

William Willard Hutchings, Jr. and Sarah Agnes LeBaron Hutchings

Born: 23 November 1851; Salt Lake City, Salt Lake, Utah

Died: 18 March 1927; Beaver, Beaver County, Utah

Married: (1) Sarah Agnes LeBaron Hutchings; 7 April 1874; Salt Lake City, Salt Lake County, Utah

(2) Sarah Edwards; 15 April 1887

Father: William Willard Hutchings, Sr.

Mother: Sarah Ann Baldwin

Born: 18 November 1851; New Orleans, Orleans, Louisiana

Died: 7 June 1943; Beaver, Beaver County, Utah

Married: William Willard Hutchings; 7 April 1874

Father: Alonzo Harrington LeBaron

Mother: Sarah Jeffs

Childhood

William Willard Hutchings, Jr. was born November 23, 1851 in Salt Lake City, Utah. He was the only child born to William Willard Hutchings, Sr. and his second wife, Sarah Ann Baldwin. Sadly, Sarah Ann died when little William was only a year and a half old. He was primarily raised by his father's third wife, Matilda Wiseman, who lived on a family farm in present-day Draper, Utah, in an area known as Willow Creek.

In 1862, William Sr. was called, along with 200 other men, to be part of the Cotton Mission in Southern Utah. Throughout the 1850s and 1860s, many families were called by LDS Church leaders to move to Southern Utah and help raise cotton in the hope that the cotton industry would bring a measure of self-sufficiency and economic stability to the Mormon population. Accordingly, William Sr. moved his wives and children to Toquerville, Utah, a settlement north of St. George. They stayed there until 1867, when William Sr. decided to move his families to Beaver, Utah.

William Jr. was sixteen years old at the time of his family's move to Beaver. He had grown into a conscientious young man who was skilled in many facets of pioneer life, including carpentry, milling, and farming. He was quietly religious and committed to the LDS faith. On April 7, 1874, he married Sarah Agnes LeBaron Hutchings in the Salt Lake Endowment House.

Sarah Agnes LeBaron Hutchings's birthday fell just a few days before her husband Williams's birthday, on November 18, 1851. However, Agnes, as she was called, was born far away from the Salt Lake Valley in New Orleans, Louisiana. Her father, Alonzo Harrington LeBaron, had met her mother, Sarah Jeffs, while serving an LDS mission in England. They were married there in approximately 1850, and the next year left for America. They sailed to New Orleans, where little Agnes was born. Her father left his young family in the care of a local Frenchman and traveled to Salt Lake City in order to

prepare a home for them there. Sarah and baby Agnes lived with the French family for two years, and consequently many of Agnes's first words were French ones.

In 1853 Agnes and her mother began their journey across the plains to the Salt Lake Valley. Agnes was only two-and-a-half years old at the time, and rode in the back of a covered wagon. Her mother told her the following story about their travels:

“When we were camped one night in a tent where there were plenty of wild hogs, one found his way into our tent [,] took me by the shoulder and had drug me to the door, when my mother awoke and got me in time [sic] to keep the pig from carrying her little girl away and being devoured. So any person can imagine how thankful my mother was to our Heavenly Father for helping her save her baby’s life.”ⁱ

After reaching the Salt Lake Valley and being reunited with her father, Agnes and her mother lived in the small, four-room house Alonzo had built “one block east of where the City-County Building now stands”ⁱⁱ Her father was employed working on the foundation of the Salt Lake Temple; nevertheless, the family suffered from much want. Agnes recalled that her mother gave most of their food to her father to sustain him in his physical labor at the temple grounds, while she, her mother and eventually her brothers would scour the mountainsides in search of sego-lily bulbs to eat. The family learned to make-do with what they had, as they did not have much. Agnes's mother also made lye soap from the ash of cottonwood trees, and taught Agnes how to braid straw that she would make into hats. Her father would sell these items in town to help earn extra money for the family.

