

Elaine Beatrice Zarobsky-Profant - an unexpected life

A Tribute to a Remarkable Woman

The Principals



Elaine Beatrice Zarobsky Profant Baldwin (wife of paternal uncle of author)
Birth 12 Jan 1916 - Chicago, IL
Death 5 Oct 2011 - Greeley, CO

Biological Parents:

Joseph James Zarobsky Profant
1888–1957
BIRTH 15 APR 1888 • Chicago, Cook, Illinois
DEATH 18 NOV 1957 • Chicago, Cook, Illinois

Emilie Johanna Hruby Tuma
1886–1959
BIRTH 21 AUG 1885 • Vienna, Austria
DEATH 21 OCT 1959 • Kansas City, Jackson, Missouri, USA

Maternal Biological Grandparents:

Franz Hruby
1843–1886
BIRTH 12 JAN 1843 • Mährenhausen, Coburg, Bavaria, Germany
DEATH ABT. 1886 • Vienna, Austria

Emilie Radesinsky
1865–1927
BIRTH 12 MAR 1865 • Vienna, Austria
DEATH 16 OCT 1927 • Chicago, Cook, Illinois

Maternal Adopting Grandfather:

Josef Tuma
1868–1916
BIRTH 21 JUL 1868 • Czechoslovakia
DEATH 18 SEP 1916 • Chicago, Cook, Illinois

Husband:

William Allen Baldwin

1911–1999

BIRTH 20 APR 1911 • Kitts Hill, Lawrence County, Ohio

DEATH 25 AUG 1999 • Greeley, Weld, Colorado

Introduction

For all of us, there seems to always be a few people who have an outsize influence on us; introducing new and exotic experiences, expanding the cultural horizon, and opening a fresh view of the world. While you're living through their influence, usually unknowing, it may be years later before you realise just how much they changed us and how much we appreciate them as friends and mentors. For me, Elaine Baldwin was one of those rare individuals.

The first I knew of Elaine was in the summer of 1958, when my parents, my brother and I (me, age 9) drove from El Reno, OK to Denver, CO to see my dad's newly married brother (Bill Baldwin) and his wife. There, my Mom took it upon herself to teach Elaine how to drive a car (a giant blue Buick), in the mountains west of Denver. I recall riding in the car behind them and going somewhat slower so as to not rush a new and inexperienced driver. Why did Elaine (she, age 43) NOT know how to drive a car? We will get into details in a few moments. However, this was a woman who was crossing over into a new life. This was but one of many new life experiences for her. Though I did not know it then, I would get to know Elaine and Bill quite well over the next few years.

In my family research, I regularly turn to Elaine's story, adding new information, fresh updates, filling in the blanks. I discovered that she had two distinctly different yet unique and fascinating lives - one, before meeting Bill Baldwin and, two, after marrying Bill Baldwin.

Before I started researching Elaine, little was known about her early life. We knew she was close to her mother, Emilie (Joan), and that she was from Chicago, but that was the extent of our knowledge. When Bill Baldwin died in 1999 a detailed obituary was prepared and he was properly eulogised at his funeral service, likely coordinated by Elaine. When Elaine died in 2011, there was no obituary for her, no eulogy, and only a single, unflattering, photo of her on the funeral home web site. Let's fix this.

Here then is the story of Elaine Beatrice Zarobsky-Profant-Baldwin told in two parts.

Elaine's First Life - before Bill Baldwin

Elaine was the only child of an only child. She was the daughter of Joseph J Zarobsky-Profant and Emilie "Emma" "Joan" "Emily" J Hruby-Tuma-Profant. Joseph was born in Chicago in 1888 to immigrant parents originally from Czechoslovakia. Emilie was born

