

Obituary Bishop Edwin D. Woolley Dead

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At 12:45 a.m. Bishop Edwin Dilworth Woolley breathed his last, surrounded by the members of his family. From about three o'clock yesterday afternoon it became evident that the end was approaching, and he appeared to suffer considerably for several hours. For some time before the last, however, he simply sank peacefully, and expired as gently as if passing off into a sleep.

Deceased was born on the 28th of June, 1807, at West Chester, Chester County, Pennsylvania. After hearing of the Prophet Joseph, he left his home in Rochester, Columbian County, Ohio, in 1837, and visited Kirtland for the purpose of seeing him. It was a time of trouble with the Saints, and Joseph had been forced to leave that part, and he did not meet him. Brother Woolley, however, found Joseph Smith, Sen., the Patriarch or, as he was familiarly called, Farther Smith, whom he took from Portage, where he was secreted from persecutors and conveyed him to his home, in Rochester, keeping him that winter. It was at this time, in 1837, that he was baptized and became a member of the Church, Elder Lorenzo Barnes officiating. On the Sabbath following his baptism he was ordained to the High Priesthood, and appointed to preside over the Rochester Branch of the Church, which position he officiated in with the exception of some months in the winter of 1838-9, which he spent in preaching the Gospel, this being his first traveling and preaching mission. At that time, among others, he preached to Bishop Edward Hunter.

He removed from Rochester in 1839 and went to Quincy, Illinois, where he first met the Prophet Joseph Smith and his brother, Hyrum Smith, with whom he was ever after on the most intimate terms until they were martyred. In the spring of 1840, by advice of the Prophet, Bro. Woolley went to Commerce, subsequently called Nauvoo, and in the fall of the same year went on a mission to Northumberland County, Pa., where he labored a year, bringing quite a number into the Church, some of whom are in Utah now. On his return to Nauvoo he engaged in the mercantile business, and at that time occurred, a very noteworthy incident of his life, showing his characteristic devotion to the cause in which he was engaged.

The Prophet said to him, "Brother Woolley, we want all your goods for the building up of the Kingdom of God," or words to that effect.

Brother Woolley gathered his whole stock of merchandise, excepting what he received from different houses to sell on commission, and packed them up ready for removal. He then went to Joseph and said: "I wish to know whether you also want the goods I have received on commission, and will pay the houses in St. Louis and other places I obtained them from, and whether you will send teams to haul the goods away, or wish me to deliver them?"

The Prophet asked: "And you have packed all the other goods except those you have on commission, and are ready to hand them over?" "Yes," was the answer. "Then," said the Prophet with deep feeling at the same time placing his hand affectionately on Brother Woolley's shoulder, "take your

goods, replace them on your shelves and go on with your business.” The Prophet had evidently only been testing him and found him equal to the occasion.

In 1842 Brother Woolley was sent on a mission to Massachusetts and Connecticut, returning in April 1843. During that year a copy of the “Revelation on Celestial Marriage” was taken to his house by Hyrum Smith, and read to him. S. A. Woolley, his brother, who was then a lad, was in an upstairs room at the time, quite ill, was by a super natural power enabled to hear and understand the revelation with perfect clearness at the time. The deceased was among the first who adopted the revelation in faith and practice.

It is a fact worthy of note that the residence of Edwin D. Woolley was the last house in Nauvoo visited by the Prophet and Patriarch Joseph and Hyrum before they went to Carthage jail. They dropped in as they were leaving, and as the Prophet stepped from the entrance as he was about to depart he uttered the words, “I go as a lamb to the slaughter,” etc.

Being driven out of Nauvoo by persecutors, with the rest of the Saints, Brother Woolley left that place on the 5th of June, 1846, and proceeded to Winter Quarters, where he remained two years, coming to Utah in 1858, with President Brigham Young’s company. In the fall of 1849 he went east to help Bishop Hunter with the emigration and to buy goods for the Church, both of which commissions he accomplished, returned in the fall of 1850. In 1853 he was commissioned by President Young to take a herd of cattle to California, on which errand he was absent five months. After his return, he was, in November of the same year, ordained a Bishop, and from that time until his death presided in that capacity over the 13th Ward. In 1853 and or several subsequent years Brother Woolley was employed by President Brigham Young to superintend his private business. He served several sessions as Representative to the Legislative Assembly.

The deceased has 27 children, 20 of whom are now living, 11 sons and 9 daughters. He has 57 grand-children, all of whom are living, with the exception of 3 or 4. He has 11 great-grandchildren, 9 of whom are living, the aggregate of his issue, in a direct line, being consequently 95, making him a patriarch of a numerous branch of connections.