When Agnes was seven years old, word spread throughout the Mormon settlements that Johnston's Army was traveling to the Salt Lake Valley to subdue the Mormon pioneers. Many families, including Agnes's, decided to leave the city. Her father rented out their Salt Lake home to an elderly couple and relocated his family to Springville. At some point prior to this, Alonzo had married a plural wife, and so he actually built two new homes in Springville when the family moved; Agnes recalled that her bedroom was in a dugout. Unfortunately, her father had financial trouble in Springville, and decided to move his family back to Salt Lake. When the couple living in their Salt Lake home refused to move out, Agnes's family had to live in a barn. After a time they moved to a farm in Ogden where they harvested wild berries to sell. Her father also hunted small animals and harvested their fat, which her mother used to make soap they peddled in town.

While living in Ogden, Agnes's father decided to travel to the East in search of his first wife whom he had divorced, a woman named Clarissa Bostwich. Agnes was by then the eldest of several children, and recalled that “[t]his broke up our family,” though whether or not her parents were legally divorced is unclear.ⁱⁱⁱ However, her mother remarried in Alonzo's absence and moved with her children and new husband to Beaver in 1863.^{iv} She died the next year only a week after giving birth to her seventh child, a baby girl.

Essentially orphaned at this point, Agnes went to her work spinning yarn in people's homes, earning fifty cents a week in addition to her room and board. After a year, she was taken in by a childless couple named William and Eliza Hawkins who raised her as their own. She lovingly called them "uncle" and "auntie." Agnes lived with them until she married William Willard Hutchins, Jr., at age twenty-three. Her other siblings were likewise adopted into the families of friends and neighbors.

Early Married Life

William and Agnes returned to Beaver after their marriage in Salt Lake and moved into "a nice new room" provided by his father.^v They furnished it with "a bedstead, a cupboard which my husband made, and a second hand stove and chairs, flat irons and some dishes and a clock that we brought from Salt Lake"^{vi} Agnes made a rug and the bedding that completed their feelings of comfort. William owned a good wagon and team of horses worth five hundred dollars, and was never had trouble providing for his young family. After a year he built a two-room frame house from logs he brought down from Beaver Canyon and cut in his father's mill. The couple's first daughter, Sarah Eliza, called Sade, was born January 9, 1875. In 1876 they moved briefly to a farm in Sevier, about 45 miles to the northeast, but were unhappy there and so returned to Beaver.

Called to the San Juan Mission

It was while living in Beaver in 1879 that William and Agnes received the call to be part of the San Juan Mission. LDS Church leaders hoped that by sending settlers to the largely unexplored desert areas of the San Juan River, they could both befriend local Indian tribes and provide a settlement buffer in the area. With three young daughters (Sade, Ella and Lydia) ranging in age from four years to six months, the Hutchings family loaded their wagon and left Beaver on October 6, 1879. They traveled through Panguitch and southward through Escalante until they reached "a mountain of rock with just a small crack in it."^{vii}

In later years, Agnes recalled the experience as a very difficult one for her and her family. It was originally anticipated that the journey would take about six weeks, but instead it took six months. Agnes noted that Silas Smith was the leader of the expedition, but "[f]rom the type of road which he led us through, we concluded he did [sic] not know much about the country."^{viii} She was correct in that assumption, as the landscape before them was virtually unexplored territory.

Agnes remembered the tedious days of waiting for the "Hole-in-the-Rock" to be blasted out, and how hard it was for the settlers to build a road across the rocky terrain. But the harsh landscape was not the only hardship they had to endure: the winter was "colder and snow deeper than in years past."^{ix} Agnes gathered "brush wood" with which to build a fire for warmth and cooking, and relied upon the snow that melted in bowl-shaped depressions in the rocks for water to wash and cook with.^x

When the Hole-in-the-Rock pioneers finally reached the site of present-day Bluff, Agnes and William were discouraged at the thought of building a new life in such a barren place. “William Willard Jr. gave the town of Bluff its name. Bluff means to mislead.”^{xi} And that was exactly how William and Agnes felt about it. After enduring such a difficult journey to get there, the prospect of staying in Bluff was disheartening to them. Rather than build a more permanent home, they continued to camp, as they had on the journey there. Misfortune struck when William’s horses were lost. Further disheartened, they left Bluff and went to Mancos, Colorado, where William found temporary employment working on the railroad. Within a few months they decided to return to Beaver, though by a much easier route.

