

# Edwin D. Woolley

A LEGACY OF LOYAL SERVICE



**Family History StoryBooks**

**Edwin Dilworth Woolley's story began in the lush, green hills of Pennsylvania. He was the eldest child in a hardworking Quaker family, that taught him the values of honesty and integrity. His days were filled with helping on the family farm, where he discovered the joys of building and the satisfaction of a long day's work.**

**Edwin's mother died when he was a teenager, so he had many responsibilities taking care of his six younger siblings. At that time, many families from the East Coast were moving out to the western frontier where there were more opportunities. One such family was the Woolley's neighbors, the Wickershams.**







**At the age of 22, Edwin embarked on an adventure to Ohio, where many of his neighbors had gone in search of cheap, fertile land. The frontier was full of new opportunities and challenges. With dreams in his heart and determination in his steps, he traveled through the American frontier, eager to forge a new path for himself and his family.**

**Ohio welcomed Edwin with its vast lands and promise of a new beginning. Edwin was pleased to reconnect with the Wickersham family from his childhood, particularly with his friend Mary Wickersham who was his same age. Their friendship blossomed into love, and soon they were married.**



**Edwin and Mary went back to Pennsylvania together, starting their family journey amidst the familiar landscapes of their childhood. Soon their first child was born, a healthy baby boy they named John. While Edwin and Mary loved being back on the family farm in Pennsylvania, they felt the call to move back out west.**

**Their life took a significant turn with the passing of Edwin's father. Edwin had to take on the responsibility of caring for his younger siblings, as well as his own young family. He knew the farm wouldn't be large enough for all of them, so he made the brave decision to move the entire family to Ohio where they could buy cheap land on the frontier.**









**In Ohio, Edwin proved to be a man of many talents. He farmed the land, cleared new fields, and managed a tavern that became a hub for travelers and locals alike. His tavern was a place of rest and community, and he enjoyed helping and hosting travelers from all over the country.**

**Edwin and Mary were known for their fairness and kindness. They stood up for their neighbors, including the newly arrived Latter-day Saints, defending them against misunderstandings and false accusations. Their home became a symbol of hospitality and respect in the community.**



**After several months of meeting with missionaries and listening to sermons, Mary had a powerful spiritual experience at a meeting with other Church members and decided to be baptized. This decision was a testament to her faith and inner strength, choosing to follow the Lord—even without the support of her family.**

**Edwin still wasn't convinced. One day he brought Mary a new dress pattern and offered to buy her a brand new silk dress if she would deny her new religion. Instead, she threw the pattern in his face! She had made a commitment to the Lord by being baptized and was unwilling to turn her back on Him.**







**Edwin decided to find out for himself if the religion were true and traveled to Kirtland to meet the so-called prophet, Joseph Smith Jr. Due to local persecution, the prophet was not there; but Edwin met the prophet's father. Edwin invited Joseph Smith Sr. to come stay with the Woolley family until things calmed down in Kirtland and it was safe again.**

**Edwin's association with the prophet's father and other church members helped to convince him of the truth of the Latter-day Saint movement. A few months after Mary's conversion and baptism, Edwin was baptized in an icy river on December 24, 1837.**



**Following his baptism, Edwin felt a strong call to share his new faith. With his family taken care of, he left to serve a short mission to Pennsylvania. He was eager to spread the message of the restored gospel to his old community.**

**Edwin's passion and conviction touched many hearts, including many from his extended family and his childhood friends. His mission was fruitful, bringing many to the waters of baptism and into the fold of the Church. It was a time of joy and spiritual growth for Edwin and those he taught.**









**After returning from his mission, Edwin and Mary made the difficult decision to move their family to Nauvoo, Illinois. Most church members had left Ohio and had been driven from Missouri. Nauvoo would be yet another frontier for Edwin. At this point he and Mary had four children of their own, and a few of his younger siblings still lived with them.**

**After struggling through a season of severe illness while draining the swamp in Nauvoo, Edwin took his family back to Ohio to sell off his land and businesses. Mary and the children then spent time with her family while Edwin served another short mission in the area. When they got back to Nauvoo, the city was growing rapidly, and they were able to build a house that was big enough for the whole family.**



**In Nauvoo, Edwin's creative spirit thrived. He opened a store that soon became a cornerstone of the community, known for its fairness and quality. His understanding of business and willingness to work hard paid off, earning him respect and success. He traveled up and down the river, bringing supplies from St. Louis to Nauvoo.**

**On one occasion, Joseph Smith came into Edwin's store and asked him to donate all of the store's goods to the Church. Edwin worried about giving away everything, but he trusted the prophet. Joseph came back later that day and found the store full of neatly stacked boxes, ready to donate. Joseph smiled and told Edwin that this had been a test of his faith. Edwin could keep all of the goods. He praised Edwin for his dedication and willingness to sacrifice.**







