

The following is excerpted from *The Bishop's Boys, the life of Wilbur and Orville Wright* by Tom Crouch, chairman of the department of aeronautics at the National Air & Space Museum of the Smithsonian Institution, published in 1986 by WW Norton and Company, New York, and London. What he says of their father Milton Wright and his time in Sublimity as the headmaster of Sublimity College is however limited to these paragraphs:

They journeyed across Panama by rail, passing "villages, huts, mosquitoes, then boarded the Golden Age, and sailed for San Francisco on July 18. Milton was shocked that "not a few" church members took to the Americans that their nation was but a child. "A very large child," Milton replied. They touched at Acapulco and Manzanilla, "sorry towns." Milton had a slight chill on July 26, the first symptom of the dreaded Panama fever. By the time they reached San Francisco he was a very sick man, his fever so high he almost fainted simply walking aboard the Commodore, the ship that would carry them on to Portland, T. J. Connor, a fellow mission worker, nursed him through the delirium that followed, when, as Milton later recalled, "my thoughts with painful vigor flew over the universe."

His recovery was very slow, Milton was still "quite weak and stupid" when they transferred to the Hoosier at Oregon City for the final for the final leg of their journey to Butteville, Oregon on August 23, then began a slow tour of the Willamette Valley circuits as he regained his strength. Milton fell in love with the Oregon wilderness during his first weeks in the territory. "The breezes had a peculiar roar in the trees," he wrote, "and the memory of the sound was lasting."

Posted to the Lane County Circuit in mid-September, he was still too ill to accept. Instead, he was asked to take over the preparatory department of Sublimity College, an embryonic United Brethren school. He opened classes on November 23 with twenty-seven "scholars." Under his leadership, Sublimity grew and prospered. He spent the rounds of various Oregon circuits as a preacher. Milton remained in close touch with his family by mail. William received constant letters describing his life in the Oregon wilderness; there was also a steady flow of letters to and from Susan, "the girl I left behind,"

His first tour of missionary duty completed, he sailed from Portland on October 7, 1859. His plan was to return home, marry Susan, and come back to Oregon to spend his life in the service of the West Coast conference. As before, he enjoyed The trip, attending a lecture on Arabia by the renowned traveler Bayard Taylor in San Francisco before boarding the steamer Sonora, bound for Panama. Taylor and his wife; Lansing Stout, U.S. representative from Oregon; and U.S.

Arriving at Panama City, they received word that "Ossawatimie" John Brown had been captured by Virginia authorities following a raid on the U.S. arsenal at Harper's Ferry. Senator Lane, who would run as the Southern Democratic candidate for Vice President with John C. Breckinridge in 1860, remarked, "I would have him hung higher than Hamnion without judge or jury!" Milton, while never a violent man, felt some admiration for Brown, and chided the senator

He arrived back home in Fayette County on November 14, 1859, after an absence of two years, four months, and nineteen days. "Mother," he noted in his diary, "almost overcome with joy." Milton visited the Koerners the next day. Apparently all doubts were now resolved. One week later on November 22, he obtained a marriage license. He and Susan were married by the Reverend John Fohl shortly after three o'clock on the afternoon of November 24, Thanksgiving Day, 1859. He was four days short of his 31 birthday, her birthday; she was twenty-eight.

The long years of waiting had been worthwhile. This was to be a very successful marriage. A quarter of a century after his wife's death in 1889, Milton continued to honor their anniversary, her birthday, and the anniversary of her death. On July 4, 1908, he wrote a poignant letter to his son Wilbur and laid a little bunch of flowers on her grave.

It is clear that he regarded Susan as the ideal wife and helpmate. The best advice he could give his daughter was that she strive to attain "some of her Mother's love of calm and solitude," so that she might "Flourish like the palm." Susan was a good and dutiful wife, even by the rigorous standards of the period. There was assuredly much more to her than that, however. She was a woman with a will, if not a constitution, to match her husband's. She accepted Milton's religious calling as her own. Her duty, as she saw it, was to create a home that would provide him with the moral fiber that would enable them to take their place as good Christians and model citizens. Her health was never good. She suffered periodic bouts with malaria, rheumatism, and a variety of other ills. Yet she bore Milton seven children the first when she was twenty-nine, the last when she was forty-three. She packed and moved her family twelve times in thirty years of married life without a complaint. She was a capable, independent woman, devoted to her family.

The following is from Wikipedia:

Early life

Wright was born on the Indiana frontier, in Rush County. He attended Hartsville College, and graduated in 1854. married susan c. wright in 1858

Marriage

Milton met Susan at Hartsville College in 1853, where he was appointed supervisor of the preparatory department and she was a literature student. After a long courtship, Milton asked Susan to marry him and accompany him on his assignment by the church to Oregon. She declined, but agreed to marry him when he returned. They married in 1859, when he was almost 31 and she was 28.

Both shared a love of learning for the sake of learning. Their home had two libraries — the first consisted of books on theology, the second was a large, varied collection. Looking back on his childhood, Orville once commented that he and his brother had

“special advantages...we were lucky enough to grow up in a home environment where there was always much encouragement to children to pursue intellectual interests; to investigate whatever aroused their curiosity.”

Children

Susan and Milton had seven children. Four sons and one daughter survived past infancy. Their first son, Reuchlin, was born in a log cabin in 1861 near Fairmount, Indiana. The second son, Lorin, was born in 1862 in Orange Township, Fayette County, Indiana. Wilbur, the third son, was born in 1867 near Millville, Indiana. In 1871, the family moved to Dayton, Ohio, where Susan gave birth to her fourth and fifth children, twins Otis and Ida, who died soon after birth. Orville, the sixth child, was born in Dayton, Ohio, in 1871, and Katharine, the only surviving daughter, was born in 1874.

None of the Wright children had middle names. Instead, their father tried hard to give them distinctive

first names. Wilbur was named for Wilbur Fisk and Orville for Orville Dewey, both clergymen that Milton Wright admired. They were "Will" and "Orv" to their friends, and "Ullam" and "Bubs" to each other. In Dayton, their neighbors knew them simply as the "Bishop's kids."

Because of Milton's position in the church, the Wrights moved frequently — twelve times before finally returning permanently to Dayton in 1884.

Church service

Milton joined the Church of the United Brethren in Christ in 1846 because of its stand on political and moral issues including slavery, alcohol, and "secret societies" such as Freemasonry.

Indiana and Oregon

From 1855 to 1856 he served as pastor of the Church of the United Brethren in Indianapolis. He was ordained in 1856 and was pastor in Andersonville, Indiana from 1856 to 1857. Later that year, he went to Oregon as a missionary and served as pastor at Sublimity and first president of Sublimity College, a denominational institution.

Wright returned from Sublimity in 1859 and was assigned by the church as a circuit preacher in eastern Indiana, where he served also served as presiding elder and pastor in Hartsville, Indiana. From 1868 to 1869 he was professor of theology in Hartsville College.