

Lue Anna Brown Sanders Clark (1892-1992)

Much of what we know about Lue Anna Brown Sanders Clark comes from her own words, in the form of five oral history interviews that were conducted from the mid-1980s to the early 1990s as part of the Bloomington-Normal Black History Project. These oral histories are supported by additional documentation and are a valuable source of information about Lue Anna and life in the African American community in Bloomington-Normal.

Lue Anna Brown was born on January 26, 1892 in a rural area in Bandana, Kentucky, to William and Laura Brown.¹ Anna (as she was known to most) was the third of four children and was the youngest daughter born to the couple. Bandana is located east of Cairo, Illinois, across the Ohio River. William was born into slavery, the son of his white enslaver and his enslaved black mother.² William worked as a “house boy” (a young enslaved child who performed domestic chores in the slave owner’s house) on his father’s Tennessee plantation.³ He did not remember his mother very well because she was sold when he was young.⁴ William “thought he had a sister, but he wasn’t sure.”⁵ His enslavement destroyed William’s family structure. He was ten years old when slavery ended.⁶ Anna believed that her father later moved from Tennessee to Missouri (where he met her mother Laura), before finally settling in Kentucky.⁷

Anna was born in a dog trot style two-room house.⁸ She recalled that one room was used as the bedroom, and the other room served as the kitchen. A wide hall between the two rooms was used as a dining room.⁹ There was also an upstairs, which the family used for storage.¹⁰ The house had no indoor plumbing, which made it necessary to retrieve water from a well.¹¹ The house also lacked electricity, so they used kerosene lamps to light the home.¹² When she and her siblings were old enough, some of them slept in the kitchen.¹³

¹ “Lue Anna Clark,” *The Pantagraph*, April 6, 1992, 2; “Lue Anna Brown Sanders Clark 100th Birthday Celebration” program, BNBHP Collection.

² Oral history interview with Lue Anna Brown Sanders Clark by Mildred Pratt and Stephanie Shaw, 1986, 2; Oral history interview with Lue Anna Brown Sanders Clark by Mildred Pratt, November 13, 1986, 4.

³ Oral history interview with Lue Anna Brown Sanders Clark by Mildred Pratt and Stephanie Shaw, 1986, 2; Oral history interview with Lue Anna Brown Sanders Clark by Mildred Pratt, November 13, 1986, 4; Census records differ on William’s birthplace, switching between Alabama and Tennessee. The censuses place Laura’s birth at Missouri, Tennessee, and Kentucky.

⁴ Oral history interview with Lue Anna Brown Sanders Clark by Mildred Pratt and Stephanie Shaw, 1986, 2.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Oral history interview with Lue Anna Brown Sanders Clark by Mildred Pratt, November 13, 1986, 4.

⁷ 1920 census; Oral history interview with Lue Anna Brown Sanders Clark by Sharla Brown and unknown male, March 21, 1991.

⁸ Oral history interview with Lue Anna Brown Sanders Clark by Mildred Pratt, November 13, 1986, 1-3; A dog trot style house had a wide, central breezeway that connected two enclosed halves of a house, all under one common roof. If the house was situated properly, the breezeway provided good airflow through the center of the house. This type of home was popular in Southeastern parts of the United States, “Our Home Is An Old Dogtrot,” *Living Vintage*, <http://livingvintageco.com/2013/08/our-home-is-an-old-dogtrot/>, date accessed September 11, 2018.

⁹ Ibid, 1.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid, 1-2.

¹² Ibid, 1, 24-25.

¹³ Ibid.

