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## The Twelve Apostles

Author(s): Andrew Jenson

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**Abstract:** Biographical essays on early Latter-day Saint apostles Wilford Woodruff, George A. Smith, Willard Richards, and Lyman Wight.

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*"What thou seest, write in a book."* REV. 1:11.

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## THE TWELVE APOSTLES.

### WILFORD WOODRUFF,

President of the quorum of Twelve Apostles, was born in Farmington (now Avon), Hartford County, Connecticut, March 1, 1807. He assisted his father, Aphek Woodruff, in attending the Farmington Mills, until he was twenty years of age. In April, 1827, he took charge of a flouring mill belonging to his aunt, and continued in the mill business until he, in the spring of 1832, together with his oldest brother Azmon, went to Richland, Oswego County, N. Y., and purchased a farm and saw-mill and settled in business.

At an early age his mind was exercised upon religious subjects, although he never made a profession until 1830, and then he did not join any church, for the reason that he could not find any denomination whose doctrines, faith or practice agreed with the gospel of Jesus Christ. In 1832 he was inspired to go to Rhode Island, but as he had made preparations to remove to the West, he ignored this call and went to Richland, Oswego County, N. Y., where he, on Dec. 29, 1833, heard Elders Zera Pulsipher and Elijah Cheeny preach. Young Wilford Wood-

ruff and his brother Azmon believed their testimony and offered themselves for baptism, after having listened to the first sermon. They also read the Book of Mormon, and Wilford Woodruff received a testimony that it was true. He was baptized by Elder Zera Pulsipher Dec. 31, 1833. Soon afterwards he learned what the Lord wanted of him in Rhode Island, for at the time he and his brother Asahel were warned to go there, two Latter-day Saint Elders were preaching in that country, and had they gone, they would, no doubt, have embraced the work at that time.

On January 2, 1834, a small branch of the Church was organized at Richland by Elder Pulsipher, and Woodruff was ordained a Teacher. In February following, in company with Elder Holton, he walked 60 miles to the town of Fabius to visit some Saints, and during the winter Richland was visited by several of the Elders, among whom was Parley P. Pratt, who told Wilford Woodruff that it was his duty to go to Kirtland and join the Camp of Zion, which was about to start for Missouri. Wilford Woodruff immediately settled up his

business and started for Kirtland, Ohio, where he arrived April 25, 1834. The Prophet Joseph invited him to stay at his house, which he did for about one week, during which he became acquainted with many of the leading men of the Church and had a glorious time.

On May 1, 1834, he left Kirtland, with a portion of Zion's Camp, and traveled to New Portage, Ohio, where they remained until the Prophet arrived with the remainder of the company and organized the camp. Traveling a thousand miles under the immediate leadership of the Prophet gave these young Elders considerable experience. Some of them murmured, but the majority showed that integrity and worth which afterwards qualified them for responsible positions in the Church.

As the Prophet advised all the young men who had no families to remain in Missouri, Wilford Woodruff stopped with Lyman Wight, in Clay County, Missouri, and spent the summer cutting wheat, quarrying rock, making brick, and doing other kinds of hard labor. In the fall he was ordained a Priest and sent on a mission into Arkansas and Tennessee, in company with an Elder. They started without purse or scrip, traveling through Jackson County, Missouri, from which the Saints had just been driven, and as it was dangerous for a "Mormon" to be found in that part of the State, they dared not preach. Notwithstanding this caution, they were in great danger, and in some instances they were preserved, as if by miracle, from the mob. The first time Wilford Woodruff attempted to preach was on a Sunday in December, 1834. The meeting was held in a tavern.

While traveling through the thinly inhabited parts of southern Missouri

and northern Arkansas, the young missionaries frequently lost their way in the woods and swamps, where they, on several occasions, had dangerous encounters with wild beasts. Sometimes, in order to avoid heavy traveling expenses, they descended rivers in small canoes and had to endure heavy and protracted marches. Persecutions also raged against them in certain localities. The Lord, however, comforted His servants, and manifested His approbation of their labors in various ways. Thus one of their enemies, an apostate, who railed against them, was, on a certain occasion, smitten by the Lord, so that he fell dead at the feet of the missionaries, in fulfilment of a dream which Brother Woodruff had had some time previous.

While traveling from Little Rock, Arkansas, to Memphis, Tennessee, Wilford Woodruff was left by his companion sitting in an alligator swamp and being lame with a sharp pain in the back. He knelt down in the mud and prayed fervently. The Lord healed him and he went on his way rejoicing. In April, 1835, he was joined by Elder Warren Parrish, in whose company he traveled some seven hundred and sixty miles in three months and nineteen days, preaching the gospel daily. They baptized about twenty persons. Warren Parrish also ordained Wilford Woodruff an Elder and left him in charge of the branches that had been raised up in that neighborhood.

As soon as he was left alone, Wilford Woodruff extended his circuit and labors and baptized a number, among whom were several Campbellites. During the year 1835 he traveled altogether 3,248 miles, held 170 meetings, baptized 43 persons and organized three branches of the Church.

In the early part of 1836 Wilford Woodruff had A. O. Smoot, of Kentucky, for a missionary companion, and on April 21 he met Apostle David W. Patten, who brought good news from the headquarters of the Church, at Kirtland, Ohio. On May 31, Wilford Woodruff was ordained a member of the second quorum of Seventy, under the hands of David W. Patten and Warren Parrish. After continuing his missionary labors, in company with Elders Patten, Smoot and others, he finally returned to Ohio in the fall of 1836, and spent the winter in Kirtland, during which he received his endowments and went to school. On the 13th of April, 1837, he was married to Miss Phoebe Whitmore Carter, and received his patriarchal blessings under the hands of Father Joseph Smith two days later. In the following month he left Kirtland on a mission to the Fox Islands, situated southeast of the Maine shore. On his journey thither he preached to his relatives in Connecticut and baptized some of them. On Aug. 20th he landed on North Fox Island, in company with Jonathan H. Hale, and immediately commenced to preach the gospel with success. On Sept. 3rd they baptized Justin Eames, a sea captain, and his wife, as the first fruits of preaching the fulness of the gospel on the islands of the sea in this dispensation. Mr. Newton, a Baptist minister, who at first allowed the Elders to preach in his meetinghouse, but afterwards opposed them, had to pass through the experience of seeing the best of his Church leave him to accept "Mormonism," and a Methodist minister by the name of Douglas had a similar experience on the South Island. Finally two branches were or-

ganized, one on each island, and in October the two successful missionaries returned to Scarboro, Maine, where Wilford Woodruff had left his wife with her father's family.

