

MARION WOODRUFF



Born: 1 Jun 1861, Salt Lake City, Salt Lake, Utah.
Son of Wilford Woodruff and Sara Delight Stocking
Died: 5 Feb 1946, Tremonton, Box Elder, Utah

Being the son of the Prophet brought him no special privilege. Life was tough in early Utah. As a small youth, he was nearly killed by Indian's while herding his grandfather's cattle. His life was saved because of his courage in the face of danger. To avoid a beating at school, he ran away from home at the age of 9. He learned quickly to survive on his own wits. He was known as "the kid" by his cowboy buddies around the Evanston, Wyoming area. He learned to compete with the bears and the snakes, to calm a stampede, or to survive a blizzard. Eventually he came home, but he still had a wild streak. He was known for his bronco busting ways. Folks would come from miles around to watch him break horses (a Sunday pastime). One time when he met his father his horse kicked out the spokes of his carriage. In spite of being a bit wayward, he

always honored and revered his illustrious father.

He nearly trampled his future wife and her sister into the ground, riding a wild horse, made wilder by holding a cat by its tail in each hand, and letting them claw the sides of the horse. "What a terrible man," thought Bertha Jensen. I'm going to marry that girl thought Marion. Love moves in strange ways. They were married in 1887. The early years of their marriage were spent in Salt Lake. He helped grade the hill in front of the capital and worked as a mule driver with the Salt Lake Trolley system. Marion still had a wild streak. He was an expert in the making of home-brew. One time, in a drunken state he rode his horse into the house, breaking up the dishes and the floor. On another occasion he rode an out of control horse into a police buggy, overturning it. He was chased all through the valley. Landing in jail, his illustrious father had to bail him out.

In 1897 the family moved to Tremonton. Marion helped construct the canal that brought water to the parched land. The family lived in a dugout until a cabin could be constructed. A home was later built on the front of the log cabin. They homesteaded the land, grubbed out the sagebrush and made it into a farm and orchards. Indians from Washakie on their way to Brigham City would often make the Woodruff home a "stopping off place." He earned the respect of the Indian people. Marion was noted for his good sense and homespun humor. The family of 11 grew and married. Although they took on two different religions in the family, they were still closely-knit. Family reunions were big affairs and the family had a great appreciation for each other. Marion was a man of a thousand stories. His life was a magnification of the grit and stamina that made and tamed the wild west. In his older age, he would often sit under a tree in the front yard, whittling or braiding leather and entertain the grand kids, who were mystified with his tall tales, that were quite likely true.

One of the great traits of the Woodruff family was their care for the poor, the ill, the wayward or the less fortunate. Their home was always open to those in need, and they shared their love and what they had. They cared for their family, their extended family, and all their friends and neighbors—as a matter of fact, it didn't really matter. They cared for everyone.

(Alan J. Hill 10-11-97)

Sources

Brainard, Rosa, Father, *Life of Marion Woodruff*, a life sketch prepared for Marion's 50th wedding anniversary, 1937

Hill, Alan, *Neither Saints nor Sinners – Just Good Folks*, Publisher's Press, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1983
This is a 60-page story research and documented by the author of the one-pager above.

Hill, Mamie Woodruff, *Life of Marion Woodruff in His Boyhood Days*. Written by Marion's 4th daughter after collaboration with Ella and Myrtle Woodruff (Marion's 1st and 2nd daughters.)

Woodruff, Leola, *Valley of Decision*, Pacific Press, Nampa, Idaho, 1959. Originally written by Lucinda Kay Woodruff but published by Leola after her mother's death.

Discrepancy

Wilford Woodruff made mention in his journal that Owen had ridden a horse up to his buggy and that it turned and kicked the spokes out of one of the wheels. Marion Woodruff related to his children, a similar incident in which he was riding a wild pony with the same result. It appears that this incident could have been consistent with the character of both men. Did Wilford mistake which son he recorded relative to the incident, or was Marion giving his children an enlarged story of his own escapades. The comment does not solve this matter, but leaves it to the imagination of the reader.