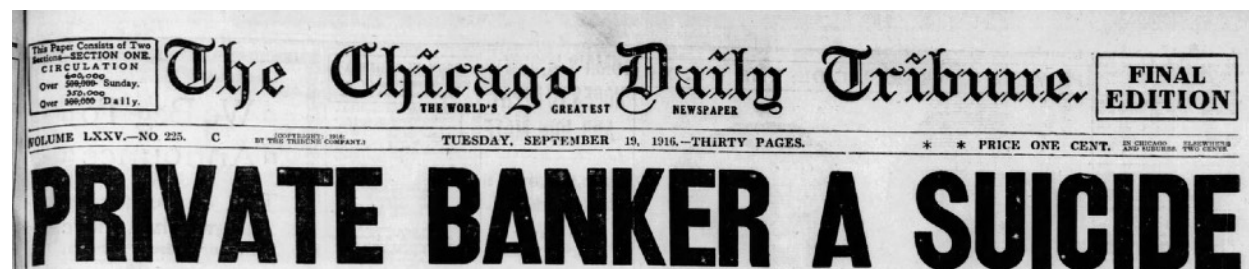
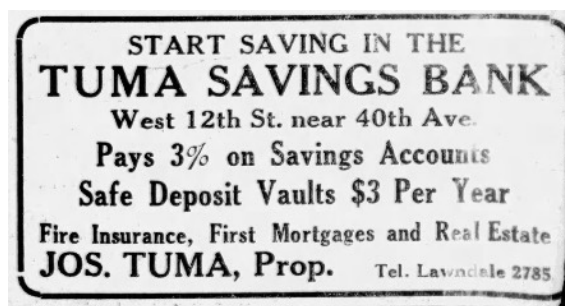
in Vienna, Austria in Aug 1885 to Franz and Emilie Hruby (nee Radesinsky). Franz and Emilie married Oct 1885 (after the birth of their daughter). Unfortunately, Franz died shortly after the marriage, leaving Emilie with no husband and an infant daughter, Emilie Johanna Hruby.

Fortunately, Josef Tuma married widower Emilie Radesinsky-Hruby in 1886/1887 in Vienna and adopted her infant daughter. In Oct 1892, Josef and Emilie Tuma, and 6 year old daughter Emilie Hruby, immigrated to the US via Bremen, Germany to New York City and then to Chicago, IL.

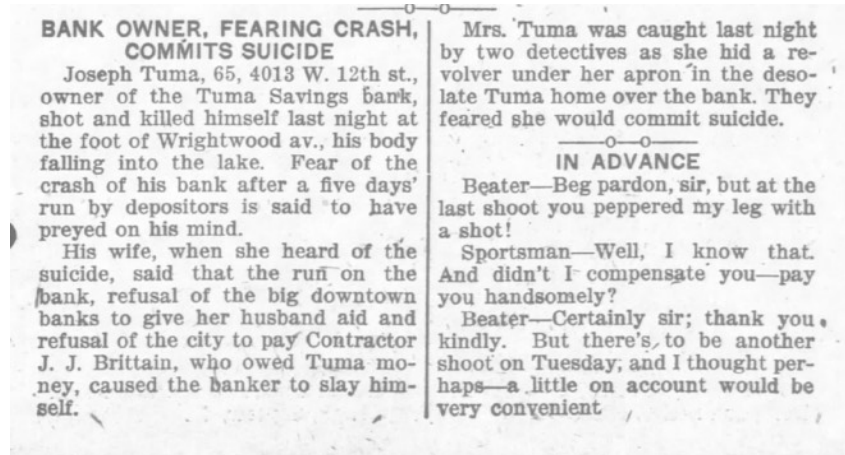
102	Josef Tuma	26	m	privater
103	Emilie	24	f	wife
104	Emilie Hruby	6	f	child

In Jan 1894, Josef Tuma and Emilie Radesinsky-Hruby were again married, in Chicago, likely to insure that their marriage would be legally recognised in the US.

In Chicago, Josef Tuma became a successful banker. There, he and Emma opened a private bank, **Tuma Savings Bank**, about 1911 at 4013 West 12th St. By all accounts, it thrived and was well supported by the local community, at least in its early years.



Tuma Savings Bank was in danger of insolvency in the fall of 1916. In a depressed state, Josef took his own life on Sept 18, 1916. The bank, however, remained solvent due to the diligence of Emma Tuma. This, though the bank was closed by court order and it along with the estate of the Tuma's was placed into receivership under Chicago Title and Trust Company.



Regarding this tragedy, here's a salient point. In probate court, Sep, 1916, Emma Tuma stated that her husband's estate consisted of \$40,000 in personal assets and \$45,000 in real estate assets. Additionally, the estate was awarded \$32,706 in a judgement against a contractor who had taken out and failed to repay a loan with the Tuma Savings Bank.

All told, the Tuma estate totalled about \$118,000, approximately \$3.5 million in current day dollars. It's evident that Elaine's grandmother, Emma Tuma, was an astute business woman. Her advanced knowledge of and deep experience with banking and real estate was passed to her daughter Emilie Johanna Hruby-Tuma. And, following the death of Emma Tuma in 1927, the estate would be passed on to her daughter, and eventually, her granddaughter, Elaine.

