

4.0 Miley Sarah (Johnson) Eaton (I,G,M)



Bloomquist Barbara

Leatherwood Dahlias

Maggie Valley/Waynesville, North Carolina

Proverbs 31: 29-30

**“Many women do noble things.
Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting;
but a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised.”**

Isaiah 61:1-2 Luke 4:18-19

“The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”

Miley Sarah (Johnson) Eaton

April 23, 1884 -- October 7, 1960

October 2023



The story of Miley Sarah Eaton underscores the need for these stories from our family tree! If we do not tell these stories, memories of our ancestors will be lost to the family. We hope to compile a book that will contain some of these stories that are worthy of being passed down to future generations.

It was over 60 years ago, on my Martha's 14th birthday, that Miley Sarah went home to be with our Lord. Sadly, while everyone that I have spoken with about her remembers her as one of the Godliest women they ever knew, no one seems to have knowledge of a eulogy or any document that was written to describe her values or her lifestyle. It's wonderful that her Godly lifestyle is well-known to the Lord and celebrated forever in Heaven! However, it's sad that I arrived in the family a decade too late to meet her in person. Now it's getting late, but it's NOT too late, to hear and write down some stories from her grandchildren who remember her.

They say that the fruit does not fall far from the tree. Judging from the children and grandchildren of Miley Sarah that I have known, she must have been one incredible tree!! Here is her story as recalled by three of her granddaughters:

1. Irma (Billette) Williams
2. Gwen (Dawson) Love
3. Martha (Dawson) Rapalje

Miley Sarah (Johnson) Eaton

April 23, 1884 -- October 7, 1960

December 2023

By Irma B. Williams



Irma and Miley Sarah

My dear Grandmother Sarah Miley Johnson Eaton was beautiful in character: mild-mannered with a sweet and caring disposition. Her blue eyes and demeanor revealed her true inner self by her expressions. She was soft-spoken, and when she did speak, she was a person of few words. She observed and listened and taught her children by example to love the Lord and to be kind to each other and to be courteous to others.

In her retirement years, she and her husband June Eaton, known to many as Mr. June, moved from South Georgia to central Florida to be closer to most of their children, six daughters and a son. One small daughter, Alma, had already died when she was but a child. Yes, Grandmother knew pain early in life.

Grandmother Eaton loved to fish in the beautiful lakes in Florida. In those days Mr. June owned one of those old wooden paddle boats with oars on either side of the boat. One day my mother, who loved to fish also, went fishing with her parents, and I was with them. There were four of us in that boat. Mr. June sat in the middle of the boat and managed the oars and fished. Grandmother sat in the front of the boat, and Mother and I sat in the back end of the boat because there was room for two.

During the afternoon a strong wind began to blow, and the clouds began to look angry to me, but Mr. June kept fishing with an eye on the clouds. I was watching the water as waves turned into white caps. The water in Lake Beauclair began to feel rough, but Mr. June decided to fish a little longer while the waves and wind worsened...

Suddenly, Mr. June began to row us toward the shore. I felt very afraid. I looked up at Mother's face. Her lips were moving, but not a sound came out. I knew she was praying. There were no life jackets, and furthermore, to my knowledge, it never occurred to Mr. June to own one.

As you already know, we made it to shore. That was my first and last time to go fishing in that old wooden boat. During this time, Grandmother Eaton never opened her mouth or made a sound.

Later, after Mr. June went on to his reward in 1957, Grandmother Eaton began to make plans to live with one of her daughters. When she finally made her decision to live with our family, Dad [Kelso Billette] built her an apartment connected to our house. Two large glass doors were installed on the side of our dining room. An entrance into Grandmother's apartment from our dining room had a nice sitting room, large bedroom, and a modern kitchen and bathroom. An entrance was also made to the outside, which made it convenient for her daughters and son and their families to visit her.

Grandmother was with us often. Once, as a young teen, I was telling Grandmother my plans for the next day. I felt sure of what I would do. Grandmother said to me, "Irma, the Bible says to say, 'If the Lord wills' I will do such and such..." I looked up that Bible verse, and there the verse plainly said: For that you ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this or that. (See James 4:15.)

Grandmother did not raise her voice when speaking, there are two other "words of wisdom" she taught. She was present at my wedding shower which my sweet friends gave me. We played a game where each one was supposed to write on a piece of paper advice to the bride. Grandmother waited until we were alone, and she gave me the rules she lived by:

- 1. "Irma, it is better to suffer wrong than to do wrong." Those words have been invaluable to me.**
- 2. The other advice she gave me in her quiet tone of voice has been worth more than gold to me: "Irma, always keep sweet in your soul."**

These are words she spoke to me over 68 years ago, and they still ring in my ears. Grandmother Eaton lived by her own words of wisdom. I am blessed by her sharing her own hard-earned lessons. These are some of the treasures she passed on to me.

By Martha D. Rapalje

Let me begin by saying that the most important person influencing my own life was my own mother, Vergie Dawson. It was so sad to me that my Grandmother Eaton passed away on my 14th birthday! In those early years of my life, I did not have very many memories of my grandmother, but I can surely say this: She was a terrific influence on many, many people, including my own mother.

One memory that I have was a common practice of Mother picking up Grandmother and bringing her over to our house. There, Mother would wash and style Grandmother's hair. Mother used an old-fashioned wave clip, and Grandmother would sit under a hair dryer and enjoy the views of Lake Carlton. In my later years, I would roll Mother's hair and reminisce, understanding and appreciating what Mother had done for her own mother. Now that I am older with a serious arm injury to myself, I really need and appreciate help with my own hair!

When Grandmother Eaton went home to be with the Lord, my mother was totally devastated by her loss. Then one morning, my mother awoke from a dream in which Grandmother Eaton was at the foot of her bed, speaking to her, telling her not to worry and grieve, that everything was good. This dream was very real to Mother, and it helped to relieve much of the sadness she had been experiencing.

A few years later, my mother (Vergie) often told our boys Rob and Philip, "I wish you could have met my mother [Miley Sarah]!" My reply to this to my own boys is "It's true that you didn't get to meet Grandmother Eaton, but, the next best thing, you were blessed to meet and know MY mother [Vergie]!"

Today, our boys are telling their own children, "I wish you could have met my Gram [Vergie]!"

[Bob's note: Someday, after we are gone, OUR grandchildren will be saying to THEIR children, "I wish you could have met MY Nana!!" The pattern continues from generation to generation to generation . . .]