Anna remembered her father was a strict man, who always taught her the value of work.¹⁴ Her father was a sharecropper on about 10 acres outside of town, but the plot “wasn’t big enough to feed the family.”¹⁵ He supplemented his income by performing jobs for other farmers in the area, such as hoeing tobacco and making lard.¹⁶ Anna admitted that she did not help on the farm much because “I was afraid of everything” and “stayed in the house most of the time.”¹⁷ Despite his inability to read or write, William always had money and owned their home outright.¹⁸

Anna’s mother passed away around 1897, when Anna was five years old.¹⁹ Afterwards, her older sister, Hattie, took an active role in her upbringing.²⁰ And for a brief time around 1900, Anna’s father remarried a woman named Mollie, who lived with them along with her three children.²¹ According to Anna, they separated after a year of marriage, supposedly because William’s stepchildren did not obey him the way he liked.²²

While living in Bandana, Anna attended a segregated, one-room school.²³ She disliked the quality of her education there.²⁴ The school term ran for just six months out of the year to allow students to help with farm work at home.²⁵ In particular, Anna remembered a long-tenured teacher, whom she did not like.²⁶ She said that “white people hired the teacher” and the parents of the children who attended the school had no say in who the teacher would be. She also remembered that “he was a man that liked music, but outside of that, he didn’t care whether you learned or not.”²⁷

Anna was free to patronize stores and other businesses in Bandana, and she did not have any specific memories of racial conflict. Nevertheless, the African American community remained distinct. For example, she recalled celebrating the “Eighth of August,” when her entire family would travel to Paducah, Kentucky, for an enormous celebration.²⁸ Many African American communities in western Kentucky celebrate the “Eighth of August,” an Emancipation celebration and homecoming when thousands of African Americans would travel to celebrate with family who never left. Its origins date to the 1860s. It has been celebrated in Paducah, Kentucky, since at least 1886. Anna remembered that because “the Eighth of August was a celebration of freedom,” her family did not celebrate the Fourth of July.²⁹ Furthermore, her father’s experiences as an enslaved child influenced Anna’s worldview. She recalled hearing her father and neighbors

¹⁴ Oral history interview with Lue Anna Brown Sanders Clark by Mildred Pratt, November 13, 1986, 10-11.

¹⁵ Oral history interview with Lue Anna Brown Sanders Clark by Mildred Pratt and Stephanie Shaw, 1986, 1; Oral history interview with Lue Anna Brown Sanders Clark by Mildred Pratt, November 13, 1986, 3.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Oral history interview with Lue Anna Brown Sanders Clark by Mildred Pratt and Stephanie Shaw, 1986, 1-2.

¹⁸ “Luannie Brown,” 1900 Census, ancestry.com. Accessed August 24, 2018.

¹⁹ Oral history interview with Lue Anna Brown Sanders Clark by Mildred Pratt and Stephanie Shaw, 1986, 1.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ “Luannie Brown,” 1900 Census, ancestry.com. Accessed August 24, 2018; “Anna Clark Celebrating 99th Birthday Today,” *The Pantagraph*, January 26, 1991.

²² Oral history interview with Lue Anna Brown Sanders Clark by Mildred Pratt, November 13, 1986, 10.

²³ Oral history interview with Lue Anna Brown Sanders Clark by Mildred Pratt and Stephanie Shaw, 1986, 2.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Oral history interview with Lue Anna Brown Sanders Clark by Mildred Pratt, November 13, 1986, 11.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Oral history interview with Lue Anna Brown Sanders Clark by Mildred Pratt, November 13, 1986, 13; “The Eighth of August,” *The Kentucky Network*, <https://www.ket.org/promos/kentucky/the-eighth-of-august/>. Accessed August 30, 2018.

²⁹ Oral history interview with Lue Anna Brown Sanders Clark by Mildred Pratt, November 13, 1986, 14.

talk about “mean” white people during her childhood.³⁰ “Many people talked so much about how mean the white people were. I’d go to church and the minister would talk about heaven and hell. I thought all white people went to hell, and all Colored people went to heaven.”³¹

Though the 1910 United States Federal Census reported that she lived with her father and younger brother in Bandana, Anna was actually living with her sister and sister’s family in Olmstead, Pulaski County, Illinois, where she also attended school.³² During that first school year, she did not have any books because her father was “kind of a tight man.... I just had to copy off some of the kids’ books at school.”³³ Nevertheless, Anna received an award from the Pulaski County Public Schools for being a “wide-awake pupil” and for “regular attendance and punctuality” during the 1909-1910 winter term.³⁴ She attended school until eighth grade.³⁵ It was not until 1936, at the age of 44, that Anna officially received a diploma, which was signed by William Brigham, Superintendent of McLean County Schools. It certified that “she completed the Course of Study prescribed by Law for the Common Schools of Illinois “and entitled her to admission to any high school in Illinois.”³⁶

