



History of
Ruby Wright
Barnett

1882-1936



A Tribute to Ruby Wright Barnett
by Kate H. Zesiger

Our Father called unto his angel,
“Go ye forth unto my garden fair
And pluck for me the loveliest flower
Thou shalt see growing there.”

The angel went forth thro’ the garden
Among flowers beautiful and gay.
He chose our sweetest flower
And has taken her away.

Taken her to a land of sunshine,
Far away from care and toil.
Transplanted she will bloom forever,
In a sacred and holier soil.

We will miss her, Ah, yes, greatly.
Hers is a place not easily filled.
‘Twill be hard to go on without her,
But it is as God has willed.

Dearly did she love the gospel.
So happy was she in work.
Faithfully, she performed her labors.
Never was she known to shirk.

Tenderly she cared for the aged.
She has smothered their every care.
Her home, her time, and all she had,
With them she was willing to share.

While we mourn, there is great rejoicing.
Brother, Sister, and Mother true,
Stood with open arms to greet her
As the veil was lifted and she passed
thro’.

We pray, our Heavenly Father,
Wilt thou bless her loved ones here.
Comfort the hearts of her children
And of her companion dear.

Give them that blessed assurance
That she will be waiting there.
She has gone to prepare a place
Where they her eternal joy may share.

History of Ruby Georgehanna Wright Barnett
Compiled by her daughters:
June B. Tolman and Ruby B. Perry
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Ruby Georgehanna Wright Barnett was born on November 29, 1882 in the 10th ward, Salt Lake City, Utah to George and Rachel Mary Shreeve Wright.

Her parents and grandparents were all born in England. They all joined the church when the gospel was taken to England by the missionaries. Her father was born in Coventry, Warwickshire, England, he was son of Jesse and Jane Millward Wright. Her mother was the daughter of William and Maria Gladman Shreeve.

The Wright and the Shreeve families both settled in the 10th ward in Salt Lake City, where Ruby's parents met. They were married on December 18, 1878 by Bishop Spears, he also was a justice of the peace. On June 19, 1879, George and Rachel were sealed for time and all eternity in the Endowment House.

Their first home was at 4th South and 7th East, later they bought a home on 4th South between 11th and 12th East in Salt Lake City.

Their first child, a son, who was born Sept. 18, 1879, died at birth. Their second child, another son was born March 11, 1881, and was named Alma Thomas. On November 29, 1882, they were blessed by having a daughter, Ruby Georgehanna, of whom this history is about. She was a large baby weighing about 12 pounds. Next came Pearl Ethel, born April 18, 1884. As months went on and Pearl grew, her mother realized that she wasn't responding to sound and it wasn't until sometime later that they realized Pearl was deaf. Next came Jessie, born January 13, 1886, then Alexander George Shreeve born on December 21, 1887. He was deaf also. The family went to doctors to see what was the cause of it and they couldn't find any answers. They traced their ancestry and couldn't find anyone who was even the slightest bit hard of hearing. The 7th child was Violet, born on November 22, 1889.

At this time Ruby was seven years old and had one brother and three younger sisters, so a lot of responsibility was put on her shoulder to help around the house and to take care of the younger children. She was mixing bread before she could reach the table to mix it and had to stand on a stool.

Ruby's father knew that his family was growing rapidly so he decided to buy a farm in Bountiful, Davis County, Utah. In 1890, he sold his home in Salt Lake and moved to Bountiful. The home was on 4th East and about 950 North. There he and his family began to farm. They would take their produce to the Grower's Market in Salt Lake City.

When Ruby was eight years old she was baptized in the font of the Bountiful First Ward by Willard Call, and confirmed by Israel Call on May 24, 1891.

Rachel Maude was the first child to be born in their new home in Bountiful. She was born February 24, 1892. Jane Marie was born September 11, 1893. Naomi Ruth was born March 29, 1895. She was also deaf. The rest of the children in order of birth were: Bryant, born November 8, 1896, Lillian, born on March 20, 1898, Joshua, born on April 2, 1899, and the last and 14th child was Edna May, born on February 2, 1901. The last two children were also deaf. All five of their deaf children were given every advantage of an education. Their parents believing they needed it because of their handicap. They all attended the deaf school in Ogden and two of them went back east to continue their studies at a college.

All of this time Ruby was working hard on the farm and in the home helping her parents. She was always the fastest at picking peas and bunching radishes and onions. She was always faster than any of her sisters.

While she was young, she and her sisters would sometimes get up at 2:00 a.m. to go to the market with their father. After selling at the market their father would have some deliveries to make at some of the stores in town. Before they would leave for home their father would buy a treat for them to have for their return home.

Ruby loved playing with her younger brothers and sisters. They would play many games, but the one they seemed to like best was "anti-high over the roof."

Her sister Pearl said that Ruby would make nine loaves of bread everyday for the family. It was nothing for one or two of the children to have a friend to dinner. The table was usually set for 15 to 20 people every meal.