Hutchings Hotel

The Hutchings family were glad to be back in Beaver, having been gone a year, and were gladly reunited with friends, family and other familiar aspects of life. They purchased an adobe home and some property from Mr. and Mrs. Urbun VanStewart, and settled down. On April 15, 1887, William entered into a polygamous marriage with a second wife, named Sarah Edwards. This was not an easy adjustment for Agnes, but she was always kind to the six children that were eventually born to William and Sarah Edwards. Because United States government authorities were cracking down on the practice of polygamy among Latter-day Saints at the time, William and Sarah fled to Arizona for about a year and a half. They then moved to Price, where Sarah continued to reside for about ten years. William, however, returned to Agnes in Beaver and visited Sarah Edwards when he could. By the turn of the century the danger of being prosecuted for a polygamous lifestyle had largely passed, and it was deemed safe for Sarah to move to Beaver.

William and Agnes eventually had six more daughters (for a total of nine) and a son. The little adobe house they had purchased seemed to shrink as their family grew. Over the years they remodeled and expanded it to fit their large family. Then they decided to turn it into a hotel – aptly called “The Hutchings Hotel.” Agnes served as a wonderful hostess and manager of the hotel. There were several guest rooms on the main floor, a stylish parlor, and a small apartment where their daughter Julia Hutchings Boyle eventually lived with her husband and family. Upstairs were more guest rooms and the rest of the family’s living quarters. A talented cook, Julia was in charge of the hotel’s meals. Most of the vegetables she cooked with were harvested from the garden behind the hotel. Her mother, after all, was a strong advocate of nutritious foods. On the southern edge of the hotel property stood a two-story barn and a tool shed where travelers could keep their horses and mend anything that might need fixing.

The Hutchings family did all they could to make their hotel a place of comfort, elegance and respectability for thirty years. Along one wall of the main parlor were shelves of books that guests could peruse and enjoy during their stay, perhaps curling up in one of the overstuffed couches or chairs. A pedal organ, and later, a piano and a record player, added to the possibilities for entertainment in the parlor. A beautiful chandelier hung from the ceiling, and in the dining room next door, a large buffet with a gilded mirror adorned the north wall. On it were placed lovely glass bowls and vases, which

complimented the long dining tables draped with white linen tablecloths and set with Agnes' best china.

Sadly, the Hutchings Hotel was ultimately demolished at the behest of local civic leaders, who wanted to build a high school on the property. As noted by a granddaughter of the Hutchings, the decision to tear down the hotel was not a popular one:

“Many citizens then and now question the wisdom of these people demanding that the Hutchings Hotel, one of the finest buildings in town, be purchased and demolished to build a high school right on main street where there was no parking space, while there was so much empty land available in all directions around the small town of Beaver.”^{xii}

William and Agnes' daughter Lydia lived directly across the street from the hotel at the time it was razed. “She wept for days while watching her beloved home of memories swept away, as did many members of the Hutchings family.”^{xiii} When the hotel property was sold to the city, William and Agnes bought a home on 195 East and 200 North where they lived the rest of their lives.

Years of Community and Church Service

Through the years, William and Agnes were as involved with life outside the hotel business as they were in it. William served two-year terms as both the Beaver City marshal and the sheriff. He was also a city councilman and a U.S. Deputy Marshall for a time. He oversaw the construction of local roads and ran a stage coach for many years in and out of Beaver to nearby communities such as Milford and Parowan. After the hotel was shut down, he hauled copper ore to Nevada, and also bought a saw mill in Indian Creek.

In Church affairs, he served as president of both the Elders Quorum and the Young Men's Mutual Association. At the time of his death, on March 18, 1927, he was a high priest.

Agnes was likewise a contributing member to her community and church. She belonged to the local camp of the Daughters of Utah Pioneers, and the American Legion. When she was eight years old Agnes had been baptized a member of the LDS faith, and she always remained true to its teachings. She served for nine years as a counselor in the stake Primary organization, and also held the position of secretary in her local Relief Society. She had joined the Relief Society organization when she was just fifteen years old. And for fifty years she served as a visiting teacher – actively holding that calling until she was 81 years old.