In the beginning of November Elder Woodruff, having parted with Jonathan H. Hale, returned to Fox Islands, this time accompanied by his wife. He continued to preach and baptize until persecutions of a severe nature arose, when he thought it wise to return to the main land. Next, in company with James Townsend, whom he had ordained an Elder, he introduced the gospel in the city of Bangor and several towns in Maine, after which he returned to the Fox Islands, and, agreeable to instructions received from the headquarters of the Church, he began to counsel the Saints to sell their property and accompany him to the land of Zion. In the spring of 1838, he visited Boston, Providence and New York. From the latter city he went to Farmington, Connecticut, where he baptized his father, step-mother, sister and other relatives and organized them into a branch of the Church. Taking an affectionate leave of his relatives, he returned to Scarboro, where his first child, a daughter, was born, July 14th. After this event he again visited Fox Islands.

While holding meetings with the Saints in North Vinal Haven, Aug. 9th, he received a letter from Thomas B. Marsh, then president of the Twelve Apostles, informing him that he had been chosen by revelation to fill a vacancy in that quorum, and he was requested to come to Far West, Missouri, as soon as possible, in order to prepare for a mission to England in the spring. He immediately set to work arranging

for the emigration of the Fox Island Saints westward. He had baptized nearly one hundred persons on the Islands, and about fifty of these now made ready to accompany him to Missouri. Assisted by Nathaniel Thomas, who had sold his property and had money, Elder Woodruff went to the main land and purchased ten new wagons, ten sets of harness and twenty horses, which outfit cost about two thousand dollars. When everything was prepared, he went on ahead of the company to Scarboro to prepare his own family for the journey. The company, instead of starting no later than Sept. 1st, as they were counseled to do, did not get under way until the beginning of October, which caused the journey to be a very hard one.

"On the afternoon of October 9th," writes Elder Woodruff, "we took leave of Father Carter and family (in Scarboro) and started upon our journey of two thousand miles at this late season of the year, taking my wife with a suckling babe at her breast with me, to lead a company of fifty-three souls from Maine to Illinois, and to spend nearly three months in traveling in wagons, through rain, mud, snow and frost."

While crossing the Green Mountains, Oct. 13, 1838, Wilford Woodruff was attacked with sickness, and a few weeks later his wife was reduced to the point of death, from which, however, she was rescued by the power of God, through prayer and administrations. (See under *Phoebe Woodruff*.) Finally he arrived, with most of his company, in Rochester, Ill., Dec. 19, 1838, and, getting information of the Missouri persecutions and the unsettled affairs of the Church, the Saints concluded to stop at that place during the remainder of the winter.

In the following spring Elder Woodruff took his family to Quincy, Illinois, and shortly afterwards accompanied the Twelve to Far West, Mo., where a secret conference was held early in the morning of April 26, 1839, on which occasion Wilford Woodruff and Geo. A. Smith were ordained members of the quorum of Twelve Apostles. After his return from Missouri, Wilford Woodruff removed his family to Montrose, Iowa, where he was severely attacked with chills and fever. When he, on August 8th, started on his mission to England, this disease still rested upon him, and his wife was also sick. After an adventurous journey, Elders Wilford Woodruff, John Taylor and Theodore Turley arrived in Liverpool, England, Jan. 11, 1840, and two days later they found themselves among the Saints in Preston. Elder Woodruff was sent to the Staffordshire Potteries, and he labored successfully in that neighborhood until the beginning of March, when the Spirit prompted him to go south. Arriving in Worcester he learned from Mr. John Benbow, a wealthy farmer, that there were about six hundred people in that region who had broken off from the Wesleyan Methodists and taken the name of United Brethren. They had forty-five preachers among them, owned chapels and other houses of worship, and were searching for more light and truth. To these people Wilford Woodruff commenced to preach the gospel in earnest, and after eight months' labor eighteen hundred persons had been baptized in Herefordshire, Gloucestershire and Worcestershire, including all the United Brethren except one, and two large conferences had been organized.

On the 17th of August, 1840, Elder Woodruff took leave of the Saints in Herefordshire and started on a mission to London, in company with Heber C. Kimball and George A. Smith. Here they found it exceedingly hard to open a missionary field, but they finally succeeded and on Aug. 31st commenced to baptize, the first candidate for baptism being Henry Connor, a watchmaker. After twenty-three days' labor in London, Wilford Woodruff returned to Herefordshire, where he met with the Saints in conference and then paid a visit to Staffordshire. On Oct. 6, 1840, he attended a general conference of the Church in Manchester, and spent most of the following winter in London. He also made several visits to other parts of England.

After a prosperous mission, most of the Twelve, including Wilford Woodruff, sailed from Liverpool April 21, 1841, and arrived in New York May 20th. On June 2nd Elder Woodruff arrived at Scarboro, Maine, where he met his wife, after two years' separation. About a month later he continued the journey westward, arriving in Nauvoo October 5th.

On the 30th of October he was appointed a member of the city council of Nauvoo, and spent the winter of 1841-42 attending meetings and laboring with his hands. On Feb. 3, 1842, he took charge of the business department of the *Times and Seasons*. In the following July he again left Nauvoo on a mission to the Eastern States, to collect funds for the Temple and Nauvoo House; from this trip he returned Nov. 4th. He spent the winter of 1843-44 in Nauvoo, received his endowments with the Twelve, and built a two story brick house on a lot, which the Prophet had given him.

In the spring of 1844 he was appointed on another mission to the Eastern States with the quorum of the Twelve. He was in Portland, Maine, ready to step on board of a steamer, bound for Fox Islands, when he saw an account of the martyrdom of Joseph and Hyrum Smith in Carthage Jail. He immediately returned to Boston, met in council with the Twelve and returned with them to Nauvoo, where they arrived Aug. 6th. He there attended the special conference, when the Twelve by the assembled Saints were acknowledged as the presiding quorum of the Church.

