



## *History of Franklin Benjamin Woolley and his Wife, Olive C. Foss Woolley*

*By Ida Matilda McArthur Snow, granddaughter with added notes by Loretta Nixon*

At the age of twelve Franklin Benjamin Woolley left Nauvoo with his parents for Winter Quarters, where the Saints had been driven during the dead of winter by their enemies. Here his mother, Mary Wickersham Woolley, and her children remained during the winter of 1846 and 1847, while his father Edwin Dilworth Woolley, went East on business for the church. [He was sent to St. Louis for supplies by Brigham Young.] Being the oldest boy in the family, [He was the second oldest, John Wickersham Woolley born in 1831 was the oldest child of Edwin D. Woolley and Mary Wickersham.] he and his older sister, Rachel, had to assume great responsibilities in helping their mother and the other wives care for the smaller children, gather wood for fires, etc. They all suffered untold misery from cold winds, snow, poor housing conditions and sickness, little or no medical care. Only their great faith in the goodness of God kept them alive and gave them courage to endure such hardships.

When his father returned from the Eastern trip, they prepared to go to Salt Lake City. His father had four teams and wagons and good equipment, and had brought quite a lot of supplies from the East, so they started West in good spirits, Franklin driving a team and assuming many duties that would now be considered impossible for a boy of thirteen or fourteen years. They arrived in Salt Lake Valley September 20, 1848, in Brigham Young's Company and camped in the Old fort.

Then it became Franklin's duty to assist his father in building an adobe house, to bring wood from the mountains, and his father purchased a large farm and Franklin helped to get this cultivated and planted.

In 1849, his father was sent to Missouri to aid an emigrant train of Saints to get to Salt Lake, and since he was gone a year, Franklin and his mother and younger brothers were kept busy on the farm and at home. But burdened though they were, Mary Wickersham and Edwin D. Woolley never lost sight of the fact that their children needed an education, so whenever a teacher was to be had, Franklin as well as his younger brothers and sisters were sent to school during the mid-winter months.

When it was learned that Brigham Young's immigrant train was nearing Salt Lake Valley, Franklin and many others went out to meet them. It was while wandering about camp, lending aid wherever possible, that he saw Olive C. Foss, a little dark haired, black eyed girl, who had come from Maine in Wilford Woodruff's company. He was interested in her immediately and though only about fifteen years old, he said, "I'm going to marry that girl someday."

Olive C. Foss was born April 12, 1835 in Scarborough, Maine. She was the daughter of Calvin Foss and Sarah Brackett Carter Foss. Her father died six months before she was born, leaving her mother and six children and a baby expected in a few months. Her father, Calvin Foss, had left his family in moderate circumstances and so her mother returned to the home of her parents when her husband died and so Olive C. was born in the old family home. The children of Calvin Foss and Sarah Brackett

Carter Foss, brothers and sisters of Olive C. Foss, were Ira, Calvin Ichabod, Sarah, Elizabeth, Rhoda, Harriet, Phoebe Carter, Ezra Carter and Olive C.

Sarah B. C. Foss had what was then considered a good education and so she taught school and did many other things to provide for her family. All of her daughters taught school, too.

In 1836 or 1837, Wilford Woodruff and John F. Boynton took the message of the Gospel of the Church of Jesus Christ to Maine and Sarah B. C. Foss and all of her children and her father and mother and all their children were converted and all who were then old enough, were baptized—except Sarah Elizabeth, sister of olive C. Foss who was away teaching school in Portland, Maine, and her grandfather, Ezra Foss, who was not baptized until 1849. [Note: It was probably John Boynton who brought the gospel to the Carter and Foss family. Wilford Woodruff states in his journal that he first became acquainted with Phoebe Carter in Jan 1837 and they were married 2 1/2 months later. Wilford Woodruff was laboring in Kentucky and Tennessee in 1836.]

Wilford Woodruff married Phoebe Carter, a sister of Sarah B. C. Foss and aunt of Olive C. Foss, and in 1850, Sarah B. C. Foss and her seven children accompanied Brother Woodruff to Utah, crossing the plains from the Mississippi River to Utah with horses and Ox drawn wagons. Their trip was rather uneventful, except for a few minor accidents. Sarah Elizabeth Foss was baptized in the Platt River, July 10, 1850 by Wilford Woodruff. The Indians gave them very little trouble. However, on one occasion when they were camped for the night, an Indian chief rode into camp and made numerous threats; but when he saw Olive, he promised to leave them unmolested, if they would let him take Olive away with him for a wife. But after considerable discussion, and the receipt of food and a few other presents he departed and molested them no more.

