

WINIFRED BLANCHE WOODRUFF



Born: 9 Apr. 1876, Salt Lake City, Salt Lake Utah, daughter of Wilford Woodruff and Emma Smith

Died: 28 Apr. 1954, Salt Lake City, Salt Lake Utah

Blanche, as she was known throughout her life, was the next to youngest of seven children born to Wilford Woodruff and Emma Smith. Her father blessed her as a baby and baptized her on April 9, 1884. She had sweet memories of being taught gospel principles by her wonderful father and loving devoted mother while the family gathered around the fireplace in their home. One of her favorite chores as a child was on washdays when she would jump up and down barefooted in a tub of subs washing the quilts and blankets until they were clean. She also recalled fun times when a few friends were invited to have molasses candy-pulls. She attended Farmers Ward Grade School, Brigham Young University (in Provo), and LDS Business College from which she graduated in June 1894. She was tutored by such scholars as Karl G. Maeser and James E. Talmage.

The Mormon Tabernacle Choir performed at the Chicago World's Fair in 1893 and Wilford Woodruff and Emma Smith's family accompanied them. It was on this trip that Blanche met Joseph J. Daynes. Joseph's father was organist for the choir. Joseph John Daynes and Blanche were wed in the Salt Lake Temple on Dec. 18, 1895. Wilford Woodruff performed the ceremony. They had a fabulous reception in the newly completed Woodruff Villa. They were the parents of 9 children, all born in Salt Lake between 1896 and 1920. On the day of their oldest child's birth, Wilford Woodruff came into the room and named her Florilla. He was very attached to her. She contracted Whooping Cough and died in 1899. The rest of their children grew to maturity, although there were other close calls with death. Joseph Daynes was a very successful businessman. He took over his father's music business, expanding it through a partnership with a brother-in-law and was also very successful in real estate ventures as well as the insurance business. Because of daughter's death, Blanche was allowed to accompany her husband on a mission call to Great Britain in 1899. They labored in the Birmingham Conference, which included Herefordshire (where Wilford Woodruff had his success with the United Brethren). In 1900 the family attended the World's Fair in Paris. They returned to the states in 1901. Blanche was a home missionary to non-members in Salt Lake. In 1906 she became a Board Member of the Granite Stake Relief Society. Her mother, Emma, was the Stake Relief Society President at the time. On the organization of the Grant Stake in 1924 she was called as First Counselor in that stake 's Relief Society, until 1927 when she became the President. In 1933 she followed her husband again to the mission field while he presided over the Western State Mission with headquarters in Denver. There she presided over the Relief Societies of the Mission. While in the mission field she arranged for the donation of Wilford Woodruff's handkerchief to the church. It was the handkerchief that had been given to her father by Joseph Smith in Nauvoo. The Family subsequently moved to San Francisco and Phoenix where she continued to labor in the Relief Society. She passed away at the age 78 from heart trouble. Sister Belle Spafford, Church Relief Society President paid this tribute to her at the funeral. "Sister Daynes was a wonderful homemaker. Throughout her lifetime she maintained a home of beauty, of culture, and of refinement. She was an excellent cook and a perfect hostess. She loved to entertain. There was always an air of elegance about her social activities, yet with all; there was a spirit of warmth and friendliness... Few women...have a finer comprehension of the work of the Relief Society than did Sister Daynes. She had vision, knowledge and understanding of the work." She was buried in the Salt Lake City Cemetery.

[Alan J. Hill, 11-22-01]

SOURCES

Family Group Sheets – Wilford Woodruff and Emma Smith; Joseph Daynes Jr. and Winifred Blanche Woodruff.

Price, Richard W. The Great Lives of Joseph John Daynes Jr. and Winifred Blanche Woodruff Daynes”, compiled 25, Dec. 1973 from writings of Joseph John Daynes Jr. A family history. Thanks given to Wilford W. Daynes Sr. and Julie Ann Price for their assistance.

Photo courtesy of Marilyn Rasmussen, Bountiful, Utah. She is a descendant.

BLANCHE IN THE AFTERLIFE (A story by her husband)

My beloved wife passed away in April of 1954. Of course, I was greatly grieved at this tragedy in my life. However, on Thursday afternoon, March 29th, 1965 upon my return to my apartment from work, I was very much overcome with a spirit of lonesomeness and despondency as I had been thinking considerably during the day of the passing of my lovely wife. Upon the end table of my apartment I have the funeral service and also the history of her life which I was impressed to read again at that time. In doing so, it intensified my anxiety concerning her, and on my knees that night I felt impressed to seek the blessings of the Lord and, if possible, at sometime have the privilege of seeing her and hearing her voice. At four o'clock in the morning, as the clock was just striking there before me stood my beloved wife, I was speechless at her startling beauty. Her face fairly beamed touched with the radiant hues of Heaven. Her eyes shown like the star of the firmament, her beautiful snow – white hair and her robe of immaculate whiteness surely presented a picture of heavenly grace no artist could paint.

I arose from my bed and went to embrace her but of course felt nothing. I then spoke to her and asked if she was well and happy, and she remarked that she was very happy and always busy. I asked her if she had seen her father and mother. She said that she had, and they too were very busy. Her father seemed to have the special duty to introduce newcomers as they come in, and his wife, of course was exceedingly busy assisting him. Then she said, “Someone else I have seen - who is my constant companion – my daughter, (who died as a child). We are always together and very happy in our associations, and as you can imagine, she is an adorable companion.” Then she said, “I have enjoyed many wonderful experiences. My father has introduced me to the Prophet Joseph Smith and Brigham Young, and many others, and I was thrilled that father was so happy laboring with two of his old-time church associates. I asked her if she had seen Paul (one of our sons), and she answered, “No, that he had been detained for a period,” “Then the greatest experience of all was that my father took me one day and introduced me to the Lord – you can imagine how thrilled and overcome I was at such a distinct honor being conferred upon me. I hesitated for a moment because of my humbleness, but when I met Him all fear left me. He was so kind and gentle in his welcome to me that I rejoiced in the glorious privilege extended me. “Many other instances she likewise mentioned, and as the clock struck half past four, the light faded and the beautiful moment of inspiration terminated. We must have been conversing for thirty minutes of time.

[Alan J. Hill, 3-11-99]