

EM- Biography

The Evans family lived in a large house at 476 South 4th West, right near the railroad tracks. The Martin Coal Company was almost next door. On Saturday, May 5th, in the year 1877 Mother Adah gave birth to a baby girl. She had two big brothers, Sammy and Junius. Junius got whooping cough that winter and died from it.

When their baby girl was a month old, Mother Adah and Father Samuel took her to fast meeting June 7th. Samuel was Second Counselor in the bishopric of the Sixth Ward. President Brigham Young happened to be visiting, and he volunteered to bless the Evans girl. Her name was Mayme Evans.

Mayme enjoyed life. Her father lived next door with one of his other families (Aunt Eliza). And he had a good job, so life was comfortable. He worked in cement and stone. He and his partner (Elias Morris) laid many sidewalks in Salt Lake City, and they also made headstones for graves.

Grandma Powell, then in her 50s, lived with Adah and Mayme. Mayme was past six months old when winter came. Two-year-old Junius caught the whooping cough. He had a hard time with it; he died in February.

At about the time that Mayme was talking well, Mother Adah gave birth to a baby boy. He was called Heber.

About a year later, Father Samuel had begun to feel overly tired. But he kept on working. He loved to hug his children. But by the time Mayme was three and a half years old, That winter, Father needed to stay in bed. He died before spring came. Somehow, life for the widow and her children was still comfortable, because Mother Adah took up housecleaning for people. Mayme, though young, did also.

Sammy, at age seventeen, thought of getting a job. He showed that he was smart, ready to work anyplace. Yet, at home one evening, he fell. He hit his head. Hard. The bruise didn't recede as expected. The doctor said he had a growth, or a tumor, in his head.

Mayme enjoyed school. She was a bright girl. The winter of the year she was ready to start high school, her brother, Sammy, had a hard time with a cold he had caught. It went to his tumor and got worse and worse. He died before spring came. He was only eighteen.

Two years later, Mayme was out of high school. She was sixteen. Mayme got a job knitting at the Deseret Woolen Mills. Although it was a nice job, she decided to work instead at James G. McDonald's Candy Company, folding boxes together. That paid more.

Mayme did not lack boy-friends. One was Harry Price. He was a fun-loving boy, and like to dance, and they got along well. Once, when he brought her home after the agreed hour, her mother (Grandma Adah Jane Powell Evans) chased Harry from the house with a broomstick. Every time Harry came to pick Mayme up after that, he would come in and look behind the doors very cautiously. The family would ask, "What are you looking for?" and he would answer, "I'm just checking on the broomstick!" That was EVERY time.

The new year of 1896 was ten days old when Mayme's younger brother, Heber, got an awful pain in his stomach. The doctor did not know what to do. Heber's appendix burst, and he was in terrible pain for several days; then he died. He was just sixteen. Now there were no men in the house, at all.

The next year, Mayme found an even better job at the American Biscuit Company. She packed crackers into boxes. Her work station was by a window. A company was remodeling the building next door. She could watch the workers as she packed crackers. Among the carpenters, she noticed a handsome young man. It happened that their eyes met one time. As days passed, she thought she could impress him, for fun, by tossing a cracker his way. He caught it. Soon they were meeting after work. It was fun to be together. Fred took Mayme to his ward's meetings. He was proud of her. After a year of dating, the young man, Alfred Asper, told her he had received a mission call to New Zealand. That was an exotic place. Both were happy with that; Mayme promised to wait for his return. He left in February of 1901; he didn't get back until late 1904.

Mayme didn't wait and stagnate. She was able to get a better-paying job (commission) as a clerk at N. M. Hamilton, a clothing store on south Main Street. It was quite an exclusive place -- anything from skirts to furs, and men's and women's suits, besides. And she mailed her Fred five dollars occasionally.

Alfred got back in September of 1904; they married in the Manti Temple on the first Wednesday in December. Manti was where he had helped his father, William, build the temple. They rented a place not far from her home on Fourth West. Within a year, they were able to get a place just one block west of where Fred worked. By their first anniversary, Mayme was expecting. A baby girl came to them that March. They named her, Ada Jane, like her grandmother. In fact, grandmother lived with them at the time.

Two and a half years after Ada, as autumn 1908 began, Mayme gave birth to a baby boy. They named him William Samuel, after his two grandfathers.

Hardly ninety days after, Mayme's great-grandmother, Jane Powell,

died. (1909) She had shepherded Grandma Ada Jane and her sisters as they had come on ship and train from England. That had been 50 years in the past!