At a council of the Twelve held in Nauvoo, Aug. 12, 1844, Wilford Woodruff was called to go to England to preside over the British mission. In company with Elders Dan Jones and Hiram Clark, and their families, he left Nauvoo, Aug. 28th, and arrived in Liverpool January 3, 1845. After presiding over the mission about a year, he returned to America early in 1846, and arrived in Nauvoo at the time the Saints were leaving for the west. The following year (1847) he joined the Pioneers and arrived in Great Salt Lake Valley on the 24th of July. In 1848 he was sent on a mission to the Eastern States, from which he returned to the Valley in 1850, and in December of that year he was elected a member of the senate of the Provisional State of Deseret. In the spring of 1852, he accompanied President Brigham Young on an exploring trip to Southern Utah, and at the October Conference, 1853, he and Ezra T. Benson were called to gather fifty families to strengthen the settlements in Tooele County. When the Horticultural Society was organized in Great Salt Lake City, Sept. 13, 1855,

he was chosen its president. Since the early settlement of Utah, Apostle Woodruff has been one of the very foremost in all affairs at home, and is emphatically one of the founders of the Territory of Utah. He also well deserves the name of "Wilford, the Faithful," by which he sometimes is distinguished among his friends. Ever since he was a mere boy he has kept a very complete journal, and a great deal of Church history has been compiled from his writings. In the days of Joseph Smith he reported quite a number of the Prophet's sermons, which today are very valuable. Since the death of George A. Smith he has been sustained as the principal historian of the Church, and since the re-organization of the First Presidency, in October, 1880, as president of the quorum of Twelve Apostles. He continued to be bright and active, but like many of his brethren is now forced into exile, because of the unhallowed persecution raging against the Saints and the Priesthood of God, at the present time.

#### GEORGE ALBERT SMITH,

A son of Patriarch John Smith and Clarissa Lyman, and cousin of Joseph Smith, the Prophet, was born on June 26, 1817, in Potsdam, St. Lawrence County, N. Y. He was trained strictly in the religion of the Congregational Church, of which his father and mother were members, until he was fifteen years of age.

While living on a farm on Rackett River and attending school in the village of Potsdam, George A. grew very rapidly, attaining his full growth several years before he became of age. This gave him an awkward address, as of an overgrown boy; and as chil-

dren growing fast are usually weak, it was so with him. In addition to these misfortunes for a school boy, he was near-sighted, and being contented with his studies, the society of older people and the companionship of his own thoughts, he paid little attention to cultivating the good will and currying favor with the boys at school. The consequence was that they made fun of him, bullied him more or less, and at one time, shortly after a period of illness, carried their fun to such an extreme that George A. resolved on retaliation; but knowing his weakness at the time, he refrained attempting his revenge then and harbored his strength until a favorable opportunity should be presented. The time came, and it developed a phase of his character which was new to his schoolmates, but distinguished him then and ever after. His sensitive nature had been repeatedly outraged; he felt that he had been abused by his schoolmates, that they had taken advantage of him unfairly and that the insult to his honor and manhood demanded reparation. If any of the boys were not guilty of this general arraignment, he did not stop to discriminate in their favor. He felt that *all* were down on him, and he determined to whip the school. And he succeeded. He started in and kept at it until he had whipped every boy of his size and age. They never made fun of him after that.

In the winter of 1828, Father John Smith received a letter from his nephew Joseph, the Prophet, who then lived in western New York, in which a very striking prediction occurred, foretelling awful judgments upon the present generation because of wicked-

ness and unbelief. The letter made a deep impression upon the mind of George A., who, but a boy of eleven years, was capable of appreciating the statements it contained, which he treasured in his memory. His father observed, on reading them; "That Joseph writes like a Prophet!"

In August, 1830, the father of the Prophet and his brother Don Carlos visited their relatives in Potsdam and vicinity. They brought with them a copy of the Book of Mormon, which they left with George A.'s father, while they went on to visit Father Asahel Smith and family. During their absence George A. and his mother read a great deal in the strange new book, or "Golden Bible," as it was popularly called. The neighbors, who often came in and heard portions of it read, ridiculed it and offered many objections to its contents. These young George A. soon found himself trying to answer, and although he professed no belief in the book himself, having in fact noted many serious objections to it, he was so successful in refuting the charges the neighbors brought against it that they generally turned from the argument discomfited, with the observation to his mother that her boy was a little too smart for them.

When his uncle and Don Carlos Smith returned, George A. laid before them his objections, which he believed to be unanswerable. His uncle took them up carefully, quoted the Scriptures upon the subject, showed the reasonableness of the record, and was so successful as to entirely remove every objection, and to convince him that it was just what it purported to be. George A. from that time ever after advocated the divine authenticity

of the Book of Mormon. He was also convinced of the necessity of religion, and not being sufficiently instructed by his relatives how to obtain it, after they had left, he attended a protracted series of Congregational revival meetings. These lasted seventeen days, and effected the conversion of every sinner in Potsdam who attended them except George A., who went to the meeting regularly, sat in the gallery listening attentively, but waited in vain for the sensation of religion which should bring him down to the anxious bench. Finally, prayers and exhortations having failed, the minister, Rev. Frederick E. Cannon, pronounced him reprobate and sealed him up unto eternal damnation, saying, "Thy blood be upon thine own head!" Nine times he thus delivered this inoffensive but unsatisfied seeker for religion to the buffetings of Satan and the burning of an endless hell.

For two years George A. had performed the greater part of the labor on his father's farm, but in the winter of 1832-33, he attended school, and gave considerable attention to studying the gospel and its requirements. On September 10, 1832, he was baptized by Joseph H. Wakefield.

On the first day of May, 1833, he started with his parents to Kirtland, Ohio; they arrived there on the 25th of that month, and were warmly welcomed by the Prophet Joseph Smith and by the Saints who had gathered there to the number of about five hundred souls.

Immediately on reaching Kirtland, George A. became interested in the affairs of the Church, and was delighted with his cousin, the Prophet Joseph Smith, whom he had never seen before. He was on hand for any duty



required, and spent many nights guarding the houses of the brethren who were in much danger from mobs. During the summer and fall he was engaged in quarrying and hauling rock for the Kirtland Temple, attending masons and performing other labor about its walls. The first two loads of rock taken to the Temple ground, were hauled from Stanard's quarry by Geo. A. Smith and Harvey Stanley.