In 1916, a 24-year-old Anna boarded a train for Bloomington to take a housekeeping job that a friend had arranged for her.³⁷ “I got off the train and went right to my job” performing housework for Albert and Anna Kitchell, an older couple who lived at 608 E. Washington Street.³⁸ Albert owned the A.M. Kitchell Company, a retail and whole sale confectionary at 209 N. Main Street in downtown Bloomington.³⁹ Fortunately for Anna, Mrs. Kitchell stayed home and worked alongside her.⁴⁰ Anna said that Mrs. Kitchell “would work till she’d practically fall out. She wanted to be the cleanest housekeeper in town.” For her work, Anna received four dollars per week, which was eventually raised to five dollars per week (\$91 and \$114 respectively in 2017 dollars).⁴¹ Anna cooked, cleaned, and did a little washing and ironing. She received a half-day off on Thursdays and a half-day off on Sundays. Anna said “all the girls who worked out in service” had the same days off. She worked for the Kitchells until her marriage to Isaac “Ike” Sanders on May 10, 1917.⁴²

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Oral history, 1985, 2; Oral history interview with Lue Anna Brown Sanders Clark by Mildred Pratt and Stephanie Shaw, 1986, 4; “Anna Clark,” 1910 Census, ancestry.com, date accessed August 24, 2018.

³³ Oral history interview with Lue Anna Brown Sanders Clark by Mildred Pratt and Stephanie Shaw, 1986, 4.

³⁴ “Award of Honor,” March 22, 1910.

³⁵ “Anna Sanders,” 1940 Census; Oral history interview with Lue Anna Brown Sanders Clark by Mildred Pratt and Stephanie Shaw, 1986, 4-5.

³⁶ “Diploma,” May 28, 1936, BNBHP Collection.

³⁷ “Black History in Residents’ Stories,” *The Pantagraph*, June 18, 1985.

³⁸ Oral history, Anna Clark, Henry Brown, and Luther Watson, interviewed by Mildred Pratt, 1985, 1; “Black History in Residents’ Stories,” *The Pantagraph*, June 18, 1985; “Lueanna Clark’s Career Spans Caring for Restrooms to Caring for Students,” *The Pantagraph*, October 2, 1987 C; Oral history interview with Lue Anna Brown Sanders Clark by Mildred Pratt and Stephanie Shaw, 1986, 6; 1915 *Bloomington City Directory*, 370.

³⁹ “Black History in Residents’ Stories;” “Lueanna Clark’s Career Spans Caring for Restrooms to Caring for Students;” 1915 *Bloomington City Directory*, 370.

⁴⁰ Oral history interview with Lue Anna Brown Sanders Clark by Mildred Pratt and Stephanie Shaw, 1986, 6.

⁴¹ Oral history, 1985, 2; <https://liberalarts.oregonstate.edu/sites/liberalarts.oregonstate.edu/files/polisci/faculty-research/sahr/inflation-conversion/pdf/cv2017.pdf>

⁴² Oral history interview with Lue Anna Brown Sanders Clark by Mildred Pratt and Stephanie Shaw, 1986, 8-9; “Lue Anna Clark;” oral history, 1985, 4.

