

Nettie Lambert Woodbury
Miller



Age 1



LIFE HISTORY OF NETTIE LAMBERT WOODBURY MILLER

Nettie Lambert Woodbury was born June 4, 1903 in Salt Lake City to Frank Bartlett Woodbury and Lilly Druce Lambert.

Nettie was married to Joseph Larson Miller on 12 Oct 1935.

Nettie died August 11, 1985 and was buried August 14, 1985. At her funeral, Apostle Thomas S. Monson gave the following talk:

"My brothers and sisters, I'm honored to have the opportunity to respond to the invitation extended by the family to say a few words on this very touching occasion, when we honor the mother, sister, grandmother and our beloved friend, Nettie Woodbury Miller. I've enjoyed the words that have been spoken this day. Many great memories have flowed through my mind. The beautiful music, the prayer, the capacity audience, the feelings of love which we all have for this truly wonderful family. As she lay in her casket in the other room we each had an opportunity to file past. I commented to her brother Orin the feelings of my heart. She reflects nobility. I can't think of a better word--a truly noble person--and in the words of the Father, as I looked at Nettie it was just as though he described them pertaining to her. "God touched her, and she slept." Didn't she look peaceful, beautiful, happy, contented? I had only one modest correction to add to that which has been said today. The comment was made that when she became a widow she became independent. Nettie was independent before she ever became a widow! Nettie was independent the day she was born! And what a treasure she must have been to her mother and father.

I never knew her mother, but how I revered and respected and loved her father, Frank B. Woodbury. I feel somewhat like a relative of this family, shirttail we call it I suppose. I went to school with young Orin, my cousin Agnes married Mel, and loved and worked with Wilford Wood, Lillian's husband. I enjoyed being in their home and enjoyed their friendship. And then to have known Nettie all my life. She was one year younger than my mother and has known me all of my life.

One of the first occasions that I remember best about Nettie was when I was a 14-year-old boy, by appointment, went into the Woodbury home on Orchard Place, as some say (Orchard Court as others refer to it) and sat in that big room. I'd never been in a living room so quiet in my life. Our house was just a little more hectic than that. I could hear the clock ticking, I could see those bookcases with the cherished volumes, well-used within them. I saw my first love seat sitting there by the middle wall and then I sat down and Nettie came in and turned on the dictaphone, that old-fashioned type with the big cylinder. And then she sat down and Frank B. Woodbury put his hands upon my head and spoke a very prophetic patriarchal blessing. I've read hundreds of patriarchal blessings, but I haven't read one more prophetic in nature; perhaps, with one exception and that's my wife's; than the blessing that Frank B. Woodbury gave to me. I'm grateful that Nettie typed it, not in the days when Wang word processors and multiple copies without effort, but in the old days where you typed with carbon paper; where you have to methodically, with great effort, correct any errors with a typewriter eraser. I still have the original--I

wouldn't part with it. I thought I was someone very special to think Nettie would transcribe my blessing and Frank B. Woodbury would give me my blessing. And then I think that 4,999 other very special people felt the same way that Frank B. Woodbury gave each one of them his or her patriarchal blessing and Nettie, I suppose, typed practically all of those. I don't know of a record to equal in all the church. Never a dollar of compensation, and sometimes rarely a word of thanks, and so efficiently and beautifully done. She felt she was dealing with sacred truth, and she was.

The next experience I best remember was when I was president of the teachers' quorum and Joseph, her husband, was our leader. We loved him; he was 1st Counselor in the bishopric. I remember when he had a lesson all prepared one night (we met on Monday in our stake for priesthood meeting) and the teachers' quorum presidency said, "Joseph, rather than listening to the discussion that you would like to have with us, we'd like to talk about girls." I can see his face as though it were yesterday--of total confusion at the query from young boys--but he put aside the book and then he began to talk to us about Nettie and the kind of girl that we ought to look for, the kind of girl we ought to marry. You know, I don't remember one of the lessons that was in that book, but my I'll never forget the lesson we got from Joseph on the subject of girls.

He then wanted us to come over to the house and hold our presidency meeting in the home. We went there and he told us to come hungry. Nettie put on that table the most delicious meat pies one could ever have. And, it won't be in any handbook, brethren,

but our presidency meeting consisted of a game of Monopoly with Joseph and Nettie and the three of us who comprised the presidency always wanting more blocks then. I suppose she had a little of the real estate business in her, Orin, Wally, Young Orin. I'll never forget that evening; an evening of love, and evening of respect, just an evening of being together; and that's what it is all about.