In May, 1834, George A. started from Kirtland with Zion's Camp for the State of Missouri, and returned again to Kirtland, Ohio, in the summer, walking on foot nearly two thousand miles.

On March 1, 1835, he was ordained a Seventy, under the hands of Joseph Smith, sen., Joseph Smith, jun., and Sidney Rigdon, the latter being spokesman. He was the junior member of the First Quorum of Seventy. On the 30th of the following May, (1835) he was appointed to a mission to preach the gospel in the East. Elder Lyman Smith, a second cousin, and member of the same quorum, was his traveling companion. They started from Kirtland June 5, 1835, traveled on foot about two thousand miles, without purse and scrip, held about eighty meetings in the States of Ohio, Pennsylvania and New York, baptized eight, and returned to Kirtland, where George A. arrived October 5, 1835.

In the spring of 1836, he received his endowments in the Kirtland Temple, after which he performed a mission in Ohio, traveling on foot about twelve hundred miles.

In the spring of 1837, he commenced a mission in Ohio and Virginia, which continued about one year, traveling about two thousand and five hundred miles; nearly half of his journeyings were on foot.

In 1838, he emigrated with his father's family to Daviess County, Missouri. On June 28, 1838, he was ordained and set apart as a High Councilor. In the autumn, he was sent on a mission to Kentucky and Tennessee, traveling some 800 miles on foot and about 700 miles by water, including the return journey. After his return, he moved his father's family to Illinois.

In 1839, he returned to Far West, Caldwell County, Mo. On the morning of the 26th of April, he was ordained one of the Twelve Apostles, on the southeast corner stone of the intended Far West Temple. He returned to Illinois, and on Sept. 21st, started for England on a mission, arriving in Liverpool on April 6, 1840. He labored for over one year with much success, and then returned to America. He arrived in Nauvoo, Ill., July 5, 1841. On the 25th of the same month he married Bathsheba W. Bigler.

In the fall of 1842, he preached in the principal places in Illinois, and returned to Nauvoo November 4th.

In the summer and fall of 1843, he traveled about six thousand miles, preaching the gospel in the middle and eastern States.

In the spring of 1844, he attended conferences and preached in the States of Illinois, Indiana and Michigan, and was in the last named State when he heard of the death of the Prophet and Patriarch of the Church. He immediately returned to Nauvoo and took an active part in the councils and deliberations consequent upon that sad event.

September 17, 1844, he was elected quartermaster of the Nauvoo Legion, was also elected a trustee of the Nauvoo House Association and labored actively in forwarding the erection of that building. He continued these

labors until the mob commenced its outrages upon the Saints in the fall of 1845, from which period he was active in counseling, fervent in his labors on the Temple and in making preparations for the exodus of the Saints from Nauvoo.

"Before leaving the Temple of Nauvoo," writes George A., "my wife, under the law of Abraham and Sarah, gave me five wives, viz., Lucy Smith, born February 9, 1817, at Newry, Maine; Nancy Clement, born Oct. 31, 1815, at Dryden, Tompkins County, N. Y.; Zilpha Stark, born July 3, 1818, at Hartland, Niagara County, N. Y.; Sarah Ann Libby, born May 7, 1818, at Ossipee, Stratford County, N. H., and Hannah Maria Libby, born June 29, 1828, at Ossipee, Stratford County, N. H." He also married Susan E. West after he reached Great Salt Lake Valley. Five of Brother George A.'s wives survived him. They bore unto him twenty children, eleven of whom, among them Apostle John Henry Smith, are yet living.

Early in Feb., 1846, he crossed the Mississippi River with his family, on his way to find an asylum in the west far from the rage of mobs and the persecutions of bigoted professors of religion. The ensuing winter he tarried with the main camp at Winter Quarters. While there the people suffered severely from scurvy, a disease induced through lack of vegetable diet. George A.'s third wife and four children died of this disease. He visited all the camps, and urged the cultivation of the potato as a cure for the scurvy. But little seed could be obtained; what was, however, produced in a marvelous manner. As they had no vegetables for one year, their bread was mostly made of corn, bought two

hundred miles away, in Missouri. The season after Geo. A. had left Pottawattamie County, Iowa, the potato crop was a failure, and the saying went forth that it was because George A., "the potato Saint," had gone to the mountains.

In 1847, George A. accompanied President Young and the company of pioneers in searching out and making the road to and finding the location for the Church in the Great Basin. During this journey he walked seventeen hundred miles, and rode, mostly on horseback, eight hundred miles, much of the distance with raw hide soles on his shoes. He was six weeks without bread, though he was better off than most of the pioneer company, for he had about twenty-five pounds of flour locked up in his trunk, unknown to any one. He lived, as the rest of the pioneers did, on buffalo bulls and other wild meat, which was not always plentiful. He issued his reserve flour by cupsful to the sick, some of whom attribute to this circumstance the preservation of their lives. He planted the first potato that was put in the ground in Salt Lake Valley, and built a house for his father in the fort, before starting on his return to Winter Quarters, where he arrived Oct. 31st of the same year.

In 1848 Geo. A. removed to the neighborhood of Kaneshville (now Council Bluffs, Iowa), and opened a farm. In 1849 he took charge of the emigration in Council Bluffs, organizing and starting the companies for the mountains. With the last of these he started westward with his family, July 4, 1849. Their teams were heavily laden, and they encountered hail and rain storms. Their cattle also stampeded, and at the South Pass they were overtaken by

a heavy storm, in which seventy animals were frozen. They made the journey to Great Salt Lake City, 1034 miles, in 155 days, arriving Oct. 27th.

George A. was elected a member of the senate of the Provisional State of Deseret, and reported a bill for the organization of the judiciary, which was the first bill printed for the consideration of members. He also reported a bill in relation to the construction of a national railway across the Continent.