Ike Sanders was born in Arkansas in 1878. He came to Bloomington in the 1890s and owned and operated several businesses during his lifetime. During the summer of 1916, Ike opened the last restaurant he would operate, the Working Man's Club of the City of Bloomington (also known as the Working Men's Social Club or Colored Men's Club). The restaurant was first located at 408 South Main Street. In order to open his restaurant at that location, Ike—because he was African American—had to get permission from the citizens and business owners on the 400 block of South Main Street. In the statement, the people who lived and worked on that block stated that they were willing to allow Ike's Working Man's Club to open.⁴³ The club was at this location for a short time until approximately 1917, when Ike moved the club to 1101 W. Washington Street, where it remained until he was forced to close in late 1919.⁴⁴

The Working Man's Club operated seven days a week from 7:00 a.m. to midnight. The Club "provided rooms, recreation, and food for the working man." At first, the Club was a "private affair." Men who wished to come in would sign their name in the book and give a \$1.00 annual membership fee.⁴⁵ However, Anna recalled that after a while everybody came in. She said, "You know how people are. They just rush in whether it's private or not."⁴⁶ The Working Man's Club had a restaurant, pool hall, barbershop, and rooms for men to stay in overnight. Ike and Anna worked as equal partners at the Club and also lived there.⁴⁷ Ike served as the President of the Working Man's Club (managing the pool hall, the barbershop, the drinks, and all of the finances), and Anna controlled the restaurant, which consisted of three small tables. Anna cooked and served customers whenever anyone came in, including at breakfast time. Anna remembered that they did not serve "fancy foods" such as greens, chitlins, barbeque ribs, or potato pie. Pig feet and pig ears were favorite menu items, but they "served most anything customers wanted including beef stew, hamburgers, neckbones," and fish every Friday.⁴⁸ They also offered Bohemian, Crown, and Budweiser beers.⁴⁹

The business served white, black, and Latino clientele.⁵⁰ Anna recalled that a lot of the men who came to the club worked in the coal mine or at the Chicago and Alton Railroad shops on Bloomington's west side. She went on to say that most of the men were married that would come by to buy their food and drinks before going home. She said that their Club was the only place in town where black men were able to stay overnight for \$1.00 per night. Men could stay by the day or the week. Women were allowed to visit and eat in the restaurant, but they were not allowed to stay overnight. Since African Americans made up a relatively small percentage of the local population, and there were very few black business owners in Bloomington and Normal, the majority of Ike's customers would have been white.⁵¹ Anna said the reason everyone came to their club was because Ike was well liked in the community. "We had a lot of white trade. He

⁴³ "Statement of support for Ike Sander's Workingmen's Club," June 13, 1916, Bloomington-Normal Black History Project, Box 12, Folder 7, McLean County Museum of History Archives

⁴⁴ 1917 *Bloomington-Normal City Directory*; The location of the club is an empty lot at the intersection of Western and Washington Streets., across the street from Retrofit Culture today.

⁴⁵ Membership card for The Workingman's Club, Bloomington-Normal Black History Project, Box 12, Folder 7

⁴⁶ Oral History Interview with Lue Anna Brown Sanders Clark interviewed by Mildred Pratt, late 1980s

⁴⁷ "Lue A. Sanders," 1920 U.S. Federal Census, ancestry.com, date accessed September 5, 2018; "Isaac J. Sanders," *Bloomington-Normal City Directory, 1917*.

⁴⁸ Emilie Krebs, "Black History in residents' stories," *The Pantagraph*, June 18, 1985

⁴⁹ Oral history Interview with Anna Clark, Henry Brown, and Luther Watson, 1985, 4-5.

⁵⁰ Ibid, 5; Oral history with Lue Anna Brown Sanders Clark by Mildred Pratt, late 1980s, 5.

⁵¹ Oral History Interview with Lue Anna Brown Sanders Clark, late 1980s; Oral history, Lue Anna Brown Sanders Clark, Interviewed by Mildred Pratt and Stephanie Shaw, 1986, 13-14.

[Ike] was a friendly type man, and everyone knew him, white and colored, and they came from all over town.”⁵² As a result of their business, the couple did not have a lot of free time and enjoyed any chance they got for relaxation, which usually occurred in the early morning hours before the restaurant opened. Their walks during that time would sometimes cover two or three miles throughout Bloomington.⁵³

The Working Man’s Club closed in late 1919, when an African American man named Henry Burton purchased the building and would not renew Ike’s lease. Burton wanted to subdivide the building and rent out all of the rooms.⁵⁴ Anna remembered that the loss of the business saddened Ike a great deal.⁵⁵

