

NEWTON WOODRUFF



Born: 3 Nov. 1863, Salt Lake City, Salt Lake, Utah, son of Wilford Woodruff and Sarah Brown

Died: 21 Jan. 1960, Salt Lake City, Salt Lake, Utah

When Newton was 6, he helped drive cows to pasture in what was then known as "the big field," south of Salt Lake. The following year he carried shavings from the temple construction to make fires. He was only 7 when his family moved to Randolph, Utah. The next year he helped drive a flock of sheep from Salt Lake to Randolph. He would use a hand rake to pile hay that his brothers cut with a scythe. The family moved to Smithfield on his 13th birthday, in 1877, and he was very active in farm activities. He plowed, raked hay, harvested grain and herded the cows. He was able to attend school during the winter quarter. He traveled back and forth to Logan to attend Brigham Young College. In 1883, in the months following his call as President of the Twelve Apostles, Wilford Woodruff visited his wife Sarah in Smithfield for a time. While there he worked at a variety of activities

including "helping son Newton build a pig pen." He and Newton also went fishing in the marshes of the nearby Bear River.

Newton was always active in his church callings. He served as a Ward Teacher from 1880 to 1892 in Smithfield. His father ordained him an Elder on Nov. 2, 1884. He married Catherine Amelia "Millie" Partington on Nov 12, 1884. Their 1st child, a son was still born, followed by 8 more children: Newton (3 Aug 1886), Katherine (7 Sep 1888), Leo (9 Jan 1891) Eunice (23 Aug 1893), Melvin (7 Sep 1895), Sarah Alta (2 Oct 1897), Oliver Charles (5 Jun 1900) and Angus Quayle (7 Mar 1902).

Newton served as second counselor to the president of the 8th quorum of Elder in the Cache Stake for 5 years. In 1892 he was ordained a High Priest by Apostle Moses Thatcher and served as second counselor to Bishop George L. Farrell in Smithfield Ward from 1892 until his call on a mission to the Southern States in April 1897. He served in North Carolina and Kentucky having many spiritual experiences and blessing the people. In 1900 he was set apart as Bishop of the Smithfield Ward and served in that calling until the ward was divided in 1906.

Bishop Woodruff was known as a thrifty citizen and active in furthering the interests of the community in which he lived. He held several secular positions of trust in Smithfield and filled them with marked ability. He served as city councilman from 1895 to 1896 promoting the town's 1st culinary water system. Elected mayor in 1899 he was helped bring electric lighting to the city. He was a farmer and stockman. He was also the director in the Young Men's Co-op and Director in the Farmers' Union Mill.

While still a bishop, Newton married a 2nd wife, Elizabeth "Lizzie" Susan Weeks, on 2 Oct 1903 in the Salt Lake Temple by Apostle Mathias Cowley. (At April Conference 1904 President Joseph F. Smith announced that no one was authorized to perform any more plural marriages.) Newton and Lizzie moved to Dublan, Chihuahua, Mexico where daughter Phebe Brown was born (31 May 1908). They returned to Utah in 1909, homesteading in Park Valley where their son Wilford Weeks was born (14 July 1910). In 1915 they moved to a ranch 5 miles NW of Smithfield, then back to Smithfield in 1920.

Both wives Catherine and Elizabeth passed away in 1937 in Smithfield and were buried there. Newton living with his son, Wilford and his family in Smithfield and also with his daughter, Phebe in Copperton for the rest of his days. Newton passed away at age 96 in Salt Lake with burial in Smithfield.

[Alan J. Hill and Sharon W. Meikle, 9-18-2020]

SOURCES

Alexander, Thomas G., Things in Heaven and Earth, The Life and Times of Wilford Woodruff a Mormon Prophet. Signature Books, Salt Lake City, UT. 1991.

Cowley, Matthias F., Wilford Woodruff, History of His Life and Labors as recorded in his daily journals. Bookcraft, Salt Lake City, UT. c. 1964. 7th Printing 1978.

Gibbon, Francis M., Wilford Woodruff, Wondrous Worker Prophet of God, Deseret Book Company, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1988.

LDS Biographical Encyclopedia, Andrew Jenson, Vol. 1, pages 402-403.

Life Histories of Newton Woodruff by Alta Woodruff Smith and Phebe Brown Woodruff Johnson.

Family Group Sheets: Wilford Woodruff and Sarah Brown: Newton Woodruff and Catherine Amelia Partington, Newton Woodruff and Elizabeth Susan Weekes. (Last two from Ancestral file.)

FamilySearch (2020). Sources have census records used in this story.

Remembrances of Sharon Meikle, Newton Woodruff's granddaughter