In December, 1850, George A. raised a company of one hundred and eighteen volunteers, accompanied by about thirty families, and started south for the purpose of planting a colony near the Little Salt Lake. The day after they started the thermometer was at zero. His company was organized at Peteetneet Creek (Payson), Utah County, and consisted of twenty-five cavalry, thirty-two infantry—picked men—and thirteen men in charge of a piece of artillery; the residue was organized as a permanent camp guard. They crossed five ranges of mountains, and arrived at Center Creek, 265 miles from Salt Lake City, on Jan. 13, 1851. This place had been designated by Elder Parley P. Pratt, and a company of explorers, as the place in the Little Salt Lake Valley suitable for a settlement. As soon as the site of the town was determined upon, the settlers commenced working a road into a canyon about six miles, which cost them five hundred days' work, where they cut down a pole ninety-nine feet long, which they erected and on which they raised the "Stars and Stripes." They dedicated the ground by prayer, and saluted the emblem of civil and religious liberty by the firing of cannon.

The organization of Iron County

had been provided for by the General Assembly of Deseret, which had elected George A. Smith its chief justice, with power to proceed with its further organization. An election was held, when two associate justices, a county recorder, a treasurer, sheriff, assessor and collector, justice of the peace, constable and a member of the House of Representatives of the General Assembly of Deseret, were elected.

In the winter of 1850-51, though it was very cold, the settlers built a fort, in which were located dwelling houses and a meeting house, which served for meetings, schools and watch tower. It was in the shape of a Greek cross, and was of hewn logs. It served the town, which was named Parowan, for fifteen years, when it was replaced by a stately stone edifice. George A. taught school during the first winter, having thirty-five pupils whom he lectured on English grammar around the evening camp fires.

At the first Territorial election, in August, 1851, George A. was elected a member of the council of the first legislative assembly of Utah. He was commissioned by Postmaster-General Hall, on October 29, 1851, postmaster of Center Creek, Iron County, and on the 29th of November, by Governor Young, colonel of cavalry in the Iron Military District. Afterwards he was placed in command of the militia of the southern part of the Territory, and was instructed to take measures for the defense and safety of the inhabitants against the Utah Indians, who had commenced, under their chief Walker, to rob and kill the inhabitants. In 1852 he left Iron County, and was appointed to preside over the affairs of the Church in Utah

County. He traveled and preached a great deal in all the settlements, over which he had the watchcare.

At the general conference of the Church held in April, 1854, he was elected Historian and General Church Recorder, and immediately went to work compiling the documentary history of Joseph Smith. On Feb. 2, 1855, he was admitted as a member of the bar of the Supreme Court of the Territory of Utah, and received his certificate as an attorney, counselor-at-law and solicitor in chancery. He was elected a member of the convention and one of the committee which drafted a constitution, and on March 27, 1856, was elected by said convention, in connection with Elder John Taylor, a delegate to Congress, to present the constitution and accompanying memorial, asking for admission into the Union on an equal footing with the original States. This mission was a respite from his close application in the Historian's Office, where he had, with the assistance of four clerks, compiled and recorded, in large records, the history of Joseph Smith from February 20, 1843, until his martyrdom in June, 1844. He also supplied, from memory and otherwise, blanks in the history and records compiled by President Willard Richards, his predecessor in the Historian's Office, who had, with prophetic pencil, written on the margin, opposite the blanks, "to be supplied by George A. Smith."

In 1856-57, during a sojourn of about eleven months in the States, in addition to his duties as delegate, George A. preached in the States of Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Ohio, Illinois, Iowa and Missouri. April 11, 1866,

he received from Governor Durkee the commission of brigadier-general and was appointed *aide-de-camp* to the lieutenant-general of the Nauvoo Legion. At the October conference, in 1868, he was appointed to succeed the late President Heber C. Kimball as first counselor to President Brigham Young.

The political career of President George A. Smith covered almost the whole period of his residence in Utah. He was an earnest worker in establishing the provisional government of the State of Deseret, and afterwards in organizing and enacting laws for the government of the Territory of Utah. He was elected a member of the first legislature and re-elected to every succeeding session but one, when absent in the States, until 1870. The last six years he was president of the council, and was distinguished for his punctuality and impartiality in the discharge of his official duties. More than half of his life was occupied in traveling and preaching the gospel. He had, before 1870, delivered three thousand eight hundred discourses in various parts of the world, as a labor of love, and never failed to use every opportunity to advocate the principles of the gospel, which his long and laborious missionary experience afforded him.

In the internal affairs of the Territory, President Smith was an active laborer. He was recognized as the father of the southern settlements, the chief of which, St. George, was named in his honor. He was president of several irrigation canal companies, and was foremost in public enterprises leading to the occupation and development of the county, the establishment

of home industries and of commercial relations among the people that would tend to make them free and independent of other communities, and at the same time utilize the natural resources with which the Territory abounds.

On October 15, 1872, he started on a mission and visit to the various European nations and to Jerusalem, from whence he returned June 18, 1873. During his absence on this tour, he was appointed and sustained as Trustee-in-Trust for the Church, which office he held until his death. After his return he gave considerable attention to the building of the Temple at St. George, where he spent a great deal of time. He was a zealous advocate and laborer in the establishment of the United Order among the people. The discourses he delivered in many of the towns of Utah, upon that subject, were pre-eminently characteristic of him as a political and domestic economist.

In the spring of 1875, about the time of his return from St. George, he was attacked by a severe cold, which, locating on his lungs, inflamed and irritated them in such a manner as to prevent their use in public speaking. This affliction was supplemented with a very peculiar affection preventing sleep, except in an upright posture, and then but at short intervals. He suffered intensely from this combination of diseases for several months, resisting the power of the destroyer with all the fortitude of a strong will and a desire to live, aided by the most sublime faith. He had the support of the prayers of all the people, among whom he was ever a great favorite; but they did not prevail over the decree of Him who doeth all things

well. "Brother George A.'s time had come," was the expression of all his friends, and on Wednesday morning, September 1, 1875, they bowed to the eternal fiat.

President Brigham Young remarked on the morning of his death: "I have known Brother George A. Smith for forty-two years, have traveled and labored in the ministry with him for many years, and have believed him to be as faithful a boy and man as ever lived; and, in my opinion, he had as good a record on this and the other side of the veil as any man. I never knew of his neglecting or overdoing a duty; he was a man of sterling integrity; a cabinet of history, and always true to his friends."

