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Title: **John Wickersham Woolley**

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Date:

John Wickersham Woolley

John Wickersham Woolley was born in New Lynne Township, Chester County, Pennsylvania on December 30, 1831. His parents were Edwin Dilworth and Mary Wickersham Woolley. They were members of a religious sect known as Quakers. They were faithful and conscientious in living up to the light they had. His parents heard the Elders preach the gospel in 1835 in Columbiana County, Ohio. Prior to this time, in 1833, they moved from Pennsylvania to the above mentioned place and here they obeyed and embraced the gospel. In the summer of 1838 they moved from Rochester, Columbiana County, Ohio to Quincy, Illinois and remained there until the spring of 1839 when they moved to the gathering place of Commerce (afterwards known as Nauvoo). Here they passed through all the trials that befell the saints in building up and reclaiming this place.

In the fall of 1840, on the 7th day of October, John W Woolley was baptized by Almon W Babbit in the Mississippi River. Sometime afterwards Brother Babbit apostatized and this made such an impression on his mind that his father consulted the Apostle Brigham Young about the matter and in order to pacify him, Brigham Young baptized him in the font in the Nauvoo Temple. Prior to this, namely in March 1840, he received his patriarchal blessing under the hands of Patriarch Joseph Smith, Sr., which blessing states that he should go to the Rocky Mountains. It also stated that he should hold prominent positions among the people and stand in holy places and cross the mighty deep and assist in gathering the sons of Ephraim.

In 1843, when the revelation of celestial marriage, including plurality of wives, was made known, the

Prophet Joseph Smith came a number of times and taught this principle to his parents, also the law of consecration. The Patriarch Hyrum Smith came and read the revelation to them and explained it, both believed accepted it. Shortly after, his father obeyed it by taking two wives whose names were Louisa Gordon and Ellen Wilding. This took place before the prophet's death. The above facts were made known to John by his mother, on his promises not to divulge it.

While living in Nauvoo John worked for Bishop Edward Hunter for 10 cents a day, driving a team to break up prairie sod and other work. One spring before the breaking up of the ice in the Mississippi, he drove his parents over the river on the ice in a sleigh and when going back the ice was getting so rotten that it bent so much under the weight of the horses and sleigh that his parents, on the bank, stood and gazed, fearful that it would break and let him in.

When, in 1846, the exodus from Nauvoo took place, John drove an ox team from there across the state of Iowa to winter Quarters, now called Florence. He endured all the trials connected with that pioneering march. While temporarily stopping at Cutters Park on the west side of the Missouri River, he was taken sick and before he was well they moved to Winter Quarters. Here he assisted in hauling logs and building houses for his father's families. At that

----- END OF PAGE 1 -----

time President Young, in order to draw the people's minds away from their trials, introduced dancing and John learned to dance.

In the spring of 1848, in company with his parents, he left winter Quarters for the Valley, driving two yoke of cows, 1 yoke of steers and a yoke of oxen. The steers and the cows were unbroken. He drove them all the way to the valley, taking part in all duties pertaining to the camp life. They arrived in the valley in September of the same year and settled temporarily in the Old Fort until his father and himself could build a house for themselves. They proceeded to do so by building adobes--hauling logs and sawing out lumber with a whip saw to make doors, windows, floor and a roof. They completed the house and moved into it early in the winter of 1848. The lot on which they built their house is located on the corner of 3 South and 3<sup>rd</sup> East, or on the northwest corner of the Ninth Ecclesiastical Ward. The following spring and summer were spent in general farm work. During the fall and winter he spent time laboring in the canyon to get out wood. Sometime in the winter he cut his hand quite severely so much so that he came near bleeding to death before they could stop it.

In 1850, after putting the crops in, he caught the gold fever and along with some others thought of going to California to seek his fortune. President Young, upon hearing of this, called Joseph C Kingsbury, Almon Fulmer, Chauncey W. West, Samuel A. Woolley and himself to go out east on the Weber River, about 4 miles below the mouth of Echo Canyon and build a ferry and run it. The river was very high that year and there was a large amount of travel overland that year with gold seekers and others going to California. After the ferrying season was over, John returned home and assisted in the fall work on the farm. Early in the spring of 1851 his father took out a contract to bring to get a railroad to run from the temple block to the mouth of Red Butte Canyon for the purpose of hauling materials for the temple. His father hired two immigrants that had stopped over the winter on this way to California. Their names were Joseph M. Simmons and Thomas Haygood. They both later joined the church and Joseph later became John's brother-in-law.

On the 20th day of March 1851, John married Julia Searle Ensign. Prior to this time, namely in 1850, he

was ordained a Priest under the hands of Bishop Edward Hunter and his father. In 1851, he was ordained an Elder and received his endowments. This was in December. He was ordained a High Priest and set apart as Second Counselor to Edwin D. Woolley (his father) of the 13<sup>th</sup> Ward in 1854. In 1856 he was called to go east and help the hand-cart companies into Salt Lake City. They met them at Sweetwater River.

In 1857 while celebrating the 24th of July in Big Cottonwood Canyon, word came to the effect that Johnson's Army [Johnston's Army] was on the way to Utah. About the first of August he left Salt Lake in charge of an advanced guard going to meet the Federal Army. He was gone the rest of the year.

----- END OF PAGE 2 -----

Next he was sent out west of Tooele after some horses that had been stolen by the Indians. He had a running fight with them but did not recover the horses. On the way home he heard of the contemplated move south as counseled by the general authorities. Therefore he moved with the rest of the people, located his family in Provo, then returned to Salt Lake and as guard until the word came to move back.

In 1860 he left for the Missouri River with the first ox train acting as assistant to Captain Joseph W. Young. He left in May and returned in October. John was employed by President Young in 1861 as overseer of his farm. He went as one of the escorts to W. S. Hooper in 1862 as the Indians were very troublesome that year. On returning from this trip he was summoned as one of a posse to go upon the Weber River near Ogden to arrest Joseph Morris and others and as they resisted arrest, the posse had to bring them to terms by force. This is called the "Morrisite War." He went to the Missouri River in 1863 in charge of a train to bring emigrating saints to the valley. He left for this journey in April, returning home in October in time for conference. In the latter part of February 1864 he moved from Salt Lake to Centerville, Davis County, as his father, his brother Franklin and himself had bought a 60 acre farm from Apostle Charles C. Rich. In June of

1877, when the Davis Stake was organized, he was called to be a member of the Stake High Council and continued in this office until Dec. 30, 1913, when he retired because of poor hearing. He was faithful in discharging duties of this calling.

During the days of the "crusade" when brethren and sisters were persecuted and imprisoned for having obeyed "God's holy law," his house was a place of refuge for them and continued to be so until brighter days came. It was during this time that the wife of his youth passed to the other side. She had faithfully done her part in administering to the wants of those who were in need or succor and assist. She taught her children by example to be faithful in keeping the commandments of God. Also at this time John married Ann Everington, whose house also sheltered a number of brothers and sisters in need. In 1894 he was called to labor in the Salt Lake Temple. Here he worked for a number of years. In 1910 he married Annie Fisher. John W. Woolley was active and enjoyed fairly good health until his death at the age of 98 years in December 1929. The names of his children are as follows: John E., Franklin L. Lorin C. Julia A. Mary E. and Amy J.

(History found in belongings of Adarene Boulton Riley)