

PARRY, SARAH WINIFRED (' Winnie Parry '; 1870 - 1953), writer, and editor of *Cymru'r Plant* from 1908 to 1912

Name: Sarah Winifred Parry
Date of birth: 1870
Date of death: 1953
Parent: Margaret Parry (née Roberts)
Parent: Hugh Thomas Parry
Gender: Female
Occupation: writer, and editor of *Cymru'r Plant* from 1908 to 1912
Area of activity: Literature and Writing
Author: R. Palmer Parry

Born 20 May 1870, daughter of Hugh Thomas (1841 -?) and Margaret Parry (née Roberts). The family lived in Welshpool at the time of her birth, but left when she was but a few months old. At one time, her father was an inspector with an insurance company but he is said to have had literary interests also. Her mother published some poems in the strict metres under the pseudonym ' Gwenfron ' (e.g. *Baner*, 19 September 1860). At the time of the 1871 Census, Winnie, her mother and sister were staying with her grandfather, John Roberts, at Port Dinorwic, and it would appear that the family did not have their own home at this time. Margaret Parry died aged 38 in 1876 in Croydon when Winnie was 6 years old, and she consequently went to live permanently with John Roberts and his wife, Ellen; she was, therefore, separated from her father, her brother and three sisters. Though there is evidence that English was her first language she was soon fluent in the colloquial speech of Port Dinorwic. No records of her attendance at the local primary schools have been found, but it is said that she was friendly with the daughter of the headmaster of the national school, so it is likely that she attended that school. She received no formal higher education, but it is said that John Roberts was a cultured man and that he had influenced his grand-daughter's inclinations. Her early years, it appears, were unhappy and lonely. Her father re-married in Swansea in 1877 a certain Martha Darroll, and by 1882 he and his entire family, apart from Winnie, had settled in South Africa, leaving her in Port Dinorwic. Shortly afterwards, her grandmother, Ellen Roberts, died and Winnie, in a letter to [John Glyn Davies](#), states that she lived with her grandfather from the age of thirteen until her aunt came to live with them when she was nineteen.

In 1893, at the prompting of [O.M. Edwards](#) and Edward Ffoulkes she began to contribute occasionally to *Cymru*, *Cymru'r Plant*, *Y Cymro*, and even *The Cambrian* (Utica) and *Wales*. Her three books, *Sioned*, 1906, *Cerrig y rhyd*, 1907, and *Y ddau hogyn rheiny*, 1928, were mainly selections from her contributions to periodicals. She published one serial in *Y Cymro* in 1896, ' Catrin Prisiard ', which did not appear later as a book. For a time in 1895-96 she corresponded with [John Glyn Davies](#) mainly on literary matters. He used to visit her on his trips from Liverpool to Llŷn; she borrowed books from him, and he helped her to learn French and German. When John Roberts died in 1903, Winnie went for a short time to her uncle Owen Parry, CM minister at Cemaes, Anglesey. By the beginning of 1908 her father had returned for a time to Thornton Heath, Croydon, and it seems that Winnie went to live with him.

She edited *Cymru'r Plant* from Croydon between 1908 and the middle of 1912 when she gave up writing altogether (though *Cerrig y rhyd* was reprinted in 1915 and Foyle's published *Y ddau hogyn rheiny* in 1928). She never married, and in London she served as secretary first to a company of engineers and also for a time to [Sir Robert J. Thomas](#), M.P. for Anglesey, 1922-28. She adjudicated the short story at the 1932 national *eisteddfod*, but by then she had severed almost all connections with Wales. At the beginning of World War II [E. Morgan Humphreys](#) tried to persuade her to reprint *Sioned*, and the B.B.C. tried to adapt some of her work for the *Welsh Children's Hour*. As late as 1949 she was still looking for a publisher for *Sioned*, but circumstances were difficult and by then she was old and infirm. She died in an old people's home in Croydon on 12 February 1953, and her friend, Hilda Alice Moore, arranged to have her buried in Croydon.

Sioned was undoubtedly her masterpiece and it won high praise from time to time (see [E.M. Humphreys](#), *Yr Herald Cymraeg*, 9 March 1953). It is said that [R. Williams Parry](#) thought highly of it and referred to it in his W.E.A. lectures (but see also [Kate Roberts](#), *Baner*, 29 April 1953).

Author

R. Palmer Parry

Sources

Winnie Parry collection, N.L.W.

NLW MSS 6647-59 (J. Glyn Davies)

Y Geninen, 2 July 1895

E. Morgan Humphreys, *Yr Herald Cymraeg a'r Genedl*, 9 March 1953

Iorwen M. Jones, *Merched Llên Cymru* (1935)

Kate Roberts, 'Led-led Cymru', *Baner ac Amserau Cymru*, 29 April 1953

Mair Ogwen, *Y Gymraes* 32, No. 8, August 1928

Mairwen and Gwynn Jones, *Dewiniaid Difyr* (Llandysul 1983)

E. Morgan Humphreys collection at NLW

letters by Winnie Parry and her cousin F. E. Williams, Edinburgh

letters in the R. Gwylfa collection UCNW

letters by Winnie Parry in the possession of Kate Roberts

1871 Census, Frondeg, 18 Terfyn Terrace, Port Dinorwic

letters in the possession of the author from Alison Lane-Poole, Fovant, Wiltshire, step-niece to Winnie Parry, and Enfys

Renshaw, Edinburgh, daughter of Winnie Parry's cousin

verbal information

Further Reading

Wikipedia Article: [Sarah Winifred Parry](#)

Additional Links

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Published date: 2001

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