#### WILLARD RICHARDS,

A son of Joseph and Rhoda Richards, was born at Hopkinton, Middlesex County, Massachusetts, June 24, 1804; and from the religious teaching of his parents, he was the subject of religious impressions from his earliest moments, although careless and indifferent in his external deportment. At the age of ten years he removed with his father's family to Richmond, in the same State, where he witnessed several sectarian "revivals," and offered himself to the Congregational Church in that place, at the age of seventeen, having previously passed the painful ordeal of conviction and conversion, according to that order, even to the belief that he had committed the unpardonable sin. But the total disregard of that church to his request for admission, led him to a more thorough investigation of the principles of religion, when he became convinced that the sects were all wrong, and that God had no church

on earth, but that he would soon have a church whose creed would be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. From that time he kept himself aloof from sectarian influence, boldly declaring his belief to all who wished to learn his views, until the summer of 1835. While in the practice of medicine, near Boston, the Book of Mormon, which President Brigham Young had left with his cousin Lucius Parker, at Southborough, accidentally or providentially fell in his way. This was the first he had seen or heard of the Latter-day Saints, except the scurrillous records of the public prints, which amounted to nothing more than that "*a boy named Joe Smith, somewhere out west, had found a Gold Bible.*" He opened the book, without regard to place, and totally ignorant of its design or contents, and before reading half a page, declared that, "God or the devil has had a hand in that book, for man never wrote it." He read it twice through in about ten days; and so firm was his conviction of the truth, that he immediately commenced settling his accounts, selling his medicine, and freeing himself from every incumbrance, that he might go to Kirtland, Ohio, seven hundred miles west, the nearest point he could hear of a Saint, and give the work a thorough investigation, firmly believing, that if the doctrine was true, God had some greater work for him to do than peddle pills. But no sooner did he commence a settlement, than he was smitten with the palsy, from which he suffered exceedingly, and was prevented executing his design until October, 1836, when he arrived at Kirtland, in company with his brother (Doctor Levi Richards, who attended

him as physician), where he was most cordially and hospitably received and entertained by his cousin, President Brigham Young, with whom he tarried, and gave the work an unceasing and untiring investigation.

On Dec. 31, 1836, he was baptized by Brigham Young, at Kirtland, Ohio, and on March 6, 1837, ordained an Elder by Alva Beeman. A few days later he left Kirtland on a mission to the Eastern States, from which he returned June 11th. On the day following he was blessed and set apart by the Prophet Joseph Smith to accompany Heber C. Kimball, Orson Hyde and others on a mission to England. They started on the 13th.

Having arrived safely in England, and the gospel door having been successfully opened in Preston, Willard Richards was sent to Bedford, and surrounding country, where he labored with much success, notwithstanding bitter opposition. He returned to Preston in February, 1838, and on April 1st attended a general conference, where he was ordained a High Priest and appointed first counselor to Joseph Fielding, who was appointed to preside over the mission after Elder Heber C. Kimball and Orson Hyde returned to America.

On September 24th Richards married Jennetta Richards, daughter of the Rev. John Richards. During the following year he continued his missionary labors in Manchester, Bolton, Salford, Burslem, Preston and other places.

On April 14, 1840, after the arrival of the Apostles from America, Willard Richards was ordained one of the Twelve Apostles, to which high and holy position he had been called by direct revelation, and after the

publication of the *Millennial Star* was commenced, he assisted Parley P. Pratt in its editorial department, and also performed the general duties of presiding over the mission.

In February, 1841, he removed his family from Preston to Manchester, and in the following April left England with others of the Twelve to return to Nauvoo, where he arrived Aug. 16th.

Agreeable to the council of the Twelve he located at Warsaw, Hancock County, Ill., for a short time. On October 30th he was elected a member of the city council of Nauvoo and removed to that city in December following. Two days later (December 13th) he was appointed recorder for the Temple, private secretary to Joseph Smith and general Church clerk. He commenced his labors in Joseph's new office, in the brick store.

From the time he entered Joseph's office, with the exception of a short mission to the East after his family, he was with the Prophet Joseph until the Prophet's death, continually at work with his pen, while was able to sit up.

He was recorder of the city council and clerk of the municipal court. He kept Joseph Smith's private journals, making an entry only a few minutes previous to the awful tragedy at Carthage. And in the face of a hundred muskets, in the hands of infuriated mobbers, he thrust his head out of the window to catch a glimpse of his dying President, and there remained gazing intently upon the mangled body until he was satisfied that the innocent spirit had fled.

His "Two Minutes in Jail" is one of the most thrilling documents ever written, and his parrying muskets

with a walking stick is one of the most unequal contests on record. God preserved him without the loss of a drop of blood, and without a "hole in his robe."

During the catastrophe of Joseph and Hyrum's death, and the emergency into which the Church was suddenly thrown, Doctor Richards felt the burden of giving directions to the affairs of the Church in Hancock County, in consequence of the absence of the Twelve Apostles. Though standing in the midst of the murderous mob at Carthage, with the mangled bodies of his martyred friends, and that of Elder John Taylor, under his charge, his letters and counsels at that time indicated great self-command and judgment. His ability was happily commensurate with such an occasion.

At the time of the expulsion from Nauvoo, he acted as Church Historian, having been appointed to that position as early as December, 1842.

In the spring of 1847 he was enrolled in the memorable band of Pioneers, under President Brigham Young, that first marked out a highway for the immigrating Saints to Great Salt Lake Valley. After his return to Winter Quarters he was elected second counselor to President Young, in which capacity he continued to act until his death. In the fall of 1848, he arrived in Great Salt Lake Valley a second time, as captain of a large company of Saints.

As a civil officer, he served as secretary to the government of the State of Deseret, and did the greatest share of the business of the secretary of the Territory of Utah, after its organization as a Territory, and presided over the council of the legislative assembly for about the same period.

He was also postmaster of Great Salt Lake City up to the time of his death, and enjoyed the full confidence of the Postmaster-General, who respected his judgment touching postal arrangements throughout the mountain Territories. He was an efficient member of the Emigrating Fund Company, whose duties affected the interest and gathering of tens of thousands.

In the quorum of the First Presidency, he magnified his high calling to the day of his death, ever shedding light and consolation, in his sphere, upon the minds of thousands and tens of thousands to whom he ministered.

