

Rev. Frank Hall Wright, D.D.

Birth: Jan. 1, 1860
Atoka County
Oklahoma, USA
Death: Jul. 16, 1922
Muskoka
Ontario, Canada

The "Indian Evangelist"

"Rev. Frank Hall Wright, the evangelist, is a man whose history, achievements, and personality might well attract unusual attention. He is everywhere spoken of as "the Indian Evangelist," though he is in reality only a half Indian, his father being a full blooded Choctaw Indian, and his mother, Scotch Irish. Mr. Wright's father was left an orphan at an early age and was adopted by a missionary to the Indians. He became a Christian and decided to get an education, and graduated at Union college at Schenectady, N. Y., and at Union Theological Seminary of New York City. Just 30 years later, Frank Hall Wright, the son graduated from these institutions.

Mr. Wright was converted when he was 13 years of age. After graduation from the seminary, he preached among the Choctaw Indians for five years, after which he became an evangelist and preached in New York and New Jersey. Later, he again took up work as a missionary to the Indians, this time working among the Blanket Indians in Oklahoma, being maintained in that work by the Dutch Reformed Church.

But for many years now, he has been giving his time exclusively to evangelistic work among the English speaking people in the northeast and southwest. Crowds throng his meetings wherever he goes, and it not infrequently becomes necessary to change to a larger auditorium after the meetings have begun. A church paper recently said of him, 'He is an ideal evangelist. By him not one harsh word uttered, but the truth of God is driven home with convincing power and without compromise.'"

Excerpt from the article "Indian Evangelist to Conduct Revival," the El Paso Herald (El Paso, TX), 31 January 1914, page 18.

Frank Hall Wright was born in Boggy Depot, Indian Territory, what is now a ghost town in Atoka County, Oklahoma. He was the son of Allen Wright and Harriet Newell Mitchell. About 1885, he married Ada Lilienthal of Saratoga Springs, New York, who was of German descent. They had just one son, Frank Hall Wright, Jr., who died in service in World War I; and a daughter Gladys, who married Charles B. Harrison. Both children were born in New York.

Another minister wrote of him, "As well as I can remember, Dr. Wright is a man of medium height. At the time I knew him his hair and mustache were black. He wore glasses. He is half Indian. Somebody twitted him once about having to use glasses and also having some trouble with his teeth. He replied: That is the white blood in me.

That however regarding Dr. Wright in which we are now most interested is as a man and preacher. He is a fine Christian gentleman. He is a good preacher. He is not at all sensational. He relies upon the word of God and the Holy Spirit for the effectiveness of his message...If you hear him and you are at in doubt as to your spiritual condition, you are likely to be made to feel uncomfortable. After preaching for some time...he presents the wonderful plan of salvation with simplicity, clearness and force.

One of the chief charms about Dr. Wright both as a man and evangelist, is his wonderfully sweet voice. I have heard few sweeter tenor voices than he has. Every time I heard him, he concluded each sermon with an appropriate song. Although it has been a long time since I saw and heard him, some of the songs he sang with such marvelous sweetness and wonderful effectiveness linger with me still. I remember a meeting for men one Sunday afternoon. He sang a song called 'My Mother's Hands.' There were few dry eyes in that church that afternoon...

No Christian in Sumter, either for his own sake or the interest he has in the salvation of the unsaved, can afford to miss hearing."

W. E. Thayer

Excerpt from "Something About Dr. Wright," The Watchman and Southron (Sumter, SC), 14 June 1919, page 7

Another announcement of Dr. Wright's death:

WRIGHT

Information was received here of the recent death at Muskoka Lake, Ontario, Canada, of Dr. Frank H. Wright, known as the "Indian Evangelist." He was sixty-one years old and a son of the late Governor Allan Wright, who was a full-blooded Choctaw Indian, and a noted minister of the Southern Presbyterian church.

Dr. Wright a few years ago conducted a successful revival meeting in the Paris Presbyterian church. He possessed an unusually strong singing voice, which was a factor in his evangelistic work. While here he was assisted by Miss Mary Dan Harbeson, as soloist. The body of Dr. Wright was taken to St. Louis for interment beside the body of his son, who lost his life in the world war."

Death notice from
The Bourbon News (Paris, KY)
4 August 1922, page 4

Note: There is information about the Rev. Frank Hall Wright in the book Taking the Jesus Road/The Ministry of the Reformed Church in America Among Native Americans by LeRoy Koopman (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2005).

Family links:

Parents:

Allen Wright (1826 - 1885)

Harriet Newell Mitchell Wright (1834 - 1894)

Spouse:

Addie Litteanthal Wright (1863 - 1935)

Children:

Frank Hall Wright (1891 - 1918)*

Siblings:

Eliphalet N. Wright (1858 - 1932)*
Frank Hall Wright (1860 - 1922)
Mary Wright Wallace (1863 - 1960)**
Anna Wright Ludlow (1865 - 1955)*
Allen Wright (1867 - 1955)*
Clara Eddy Wright Richards (1870 - 1960)*
James Brookes Wright (1876 - 1963)*

*Calculated relationship

**Half-sibling

Burial:

Bellefontaine Cemetery

Saint Louis

St. Louis City

Missouri, USA