

#52Ancestors 2020 Week 23 Wedding

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Wedding

This beautiful bride is my grandmother, Josephine Dorothy Morgan, on the occasion of her marriage to my grandfather, Frederick Whitten, which took place on 9 August, 1911 in Tamworth, NSW.

Josephine, known as Jo or Josie, had not had an easy life to this point. There are clues in the newspaper report to some of those hardships*

At the Methodist Church, Tamworth, on August 9, Miss Josephine Dorothy Morgan, of "Leicester Vale," Duri, was married to Mr. Fred Whitten, of Gaspard, Quirindi. The bride wore a dress of cream silk striped ninon over glace silk, richly decorated with pearl and silver trimmings, with the customary wreath and veil. She carried a handsome shower bouquet of white hyacinths, camellias, snow drops and asparagus fern, the gifts of the bridegroom also a costly diamond ring. She was attended by two bridesmaids, Miss Emily Maunder and Miss Lucie Whitten (sister of the bridegroom.) They were attired in cream ninon and carried lovely bouquets of pink and white hyacinths and autumn leaves, and they also wore pretty wreath brooches, gifts of the bridegroom. Mr. W Chalmers, of Tamworth, acted as. best man, and Mr. Dunning, of Duri, gave the bride away. Rev. James Colwell was the officiating clergyman, and Mrs. Colwell supplied the music. A goodly number of friends assembled to witness the ceremony, and afterwards adjourned to Mr Jarman's refreshment rooms, where the bride and bridegroom were the recipients of hearty congratulations. Upwards of 40 guests sat down to the wedding breakfast. The customary speeches were made and the usual toasts were proposed and honored. The bride's travelling dress was of saxe blue silk voile, nicely braided, with hat to match. The newly wedded couple went to Toowoomba and Brisbane.



Josephine Morgan on her wedding day

What a pity that local newspapers don't do this anymore – we can learn so much from the report – the name of the Church, the names of the others in the wedding party, the bouquet and the gifts, the reception and the honeymoon destination.

We know that Josephine wasn't given away by her father because she had not seen her parents since she was about 5 years old, and they separated. Her mother went with baby

Edward and was soon living with another man. Her father took Josie and Elsie, her 2 year-old sister, to live with his sister (also Josephine) and her family in Summer Hill. We don't know if perhaps he visited in her early years but certainly, by the time she married, she had long believed that she was an orphan.

Both of her parents were actually still alive in 1911, but she was not to learn that until her mother died in 1933.

We know that her bridesmaid, Miss Emily Maunder, was the sister of her best friend, Ruth, who was supposed to be Matron of Honour but who had learned that she was pregnant. Nobody could possibly have guessed, but it was considered "not done" to be a pregnant attendant to the bride.

My mother wrote that "Josie had met the Maunder family when she was brought to Tamworth by family friends named Lonsdale. Mr Lonsdale was a traveller for Buzacotts, a farm supplies firm now defunct. He called on a Duri farmer named Will Maunder. The Maunders took a fancy to my mother and asked her to stay on as a companion to their daughters Ruth and Emily. While there, she was included in the social activities of the community, and it was during one of these that she met my father."

We know that this was Fred's second marriage and that his 8 year-old daughter, Gladys, was amongst the wedding guests. The first marriage ended tragically when Annie Whitten died shortly after giving birth to Gladys in 1903. She was 22 years old and they had been married for less than a year. Josie became an instant stepmother - an unenviable position for a new bride.

Fred and Josie had a happy marriage. They had seven children, but sadly lost their second son Jackie at the age of 6 and then their daughter Ruth at only 30. Fred suffered from ill health in the last years of his life but was loved and cared for at home until he died in 1947 at the age of 76. Josie lived for 21 years as a widow. Her family was scattered throughout NSW, but she remained a central figure in their lives.

When I was about 11, my sisters and I "dressed up" in Josephine's wedding dress. I don't think it fit me even at that age – my



Fred's brothers Harry and Tony, with Gladys at the wedding

grandmother was about 5' tall and Fred used to say he could "put his hands around her waist

without her stays on". Fortunately, before it could be ruined by us, my grandmother donated it to the Quirindi Museum.