In 1920, William Brown, Anna’s father, lived with the couple at the West Washington Street location.⁵⁶ Shortly afterward, Anna and Ike rented a room on East Empire Street for about a year before moving to 322 ½ S. Main Street.⁵⁷ Between 1924 and 1928 they lived at 402 ½ S. Main Street.⁵⁸ A short time before Ike passed away, it appears the couple was living at 322 S. Main Street.⁵⁹ After Ike’s death on January 6, 1929, Anna lodged with George and Nettie Mounts, a black couple, at 907 E. Empire Street until 1932.⁶⁰

Anna worked as a women’s restroom attendant at A. Livingston & Sons department store (located at 110-114 W. Washington Street) from approximately 1919 until 1931. Part of her work maintaining the women’s restroom included dusting the “elegant furniture” and stocking paper supplies.⁶¹ According to Anna, a janitor did the heavier cleaning.⁶² Anna recounted that “sometimes they [shoppers] would leave their children with me. Sometimes they would give me tips for that. I’d just let them entertain themselves.”⁶³ Unfortunately, she was let go, along with many other workers, during the early Great Depression years because the business could no longer afford to pay her.⁶⁴

After she was let go from Livingston’s, Anna lived and worked as a housekeeper at the home of George Burt Read, president of the Portable Elevator Manufacturing Company, located at 1308 E. Washington Street.⁶⁵ Working for the Reads was more challenging than work had been at the Kitchells.⁶⁶ In addition to Read and his wife Dottie, Read’s son, Roland, and daughter-in-law also lived at the house. The house was larger and situated on two acres of land (though a “yardman” took care of the flowers and the grounds), and “they were big eaters.”⁶⁷ While it was

⁵² Oral History Interview with Anna Clark, Henry Brown, and Luther Watson, 1985

⁵³ Krebs, “Black History in residents’ stories.”

⁵⁴ Oral History Interview with Lue Anna Brown Sanders Clark, late 1980s, 8.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ “Lue A. Sanders,” 1920 United States Federal Census.

⁵⁷ Oral history with Lue Anna Brown Answer Clark by Mildred Pratt, late 1980s, 8; “Isaac J. Sanders,” 1922 & 1923 *Bloomington City Directory*.

⁵⁸ “Isaac J. Sanders,” 1924-25, 1926, 1928 *Bloomington City Directory*.

⁵⁹ Probate documents for Isaac Sanders, January 10, 1929.

⁶⁰ “Mrs. Anna Sanders,” 1929-30, 1930-31, 1932 *Bloomington City Directory*; “Anna Sanders,” 1930 Census; “Letters of Administration,” McLean County Probate Court, January 10, 1929.

⁶¹ “Anna Sanders,” 1930 Census; “Lueanna Clark’s Career Spans Caring for Restrooms to Caring for Students;” 1919 *Bloomington City Directory*.

⁶² “Lueanna Clark’s Career Spans Caring for Restrooms to Caring for Students.”

⁶³ Ibid

⁶⁴ “Lueanna Clark’s Career Spans Caring for Restrooms to Caring for Students.”

⁶⁵ “Black History in Residents’ Stories,” *The Pantagraph*, June 18, 1985; 1932 *Bloomington City Directory*, 309.

⁶⁶ Oral history interview with Lue Anna Brown Sanders Clark by Mildred Pratt and Stephanie Shaw, 1986, 7.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

a good job and she was treated well, Anna said in a 1986 interview that she “didn’t feel like [she] was one of the family. They just treated me nice, and I treated them nice, and I’d get away from them as quick as I could. I guess I was kind of brought up like that.”⁶⁸ Anna worked for the Reads for about two years.⁶⁹

By 1934, after she no longer worked for the Reads, Anna lived at 603 W. Mill Street.⁷⁰ Later, Anna moved in with Rev. Aubrey Hursey and his family at 1002 S. University Street in Normal (at the intersection of Church and University).⁷¹ Following the Hursey’s move to downtown Bloomington, Anna rented his home and began boarding African American students who attended Illinois State Normal University (ISNU, known today as Illinois State University).⁷²