It then became the privilege to become her bishop--a very big ward, 1,080 people. That's a big ward by today's standards. Eighty-seven widows; the largest welfare load in the church; an elderly population. Nettie was my Relief Society president, and she and I participated in as many as three funerals in one day. She has arranged more flowers for more funerals and helped more people than I think any person that I have even known. I have seen her methodically, with the midnight oil burning, preparing the grocery order for souls in need. She didn't just give, she measured it out methodically. This was the Lord's and these people also needed to be helped. She did it so privately, so confidentially, so carefully, that the right hand knew not what the left hand was doing. Recently when all of the general authorities were instructed on holding welfare meetings with bishops and stake presidents as they went to stake conference, I had the opportunity to provide some suggestions to the brethren. My model for every Relief Society President is Nettie Miller. What we need is less instruction and more models to follow. And, with Nettie we have had such a model. I smiled when it was mentioned that your children, Janice and Brother Ashby, would go check on Nettie at her request. As the years go by they'll discover that Nettie was

checking on them when they went on to check on her--a very wise counselor and grandmother.

She loved beloved Joseph with all her heart. I think that of all the assignments she had in the church the one she most enjoyed was the one she had with him to be co-editor of the 6-7th Ward history. This was an assignment they could do together, and oh, what exceptional service they rendered then. They were very proud of this accomplishment. They were a team and they set for their children an example worthy of all emulation. They have been so proud of their children and their grandchildren all of these years.

Maxine was always so special in our ward. It seemed like she always did the right thing at the right time and we loved her for it. Frank was the president of our deacons' quorum when I served as a bishop. I've talked about him in general conference. You have a little pamphlet with an artist's rendering of him and his counselors taking some groceries to the widows on West Temple. And Janice--there's always Janice who took to her side her mother and brought her that great gift of companionship and family love when Nettie needed it most. I said to her husband, "Brother Ashby, it is perhaps the duty of a daughter to open her door to her mother in a time of need. But it's a great mark of credit, a son-in-law, that you not only opened the door of your home but you opened the door of your heart, and you will never regret it." For those of you who have been to the home in West Jordan Nettie was so proud of her cubicle, her private area. It kept her dignity, something which is so precious to one so proud. Beyond that I had the opportunity of going into the home when Family Home Evening was

in progress. It was thrilling to see each one of the children with his or her own scriptures and a matron-like Nettie, grandmother, leading the pack if you please, in the study of the word of the Lord. I know that Janice, Frank and Maxine are her treasures.

I only asked for two assignments in the 22 years since I have been a general authority. One of them was to New York Stake. I wanted to go to New York. I wanted to tell the people over whom Frank Miller presided just what kind of a person he is and how fortunate they are to have him as their stake president. I wanted to stay in the home with him and Alice and with the family. And how pleased I was when I walked into that home in Brooklyn and saw Frank take out a key, just like Joseph. I saw Frank open those bookcases and I fondled and held to my heart those treasured volumes which as a 14-year-old boy I saw in the home when I received my patriarchal blessing. I don't know when I have more enjoyed a stake conference. All of these are tender to all of us because we say farewell to a woman who knew God.

She was a pioneer in a way. The first lady missionary to Europe--adventuresome, independent. She was a woman who as she married and reared her family always had time for the Lord; always had time for the downtrodden; always had time and means to help mankind. What was it the Lord Said, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these....ye have done it unto me." So thousands of those have praised the name of Sister Miller, the Relief Society President of the 6-7th Ward.

How proud she was of her father and the temple work he accomplished. If you didn't know Frank Woodbury.....I wish you

could see him dressed in white, slim and trim, running up and down those stairs of the Salt Lake Temple, even in his 90's. Absolutely a fabulous person. I think he never used a profane word in his whole life. It would be so out-of-character for Frank Woodbury to use slang word. He was a man of dignity. I'm grateful way back in the early 50's when tape recorders first came out, that a young bishop received the inspiration to sit in that home in Orchard Place and record on tape for posterity a full evening with Frank B. Woodbury. I'm grateful that we have that tape. There is one in the archives of the Historical Society of the Church.

