, City Beautiful Movement, pp. 42, 61, 62, 74; Gillette, Between Justice and Beauty, pp. 120-23.


18. Roberts, "United Verde’s Million Dollar Town," p. 545; Patricio Paylore, "Viva Clarksdale!" Journal of Arizona History, vol. 21 (Summer 1980), p. 113; "Four Room Brick Cottage No. 1," July 29, 1913, United Verde Copper Company, Clarksdale. The cost of construction for a fourroom upper Clarksdale home was around $2.10 per square foot. The cost for a fourroom home in lower Clarksdale was $1.50 per square foot. These figures are calculated from T.C. Robert’s cost estimates and from an estimate of home sizes based on construction drawings.
22. Roberts, "United Verde’s Million Dollar Town," pp. 544, 546; "Five Room Brick Cottage, No. 1, Right Hand House," February 6, 1914, United Verde Copper Company, Jerome. The cost of construction of the upper Clarksdale homes was around $2.10 per square foot, while the cost of a Pabst Town building was $0.65 per square foot. Even considering just the living area of the patio buildings, since the patios would be less expensive to build than the living area, the cost of construction for the patio homes was about $1.55 per square foot, less than half that of upper Clarksdale homes.
23. WPA Guide to 1930s Arizona, p. 332. The story probably started with Paylore, "Viva Clarksdale," p. 115, and has been perpetuated by subsequent authors.