



Simpson Wragg

1895 – 1916

Simpson was born at 9, Hambledon Street, Cowpen Quay near Blyth, Northumberland on 30th August 1895. His father was William Wragg, a Coal Miner and sometime Dock Labourer born in Nottinghamshire around 1857 and died in 1924. His mother was Jane (née Haywood) born in Bilston, Staffordshire around 1865 and died in 1919. They were married on 26th April 1884 in St. Mary's Church, Horton, Northumberland. On the 1911 Census they declared 10 children born to the marriage of which 7 were still alive.

Their other children who could be traced were; Herbert, born in Glasshoughton, Castleford in 1887 and was killed in action on 1st July 1916, although no official record of his death has been found, William, born in Pontefract in 1890, Sydney, born in Pontefract in 1892, Walter, born in Pontefract in 1893, Emma, born in Cowpen in 1898 and died in 1898, Ellen, born in Cowpen in 1899, Jane, born in Cowpen in 1902 and Mona, born in Cowpen in 1906 and died in 1906. Sydney and William served in the Royal Navy and Walter in the Military Police in World War 1.

William was previously married in 1881 to Isabella Belch (born in 1861 and died in 1882); they did not have any children.

On the 1891 Census the family lived at Farrar's Yard, Corn Market, Pontefract, in 1901 at 6, Cowpen Row, Cowpen and in 1911 at 12, Wesley Street, Castleford where Simpson was working as a pit boy working below ground in a coal mine. Around 1913 they moved to live at 100, Huddersfield Road, Dewsbury where they ran a butcher's shop which Simpson was to have managed, had he survived his war service. They later lived at 12, Dale Street, Thornhill Lees and finally 20, Thornhill Street, Savile Town.

He was with the Territorials at the outbreak of war, joining them whilst the family lived at Castleford. He was sent to the Western Front on 13th April 1915 with the 1st/5th King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry serving as Lance Corporal 1935. He was in a patrol of eight men on a bombing party in the Somme Region on the night of 21st February 1916. The Germans spotted them and opened fire. All but Simpson returned. A search party was sent out the following night but found no trace of him. The family made numerous enquires as to his fate, as there was some doubt as to whether he had been taken prisoner. However, he did not appear on any of the official prisoner lists, and they finally received official notification on 14th March 1917 that he was presumed killed on 22nd February 1916. He was later discovered to have been buried by the enemy in Miraumont Communal Cemetery, Somme, France. Simpson was awarded the 1914-15 Star, the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

His will, recorded in his Army Pay Book was lost, so the family had to go to Dewsbury Town Hall to go through the ordeal of giving evidence as to its contents. Ellen, still only around 17 years old, undertook the formalities. She said the family had seen it on 7th January 1916 when he was home on leave. Simpson's mother was his sole legatee, but in the event of her death sisters Ellen and Jane were the beneficiaries. This was accepted.

Simpson is commemorated on the Dewsbury Cenotaph in Crow Nest Park and in the Dewsbury Roll of Honour kept in Dewsbury Central Library and on the War Memorial from the now demolished St. Mary's Church, Savile Town now displayed in Holy Innocents Church, Thornhill Lees and on the Castleford War Memorial along with his brother Herbert, whose full details of death and service records remain a mystery. Both brothers are named on their mother's headstone in Holy Innocents Churchyard.

In Memory of
Lance Corporal
Simpson Wragg

1935, 1st/5th Bn., King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry who died on 22 February 1916 Age 20

Son of William and Jane Wragg, of Castleford, Yorks.

Remembered with Honour
Miraumont Communal Cemetery



Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