He was the editor and proprietor of the *Deseret News*; also General Historian of the whole Church, and Church Recorder, for which offices he was eminently gifted. He chronicled events, dates, circumstances, and incidents, with rare accuracy of judgment and great tenacity of memory. The number of offices which he held at the time of his death indicate the confidence which the Church reposed in his great integrity and varied abilities.

That ardent love of truth, and intuitive perception of the same, which impelled him to investigate the claims of the everlasting gospel in the beginning, grew with his passing years, and became more and more manifest, by his unwavering and unflinching adherence to it, in the most perilous and troublesome times of the Church's history in after life.

He possessed a calm and even mind, and yet was rather reserved, and naturally diffident to his own superior ability. This diffidence may have caused the early part of his ministry to be undervalued. From being familiar with the minutia of the medical

profession and a careful observer of clerical deportment, and thoroughly proficient in science generally, the change that swept over his past attainments and brought him down to the altar of revelation by the Holy Ghost, showed forth the reality of a new birth personified in all his subsequent life. On great and rare occasions, his masterly energies came forth like a well disciplined and invincible troop, that knew their place and prerogative to act in defense of the truth.

Beloved and respected by all who knew him, Dr. Willard Richards died in Great Salt Lake City, March 11, 1854, from palsy, which disease had preyed upon his system ever since he began to investigate the Book of Mormon.

#### LYMAN WIGHT,

A son of Levi Wight and Sarah Corbon, was born in the township of Fairfield, Herkimer County, New York, May 9, 1796. He served the Republic in the war of 1812-15 with Great Britain.

He united with Isaac Morley and others in forming a society in Kirtland, Ohio, conducted on the common stock principle, being one phase in the rise and progress of the Campbellite Church.

He was baptized into the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints by Oliver Cowdery in 1830, and was soon afterwards ordained to the office of an Elder. He was ordained to the office of a High Priest by Joseph Smith, at the June conference in Kirtland, 1831. While at that conference he testified he had a vision and saw the Savior. He went to Missouri in 1831, by revelation, and soon after went to Cincinnati, Ohio, on a mission to preach



the gospel. On arriving in that city he called at a hotel and engaged his board for several weeks. The landlord asked him if he was a merchant. He said, "No." He asked him what his business was. He replied he was a preacher of the gospel. He asked him what order he belonged to. He answered, he was after the order of Melchizedek. He created so much curiosity that they wished to hear him preach. He told them that was his business, and if they would open the court house he would do so willingly. They obtained the house, and he delivered a series of lectures and built up a branch of the Church, and baptized upwards of one hundred. The families of Higbee were among the first baptized; they were fishermen, and Wight would fish with them through the day and preach at night. One evening he went from the fish net to the court house, and stood on the top of a stove barefooted with his trousers rolled up to his knees, and his shirt sleeves up to his elbows, and preached two hours. Some of the people remarked, "He preaches the truth, though he does not look much like a preacher."

Many that he baptized went to Jackson County, Missouri, and were with him through the persecutions of 1833. During that persecution he was a dread to his enemies and a terror to evil doers, and his life was often sought after.

He commanded the brethren in Jackson County in their defense against the mob. In one instance he was chased by seven men about six miles; they were fully armed and came upon him so suddenly that he had to mount his horse with a blind bridle, without any saddle or arms, except a pocket knife. His horse being fleet, he escaped by out-running the mobbers and leaping

a deep, wide ditch, where none of his pursuers dared to follow.

On the 23rd of July, 1833, he signed an agreement with others that the Saints would leave Jackson County before the first day of January, 1834; but before that time they were all driven out. After the Saints were driven out of Jackson County into Clay County, volunteers were called for to go and visit the Prophet Joseph in Kirtland. Several of the Elders were asked by Bishop Edward Partridge if they could go; but they made excuses. Lyman Wight then stepped forward, and said he could go as well as not. The Bishop asked him what situation his family was in. He replied, his wife lay by the side of a log in the woods, with a child three days old, and he had three days' provision on hand; so he thought he could go very well. Parley P. Pratt next volunteered, and they went together to Kirtland in February, 1834. On their arrival at Kirtland, the Prophet obtained the word of the Lord and they were commanded to gather up the strength of the Lord's house to go up to Zion, and it was the will of the Lord that there should be five hundred men, but not to go up short of one hundred. In fulfilment of this commandment, Lyman Wight went through Pennsylvania, and on the 15th day of March, he attended a conference at Avon, New York; he also went through Michigan, northern Indiana and Illinois, and assisted Hyrum Smith in gathering up a company of eighteen, who joined Zion's Camp at Salt River, Missouri, June the 8th, where the camp was re-organized, and Lyman Wight was appointed the second officer. He walked the whole journey from Michigan to

Clay County without stockings on his feet. By the appointment of Joseph Smith he gave a written discharge to each member of the camp when they were dismissed.

On July 3, 1834, he was set apart as one of the High Council of Missouri.

He was one of the signers of an appeal to the world, making a proclamation of peace in Missouri, July, 1834, and spent the summer of 1834 in Clay County, Missouri. He took a job of making 100,000 bricks, and building a large brick-house for Colonel Michael Arthur in Clay County; Wilford Woodruff, Milton Holmes, Heman T. Hyde and Stephen and Benjamin Winchester labored for him through the season.

Being counseled to go to Kirtland and get his endowment, Elder Wight started in the fall of 1835, and preached his way through to Kirtland, baptizing such as would receive his testimony. While on the journey he called at the city of Richmond, Indiana, and gave out an appointment to preach in the court house. He walked through the city, and, being a stranger, was unknown; but wherever he went the people were blackguarding the "Mormons," and many declared they would tar and feather the preacher when he came to meeting that night. At the time of appointment Elder Wight was at his post. There being no light provided, he went and bought candles and lighted the room. The house was soon filled with men who brought tar and feathers for the "Mormon" Elder. He preached about two hours, reproofing them most severely for their meanness, wickedness and mobocratic spirit. At the close of the meeting he said, "If there is a gentleman in this

congregation, I wish he would invite me to stay with him over night," whereupon a gentleman stepped forward and tendered him an invitation, which he willingly accepted. His host said, "Mr. Wight, it is astonishing how you have become so well acquainted with the people here, for you have described them very correctly." He was kindly entertained and furnished with money in the morning to aid him on his journey.