Black students who attended ISNU were not allowed to live in the dormitories or to eat at the campus cafeterias until the 1950s.⁷³ Anna housed up to eight students at a time, mostly young men during her boarding house career.⁷⁴ She did not allow girls to come around her house when the young men were living there. As Anna recalled, “they made a lot of trouble if there were girls around.”⁷⁵ The young men that stayed with Anna managed themselves. They shopped, cooked, and cleaned according to a rotating schedule that they hung above the stove. They also paid her \$2.50 per week (which in 2017 would be equivalent to \$43.86).⁷⁶

She was perhaps the most proud of Elroy Young, who eventually became an orthopedist.⁷⁷ Anna knew his family from when she had lived in southern Illinois.⁷⁸ Upon hearing that Young’s mother could not afford to send him to college, Anna told him, “if you want to go to school, you could come up here and stay with me. I live just a block from the school. I got a big house, and you can help me with the yard and stuff like that.”⁷⁹ He took her up on her offer in August 1940. Anna remembered the first day that he came to stay with her, she had just come “home from work and he was sitting on the porch.”⁸⁰

Four of her male boarders (including Young) became physicians; one became a high school principal; another became an artist; and yet another worked for the NAACP in Chicago.⁸¹ Anna’s boarding house career ended during the early years of World War II, when all of her boarders left for the military at the same time.⁸² She remembers how lonely that was—just her and the dog.⁸³

⁶⁸ Oral history interview with Lue Anna Brown Sanders Clark by Mildred Pratt and Stephanie Shaw, 1986, 9.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 17.

⁷⁰ “Anna Sanders,” 1934 *Bloomington City Directory*

⁷¹ Oral history interview with Lue Anna Brown Sanders Clark by Mildred Pratt, late 1980s, 9.

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ There is no real source to indicate exactly when African American students were allowed to live on campus. However, staff at the Illinois State University Archives believe it was sometime in the 1950s.

⁷⁴ “Lueanna Clark’s Career Spans Caring for Restrooms to Caring for Students,” Oral history interview with Lue Anna Sanders Clark by Mildred Pratt, 1985, 7.

⁷⁵ Oral history interview with Lue Anna Sanders Clark by Sharla Brown and unknown male, March 21, 1991, 2.

⁷⁶ Consumer Price Index (CPI) Conversion Factors for Dollars of 1774 to estimated 2028 to Convert to Dollars of 2017, <https://liberalarts.oregonstate.edu/sites/liberalarts.oregonstate.edu/files/polisci/faculty-research/sahr/inflation-conversion/pdf/cv2017.pdf>, date accessed September 7, 2018.

⁷⁷ “Lueanna Clark’s Career Spans Caring for Restrooms to Caring for Students.”

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ Oral history interview with Lue Anna Sanders Clark by Sharla Brown and unknown male, March 21, 1991, 3.

⁸⁰ “Lueanna Clark’s Career Spans Caring for Restrooms to Caring for Students.”

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² *Ibid.*; Oral history interview with Anna Clark, Henry Brown, and Luther Watson with Mildred Pratt, 1985, 7.

⁸³ “Lueanna Clark’s Career Spans Caring for Restrooms to Caring for Students.”

Fortunately, they all survived the war and stayed in touch with Anna throughout their lives.⁸⁴ “They all made good. They had it hard, but they made good.”⁸⁵ Anna’s support provided the young men with an opportunity to earn an education, an opportunity that they would not have had otherwise.

During World War II, Anna was a member of the Fred Hutchinson Club, which supported overseas troops. She remembered writing letters to a young soldier by the name of John White, who was from Bloomington and stationed in North Africa. She recalled him being “just a youngster” who would “tell me about how beautiful the flowers was there and how everything was.” When the club met each month, each member would read the letters that they received. She also recalled shipping boxes of candy and cookies to soldiers around Christmastime.⁸⁶ Members of the unit also escorted 50 young women to Camp Ellis, in western Illinois, for a Christmas party and dance.⁸⁷ Anna was elected as the club’s chaplain in 1943.⁸⁸

