

University of California: In Memoriam, 1993

## Donald T. Clark: Santa Cruz



1911-1993

University Librarian Emeritus

The founding university librarian, Donald Thomas Clark, died at his home in Scotts Valley, California, on October 24, 1993, at age 82. He was, in 1962, the first academic appointment for the Santa Cruz campus made by founding chancellor Dean E. McHenry.

Clark was born on March 13, 1911, to Minerva Angeline Heppenstall Clark and Thomas John Clark, in Seattle, Washington. He attended Willamette University, then the University of California, Berkeley, (A.B., 1934). His library career began while he was a student at UCB, as a page for the Berkeley Public Library. That experience inspired his attendance at Columbia University for his B.S. degree in librarianship (1936). He taught librarianship in universities in the United States and Canada. He was influenced by his father-in-law, Professor A. Howry Espenshade, who wrote *Pennsylvania Place Names*. At UCB he was guided by his faculty adviser, Professor George R. Stewart, author of many works on California historical subjects, who also wrote *American Place Names*, *Names on the Globe*, and *Names on the Land*.

At Harvard University's School of Business Administration, Clark earned his M.B.A. (1943) and his reputation for innovation. For more than twenty years he was the head librarian at its Baker Library. Many of the ideas he developed at Baker for serving his faculty and student clientele, which became known as "Clarkmarks," later showed up in the University library at UCSC.

Clark's appointment at UCSC began on September 1, 1962, three years before the first students would arrive on campus. Clark fought hard to retain the atrium as a focal point of the library building, a design which state architects tried to eliminate. Today, the second addition to the original building is being designed around the concept of the atrium, a fitting recognition of Clark's foresight and planning. In 1983, the president of the University named this feature of the McHenry Library, "The Donald T. Clark Courtyard." During his eleven-year tenure as University Librarian, Clark made several distinguished contributions, among them serving as chair of the Academic Senate from 1969 to '71. Chancellor Emeritus Dean McHenry, at the Celebration of the Life of Donald Thomas Clark (held at UCSC after Clark's death) observed, "I don't think the honor of the chairmanship, or the burden of the chairmanship, of the Academic Senate, has been extended by any other campus faculty to a librarian, but he was a recognized educationist and intellectual, and he served brilliantly to hold us together through many difficult times." This was at a time when the Santa Cruz campus was experiencing expansion and years of protest. Clark's own resignation in 1973 came as a protest against state cutbacks in funding for academic libraries.

"In the early days when [Chancellor Dean McHenry] was out of town for an extended period of time, I had the signature power for the whole campus," Clark recalled in an interview for an oral history of the campus. As a member of the Academic Senate, Clark also participated in selecting the original faculty: "I attended all the sessions with all of the incoming faculty," he said.

One of the Clarkmarks that has become standard national practice for libraries is the computerized catalog. UCSC was the first UC campus to develop this tool. Clark's vision was implemented early, and the first usable computer-printed catalog of UCSC's collection was put into use in October 1968. That was the first step toward the on-line catalog, accessible today from anywhere in the world. Clark recalled the early struggle in a memoir: "There wasn't any department of automation at Berkeley. I was absolutely alone."

Clark was a Charter Member of the American Name Society (1952). He served on the national board of directors of the Special Libraries Association, and a term as chairman of the UCSC Emeriti Group (1991-1992). For fifteen years (1978-1993) he was a volunteer in the UCSC Map Collection.

His published works span nearly half a century and include books and journal articles in librarianship, sources of business information, and his hobbies of collecting map stamps and researching the origin and use of geographical names.

It was his work on place names that brought him acclaim. They are truly “landmark” works, no other local history effort in this genre can compare with them. The entries in each of these books are highly readable and entertaining. They encapsulate local history in a factual way so that “Clark” will be a citation by generations of writers. His volume *Santa Cruz County Place Names* was given the Award of Merit in the scholastic category by the Conference of California Historical Societies. Professor Kelsie B. Harder, then president of the American Name Society, reviewed Clark's Santa Cruz book and captured the essence of Clark: “The author of a county text has to be a superior scholar, with exactness, tact, historical sensibility, and, probably above all, compassion. Donald Clark brought all the necessary qualities to his research. It is simply a great study, one that redounds to the credit of all who study names and of the discipline. Others who are contemplating a study of a county's place names must look to Clark as a model.”

Clark told his own UCSC story in a memoir that provides extensive insight into his personality. If there can be a universal truth about anyone, it is that anyone who ever met Don Clark found him a generous, kind, and friendly man.

He is survived by his wife, Emily Espenshade Clark of Scotts Valley; his daughter, Pamela Clark Patrick of Auburn; his son, Michael Espenshade Clark of Carmel Valley, his sister, Mary Adele Mather, of Princeton, New Jersey; and four grandchildren. Don and Emily Clark were generous benefactors to the UCSC campus. Memorial contributions may be sent to two funds that they established before his death, which will continue to support his interests: the Emily E. Clark and Donald T. Clark Map Endowment (McHenry Library), and the Emily E. and Donald T. Clark Endowment, UCSC Arboretum (to support its library).

Stanley D. Stevens

### **Donald T. Clark: Early UCSC History and the Founding of the University Library**

Photo: Donald T. Clark. Photo by Lawrence Madison, 1986.

[For the complete text \[PDF\] of Donald T. Clark: Early UCSC History and the Founding of the University Library \(E-Scholarship\).](#) **Note: Due to editing by the narrator and the Project, there may be minor differences between the audio recording and the transcript. Please quote from the transcript as the record and not the audio. Audio will be found under "Supporting Material."**

[For the complete text \[PDF\] of Donald T. Clark: Early UCSC History and the Founding of the University Library](#) (UCSC Digital Collections)

1993, 203 pp. 1 illus.