Their dinning room was in the middle of the home with doors going out both the north and south to the porches on both sides. The dining room table stretched from one end of the room to the other. The room was about 20 feet long. The kitchen was to the east as was one bedroom, and the living room and one bedroom was to the west and, they had two bedrooms upstairs above the living room.

When Ruby was about 15 years old, she, Jesse, and Pearl would tromp the hay down while their father and brother Alma tossed it up onto the hay wagon. They had a lot of fun doing things on the farm. When Ruby was 16 years old and her baby sister Lillian was 13 months old, baby Joshua was born and Ruby had to take over the caring of Lillian. She fed her by bottle and did many other chores her mother was not able to do at that time because of the birth of the new baby.

One day Ruby asked her father if she could go to Salt Lake and get work, but he would not let her go because he said it was not a safe place for young girls to go. She and Jessie would walk better than two miles each way to the tomato factory in Woods Cross in the fall of the year to work while Pearl was in the deaf school in Ogden. She did that for a few seasons. The tomato factory was where Philip's Refinery is now.

Ruby would go and work in homes as a housekeeper and nurse in Bountiful with families when a mother would have a new baby and needed the help. One family was Myron Holbrook's mother.

One day, Ruby and her brothers and sisters went up to the hills to pick wild flowers to take to the cemetery to put on graves. While they were picking flowers she noticed a bull coming towards them which frightened them, so they ran, jumping over sage brush until they got away. They never did get flowers they had gone to pick.

It was about this time in her life that she quit school to help her parents in the home and find work so she could help with the finances, so she could buy a few things of her own. She would save her money until she had enough, then she would buy something for the living room so it would look nice when she brought her boyfriends home.

Tom Harrison, who played a violin, was one of her boyfriends. One night when she had gone to bed she heard a noise and called to her sisters, Jessie and Pearl, to come and see what was going on. Looking outside she saw Tom playing his violin under her window. When he left she and her sisters laughed so hard they ended up crying.

Once when Ruby went to the market with her father, a young man came looking for a ride

to Bountiful. His mother had married Albert Shirley, from Bountiful a few years earlier. It was Thomas Barnett and he said to himself that day when he rode home with them that someday he would marry Ruby.

One time she and her friends went down to Thurgood's Ice Cream Parlor and passed by Tom, who was on the platform in front of the store. She did not want to talk to him or see him. Her friends had been teasing her about him she said she would never marry him.

Ruby always said that the things which influenced her the most in life was the teachings of her parents and the example they always set for her. They taught her to be better, and try to make her life's work that of a good daughter and a true wife and mother.

In the winter and spring of 1903 she received a strong testimony of the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints when her father was very sick with Rheumatic fever. After being administered to by the priesthood he became stronger and became well. At this time, Thomas became a true friend and neighbor to Ruby's family. He helped them in every way he could, both in their home and on their farm.

Ruby's closest friend was Hannah Joe Holbrook. Thomas was living at the Holbrook home. At about this time Hannah Jane was going with Will Harrison. The two fellows went to Salt Lake and bought engagement rings alike to give to their girls. The boys always said they got them at the dime store, two for a quarter.

Ruby and Tom were married on January 6, 1904 in the Salt Lake Temple, and they had a wedding reception at her parent's home. Her wedding dress was made by her sister Pearl who had become a very fine seamstress while attending deaf school.

They moved immediately into a new two room home which Tom had built on property of his stepfathers. One could feel pretty proud to be able to go into a new home as soon as they were married. This home is on the corner of 4th East and 550 North in Bountiful, Utah.

They were married for four and a half years before they had any children. During this time Ruby continued to help her mother and father with her brothers and sisters. Her youngest sister, Edna, said it was quite awhile before she knew that Tom and Ruby were not her parents. Edna would cry when she had to go home because Tom and Ruby would spoil her and she would get all the attention with no other children around. Edna was quite a little dancer and when Ruby would have friends come to see them Edna would show off and do her dance for them.

Their home had a hole dug out underneath part of the house with a trap door in the floor and that is where they stored fruits and vegetables. It was under the pantry. One day, Ruby had taken the floor up and was getting some fruit when Edna came to visit and walked into the pantry and fell onto Ruby's lap, which was a big surprise to both of them.

Tom and Ruby's first child, a son, was born June 21, 1908, they named him Thomas Arnold. She said at that time she was going to have another child in 15 months which she did. That was Edna Belle, named after her sister Edna and Tom's sister Belle. She was born October 17, 1909. Next came June, born June 6, 1912. Shirley, named after Grandpa Albert Shirley, Tom's stepfather, was born May 16, 1915. Ruby was born on July 8, 1920 and finally Owen on February 2, 1925.

Ruby's health was not good with the birth of her last three children. After Ruby, her fifth child, was born the doctor said it would not be wise for her to have anymore children. She had surgery and then she had her last baby, Owen. Owen was 11 months old when he got the measles and it developed into pneumonia. He passed away 10 days before his first birthday.