Time passed. In July of 1911 the family welcomed a baby girl; they chose the name, Lucille, for her. However, her skin was blue -- she had a defective heart valve. The doctor said she would live six months. She lived seven. That was a sad time.

Not quite two years later, Mayme gave birth to another girl. This one was healthy. She got the measles at an early age. Mayme kept her warm and covered so that the measles scarring would go away sooner. But when she invited the doctor to examine little Thelma, he "knew" she needed cool air. He undid her wrappings and opened the window. Mother Mayme was perturbed; and Thelma developed pneumonia. It got worse; she died the next week. Not a year old.

Ten days before Christmas of 1915, another baby girl arrived. Will came home from school for lunch, and heard a baby crying. The family took especial care to make sure this girl survived her first year. She did; she was named Dorothy.

About this time, Grandma (Mayme's mother) Evans was ill. The family rented a player piano to cheer her up. However, her condition worsened; her heart was weak. She died just before Dorothy's second birthday.

The house on North Temple had rooms that could be used like apartments. Mayme and Alfred took in boarders, for extra income. Alfred liked hunting ducks, and duck was for supper almost twice a week at times.

But Mayme felt that the house was dark. She wanted a new, brighter one. She found a lot in the Avenues, and Alfred built a house on it. That was in 1925. Although it wasn't entirely finished, they had Thanksgiving dinner at the new place.

One day Will brought home a malnourished boy, saying he needed a place to board. The family had stopped boarding when they moved to the new house, but in this case, they relented. The new boy, Wilford, married the eldest daughter, Ada, within two years. They found a house in the southwest part of town to live in.

Just at that time, Will was of age to serve a mission. And he got called to the Northwestern States. With Ada newly married, and Will on a mission, Mayme suddenly felt alone. It was just she and Dorothy; Father was at work each day.

In the end of 1929, Wilford and Ada decided to move. Father Fred had

built a small house to the north of his; they decided to live there. In a few months, Mayme expected Will's mission to end. She wanted to take the train up to Oregon and bring him home. She awaited news of his intended release date, probably in June. His expected date passed. Mayme did not know what to do. Then one day, Will walked in the front door. He was home. Now, Will had left a couple of girl friends and he began dating. In twenty months he was married. He got a job that required long hours. Mayme was a bit lonely again.

But Wilford had a little brother. He needed to come from the farm to the big city and get his high school education, like Wilford had. Just like Wilford. Wilford talked the family into letting him board at their house. And yes, that young man married Mayme's other daughter, just like Wilford had married the first daughter. So there was Wilford and Ada, and Ray and Dorothy. That was in 1939.

But Mayme wasn't lonely. Even before Will had returned from his mission, she had a grandson. It was Billy, Wilford and Ada's first. As consolation after Will's marriage, Ada was again expecting, and she had another boy, Paul. Will and Afton then kept the trend and had a boy whom they named Dick. And before Dorothy could plan her wedding, Afton welcomed another boy, Fred. Three more grandchildren followed by the time Father Fred retired. (Only one was a girl.) Mayme loved and adored children. This was a good time for her. She loved to walk downtown with Dorothy and her son.

But Mayme had her problems. For most of her life she had asthma and hay fever. The doctor said removing her nasal polyps would help the hay fever. She had that operation in the year before Ada had married. It gave temporary relief. She just did her best to be a mother who often suffered with sneezing and headaches. There was nothing else you could do. And as Mayme approached age sixty, her eyesight was failing. There was something you could do about that. But Mayme didn't want any doctor fooling with her eyes. Yet the doctor showed her the improvement that would occur. She had the operation; her cataracts were removed. That meant she had to lie still in bed for two weeks, and keep her eyes steady. She did well.

Some years after (and Fred had retired), Mayme felt more tired than usual. Then there came the little pains in her stomach. Nothing to worry, the doctor told her. That's age. Only as time passed and the pains got worse did the doctor pronounce a diagnosis: cancer. Again, there was nothing to do. As Mayme turned 70, she sickened; she needed special care. Fred loved her, but she was better off living with Dorothy's family for a while. Then the two small boys there got the measles. Mayme returned home to 21 "I" St. For a while she lived with Ada and her family. She was again at Dorothy's in April of 1948. Then her pains required medical help. She was admitted to the L.D.S. Hospital. She was weak. She was near death in June. But

Dorothy's boy, Ronny, had a birthday soon. Broaching the hospital rules because of her love, she had Ronny come to her beside on his birthday so she could present him his birthday gift. She expired the next day.