The Woodruff company with the Fosses, reached Salt lake City in September 1850, and located in the Fourteenth Ward on West Temple Street, number 44 South. They had the next lot south of those owned by Brother Woodruff. Brother Woodruff was always a “true Brother”, and spiritual advisor and father to the Foss family.

Olive C. Foss was always considered a beauty. She had dark hair and eyes, an olive complexion and was rather small. She always was well groomed. She loved beauty, and culture, and order. My mother says that she remembers her mother often repeated the old proverbs “a stitch in time saves nine” and “a thing worth doing at all is worth doing well”. From her mother, and her older sisters, who were all school teachers, and from the private schools, she obtained so splendid an education for those early pioneer days, and eventually was popular among the young people of her set. But though she and Franklin B. Woolley lived in different wards, Franklin never forgot the little dark-eyed girl he had met in the immigrant train, and soon a sincere friendship developed between them, which later flowered into a romance well known in Salt Lake City’s early history. Benjamin Franklin’s cousin Della Woolley Eardley says, that he was the outstanding Woolley boy in looks, accomplishments, etc. and she claims that much of the courtship of Franklin and Olive was done at her father’s home—who was Samuel Woolley. Franklin B. Woolley and Olive C. Foss were married December 10, 1856.

Franklin’s father, Edwin Dilworth Woolley, was engaged in so many enterprises, such as farming, merchandising, doing missionary work, making trips east for merchandise, company clerkship, newspaper and telegraph work, and acting as private business secretary to Brigham Young, that he kept Franklin busy helping him with his own interests. This was wonderful training for him and was really a liberal education itself, but Franklin never missed an opportunity to go to school. So when Brigham Young called men and their wives to go to St. George or Dixie, Franklin was one who was called. It had been said that President Young called each person for some definite reason—some to raise cotton, others because they were weavers and dyers or stockmen and cattlemen, etc. It is also said that he called most of those new because he knew that if he told them to go and sit on a rock, they would sit there until they were told to move, and that is about what some of them did. Franklin was called as a business executive.

At this time Franklin and Olive had two living children, Franklin Benjamin Jr., and Ida Foss—the latter a very young baby. They just arrived in St. George in the early spring. [This would have been in the year 1861.] They had no houses or tents, just covered wagons and bedding and a limited amount of food, and it rained for nearly forty days constantly—making the red sticky mud nearly knee deep. Imagine cooking over a camp-fire, making beds in a wagon box, etc. under such conditions! Before leaving Salt Lake, Franklin owned a nice home, comfortably furnished, and a small farm, and he had steady employment as tithing clerk in the general church tithing office. But they sold everything and moved south to Duncan's Retreat, now known as Virgin City. Later they moved to St. George. Here they built them a lovely big house. It was a two story homemade of adobe and plastered on the outside as well as inside. He also built a barn and planted fruits and grape vines, a vegetable garden and some flowers on his lot. Later he bought four lots in the northwest part of town known as the Sand Lots and planted them to apples, pears, peaches, grapes, etc. He owned several teams of horses and mules, and necessary wagons and equipment and kept them busy freighting, etc. He opened the St. George tithing office and was tithing clerk for several years.

Soon after arriving in St. George he and Erastus Snow and families became close friends, and one day he saw Artimesia Snow in the yard with some young people and he said, "If ever I decide to enter plural marriage, I'll marry Artimesia." Though Artimesia was a very popular young lady and had what was then known as a "beau" he did marry her in April 1868. When "Aunt Artimesia" was asked, years later, by one of her nieces, why she married into polygamy when she could have married and had a young husband of her own, she said, "It was considered a privilege then to marry a man who had proven himself a good true Latter-day Saint, and a success in other ways. Besides I loved my husband."

