

## **PROFESSOR MICHAEL G. CLEARY**

*Gray County, Kansas*

Written by Juanita Trebilcock

*Consultants: Harry Brice of Cimarron, Kansas, Mrs. Anna Erskine of Cimarron, Kansas, and  
Professor Michael G. Cleary of Ingalls, Kansas*

*Reference: The (Cimarron, Kansas) Jacksonian – Thursday, 13 Aug 1914*

*\* Additional information added about Professor Michael G. Cleary*

*Photographs provided by Sara McFarland,  
Research Librarian at the Cimarron (Kansas) City Library*



**MICHAEL GEORGE CLEARY**

About 1913

If happiness comes from service, rather than from material success, as the lecturer Ralph Parlette said, M. G. Cleary would be one of the happiest men in Gray County. During his five years of residence there, his services to the cause of education, right living, high ideals, and the wholesome things that replace idle and vicious thoughts

among young people were notable indeed.

He was born in Honeoye, (*Ontario County*) New York. He went through his common and high school courses there. For four years, he attended the State Normal College in Geneseo, (*Livingston County*) New York, and spent over a year at the Albany Normal College. He taught school at Honeoye for three years, then at Lima, (*Livingston County*) New York for three years, at Calumet, (*Houghton County*) Michigan for one year, and back to Lima for two more years.

In the spring of 1909, the affliction of tuberculosis in his family circle caused him to come to Western Kansas, and during that coming fall, he was superintendent of the Cimarron Schools and was in charge of the high school.



Professor Michael Cleary with other teachers  
*About 1911*

From the time he came, the high school, especially, grew by leaps and bounds. Twice it was necessary to enlarge the building, and the enrollment increased by 200 percent in five years. Modern courses were installed, and Cimarron High School became known as one of the best in the state.

Mr. Cleary toiled unceasingly for the people of Gray County and was always ready to serve, regardless of his own material welfare. His fourteen years of experience gave him an excellent grasp of educational work, and his administrative ability was exceptional.

The Cimarron High School was organized in 1906, and later, Professor Cleary was the second high school superintendent in Cimarron. Among the recognitions given to him was the selection as director for the entire state of Kansas in the School Garden Association of America, one of the most critical school organizations of the time.

The “package library,” which Mr. Cleary started in the high school there, was praised by the Kansas University Extension Division director as the best he had ever seen. In many other ways, he attracted statewide attention because of his efficiency in educational work.

After teaching in Cimarron for five years, he went to teach in Ingalls for the new high school that was just beginning. He taught in Ingalls that year and helped the high school get a good start.

In 1916, Mr. Cleary was the High School superintendent of the Ingalls schools. He made a lot of progress and infused life with enthusiasm into the community, which greatly benefited him.



Professor Michael Cleary as Coach, with his students  
*About 1912*

Mr. Cleary is now in his early sixties, but he is still putting forth his best efforts to make the school better. He is endeavoring to make Ingalls a Class ‘A’ School.

**Additional Information**  
**MICHAEL GEORGE CLEARY**

**MICHAEL GEORGE CLEARY**, son of William and Margaret Cleary, was born on 2 Jul 1877 in Richmond, New York. (*Although his newspaper obituary gives his birth year and place as 1876, in Geneseo, New York.*) Both of his parents were born in Ireland and arrived in the United States before 1863.

Michael Cleary married **ADDA MAY HARTMAN**, daughter of Henry Charles Hartman (1844-1903) and Elizabeth Bailey (1848-1882), on 11 Sep 1900 in New York. Adda was born on 7 Aug 1878 in Anamosa, Jones County, Iowa.

Four children were born in their marriage:

**RUTH E. CLEARY** was born on 31 Jul 1901 in Honeoye, Ontario County, New York. She died on 4 Oct 1922 in Stafford, Stafford County, Kansas, and her burial was at the Stafford Cemetery.