Around 1936, Anna began working at the Illinois Soldiers’ and Sailors’ Children’s School (ISSCS).⁸⁹ The ISSCS was established by the Illinois State Legislature in 1864 to provide care and education for indigent children of Illinois Civil War veterans. The Home was located on a large tract of land in northeast Normal (today at the corner of Lincoln and Beech streets). In 1899, the Home began to accept indigent children whose fathers had served in the Army or Navy of the United States during any war.⁹⁰ Anna began her 22-year career at the Home working in the laundry facilities.⁹¹ At that time, Anna worked 48-hour weeks to earn \$720 annually (about \$12,600 in 2017 dollars).⁹² She held that position for several years. Later, she worked in the hospital, delivering food trays from the kitchen to the sick children on the upper floors using a dumbwaiter.⁹³ She also cleaned the hospital, “making beds, things like that.”⁹⁴ She retired from the Home in 1958.⁹⁵

In 1949, Anna resided at 1202 MacArthur Avenue in Bloomington before marrying her second husband, Alonzo Clark, in September 1950.⁹⁶ Interestingly, Alonzo had been a daily customer at the Working Man’s Club three decades earlier.⁹⁷ Alonzo worked as a janitor and had previously been a railroad porter for the Gulf, Mobile, and Ohio Railroad.⁹⁸ The couple resided

⁸⁴ Ibid; Oral history interview with Lue Anna Brown Sanders Clark by Sharla Brown & M, March 21, 1991, 10.

⁸⁵ “Lueanna Clark’s Career Spans Caring for Restrooms to Caring for Students.”

⁸⁶ Oral history interview with Lue Anna Brown Sanders Clark by Mildred Pratt, November 13, 1986, 23.

⁸⁷ “Mrs. Shavers Unit Captain for Year,” *The Pantagraph*, December 13, 1943; Camp Ellis was situated near the towns of Ipava, Table Grove, and Bernadotte in rural Fulton County, Illinois. Construction for the camp began in September 1942, and it opened on January 31, 1943. It served as a U.S. Army training center and also housed 2,500 German prisoners of war. <http://www.pjstar.com/article/20151029/NEWS/151029217>. Accessed August 31, 2018.

⁸⁸ “Mrs. Shavers Unit Captain for Year.”

⁸⁹ “Anna Sanders,” 1937 *Bloomington City Directory*

⁹⁰ Ruth Cobb. *A Place We Called Home: A History of Illinois Soldiers’ Orphans’ Home 1864-1931, Illinois Soldiers’ and Sailors’ Children’s School 1931-1979* (Normal, IL: Illinois Soldiers’ and Sailors’ Children’s School Historical Preservation Society, 2007), 1.

⁹¹ Oral history interview with Lue Anna Brown Sanders Clark by Mildred Pratt and Stephanie Shaw, 1986, 18.

⁹² “Anna Sanders,” 1940 Census; <https://data.bls.gov/cgi-bin/cpicalc.pl?cost1=720&year1=194004&year2=201807>

⁹³ Oral history interview with Lue Anna Brown Sanders Clark by Mildred Pratt and Stephanie Shaw, 1986, 18.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ “State to Honor 92 ISSCS Employees,” *The Pantagraph*, February 25, 1958.

⁹⁶ “Anna Sanders,” 1949 *Bloomington City Directory*; “Bulletin Board,” *The Pantagraph*, September 3, 1950.

⁹⁷ Oral history interview with Lue Anna Brown Sanders Clark by Mildred Pratt, late 1980s, 7.

