



Funeral Home

Funeral Home Owned by the Rev. Levi Bell and Miss Jane
 Mungate. Burial in the Mt. View Cemetery
 Nysie.

Obituaries

MISS FLORA BEATRICE FARNHAM (last, were
 Miss Flora Beatrice Farnham, 103, of Rt. 1, Meadows of
 Dan died Monday, in State Line Primitive Baptist Church
 She was the daughter of the late Biggs and Minerva
 Farnham. There are no survivors. Miss Amy Hill and Mrs.
 Funeral services will be held at 10 a.m. Thursday.
 Burial will be in Mt. View United Methodist Church
 Cemetery.



John Otto's Marriage Ill-Fated for Reclusive Pioneer

By Kathy Jordan

When Colorado National Monument founder John Otto and artist Beatrice Farnham announced their engagement in May 1911 they undoubtedly believed, like many a soon-to-wed couple, that they were going to live a long and happy life on or near the Monument.

Instead of a lengthy life of wedded bliss, their marriage was followed by a quick separation and, eventually, divorce.

In interviews with John and Beatrice shortly before they exchanged vows, they had emerged as independent thinkers who shared radical theories about marriage.

According to a 1969 story from The Denver Post files, it appeared that Beatrice and John had only known each other for a few weeks before Beatrice announced their engagement. In the staid early 1900s, the unorthodox announcement resulted in a few raised eyebrows in Grand Junction as well as in the bride's hometown of Boston.

However, according to the 1911 interview on which the 1969 story was based, Beatrice dismissed the idea that theirs was a short courtship. She told the Denver Post then that the couple had crossed paths several times in the past in places such Mount Shasta in California and Albuquerque and Las Vegas, N.M.

After her art studies Beatrice moved to New Mexico where she traveled to the Navajo and Pueblo reservations in search of unique Native American art.

In the 1969 story, the Denver Post reported that Beatrice was born in Boston to a wealthy society family and was 35 years old when she married Otto. She was a handsome woman, close to six feet tall with brown eyes.

She was an artist and sculptress and spent time before her wedding at the foot of Independence Monument doing a painting of the monument while John worked on the ladder to the top.

Despite her unconventional views on marriage, she wore her mother's white satin dress with a veil and a scarf her grandmother had worn at her wedding and carried a bouquet of Colorado wild flowers. Beatrice and John were married on June 20, 1911.

John gave Beatrice a burro named Foxy as a wedding gift. The beast most likely came in handy on their wedding trip through the Monument and into Eastern Utah.

On Aug. 21, 1911, a scant two months after their wedding, Beatrice left Grand Junction to visit relatives and make arrangements to close up her estate in the East. She never returned.

Apparently Beatrice had no desire to live in the great outdoors as John did. She was, in fact, quoted as saying: "I tried hard to live his way, but I could not live with a man to whom even a cabin was an encumbrance."

Their divorce was final in February of 1914 and Beatrice married Dallas Benson, a cowboy and ranch manager from Kansas, in Boston, Mass., in March 1915.

From that point on, Beatrice's trail becomes somewhat hard to track.

Checking on the name, Beatrice Farnham, I learned about woman living in Meadows of Dan, Va., about the same time. My information came from The Enterprise, a newspaper in Stuart, Va., a town near Meadows of Dan.

I can only surmise that the two Beatrices are the same woman, based on the astonishing likenesses in their histories.

According to a story that ran in The Enterprise when Beatrice died, she and her mother had purchased property near Meadows of Dan in the 1920s.

Stories from The Enterprise about the Beatrice in Virginia and The Denver Post stories about John's Beatrice make the similarities between the two women uncanny. The story in The Enterprise however, didn't mention the two previous marriages or living in Grand Junction.

Both Beatrices had studied art in Boston and San Francisco, and were artists who enjoyed traveling and painting along the way. It is possible that the Virginia Beatrice passed through Grand Junction in the 1950s when she toured the United States in a van, painting scenes as she went along.

Another parallel was that both women had a great desire to establish retreats.

The Beatrice who lived here wanted to establish an Independent Colony to further the emancipation of American womanhood. She didn't stay in town long enough to do that.

Beatrice in Virginia did establish a retreat for Franciscan Friars at her home. She also provided financial support for many kids in Patrick County to attend school.

If the Virginia Beatrice is Otto's Beatrice than she was able to fulfill her dream of establishing a retreat and also helping young people.