**CARLOS WILLIAM CLEARY** was born on 11 Oct 1902 in Honeoye, Ontario County, New York. He was married to Vera M. Black, daughter of Harry G. Black and Cora Ross. They lived in Dunedin, Pinellas, Florida, for several years before moving to Portales, Roosevelt County, New Mexico. Carlos passed away in Portales, on 1 Oct 1982. Vera died on 27 Jan 1995. Burial for both was at the Portales, New Mexico Cemetery.

**EARLE HARTMAN CLEARY** was born on 17 Feb 1906 in Ontario County, New York. He died on 19 Aug 1979 in San Francisco, California.

**HAROLD FRANK CLEARY** was born on 8 Jun 1909 in Garden City, Finney County, Kansas. He married Viola Markum, and they had one daughter, Joanna. The family lived in Phoenix, Arizona. Harold died there on 7 Sep 1988.

In May of 1909, Michael Cleary moved his family to Cimarron, Gray County, Kansas. Adda passed away there on 21 Sep 1909.

Mr. Cleary then married **RELDA DAVIS**, daughter of John and Carrie Davis, on 30 Sep 1911 in Dodge City, Kansas. Children born in their marriage were:

**ELSIE "MARGUERITE" CLEARY** was born on 10 Nov 1917 in Stafford, Stafford County, Kansas. She married Earl E. Grandy on 20 Dec 1941 in Wichita, Sedgwick County, Kansas. Earl was born there on 13 May 1920. He died in Wichita on 18 Nov 1957. Marguerite died on 9 Nov 2010 in Bella Vista, Benton County, Arkansas. Their burial place was at the Calvary Cemetery in Wichita, Kansas.

**THEODORE "TED" DAVIS CLEARY** was born on 10 Sep 1920 in Stafford, Kansas, and died on 14 Sep 1996. Burial was at the Cimarron, Kansas Cemetery.

By 1920, Michael and Relda Cleary had moved to Stafford, Kansas, and in 1930, they were living in Harper, Harper County, Kansas. By 1935, they had moved to Dunedin, Florida, staying only a short time before returning to the Ingalls and Cimarron area of Kansas. They continued to live in that area, and Mr. Cleary continued to teach.

After his second wife, Relda, passed away on 20 Nov 1963, Mr. Cleary moved to Wichita, Sedgwick County, Kansas, where his sons and daughter lived. He died in a Colwich, Kansas nursing home, close to Wichita.

## Newspaper Obituaries for Michael G. Cleary and His Wives

### ADDA MAY (HARTMAN) CLEARY

*The (Cimarron, Kansas) Jacksonian - Thursday, 23 Sep 1909*

MRS. M. G. CLEARY - After several weeks of failing health, caused by tuberculosis complicated with bowel and lung trouble, Mrs. M. G. Cleary, wife of Professor Michael G. Cleary, of this city, passed peacefully away at her home last Tuesday night, at about 9:30. The many days and nights of sleepless watchfulness and tender care by her husband and the ministrations of loving friends sufficed only to make her last hours happy and peaceful.

Adda May Hartman was born in Anamosa, (*Jones County*) Iowa, on 7 Aug 1878. She attended Geneseo College in Geneseo, New York, where she met one of her classmates, Mr. Cleary. They were married on 11 Sep 1900. Mr. Cleary taught school at various places in New York, and then the family spent one year in Michigan, where they went because of the health of their little boy, Carlos. During the latter years, Mr. Cleary taught school at Lima, New York, and last spring decided to come to Western Kansas for the sake of the health of Mrs. Cleary and their little daughter, Ruth, both of them having symptoms of tuberculosis. He came in April, and his wife and family followed in May. Their daughter has become well, but Mrs. Cleary did not find relief.

They came to Cimarron at the beginning of the school year, about a month ago. Professor Cleary is engaged as principal of the Cimarron schools. Mr. Cleary made every effort on behalf of Mrs. Cleary's health. That included the erection of a tent house, which was supposed to help in the cure of tuberculosis. They had hoped for a full recovery, but she took a turn for the worse at the first of this week, and the end came soon.

As a mark of respect for the deceased and to relieve Professor Cleary's mind of strain as much as possible, the school board immediately decided to close all classrooms for the remainder of the week.