Meanwhile, Elaine's mother, Emilie Johanna Hruby-Tuma married. On June 29, 1911 she and Joseph James Zarobsky-Profant wed in Waukegan, IL. The multi-layered life of Joseph Profant requires a few moments of historical reflection.

Joseph J Zarobsky changed his last name from Zarobsky to Profant (based on the maiden name of his mother) between 1915 and 1920. As stated in the 1920 passport application of his wife, Emilie, he changed his last name because the former "*was too difficult to pronounce for Americans.*" When Joseph changed his surname, so did his wife. Emilie Johanna Hruby-Tuma became Emily "Emma" "Joan" Profant.

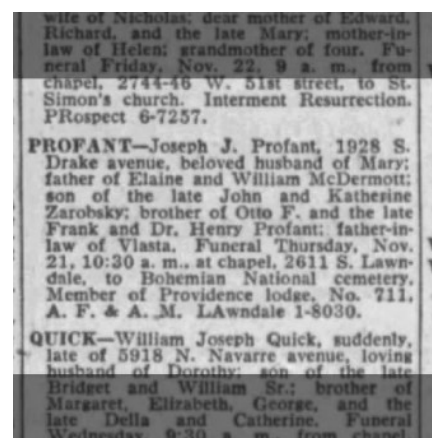
Joseph J Profant was an prominent Chicago businessman. His professions included insurance broker and real estate broker. For instance, he and his wife's mother, Emma Tuma, incorporated The National Coal Sale Company in 1913 with \$5,000 starting capital. And, checking Chicago newspapers in the 1910's to 1940's, I found dozens of newspaper accounts of real estate transactions associated with Joseph J Profant.

Elaine Zarobsky-Profant was born Jan 12 1916 in Chicago. Public records for her and her mother are sparse. For instance, I've yet to find (under numerous varied search parameters) federal census records for the years, 1910, 1920, 1940. It's clear though that, from about 1920 forward, records show Elaine and her mother Emilie began to use the surname, Profant.

As for Elaine's father, Joseph J Zarobsky, the records show that he and Emilie parted company sometime between 1920 and 1925. Joseph's 1917 military registration indicates he had a wife and daughter. No 1920 census can be found for Joseph Profant. However, records show he married Bessie Kelly in Aug 1925. And, in 1940, Joseph, who, in the 1940 census was living with his mother, married Marie Kurfirst, and adopted her son, William Henry David McDermott. No records have been found to suggest he fathered any other children. Elaine was his only biological child.

It seems likely that Joseph J Profant stayed in the life of Elaine. His 1957 obituary states clearly that he was the father of Elaine and William McDermott.

It could be that Joseph was abandoned by Emilie. Emilie and Elaine, sans Joseph, lived at least three years abroad between 1920 and 1926. The duo traveled to Czechoslovakia (Prague), France, Italy to visit and live with family.

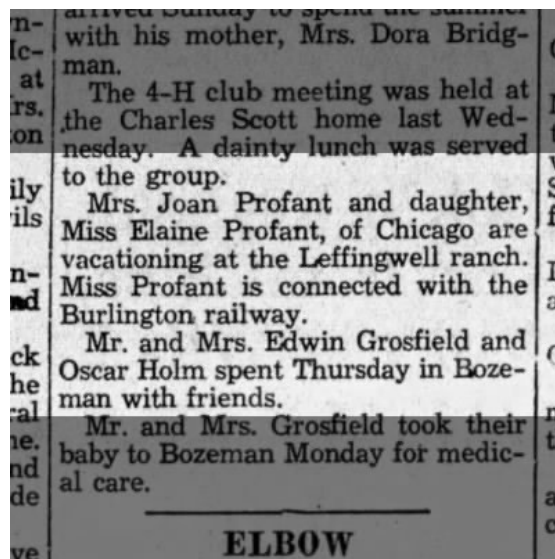


How Elaine was being educated during these extended 1920 to 1930 foreign travels is an open question. The 1930 census shows Emilie and Elaine in Chicago, living alone. Emilie reported her marriage status as "widowed" and that she was a property manager for a mortgage company. It's possible that Elaine attended Lindblom Technical High School in Chicago, perhaps using the surname, Zarobsky. However, that can't be confirmed. Perhaps she was home schooled, or she had a private tutor, or

attended private schools. No other clues have yet been found about Elaine's education.

Again, no 1940 US census for Emilie and Elaine Profant has been found. The only record found for the 1940's is a 1946 newspaper article which stated that Emilie (now called Joan) and daughter, Elaine, were vacationing at a dude ranch in Bozeman, Montana.

