ForeWord Reviews
Clarion Review

BIOGRAPHY

Faces I Remember
Clara Threatt Vincent
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One Star (out of Five)

"My early life was more work than play" writes Clara Threatt Vincent the eldest child of handsome one-armed Clarence. "We worked harder than any adult did in our community but he was always complaining about us" she writes of her cruel father.

This memoir tells the story of the author's life growing up as a farm girl in South Carolina in the 1930s and '40s and the emotional and physical abuse she suffered from her father. It also tells the story of a family devoted to each other and how they retained their sense of humor while dealing with shocking mistreatment from one parent and cowardice and resignation from another. Clarence was in the author's words "a mentally disturbed and sick man." In public he was a charming and respected church deacon choir singer Sunday school teacher and magistrate. At home he whipped his children and worked them like dogs. Their mother Eva usually looked the other way and was known to say "If it's about your daddy I don't want to know it."

Clara eventually married the love of her life and escaped. Her five sisters did the same but their father's abuse followed them to their own homes. When Clara exposed his years-long affair with "Gussie" after catching them speaking on the party line Clarence went to Clara's home with a shotgun and threatened to kill her. He frequently slapped his daughters' faces once knocking Clara unconscious and leaving her sister with a permanent injury to her jaw.

As adults Clara and several of her sisters didn't step foot in their parents' home for fifteen years although they saw their younger sisters and mother often and Clara could see her childhood home from her own window.

Typical of amateur memoirists and inexperienced writers Vincent relates details about her childhood in short disconnected anecdotes. While her remembrances are interesting the narrative could have been improved by an editor who could connect the disjointed stories into a cohesive whole.

Clara's strong will rebellious streak and overarching faith in God got her through the hard times with her father and helped her care for her aging parents in later years. Her story

would undoubtedly be comforting to others struggling with the same issues that Clara did. But for the most part this memoir—which includes short biographies of her children and a description of her husband's funeral—will be most meaningful to members of the author's own circle of friends and family.