

## SARAH DELIGHT STOCKING WOODRUFF



**Born:** 26 July 1839, Canton, Bloomfield, Conn. Daughter of John Jay Stocking and Catherine Emeline Ensign

**Died:** 28 May 1906, South Cottonwood, Salt Lake, Utah

She was known as Delight. Her mother died when she was only 2 and ½. Her father then married her mother's sister, Harriett Ensign. It was her step-mother aunt that raised her. The family converted to the 'Mormon' faith in 1843 and moved to Nauvoo in 1844. Their family was in the 1<sup>st</sup> party leaving Nauvoo in February of 1846, but they struggled getting to Utah. In Iowa, several members of the extended family died, including Delight's grandparents. On the trail west, Delight and several members of their party became very sick. As an act of faith, she asked her father to baptize her. Her father thought the ordinance would only hasten her death, but she insisted. She was baptized the first time and had to be helped out; baptized again and she walked out on her own power; baptized a third time and she was almost instantly healed. On seeing this, the other sick were also baptized in this manner and the disease was checked. A large native American also tried to steal Delight. He was in the camp and made a grab for her, but she quickly scrambled under a wagon and spread the alarm throughout the camp.

Upon arriving in the valley in 1850, the family lived in West Jordan briefly and then became one of the original settlers of Fort Herriman. At that time parents often betrothed their children at an early age. In Nauvoo Delight had been promised to Wilford Woodruff. In Harriman, when any young men came to see Delight, her step mother compelled them to sit nearby so she could hear every word they said. When her father saw the young men calling, he said that the time had come for marriage. He hitched up the team and took Delight to Salt Lake. Wilford Woodruff and Sarah Delight were married by Brigham Young in the Endowment House on July 31, 1857. Delight was 19, Wilford 50. She was considered Wilford's 5<sup>th</sup> wife.

Initially, Delight lived at the Valley House, Salt Lake's first Hotel, with Wilford's other wives. In 1860, Wilford bought a house in Ft. Harriman, where he moved his wife Sarah Brown. Delight gave birth to Marion in 1861 in Salt Lake City. In July of 1862, Delight moved to Ft. Herriman to help tend Wilford's cattle interest there and to be closer to her father. However, she was back in Salt Lake in 1865. Delight gave birth to 6 more children: Emeline (1863), Ensign (1865), Jeremiah (1868), Rosanna (1871), John Jay (1873) and Julia Delight (1878). In addition, she also cared for an Indian boy. In 1875 Wilford bought Delight a house and 10-acre farm on 3<sup>rd</sup> East, near 10<sup>th</sup> South. The next few years were difficult for all of Wilford's families as he was in hiding because of Polygamy laws, and Delight's home became a favorite target for the US marshals. Phoebe, Wilford's first wife died during this persecution. When he was able to come out, he was only seen publicly with Emma, one of the other wives. However, he was conscientious in writing to, caring for and attending to the needs of all his wives and children. His descendants honor his name. Delight kept busy with her family. She served in callings in Relief Society and M.I.A. On Wilford's death in 1898, she received her farm and share in the estate. When her youngest daughter married, she made her home with her unmarried son, John. She was a sweet woman, with a good disposition, modest and unassuming. She passed away at the age of 67.

[Alan J. Hill, 5-31-20]

## Sources

Alexander, Thomas G., Things in Heaven and Earth, the Life and Times of Wilford Woodruff, the Mormon Prophet., Signature Books, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1991

Jones, Ann M., John Jay Stocking Sr. and his wives , Catherine Emeline and Harriet Ensign Stocking. From her book Joseph Horace Stocking and Martha Jane Butterfield Stocking, LDS Family History Library, Salt Lake US/CAN 929.273 St 62 jam. Also microfilm 1698205 item #4.

Sarah Delight Stocking Woodruff (Elmer's Grandmother), author not identified. However, this story seems to be taken from "Sara Delight Stocking Woodruff, A Utah Pioneer of 1850" by her daughter, Julia Woodruff Parks.

Stocking, Sarah Delight, "Autobiography", one-page handwritten story on microfilm in the LDS Church History Library.

Notes taken from another typed history of Sarah Delight Stocking Woodruff, from the Genealogy book of Iva Woodruff Madsen, when this author was gathering information for Neither Saints Nor Sinners. Information from those notes are contained in that book.

Family Group Sheets for John Jay Stocking (father) and Wilford Woodruff and Sarah Delight Stocking.

### Birthdate of Sarah Delight Stocking

Several birthdates have been published. Please consider the source.

Birthdate	Birthplace	Source
26 July 1839	Canton, Bloomfield, Connecticut	Autobiography – SD Stocking
26 July 1839		Family Bible - Isaac Ensign, Jr
26 July 1839		SLC cemetery marker
26 July 1839		Death Certificate – SD Stocking
28 July 1838		Wilford Woodruff Journal 5:70

Obituaries for Sarah Delight Stocking have other birthdates. July 28, 1837 in the Deseret News, May 29, 1906. July 23, 1839 in the Deseret News, June 2, 1906. July 28, 1837 in the Improvement Era, July 1906. Comparing these dates with the more primary sources above, it is clear that the obituaries are all incorrect. The biggest problem is that Wilford Woodruff used an incorrect birthdate for Sarah Delight Stocking, which he noted on the day he and Sarah Delight were sealed. As a result, we find the 1838 date repeated in several stories, books and other publications. Considering the reliability of the sources, the 26 July 1839 date has to be the correct date. It comes from Sarah Delight Stocking herself, and primary family records. The 1838 date should be discounted along with any other date except 26 July 1839.

Alan Hill, 3-29-2020