⁹⁸ Oral history interview with Lue Anna Brown Sanders Clark by Mildred Pratt and Stephanie Shaw, 1986, 20

at 1304 W. Taylor Street, where Alonzo had lived with his son and previous wife.⁹⁹ That home suffered a fire in 1964.¹⁰⁰ During the repairs, Alonzo and Anna lived with their neighbor, Flora L. Lavender.¹⁰¹ Lavender had fond memories of “Annie,” as she called her. Lavender said that Annie was like a mother to her and her daughter. “We could always talk to her. It made no difference about what; she always had time to talk with me.”¹⁰² Sadly, Alonzo passed away in 1964, the night before they moved back into their home.¹⁰³ After his death, Anna remained at the West Taylor residence until shortly before her death in 1992.¹⁰⁴

Retirement did not slow Anna down. In fact, she called it the best part of her life.¹⁰⁵ She was able to travel and visited almost every state in the country.¹⁰⁶ After leaving ISSCS, Anna had a small chair upholstery business, which she operated out of the basement of her home.¹⁰⁷ She had learned to upholster by taking YWCA courses for a couple of years.¹⁰⁸ She also made her own hats and soaps.¹⁰⁹ Prior to retirement, she had taken hat-making courses at Bloomington High School.¹¹⁰ In 1974, Anna assisted the West Side Clovers, a 4-H club for girls; and in 1981, at the age of 89, she competed in her first cooking competition—the Bloomington Regional Beef Cook-Off—at College Hills Mall.¹¹¹ Furthermore, Anna was a member of several civic and social organizations including the Mt. Pisgah Baptist Church, the Order of the Eastern Star, and the 3 C Club. She was also a founding member of the Bloomington-Normal Black History Project.¹¹²

Lue Anna Brown Sanders Clark passed away at the age of 100 on April 4, 1992 at Heritage Manor in Normal. A visitation was held on April 8 at Kibler-Smith Memorial Home, and funeral

⁹⁹ “Alonzo Clark,” 1951, 1953, 1955, 1956, 1959, 1960, 1962, 1963, 1964 *Bloomington City Directory*; “Lue Anna Clark;” “Alonzo Clark,” 1940 United States Federal Census.

¹⁰⁰ “Birthday Greeting from Flora L. Lavender,” from 100th Birthday Celebration, BNBHP Collection.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁴ “Anna Clark,” 1965-1992 City Directory

¹⁰⁵ Oral history, Lue Anna Brown Sanders Clark, interviewed by Mildred Pratt, November 13, 1986, 16.

¹⁰⁶ Oral history, Lue Anna Brown Sanders Clark, interviewed by Mildred Pratt, November 13, 1986, 16.

¹⁰⁷ Oral history, interviewed by Mildred Pratt, late 1980s, 18-19.

¹⁰⁸ Oral history, interviewed by Mildred Pratt, late 1980s, 18; “Reupholstering Being Taught at YWCA,” *Pantagraph*, March 3, 1957.

¹⁰⁹ Oral history, interviewed by Mildred Pratt, late 1980s, 18-19.

¹¹⁰ “24 in Adult Course Learn to Make Hats,” *Pantagraph*, March 28, 1948.

¹¹¹ “Volunteers Backbone of 4-H,” *Pantagraph*, October 6, 1974, 3; “Beef Roast, Sauce Wins Area Cook-Off,” *Pantagraph*, April 29, 1981, C3.

¹¹² “Lue Anna Clark,” *The Pantagraph*, April 6, 1992, 2; Beginning in the 1930s with the Works Progress Administration, the history of area African Americans has been documented through written histories and the collection of oral history interviews. In 1984, several members of the community realized that an organized effort was necessary to improve the collection of data and help bring to light the true story of African Americans in McLean County. Thus began the Bloomington-Normal Black History Project. Five years later, the group partnered with the McLean County Historical Society (now the McLean County Museum of History) to gather valuable materials that eventually became part of the Museum’s collections. The collections span the 19th and 20th centuries and contains photographs, portraits, booklets, articles, and photocopies related to clubs, organizations, and churches of the local Black community. Work continues on this project today with members of the community continuing to add new materials and information to the Museum’s collections that speaks to the history of African Americans in McLean County and Illinois; “Finding Aid for the Bloomington-Normal Black History Project,” <http://www.mchistory.org/research/resources/blackhistory/>, Accessed September 7, 2018.

services were observed at Mt. Pisgah Baptist Church the following day. She is buried at Evergreen Memorial Cemetery.¹¹³

By: Anthony Bowman, 2018

¹¹³ "Lue Anna Clark."