Now what does this all mean to us? Why are we here today? Why do hundreds come to pay respect to the family. It's because they have seen in Nettie an ideal. The girls whom she has influenced over the years. I saw three of them just an hour before the service. They asked if I were going to be here and asked if I would kind of think of them in representing all of the young ladies whom she has influenced. With her own family taking her time, her own home and activities to consider, Nettie's always had time for other girls. Every summer we would make our cabin available to the girls and Nettie, Edla and Jessie would go up to the Vivian Park area and spend three sleepless nights with maybe 14, 15, up to 20, 30 girls having the time of their lives. She would teach them. She was an example before them and they shall never forget her as they teach others.

Now the Lord had something to say about women like Nettie. He said, "He that heareth my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me." Nettie heard the commandments of the Lord and she

kept them. She has demonstrated her love to the Lord, and our Heavenly Father demonstrated his love to her. He has watched over her as he did the widow of Nain, as he did the widows of Zaraphat, as he has watched over thousands upon thousands of widows. That is a sacred word. It is a word designating those whom the Savior especially loved. And if you look at her life and the opportunities which she has had--up in the Ensign area, out in the Jordan area--to wend her way into the hearts and in the lives of other people, just as she did in the old 6-7th Ward. Our Heavenly Father has honored her and has given her the blessings which she would treasure and desire to keep.

Now Nettie has a testimony of the Gospel. She knew she lived before she came to earth. She knew that she was a spirit and is a spirit daughter of our Heavenly Father. She's very much aware that she came to mortality to prove herself; and prove herself she has done. She knows and knew that the day would come when she would pass from this existence and that her spirit would go to an area we call as paradise, spoken of by Alma, where we rest from all care and from all sorrow. I'm happy he qualified that. He didn't say where we rest from care and sorrow and await the glorious day of the resurrection. Nettie's testimony is that Christ lived, as Paul said, and he served and he died and he was resurrected on the third day. I think Paul knew no more than did Nettie Miller that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, for she knew it. She knew it with a certainty. As has been mentioned, she has had no fear of death. For death for her was simply a doorway through which she could pass into the arms of her beloved Joseph and into the arms where our

Lord and Savior Jesus Christ ministers.

What about us? What about Frank, what about Maxine, what about Janice and their families? We are left to find our way but we are not left without a beacon. For Nettie is as a beacon light, ever beckoning us from stormy seas into safe harbors. And if I could leave but one scripture for this choice family it would be from the book of 3 John, the smallest book in all the Bible. "I have no greater joy than to know (hear that) my children walk in truth." That is the legacy which Nettie Miller has left for her children and for her grandchildren. And if you want to show your appreciation for her....flowers on Memorial Day, oh so appropriate (she remembered everyone else); a special thought on her birthday; a special thought at Christmas time.....but every day remembering that the greatest desire of her heart was to know that her children walk in truth.

All of us are better persons for having known Nettie. And upon the family I invoke the blessing of our Heavenly Father and the words of our Savior when he said, "Peace I leave with you. My peace I give unto you. Not as the world giveth give I unto you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let it be afraid. In my Father's house are many mansions. I go to prepare a place for you that where I am there may you be also." Now a mansion is not measured by the number of stories which it has. It is not measured by the prestigious location which it occupies. If the mansion in heaven, which Nettie has earned, is about like Orchard Place--a lovely home where dwells her husband, her father, her mother, her family members who have gone beyond; where love reigns supreme;

where the spirit of the Lord is welcome; where a word of dishonor is never spoken; where the stranger is taken in and clothed and fed and comforted and receives divine truth--that is the mansion which she would desire and the mansion which her beloved Joseph, I feel confident, has prepared for her. God bless her memory. We loved.... her mortal remains is lowered into Mother Earth, I want this family to be able to look at that casket and say to their mother, "Good-bye Mother, until tomorrow when we meet again."

I leave with you my testimony that God does live, that Jesus is the Christ, and that wherever this young man may travel there are a whole lot of people like Nettie Miller traveling with him, bearing testimony to his testimony.

I suppose it is all right to share a prayer. The day before yesterday I was in Frankfurt, Germany. The day before that I was in Berlin. The day before I was in Hamburg. And each night in my prayer it was simply, "Heavenly Father, watch over Nettie until I get back." And he did. And while I thank him and express my love to this family--a noble family from a mother of true nobility which I observe today and which I have known all my life. God bless you Maxine, God bless you Frank and God bless you Janice; your companions, your children and your posterity, remembering out of this I have no greater joy, than to know my children walk in truth. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

MY TESTIMONY

The following was written by me while I was laboring in the European Mission - probably in 1934.