It's interesting to note that the article stated that Elaine was working for the Burlington Railroad Corp in Chicago. Likely, this Montana trip was part of a promotion between Burlington R R and Leffingwell Dude Ranch. Also, take note that it was Elaine (age 30) and her mother (age 60) traveling together. It would seem that this mother and daughter were inseparable.



By 1950, Elaine and her mother were living at the Monterey Hotel, Apt 709, in downtown Chicago. It's estimated they lived there from about 1945 to 1955. In the 1950 census, Elaine reported that she was a secretary working for a railroad company; first Burlington, then Santa Fe.



I found a resource for Chicago, IL telephone white pages directories and looked for the name “Profant” for the years 1950, 1951, 1952, 1953, 1954, 1955. I found no listings for Elaine or Emilie/Joan. Did they have an unlisted number or not have a phone? I also checked the Denver, CO white pages for 1955 and 1956 and found no listings for “Profant”. Thus, it’s not clear when they moved from Chicago to Denver. This, though Elaine listed 501 East Colfax Ave, Denver, CO as her residence in the Nov 1956 marriage (Bill Baldwin) record.

And there’s this, rather odd, Chicago Tribune Personal Ad from an Aug 23 1955:



“Anyone knowing of Emilie Profant or daughter Elaine to their advantage call GLadstone 5-0808.” What is this, seeking information about Emilie and Elaine - and, why? The phone number listed, GL 5-0808 (GLadstone 5-0808), seems to be have been associated with a real estate agent. GL 5- exchange was in the Franklin Park and Schiller Park areas of Chicago, near where Elaine and Joan were living.

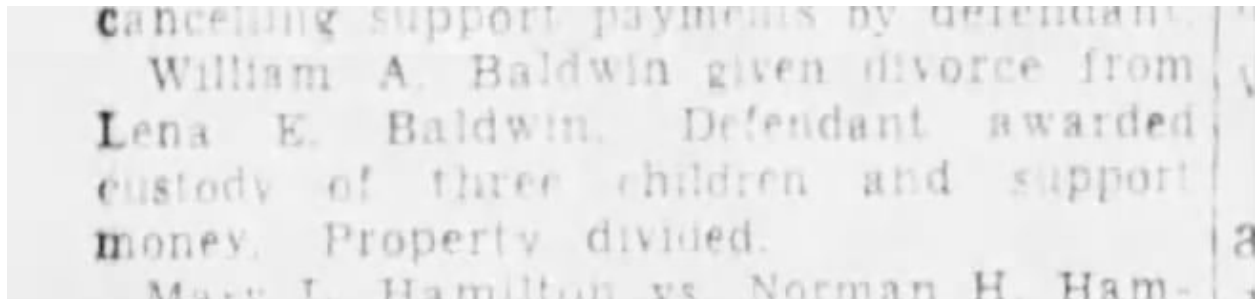
So, it does seem likely that Elaine and Joan Profant moved from Chicago to Denver, perhaps in early 1955. It’s possible they moved because of Elaine’s job with the Santa Fe Railroad, and/or, because of Bill Baldwin.

Elaine’s Second Life - with Bill Baldwin

A quick biography for Bill Baldwin is in order. Born in 1911, William A Baldwin was the 6th child of William M and Delcie Justice-Hunt-Baldwin of Lawrence County, OH. Bill started working for railroad companies about 1929, when he was 18. He first worked as a clerk for the Chesapeake & Ohio Railroad. After 1940, he was a Passenger Ticket Agent for the Santa Fe Railroad, living in Albuquerque, NM, Denver, CO, Kansas City, MO, and Johnson County, KS.

Bill married Lena E Pancake about 1936 (no record found) in Lawrence County, OH. Bill and Lena had a son in 1937 and twin daughters in 1941. According to the 1950 census, the twins were born in Oklahoma (per 1950 census), perhaps born en route, when Bill moved his family to Albuquerque, NM.

In July, 1944, in Albuquerque, Bill sued for divorce from Lena. What happened to cause a divorce is not known. However, it was done quickly with the children placed in Bill's custody.



ALBUQUERQUE JOURNAL, JULY 29 1944, PAGE 5

Oddly, in multiple Albuquerque, NM residence records including the 1950 census, Lena E Baldwin is included. What type of situation was it that a divorced wife continued living with a divorced husband?

One other interesting observation is that in the 1950 census, Bill's brother, Lee Baldwin, and his family also lived in Albuquerque, NM. Lee was a US postal carrier.

