

Birdie Josephine Davis Southwick

The history to date [4 May 1981] was compiled by Eunice Stoker Southwick, wife of Lee Southwick, Bill's [William I's] son, the information came from the Davis family records and information given orally to Eunice by Birdie herself.

Birdie Josephine Davis was born on the 1st of January, 1892, at LaPine, Crenshaw County, Alabama. She was the seventh of nine children born to James Madison and Josephine Bird Davis.

She was orphaned early in life. Her father died when she was four years old and her mother when she was eight years old. At the death of her mother she was taken into the home of her grandfather William James Bird. His wife had passed away six years before Birdie was born. Grandfather Bird cared for her for about a year when he passed away on the 31st of July 1902. He was eighty-four years old. Birdie was then ten years old.

Justus Lafayette Bird and his sister James [Jammie] Emma Bird had neither one ever married, they were brother and sister to Birdie's mother. They lived in the grandfather's home and took over the care of Birdie. Birdie described her uncle as one of the kindest men she had ever known. The home of the Bird family was about five miles northwest of LaPine, Alabama.

Birdie received her elementary education at the Surls grade school Later she went to the Highland Home School where she completed the sixth grade.

During the World War of 1918, she went to business school in Montgomery, Alabama. She planned to complete the course and graduate, but she got the flu and was seriously ill for some time. She missed so many days of school that she could not qualify for graduation. However, she had become a good typist.

Her youngest brother suggested she place classified ads in the Birmingham and Atlanta papers to seek employment. A position in Atlanta offered the best opportunity for her and she went to work for the Lawless-Brown publishing company, in Atlanta, Georgia.

Her brother helped her find a boarding home where she could have access to her work. The first day she was at the home another boarder by the name of Charles Echols Sorrels came there to live. As they were both new at the home and having much in common they became good friends and began dating.

Birdie was raised by good Christian people who had taught her high standards of morality. All of her life she lived the laws of her Father in Heaven and taught it to her children.

On the 20th of July 1919, she and Charles E. Sorrels were married. They had not been married but a few days until Birdie discovered she had made a mistake in marrying him. He had misrepresented himself to her and she found it necessary to have the marriage annulled. This became effective in August of 1919.

Birdie soon realized she was to become a mother. She was at a loss to know where to go and how to handle this responsibility by herself. She made an appointment with a lady doctor who was instrumental in getting her into a home for expectant mothers.

On March 29, 1920 she gave birth to twins, Hazel "D" and Harry "D". Harry passed away the day of his birth. Hazel was healthy and strong and lived to adulthood.

As soon as Birdie was able she went to work at a Social Service Home, where child care was given. Birdie was able to keep Hazel there with other children.

A man by the name of Benjamin Tate Reynolds, whose wife had passed away leaving him with four children came to the home to seek care for his children. There was a vacancy for the two boys, but not for the two girls. He then rented an apartment across the street from his sister and kept the girls with him with the aid of his sister. As Mr. Reynolds visited the home often to see his boys, a friendship developed between him and Birdie. On February 12, 1928, they were married and took their children to live with them. Hazel requested she be allowed to use the surname of Reynolds so her name would be like the other children. There were no children born to Birdie and Mr. Reynolds.

Mr. Reynolds was a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Birdie and Hazel soon

became interested. After receiving the lessons from the missionaries they were baptized into the church on the 17th of August 1930, in Atlanta, Georgia.

Later the family came west to Utah. They were not able to all come together. Hazel came to Ogden Utah in the month of April, Birdie found employment in Ogden taking care of an elderly Mrs. Brown. She arrived there in July. Mr. Reynolds was able to come the following December. The Reynolds children as they married moved out of the state. Hazel boarded with another girl and attended Weber college.

Hazel was active in the church and was called to serve a stake mission. Byron Gael Campbell, a young missionary, for reasons beyond his control was transferred from a full time mission to finish his time on a stake mission. He and Hazel became acquainted and were married and sealed in the Salt Lake Temple on the 21st of January, 1941.

They became the parents of two children: Douglas on the 1st day of January, 1942 and Georgia on the 22nd of January, 1943. Hazel was never able to regain her strength after the birth of Georgia. She passed away on the 16th of April, 1943 leaving Gael with the two small children.

Mrs. Campbell, Gael's mother took care of the children until he married a second time. His second wife passed away two years later leaving him with a third child. He later married Mary Tanner Thomas who had one child by a previous marriage. They started their life together with the four small children. All three women were sealed to Gael.

Mary has been a wonderful mother to the children. Georgia and Douglas were brought up in the gospel. They lived with Mary and Gael until they were married.

Birdie and Mr. Reynolds bought a home on South Porter Avenue in Ogden, Utah. The place needed much repairing and improvement which they together accomplished. There was a big ditch running through the back yard of the place. Birdie planted many varieties of Iris and made it into a beautiful garden. It was admired by all who passed by.

Mr. Reynolds was a barber by trade and worked at the Deaf and Blind school and also at the White City Barber Shop in Ogden. Birdie worked in the Ben Lomond Hotel kitchen until she retired. She also had worked making cottage cheese at the Weber Central Dairy.

Mr. Reynolds passed away while they were still living on Porter Avenue. In 1961 Birdie sold the house and moved to an apartment in the Richards Building, 2650 South Washington Avenue, Ogden, Utah. She found employment at the LDS Deseret Industries, which was managed by Bishop Pledger. After Bishop Pledger retired, Verlon Southwick became manager of the institution and Birdie worked under him.

Verlon's father, William Isaac Southwick, came there often to visit with Verlon. He was a widower. He and Birdie were attracted to each other and were married in the Logan Temple on July 2, 1971 and Hazel and Harry were sealed to this union.

Birdie and "Bill" as she called him, lived together in the Richards apartment for four years. Those were happy years for them. Bill was handicapped by the amputation of his left arm a number of years prior to this. She was a real support and helpmate for him. He needed much parental care because of his handicap. She always kept him well groomed and happy. She was a wonderful cook and home maker. Her house was always neat and clean and we all enjoyed the good meals she cooked and the hospitality she showed to the family. The Southwick sons consider they owe her much for the part she took in caring for their father.

As can be seen by the story of her life she has gone through much sorrow and hardship, but she never complained. She had to depend on herself for support most of her life.

Bill began to fail as he neared ninety years of age. Birdie developed severe arthritis and was bedfast. She had been in an automobile accident earlier and this old injury added to her troubles. The Southwick boys took turns doing the shopping and parental care for them. Ione Flygare was hired to come in and cook and keep house for them.

On April 2, 1975 Birdie and Bill decided to go to the Golden Manor Nursing Home. They were able to have a private room with twin beds. They had their own recliners and TV set.

On the 16th of May, 1976, Bill passed away in his sleep and Birdie was left alone again. She remained at Golden Manor until the 18th of July 1977 when she moved to the Ogden Care Center at 524 East on 800 North Ogden, Utah.

At this writing, the 4th of May, 1981, she is still living there.

Her two grandchildren, Douglas and Georgia have married and had families. Douglas and wife Freda live at Neola, Utah and have the following children: Bret, Scott, Shane, Brian and Jana.

Georgia lives at Brigham City, Utah. She is divorced and her two daughters Shari and Julia are both living with her.