In 1868, at the instigation of Erastus Snow, the St. George Co-op Store was organized and Franklin B. Woolley became a heavy stock holder. He also held a large block of stock in the Z.C.M.I. of Salt Lake City and also in the "Factory" at Washington, Washington County, a factory erected to weave cloth made of Dixie cotton and woolen cloth. The wool was obtained from sheep taken into Dixie by the Dixie Pioneers. Tailors were also employed to make men's suits later. Grandfather Franklin B. Woolley was commissioned to go to California for merchandise for the co-op. This was in February 1869. A company was organized to take teams and wagons and go to California and bring the merchandise home. I do not know all the names of the men in this company, Franklin B. Woolley was president, James Andrus was captain, and Andrus was accompanied on this trip by Andrew McArthur (my uncle) and Edwin D. Woolley (Dee, my mother's uncle), and Frank Foster. These men took their teams and wagons and traveled across the desert to San Bernardino, while Franklin B. came to Salt Lake City to obtain a loan with which to buy the goods. Then he went by train to San Francisco, purchased the merchandise, shipped it to Wilmington, near San Diego and March 1, he met the teamsters from St. George, and the goods were loaded on to their wagons. Here he purchased a team of mules and an outfit at San Bernardino and used them to aid in transferring the merchandise. But when they were several days out from San Bernardino, his mules decided to return to their home pastures, because they had been improperly hobbled by Edwin D., who had been commissioned to care for the animals that night, March 16<sup>t.h</sup> A council was held and it was decided that Franklin should ride back alone for his animals and the others would wait in camp for his return. But when he didn't return in a few hours the other teamsters all rode to the forks of the road in the Mojave Desert where the road to Camp Cady in Arizona and the one East divide. Here Dee remained for several days and when Franklin did not return, Dee left his freight at this station, and went back in search of his brother. Arriving at Martin's Station, he was informed that Franklin had been there and gone on to a hay ranch 20 miles away, still looking for his team. So Dee followed after him. The following story is told by Dee to Apostle Antone Ivins who wrote the story in the Era.

Franklin did not find his horses at the hay ranch, but decided to spend the night there. It was raining, so he took a door off the hinges from the barn and leaning it against the hay stack, he made a

bed under it of saddle blankets spread over hay. During the night he was killed by Mojave Indians; his body stripped of clothing, the saddle was stolen, the mule he was riding was tied to the fence and its throat cut. The Indians killed six horses owned by the rancher and rode away.

It seems that Mr. Martin became worried about Franklin when he failed to return to his ranch and as there was a Mr. Aiken and several teamsters with good outfits stopping with him, he persuaded Mr. Aiken to take some men and go to the ranch in search of Woolley. When they arrived at the hay ranch, they found conditions as above stated and returned with the body of Franklin B. Woolley to Martin's Ranch and buried it. It was thought that this gruesome murder was committed out of revenge for the killing of three Indians the previous year, and Woolley was the innocent victim.

Dee was without money or transportation but was determined to take his brother's body back to Utah. He learned from Mr. Aiken that at Martin's station were three teamsters, taking freight to Northern Utah and one of them had \$1500.00 cash on his person. So returning to Martin's ranch Dee persuaded this man, Durkee, by name, to loan him some money. An old Italian, owner of the horses killed at the hay ranch, hitched a team to a light wagon and disinterred Franklin's body, placed it in the wagon and they hurried to San Bernardino. Here they properly prepared and clothed the body and placed it in a hermetically sealed casket and returned to Martin's ranch. With the group of teamsters going to Utah were several women and they refused to travel with a corpse, so this group had hurried away leaving Uncle Dee to go on alone; but the kind old Italian decided to go as far as necessary. He took him to the forks of the road where Uncle Dee had left his freight, and here he met an old prospector (a forty-niner) who was on his way to White Pine, Nevada, a new mining town. He was riding a mule and leading a pack mule. A harness was provided, the mules put in lead of Dee's horses, the miner's saddle and pack and the casket were placed on Dee's wagon with the freight. The old Italian returned to his ranch and Dee and the miner traveled together across the Mohave Desert to the Muddy Valley. Here the miner went into the hills to seek his fortune and Dee continued on to St. George. In the meantime the freighters under James Andrus had reached St. George, and everyone was worried about the Woolley brothers. Telegrams were sent to Salt Lake and relayed to San Francisco, but no trace of them could be obtained, so a searching party was organized and started for California, but fifteen miles outside of St. George this party met Uncle Dee and his precious freight.

When the first teams came home, they were met by large groups of people and children among Franklin's children, Ida, my mother, and Jed. They rushed up to the wagon asking for their daddy, expecting to be taken into the wagon for a ride home, where Franklin's wives, Olive and Artimesia, were preparing a big dinner in honor of the return of their husband. But one of the teamsters said to Ida, then eight years old, "Your Dad didn't come home this trip". So the children rushed home and told their mother their daddy hadn't come home. This was a terrible shock to grandmother, and since she was not allowed to see the body, she just could not quite accept the fact that her husband would never return.

Grandmother, Olive C. Foss, was left a widow with five children, at the age of thirty-three, eight years after leaving Salt Lake City. Her oldest child was twelve years old and her youngest was less than one year. But she never became discouraged. She was determined to make a good home for her family and give them a good education. Grandfather left her with a good home, the sand lots planted to fruit trees, stock in Z.C.M.I., Washington Factory, St. George Co-op, and a good team. Shortly after Grandfather's death, Brigham Young presented Grandmother with a splendid team of mules. With the animals and her wagons she and her twelve year old son freighted produce from Dixie, molasses, fruit, etc., between St. George and Salt Lake. On each trip north she purchased goods for the St. George Co-op and drew up her dividends in sugar, spices, cloth, shoes, candy, rice, nuts, Christmas toys, etc. and freighted them back to St. George. She arranged one of her up-stair rooms as a store room and made a large chest with compartments. In this chest she kept her bag of sugar, spices, etc. She bought some materials by the bolt and dress lengths. She presented my mother with a bolt of lovely fine linen. From

this mother made herself the Temple Robe she is still using, and she also made fine underwear, baby clothes, etc. from this same linen and I have a table runner made of a remnant of it.