He spent the winter of 1835-36 in Kirtland, and received his endowment. He returned to the State of Missouri in 1836.

David W. Patten having preferred a charge against Elder Wight for teaching false doctrine, he was tried before the High Council at Far West, April 24, 1837. It was decided that he did teach false doctrine. He made the required acknowledgments.

He opposed the selling of land in Jackson County, Mo., and considered William W. Phelps and John Whitmer in transgression for selling theirs.

On June 28, 1838, he was chosen and ordained second counselor to John Smith, president of the Stake at Adam-ondi-Ahman, by Joseph Smith.

Sheriff Morgan, of Daviess County, had agitated the people of the surrounding counties, by asserting that he had writs against Joseph Smith and Lyman Wight, which he could not serve without endangering his life. He invited the people to assemble together in Daviess County, with their arms, so that he could summon them as a *posse comitatus* to make the arrest. The real design was to murder Joseph Smith and Lyman Wight, as they had not offered any resistance, neither had the sheriff made any at-

tempt to arrest them. They went before Justice Austin A. King, at Ragland's farm, to allay this excitement, and gave bonds in the sum of two hundred and fifty dollars for their appearance in court.

Elder Wight subsequently went before three mobocratic magistrates, under the protection of General David R. Atchison's militia, and gave bonds for his appearance in court, in the sum of one thousand dollars, on a charge of misdemeanor. This examination was had in General Atchison's camp, at Netherton Spring, Daviess County, surrounded by several hundreds of the mob, and about one hundred militia. His life was repeatedly threatened, and it required the energy of Generals Atchison and Doniphan to prevent his murder. At the close of this examination, he asked for thirty writs against members of the mob, but was refused.

He was commissioned a colonel in the militia of Caldwell County, previous to his removal to Daviess County, and in that county he commanded his brethren while defending themselves against the mob.

In October, 1838, after learning that Far West was surrounded by a mob, he raised fifty-three volunteers in Adam-ondi-Ahman (25 miles distant), and repaired immediately to Far West to aid in its defense, where, with Joseph and Hyrum Smith and others, he was betrayed into the hands of his enemies, by Col. George M. Hinkle, on the 31st; and was sentenced by a court-martial to be shot next morning (November 1st) at 8 o'clock. During the evening, General Moses Wilson took him out by himself, and tried to induce him to betray Joseph Smith, and swear falsely against him; at which time the following conversation

took place: General Wilson said, "Col. Wight, we have nothing against you, only that you are associated with Joe Smith. He is our enemy and a damned rascal, and would make any plan he could to kill us. You are a damned fine fellow; and if you will come out and swear against him, we will spare your life, and give you any office you want; and if you don't do it, you will be shot tomorrow at 8 o'clock." Colonel Wight replied, "General Wilson, you are entirely mistaken in your man, both in regard to myself and Joseph Smith. Joseph Smith is not an enemy to mankind; he is not your enemy, and is as good a friend as you have got. Had it not been for him, you would have been in hell long ago, for I should have sent you there, by cutting your throat, and no other man but Joseph Smith could have prevented me, and you may thank him for your life. And now, if you will give me the boys I brought from Diahman yesterday, I will whip your whole army." Wilson said, "Wight, you are a strange man; but if you will not accept my proposal, you will be shot tomorrow morning at eight." Colonel Wight replied, "Shoot and be damned."

This was the true character of Lyman Wight; he was true as the sun to Joseph Smith, and would die for his friends. He was taken to Jackson County, with Joseph, Hyrum and other prisoners. They were chained together and fed on human flesh in prison by their Christian guards, and he continued to suffer with his brethren until April 15, 1839, when he started with Joseph and Hyrum Smith, Alexander McRae and Caleb Baldwin and guard, to go to jail in Columbia, Boone County, but on the night of the 16th, the sheriff

fell asleep, the guard got drunk, and the prisoners left them, and went to their families and friends in Illinois.

On October 20, 1839, Lyman Wight and Reynolds Cahoon were appointed counselors to John Smith, president of the Saints in Iowa Territory; on January 19, 1841, he was appointed one of the Nauvoo House Association.

At the April Conference following he was called and appointed to be one of the Twelve Apostles, to fill the vacancy caused by the death of David W. Patten. He was ordained April 8, 1842.

He was commissioned a brevet major-general of the Illinois militia, by Governor Carlin.

He went to Kirtland in 1842, and rebaptized about two hundred of the cold, dead members of the Church, and brought many of them to Nauvoo.

On July 1, 1843, he was examined as a witness before the municipal court of Nauvoo, and gave a plain, unvarnished account of the persecution against the Saints in Missouri, and of the sufferings of Joseph Smith and his fellow-prisoners.

During the winter of 1843-44, he was employed in the Pine Country, at Black River, Wisconsin Territory, superintending the procuring of lumber for the Temple and Nauvoo House.

In a letter directed to the Presidency and Twelve, dated Black River Falls, February 15, 1844, he wrote his views about preaching to the Indians and going to Texas.

In the spring of 1844, he started on a mission through the Eastern States, and was appointed one of the delegates of the Baltimore Convention. He delivered a speech on Bunker Hill, on General Joseph Smith's claims to the Presidency of the United States; and on hearing of the death of Joseph, he returned to Nauvoo with the Twelve.

After his return to Nauvoo, he said, "I would not turn my hand over to be one of the Twelve; the day was when there was somebody to control me, but that day is past."

When the Church removed to the Rocky Mountains, Lyman Wight and George Miller, who both rebelled against the authority of President Brigham Young, went to Texas with a small company of Saints, and settled a little south of the present site of Austin. Wight and Miller subsequently dissolved partnership, and Miller returned 130 miles north with a part of the company. At a meeting held in the Great Salt Lake City fort, December 3, 1848, fellowship was withdrawn from both Wight and Miller. Wight remained in Texas until his death, which occurred on March 31, 1858, in Mountain Valley. He died very suddenly of epileptic fits, having been sick only five hours. The company of Saints who went with him and George Miller to Texas had been scattered to the four winds. Some of them, however, were subsequently received into the Church by baptism.

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## HIRAM.

Hiram, a township in Portage County, Ohio, is about thirty miles from Kirtland. The population in

1880 was 1,058. This was the home of the Johnson family and a number of other early members of the