Bill was transferred by the Santa Fe Railroad (Passenger Ticket Agent) from Albuquerque to Denver, CO in the spring of 1953.

As the family story is told: Elaine, as a secretary for a Santa Fe RR officer (who was sick), was dispatched to Denver with company mail to be delivered to passenger ticket agent, Bill Baldwin. And, they met and began a courtship ("...he carried her suitcase, and sweet talked her, and pretty much swept her off her feet...") that led to their Nov 1956 marriage.

Knowing now about probable residence timelines of Bill and Elaine, it seems probable that the first meet-up trip from Chicago to Denver was in the 1954-1955 time range. It could be that Elaine and her mother transferred to Denver in the spring of 1955 to be closer to Bill, perhaps prompted by a marriage proposal.

Bill Baldwin (age 45, second marriage) married Elaine Profant (age 40, first marriage) Nov 21 1956 in Loveland, CO. Loveland is north of Denver and west of Greeley, where they would settle about 25 years later. Bill and Elaine would have no children of their own.

While living in Denver, 1956 to 1958, the Baldwin's (that would include: son, Bill, daughters, Patsy and Ellen, and mother in law, Joan Profant) lived in a large apartment at 635 Pennsylvania, St.

Sometime in late 1958 or early 1959, Bill Baldwin was transferred by the Santa Fe Railroad to Kansas City, MO. They bought a small house in Raytown, MO at 9305 E 64th St. This time the children remained in Denver. However, Joan Profant also made the move. Sadly, Joan died Oct 21 1959 (age 74) and was laid to rest at Floral Hills Cemetery in Kansas City, MO.

In June 1960, Bill and Elaine Baldwin along with my parents, Ray and Lillian Baldwin hosted the one and only reunion of the Baldwin children; five boys and one girl. This was a truly memorable event that was spoken about for many years.



BALDWIN CHILDREN ca 1961
L-R: Roscoe, Dewey, William, Sadie, John, Ray and Lee



Wives L-R: Eva, Dorothy, Elaine. My Mother, Lillian Baldwin, took the photo.

These photos were taken at Bill and Elaine's home in Raytown, MO - 9305 E 64 St. Ray and Lillian were the primary hosts. They had a huge house in Merriam, on the west side of Kansas City. This reunion would be the last time the Baldwin children would all come together.

In 1961, Bill and Elaine bought a sprawling 300 acre ranch in, what was then, rural Johnson County, KS; approximately 83rd St and Kansas State Highway 7. It's likely that Elaine inherited a significant amount of money after her mother, Joan, died. Recall that the Tuma estate started out in the \$3.5 million range. The ranch purchase was likely made using part of the inheritance.

As a ten year old, I always looked forward to going out to the Baldwin ranch. It had a hay barn where my brother and I frolicked. It had three lakes, one of them huge, where I learned to fish. It had a large vegetable garden that produced the most delicious tomatoes. We threw rocks at copperhead snakes and lost our boomerang - how does

that happen. And, best of all, we could ride on the tractor and help feed the cattle and chickens.



CHRISTMAS AT THE 300 ACRE BALDWIN RANCH, LENEXA, KS, 1961

Also, during this time, my Mom and Elaine became good friends. My Mom taught Elaine some life skills that she did not readily have; e.g., driving, cooking fundamentals. And, Elaine became a culture mentor for me. She was highly intelligent, engaging, challenging, and worldly in an inspiring way.

Bill Baldwin retired from the Santa Fe Railroad in 1971. He had 42 years of service; 14 years with the C&O Railroad Company, 28 years with the Santa Fe Railroad Company - Passenger Agent. About this time, Bill and Elaine sold the 300 acre ranch and bought a smaller hobby ranch a few miles to the west, in Piper, KS. Interestingly, the 300 acre ranch they sold would eventually become a City of Lenexa Park - Black Hoof Nature Park.

About 1980, Bill (age 69) and Elaine (age 64) sold the Piper, KS hobby ranch and moved to Greeley, CO at 3128 6th St. This, to be closer to Bill's children and grandchildren.

Bill died in Aug 1999. Elaine made sure that he was properly eulogised with a detailed obituary and formal funeral program. Elaine was a dedicated wife for Bill. His welfare was always her main focus.

Elaine died Oct 5 2011 in Greeley, CO at the age of 95. She was laid to rest alongside Bill at Linn Grove Cemetery, Greeley. I added a short biography to her funeral home obituary that included the following:



“She was a wonderful person; kind, generous, highly intelligent, and cultured, having adopted a gentile style of behaving and living.”

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