

MEMORIES OF MY DEAR FATHER THOMAS HEWLETT WILDE  
BY EVELYN WILDE HATE

What does one remember most about a great man - his success, his many accomplishments? What really goes into the making of great man? Through the eyes of his fellow-men it is often the mark he makes in life, but through the eyes of a daughter, it is much, much more. It is his kindness, his consideration, his love and tenderness. It is the twinkle in his eyes, his pleasant smile, the memory of a song, heartfelt and loving, which he sang. It is the touch of his hand, the memory of his advice, his voice gentle and blended with love and compassion. It is his unfailing wisdom, the comfort for which he provided. It is, also, pride in his success and accomplishments. All of these wonderful, glorious things I remember about a great man, for he was also my father.

Thomas Hewlett Wilde my Father, was a man of culture, of intellectual refinement. His was the ability to win the admiration of all with whom he dealt, as well as the admiration and the love of his loved ones and friends, and to hold that love and admiration. His was the greatness that is recognized by our Heavenly Father. To obey His command, and to love Him more each day of his life, constantly serving Him, was my Father's greatest joy. Because he was so close to our Heavenly Father, he was a man of great wisdom and abiding faith. Being an educated man, he was a school teacher in the early days, and had the privilege of being the first school teacher for a number of his children.

Father was born on the 20th day of June, 1841, in Southampton, Hampshire, England, the eldest child of Henry Brown Wilde and Sarah Hewlett Wilde. His parents were converted to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints while in England, and, as a consequence came to America. Before leaving England, however, in the year of 1851, my Father was baptized, and thus he became a member of that church.

When crossing the Atlantic Ocean on their way to America, a child was born. They named her Ellen Maria, after the name of the ship. This was my Father's third sister. While crossing the plains on their way west, his small brother, Henry, was accidentally killed, and they buried him there. Grandmother often said this was her greatest trial the leaving of her little one there and going on.

The Henry Brown Wilde family were among the first settlers in the Salt Lake Valley, living at what is now known as Sugar House. Grandfather had a ten-acre farm there, and Father remembers herding cows over that uninhabited area. While there, a son, my Father's brother Joseph, was born, making three boys and three girls, including Father, in their family. There were many hardships in those days. It is little wonder then that Father was a pioneer of courage and farsightedness, giving wise and gentle assurance to others. Integrity was his great virtue.

In the year of 1859 the family moved to Coalville, Utah, to make their permanent home. Grandfather, Henry Brown Wilde, was the first Bishop of the church in Coalville, and Grandmother, Sarah Hewlett Wilde, taught the first school there. Grandfather had helped in getting out the rock for the Salt Lake Temple, and now he helped to build the railroad through Echo Canyon. Each of these wonderful experiences went into the building of my Father's strong and courageous character, and formed for him a special, faith-promoting background.

Because I am the youngest in our family, there are many incidents in the early years of my Father's married life which are not wholly familiar to me, and which I do not feel qualified to relate. The first years of his married life were spent in Brigham City, Utah, which was the birthplace of some of his children, but later moved to Mink Creek, Oneida County, Idaho, where he helped erect a sawmill in the mountains near Mink Creek. While there the remainder of his children were born, of which I am the youngest. I have always greatly admired and loved my Father for his constant loyalty, and for having the faculty and wisdom of holding us in oneness, and not as separate families, and of impressing us with the glorious purity of purpose. Joined by my Mother, they taught us love, respect, and honor for each, and thus we grew up knowing and remembering the place of each one in our great family circle, and, for the most part, their children. Distance was a barrier in those days, but this did not separate us in love and principle. In this great family circle were twenty (20) children, and one hundred and four (104) grandchildren, and each brother and sister, Aunt Sarah and Aunt Martha, I have loved and remembered, some like names in a sweet story, which, today as I write this tribute, have taken their exact places in the corridors of time and life in reality, because it has been my great pleasure to seek each one out and present them with my book of poems, "Wilde Flowers". I am sure no other joy has been greater.

While living in Mink Creek, my Father was chosen as Superintendent of the Sunday School of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. This was to be his great calling in the Church. He loved the

youth, and they, in turn, loved him dearly. It is said the children loved him so much, they cried when he was not able to be in attendance, which was infrequent.

While I was yet very small, our family moved from Mink Creek. My first recollection is of moving to Grays Lake, Bannock County, Idaho. In this very beautiful valley, in the shadow of the great Caribou Mountain, with its rolling, green hills, blue lakes, and meadows covered with wild flowers, its bright, glowing autumns and its immense quantities of snow covering everything with glistening whiteness in winter, he made for us a wonderful home. The valley was noted for its wild-hay ranches, and his was one of the largest. The rich soil produced fine vegetables in the gardens, and the mountains, not far away, afforded many kinds of berries. I remember, especially, the huckleberries which we, as a family, would gather. Yes, this was free and happy living.

We made our home in the small settlement called Wayan, which was in the Grays Lake Valley. Here, also my Father was chosen as superintendent of the Sunday School, which position he capably held for a total of thirty-five years, and until we moved away from Wayan. Also, he was Superintendent of the school at Wayan, was appointed Postmaster at Wayan, and our home boasted the first telephone in the valley. Soon many had telephones, and thus the small communities were linked closer together.

Father had a great sense of humor. He had pet-names for each of his daughters. These he formed into a song, and arising early in the morning he sang this song to awaken us. It was so musical, however, that it often put us to sleep, instead. I can still hear his chuckle as he went by the bedrooms, singing his happy song. One special song I remember which he no often sang, or hummed, was the dearly beloved church hymn, "Oh My Father". I remember this hymn was sung at his funeral, and I feel he was very pleased.

In years to follow, Father moved the family to Blackfoot, Bingham County, Idaho. The years spent here were very happy ones. In January 1914 we moved to Salt Lake City, Salt Lake County, Utah. This living, while affording many happy times, was so different from the past, and I often wondered if Father did not long for the open country, its freedom and its innate beauty, but he was growing old, and not able to cope with the requirements of such. In the last years of his life, however, he returned to Blackfoot, with my Mother, and there he passed away, on the 13th day of December, 1920, and on December 18, 1920, he was laid to rest in the Blackfoot City Cemetery, Blackfoot, Idaho. A poem, "A Father's Fame," written by me paid tribute to his blessed worth. This is contained in my book of poems, "Wilde-Flowers", and was published in a Relief Society Magazine. Later, when the General Board of Relief Society published "Our Legacy, Relief Society Centennial Anthology of Verse" which contained the poems chosen by them as the best for the first 100 years Relief Society, from both the Woman's Exponent and the Relief Society Magazine, my poem, "A Father's Fame", was chosen, and consequently is contained therein.

These, then, are only a very few of the glorious and precious memories I hold of my Father. Yea, he is a great man. I am sure he dwells with the great in our Heavenly Father's Kingdom. How I wish I might be privileged to hear his sweet voice again, singing his happy song, see the twinkle in his bright, blue eyes, and feel the touch of his blessed hand, bringing joy to my heart through his loving and tender caress. Would I that I might tell of all of the glorious accomplishments, the wisdom, and the wonderful qualities which bring back such happy and precious memories, and which made of him a GREAT MAN and a wonderful father.

All family group sheets and historical records have been written with the surname being spelled *Wilde*; however, all the early records of the family in England, and for some time after arriving in Utah, the name was spelled *Wild*. We have not been able to establish when or why the change in the spelling of our family name but are continuing research to establish why the change took place.