Ruby never quite got over Owen's death. Perhaps if she could have been able to have more children to take his place, things would have been a little different for her.

Ruby and Tom lived in their two room home until 1918, when they dug a basement and added two more rooms and a pantry. There was a 'let-down' bed in the living room and a spring cot with two drop down sides behind the kitchen table. There was always an extra bed in their bedroom where one of the children would sleep.

They were digging out the basement of the new addition when the 'Armistis' was signed to end World War I. Everyone stopped digging and went downtown to celebrate. There were bells ringing and cars driving through town honking their horns.

There was a crawl space above the basement stairs where they would store their flour, sugar, and other staples to get them through the winter when there was no income from their farm.

There was also a screen porch where the wringerwasher was stored, but it was moved into the kitchen on Mondays for wash day. The water had to be heated on the coal cookstove. There was also a big boiler pan on the stove where the white clothes would be boiled in soapy water to keep them white. There were two tubs of rinse water one of which had blueing in it to help whiten the clothes.

After Arnold started working he bought a studio couch (hide-a-bed) and that was the end of the tall pull down wall bed.

There was also sleeping space in the basement. After Jessie, Ruby's sister died and her husband, Willard Barlow remarried, one of their sons Wilford came to live with Ruby and Tom. Shirl and Wilford were teenagers and so the basement made a nice sleeping area for them.

At that time there was only one stake in Davis County. Ruby started working in the Primary soon after they were married and would have to take the horse and buggy up north to the monthly stake meetings. She worked in all the church organizations. As President of the Young Women's Mutual her counselors were Lillian Gardner, Natalie Stringham, with Merintha Burningham as the secretary.

Ruby worked a lot in the fields, mainly to keep the kids working, it became a great time for communication. On the days that she didn't work she would promise the workers that if they finished on time she would make them a freezer of ice cream. This was always an incentive to work harder. The work included such things as picking fruits, peas, strawberries and beans, bunching onions and radishes and casing tomatoes.

On the farm there were some old current bushes which Ruby picked faithfully every year to have a little money of her own, and something she could pay tithing on.

Once in awhile in the summer there would be a family outing with some of the other neighbor families to Mueller Park, this would be an overnigher where there would be a big cook out, fun and games and everyone slept in a big round bed under the rock bowery. Sometimes they would go to the Great Salt Lake to go swimming. They would take fresh water with them to rinse off in after they swam and then they would spread out their supper on table clothes, on the sand, and have a picnic.

Sometimes they would go with Ruby's family, the Wrights, to Weber Canyon where they would pitch their tents by a creek and spend several days camping out, this would be their summer vacation.

Ruby belonged to a sewing club, most likely made up of sisters who had served together

in the Primary. They made beautiful quilts and would get together once a month to quilt them.

During the winter time quite often Ruby and Tom would get together with neighbors to play Rook (a card game). It was usually with Sarah and Jasper Hepworth, or Lizzy and Jack Ashby, or the Harrisons.

Bountiful has always been famous for their east winds. One night one of these was in progress and the Spirit of the Holy Ghost prompted Ruby that she should move the coal-oil lamp that was sitting on a table in front of the east window of the living room. She had no sooner moved it than the window was blown in and very easily could have cause a fire in their home. From then on she always listened to those promptings.

For the last few years of ruby's life she was often quite ill. During this time she was not able to enjoy some of the conveniences that are taken for granted today such as central heating, hot and cold running water and inside plumbing.

During this time of her life three of her children were married, Arnold to Cora Maybe, June to Eric Tolman, and Shirl to Donna Rampton. How sad it is that she never knew any of her grandchildren here on Earth. Her first grandchild, Jack, Arnold's son, was born in April of 1936, three months after her death on January 23, 1936 at age 53. She has a total of 14 grandchildren, numerous great grandchildren and a few great great grandchildren. She was buried in the Bountiful Cemetery on January 26, 1936. Following are some of the comments made by the Relief Society President, Sister Leah Call at her funeral:

“Sister Ruby was a thorough Latter-day Saint. She has faith in the Gospel and she studied and understood the principles of the Gospel. She was truly a wise and devoted mother, and a devoted wife to her husband. Her family today stand as a monument to her teachings and her splendid principles. I have known Sister Ruby for a great many years, about twenty-three, I think it is. A part of that time I have been very closely associated with her in the different organizations [of the church]. We worked together in the Primary and were very closely associated and learned to love each other dearly. I think that she was President of the Young Ladies Mutual for some two years and she endeared herself to the hearts of the young people in this ward. She has always been a Relief Society visiting teacher and she has carried a message of cheer, love and peace into the homes which she visited. We found it necessary at one time to have a new teacher in our visiting teaching field and we called Sister Ruby to fill that position. She would come to our meetings with a thorough preparation of her work and with a sweet humility that endeared her to everyone, and we all have been greatly benefitted through our association with her.”