Grandmother, like most New Englanders, was a splendid weaver and she wove enough Jeans cloth and sold it to buy 2 1/2 acres of land on the Santa Clara Creek. She built a small house on the "sand lots" and hired a Swiss man to care for her orchards and vineyards. Then she dried apples and pears and picked grapes and sold them up North. She sent her children to Salt Lake to school after they had obtained what schooling they could get in St. George. She had one of the first organs in St. George, and my mother was taught music by one of their neighbors and became the organist for the 3<sup>rd</sup> ward in St. George. Though she did very little of her own sewing, she had the first cabinet sewing machine brought to St. George. However, she did beautiful hand work. My mother had a number of her baby dresses. They were yards long, with ruffles of embroidery, rows of tucks and insertions, and yokes, etc. The sewing looked like machine work. Anna Ivins, mother of Apostle Antone Ivins, was a beautiful seamstress. She did most of Grandmother's personal sewing.

She bought a white marble monument for Grandfather and one for herself just like it and kept it ready. She kept her loom on the South porch. Her home was a model of neatness. Her walls were all plastered and papered, she had States carpets on her parlor floors, and homemade carpets on the other floors; her kitchen was white washed and had built-in cabinets; her furniture was mostly heavy walnut; her wood was done in oak graining and was done by Bro. Milne, who was an expert grainer. She built a rock wall around her property about 2 1/2 feet high and 1 1/2 feet thick. Grandfather had planned this wall, so she could not rest until it was completed according to his plans. She furnished one room upstairs for a playroom for her children. Here, mother and Aunt Effie had a real cook stove that would burn real wood chips. They also had tables and cupboards made by her Uncle Gordon Woolley. They had doll buggies and dolls etc. I still have mother's play dishes. They are at least sixty years old and are white china with a gold band. They were always encouraged to bring their friends home to play.

Grandmother was known for her charities and her kindnesses to the Indians. John G. McQuarrie who grew up in Grandmother's front yard said to me "Your Grandmother was known for her gentle breeding, and refinement, her good taste in dress, her good grooming, her well supplied table, and her love and sympathetic understanding of young people". "I was always trying to think up excuses to take me into her home, because it was so neat and nice and she always had cookies or something for me, and she was never too busy to talk with me."

Grandfather and Grandmother were intimate friends of Brigham Young, Erastus Snow, Daniel Duncan McArthur, Israel Ivins, James G. Bleak, Rassie W. Snow, James Andrus, Walter Dodge, James G. Bleak, Brother and Sister Townsend, and their families. Grandfather and James G. Bleak were like brothers. After Grandfather died, Bro. Bleak was always her good friend and wise counselor, and her children always loved and respected him as a father.

In March 1876 Grandmother brought her family to Salt Lake to school. My mother and Uncle Frank attended Miss Cook's school, and that spring and the next fall they attended the University of Deseret. Uncle Jed and Uncle Ezra worked as errand boys for the Z.C.M.I. and attended school part time. In April 1877 Grandmother was taken suddenly ill and died and was buried here in Salt Lake City. Then in the spring when school was finished Uncle Frank took the family home to St. George. Then he returned to Salt Lake and brought Grandmother's body back to St. George and buried her beside Grandfather. Mother was then sixteen years old, Frank nineteen, Jed fourteen, Ezra eleven, and Effie eight. Mother and Uncle Frank never returned to school, but stayed home and were real parents to the other children. Uncle Frank and the other boys ran the farm and kept the teams busy and managed what little income they had. Mother kept house for them all for eight years, until she was married in 1883. Both Grandfather and Grandmother were known for their generosity. They were idolized by the poor people and their neighbors. The Indians especially liked them and no St. George Indian would ever have killed grandfather. They loved him too well.



Olive Carl Foss Woolley



Franklin Benjamin and Olive Carl Foss Woolley home, St. George, Utah, about 1915-1920

Daniel Seegmiller married Artimesia Snow on 16 Apr 1873 in Preston, Wilmott, Upper Canada. (Artimesia Snow was born in 1849 in Salt Lake City, Salt Lake Co, Utah.)