I can't really remember that I doubted in my mind that the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was not true, but I do realize that my testimony of it grows stronger from day to day.

The fact that I am here on a mission is one of the greatest testimonies that I have experienced. In October 1924, I received a Patriarchal Blessing from my father, Frank B. Woodbury, in which he stated "Your voice shall be heard in many lands declaring the message of truth for the uplift and blessing of mankind." As I reflected upon these words I wondered how that could be possible. At that time two of my brothers were on Missions and there was another one planning to go when he was old enough and we could raise the money to keep him. My mother had keeping house for my father and brothers. My father said to me, "If you live the teachings of the Gospel that promise will be fulfilled; we don't have any idea how but the Lord does." My brothers returned from their missions. My brother Melvin was called to fulfill a mission to Argentina. He had been home just three months when my bishop, Richard D. Andrew, came to me and asked me if I would be willing to accept a call to go on a mission. I immediately answered that there was nothing I would rather do, but that I didn't see how I could leave home as father's health was not good and he was unable to work full time; also, my brother Melvin had not been able to secure employment. This took place right in the middle of the big

depression and money and work were scarce. There was no one to take care of the house and I had been recording my father's Patriarchal Blessings; also, I couldn't see where the money was to come from my support.

Father said, "I am willing to trust in the Lord, that these things will all be taken care of. If He wants you to go He will open the way." Bishop Andrew asked if I would be willing to go to Europe, that President Harold B. Lee, our Stake President had requested that he asked me. He did not know if that would be where I would be sent but he wanted to know if I would be willing to go there. A few days later I received my call from President Heber J. Grant calling me to the British Mission. When I was set apart for my mission by Elder Richard R. Lyman, it was for the European Mission instead of the British Mission. I left home still wondering just how my blessing was to be fulfilled, but never doubting; I was beginning to see that the way was at last opening.

Before I had been away from home one year, that particular part of my blessing had been fulfilled, as I had spoken in eight different countries on the European Continent, as well as in England. The money has been sent each month as I had needed it and my father's health is no worse - it is in fact a little better.

I know for a surety that our Father in Heaven hears and answers my prayers and will help me at all times if I live His Gospel the way He wants me to live it. I know that the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the true Church, and am thankful to be a member of it.

Signed Nettie L. Woodbury (Miller)

MY TESTIMONY

OF THE LIFE AFTER THIS ONE

When I was but a very small child my mother was taken very seriously ill. I was too young to realize anything except that our home was different without mother, because she was in the hospital or ill at home for several months. There were six of us children - 4 boys and 2 girls, so my sister Lillian, who was only 15 years of age, carried the responsibility of the house and the family as best she could, as well as attending high school.

An incident which happened to my mother during this illness has done a great deal to help me to gain the testimony I now have of this Gospel. As mother was lying in the hospital very ill, a messenger appeared to her and told her that her mother (who had died two years before) needed her help and asked if she was ready to go. Mother answered that she was not ready then, that she had been promised in her Patriarchal Blessing that she should live as long as she desired, and her greatest desire was to live until her children were grown - until they could care for themselves. The messenger then left her.

Patriarch Harrison Sperry was visiting his wife in a room close by, who told him that another woman had been moved to 'The Death Room' to die; called such because so many people had recently been moved there to die. On being told who it was, Patriarch Sperry said he would go in and see her as he was well acquainted with her. He came to the room right after the Heavenly Messenger had left and asked mother if she would like to be administered to. Mother immediately said, yes. In the administration she was

promised that she would recover, which she immediately started to do. Within two weeks after this incident, two sisters of her mother died, evidently to assist with the work which was needed to be done.

Mother recovered from this illness and lived until her youngest child was 15 years of age. We all felt that her greatest desire had been fulfilled--'that she had lived until her children were all old enough to care for themselves', and that she was needed then to assist with the work in the world beyond this.

This incident has made me know for a surety that there is a life beyond this one, that we must live here in such a way that we will be worthy to go on to the next life and there meet with our loved ones to carry on the great work awaiting us there.

I know beyond a shadow of a doubt that this Gospel, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, is the true Church of Christ. I am thankful for this testimony. I have of the truthfulness of it and trust that I will always live so that I will be worthy to meet my dear ones who have passed on before me.

Signed Nettie Woodbury Miller