The funeral service will be at the M. E. Church tomorrow afternoon at 1 o'clock, with Dr. R. S. Ruckledge conducting the services. The interment will be at the Cimarron Cemetery.

T. H. Hartman, of Anamosa, Iowa, a brother of the deceased, was telegraphed on Tuesday but

could not reach here before her death. Besides this brother, she leaves two other brothers, Dr. F. T. Hartman of Waterloo, Iowa, and Clayton Hartman, of Anamosa, Iowa, and her stepmother, Mrs. Ida M. Beach of Anamosa. There are four little children, Ruth, Carlos, Earl, and Harold. The latter is only three months old.

Although Professor Cleary and his family had lived here only a few weeks, they showed their admirable qualities and attractive traits. A large circle of sincere friends sorrow with the husband and children and extend their warmest sympathy to them.

#### RELDA (DAVIS) CLEARY

*Garden City (Kansas) Telegram – Thursday, 21 Nov 1963*

MRS. MICHAEL CLEARY

Cimarron – Mrs. Relda Cleary, 97, Gray County pioneer, died Wednesday in St. Anthony Hospital at Dodge City.

She was born on 28 Aug 1866 in Ramsey, Indiana. She had lived in Cimarron since 1909. She was married to Michael G. Cleary on 13 Sep 1911.

Survivors include the widower; a daughter, Mrs. Earl Grandy of Wichita; four sons, Ted of Cimarron, Carlos of Ozona, Florida, Earl of San Francisco, California, and Harold of Phoenix, Arizona; five grandchildren, and one great-grandchild.

#### MICHAEL G. CLEARY

*Garden City (Kansas) Telegram – Monday, 18 Jul 1966*

MICHAEL G. CLEARY

Cimarron - Michael G. Cleary, 90, died at a Colwich nursing home Saturday morning after a long illness.

He was born on 2 Jul 1876 at Geneseo, (*Livingston County*) New York, and came to Gray County to teach. He taught at Ingalls and Syracuse before returning to Cimarron in 1940.

In 1913, he married Relda Davis at Cimarron. She died on 20 Nov 1963, and shortly after her passing, he moved to Wichita.

Mr. Cleary was a member of the Catholic Church.

Survivors are four sons, Carlos of Ozona, Florida, Earl of San Francisco, California, Harold of Phoenix, Arizona, and Ted of Wichita, Kansas; a daughter, Mrs. Marguerite Grandy of Wichita; five grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.



The Funeral will be at 11 a.m. on Tuesday in the St. Stanislaus Church in Ingalls, with the Rev. William Higgins Officiating.

Rosary will be at 7:30 p.m. on Monday at the Evans Chapel in Cimarron. Burial will be in the Cimarron Cemetery.

### Cemetery Headstones

*Headstone Photographs provided by Tim Tompkins*



STAFFORD CEMETERY

Stafford, Stafford County, Kansas

ADDA MAY (HARTMAN) CLEARY & DAUGHTER, RUTH E. CLEARY



CIMARRON CEMETERY

Cimarron, Gray County, Kansas

MICHAEL G. CLEARY & HIS SECOND WIFE, RELDA (DAVIS) CLEARY

## Funeral Memorial

My Jesus have mercy on the Soul of  
**Michael G. Cleary**  
July 2, 1876  
July 16, 1966  
**Funeral Services**  
Tuesday, July 19, 1966  
St. Stanislaus Catholic Church  
Ingalls, Kansas

O gentlest heart of Jesus, ever present in the Blessed Sacrament, ever consumed with burning love for the poor captive souls, have mercy on the soul of Thy departed servant. Be not severe in Thy judgment but let some drops of Thy Precious Blood fall upon the devouring flames, and do Thou O Merciful Saviour, send Thy Angels to conduct Thy departed servant to a place of refreshment, light and peace. Amen.

May the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.

Merciful Jesus grant eternal rest.

**EVANS FUNERAL HOME**  
CIMARRON, KANSAS

7129

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Research Librarian at the Cimarron (Kansas) City Library*