Agnes was remembered by her granddaughters, Bertha Bohn Davidson and Barbara Messinger, as being an independent-minded woman, who was unafraid to give correction when she thought it was due. She kept an immaculate house and liked to have things just so. She taught her children and grandchildren the importance of eating nutritious foods, and was an example to her daughters of good homemaking skills. She

liked to make holidays special for her loved ones. Thanksgiving Day at the Hutchings Hotel was a welcome opportunity for her children and grandchildren to gather around the long dining tables and share the best foods. At Christmas, Agnes would send her grandchildren packages filled with useful things, including “hard cookies. She said they were good for your teeth.”^{xiv} Practicality, after all, was born from her pioneer life experiences.

At the time of William’s death, all nine of the Hutchings daughters were married, and only their son remained at home. He looked after his mother throughout the remainder of her life, though even at the ripe old age of 90 it was reported that Agnes still managed to do her own housework and was an avid reader of newspapers and magazines. She finally passed away on June 7, 1943. The following poem, written by Agnes, was published in the Daughters of Utah Pioneers magazine, *The Spinning Wheel*, six months after her death:

Some Other Day
There are loving words we are going to speak,
There are burdened souls we are going to seek,
We are going to help the poor and the weak,
Some other day.
Some glorious victories we’re going to win,
We’re going to conquer besetting sin,
Some other day.
There are flowers we are going to pick,
There are wreaths of kindness we are going to make,
We’ll visit the poor, the needy and sick,
Some other day.
Oh yes, perhaps it will be too late,
There are wonderful changes while we wait,
For some other day.
For the tender words that hearts now crave,
And the wreaths of kindness we now save
May be kept to be laid on the grave
Some other day.^{xv}

*Researched and written for the Hole-in-the-Rock Foundation by:
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ⁱ Sarah Agnes LeBaron Hutchings, "Autobiography," 1, The Archives of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah. Two versions of Agnes's autobiography are contained within this file at the Church Archives. They rely on much of the same language and stories but are different; their pagination is likewise separate. The second autobiography, entitled "Brief History of the Life of Sarah Agnes LeBaron Hutchings, Dictated by Her," is also on file at the Daughters of Utah Pioneers. Because the Church Archives version is easier to read, any citations referring to it will reflect that copy and its pagination.

ⁱⁱ Hutchings, "Brief History," 1.

ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid., 2.

^{iv} Ibid. At the end of this autobiography, on page 4, reads the following note: "Sarah Jeffs LeBaron was remarried to Edmond McClatchie while Alonzo Harrington LeBaron was away visiting his first wife."

^v Hutchings, "Autobiography," 2.

^{vi} Ibid.

^{vii} Hutchings, "Brief History," 2.

^{viii} Ibid., 3.

^{ix} Hutchings, "Autobiography," 2.

^x Ibid. Agnes noted that sometimes these "rock tanks" were as deep as forty or fifty feet.

^{xi} "History of William Willard Hutchings Jr. (1851-1927)," 2, Unpublished manuscript from the files of the Daughters of Utah Pioneers, Salt Lake City, Utah.

^{xii} Bertha Bohn Davidson, "The Hutchings Hotel," 2, Unpublished manuscript from the files of the Daughters of Utah Pioneers, Salt Lake City, Utah.

^{xiii} Ibid.

^{xiv} Barbara Messinger, "History of Sarah Agnes LeBaron Hutchings (1851-1943)," 12, Unpublished manuscript from the files of the Daughters of Utah Pioneers, Salt Lake City, Utah.

^{xv} Hutchings, "Autobiography," 3; also quoted in Messinger, 14. It is most likely that Messinger also authored the history of William Willard Hutchings, Jr., that was used to prepare this combined biography of William and Agnes Hutchings. However, the copy of William's history obtained by CSM Jones, Family Heritage Consulting, does not list an author. For that reason, it is listed separately in the bibliography above.