**Edwin was asked to serve yet another mission in 1842, his third mission in four years. He traveled to Massachusetts and Connecticut as missionaries did in the time of Jesus Christ, without money or extra supplies. He relied on the Lord and the goodness of the people. He experienced many discouragements, but saw many miracles as well.**

**When he returned to Nauvoo, the persecutions from Ohio and Missouri had started up again. The city became more and more dangerous after the death of Joseph Smith, and eventually Edwin and the Saints were forced to leave. Edwin remembered the mobs firing cannons at the town and the despair of the people as they fled their homes yet again.**



**At Winter Quarters, Edwin became a pillar of strength for the Saints during their desperate circumstances. With his previous experience running a store and a tavern, he was able to get food and supplies from nearby towns and set up a store in the camp. This provided essential goods to help the community survive the harsh winter conditions.**

**The Woolley home also served as a school, ensuring that the children's education continued despite the challenges. It was a humbling time of coming together, sharing resources, and supporting one another through the trials of their journey.**









**The next summer the pioneers, including the Woolley family, headed out West. They dealt with all kinds of challenges including sickness, wild animals, supply shortages, rough trails, wagon breakdowns, and injuries. The challenges strengthened the people and fortified their faith.**

**Despite the trials and tribulations, the journey was a powerful bonding experience for the family. Mary gave birth to another daughter during their journey. It was an enormous relief when they finally got to the Salt Lake Valley.**



**In those early days, every task was crucial for survival. Edwin worked tirelessly, helping to build homes, clear land, and plant crops. He was a key figure in turning the barren valley into a place where families, including his own, could prosper and grow.**

**The first winter storm in December of 1848 caused leaks in the roof of their house that had the family using umbrellas indoors while preparing meals. It took years and years of hard work and dedication to transform the Salt Lake Valley into a place where they could live comfortably.**







**As soon as his family was settled in and prepared for the next winter, Edwin was asked to travel back East to obtain supplies for the Saints in Utah. He was to help secure wagons and animals for those who wanted to come to the Utah Territory. During his travels, Edwin also took the opportunity to continue to share the gospel, even baptizing his sister and her family.**

**Eventually Edwin again opened a store and helped to establish the Bishop's Storehouse in Salt Lake City, providing goods to those in need. Years later he was elected a member of the territorial legislature where he continued to help establish a thriving community in Utah.**



**Edwin's relationship with Brigham Young was a close one built on mutual respect. Brigham Young, recognizing Edwin's dedication and skills, often sought his counsel and even asked Edwin to manage some of Brigham's businesses. Together, they worked towards building a strong and self-reliant community.**

**Edwin was known for being very outspoken and saying exactly what he thought without regard for consequences. Brigham Young said of Edwin that, "If Edwin fell off his horse in the river, he is likely to float upstream." Despite his stubborn nature, Brigham liked that Edwin could think for himself and speak up for his beliefs.**









**Edwin served as a Bishop in the Salt Lake Valley for almost 28 years, a role he fulfilled with devotion and compassion. He was a spiritual leader to many, guiding his community through times of joy and hardship. His service was marked by a deep commitment to his faith and his people.**

**Along with the Salt Lake 13th ward family, his family, too, grew and prospered. Edwin was a father to 26 children, nurturing them with love and teaching them the values he held dear. His life was a testament to service, love, and faith, leaving a legacy that would endure for generations.**



# Edwin D. Woolley

A LEGACY OF LOYAL SERVICE

JUNE 27, 1807 - OCTOBER 14, 1881

My Relationship:



FamilySearch.org ID: KWN2-GPW

Book Created for Edwin's Great-Great Grandson, John  
Whited

Order More Copies at [familyhistorystorybooks.com](http://familyhistorystorybooks.com)



**Family History StoryBooks**

**Copyright © Jake Harmer**

**Family History StoryBooks is a subsidiary of In Our Lovely Desert, LLC**

**All rights reserved.**

**No portion of this book may be reproduced in any form without written permission from the publisher or author, except as permitted by U.S. copyright law.**

**This publication is designed to provide accurate and authoritative information in regard to the subject matter covered. While the publisher and author have used their best efforts in preparing this book, they make no representations or warranties with respect to the accuracy or completeness of the contents of this book. Neither the publisher nor the author shall be liable for any loss of profit or any other commercial damages, including but not limited to special, incidental, consequential, personal, or other damages. This book was created in part using tools that utilize artificial intelligence.**

**Illustrations by Jake Harmer**

**Photos obtained with permission by the family of the subject**

**1st edition 2024**



**Edwin D. Woolley**



**Edwin and Mary Ann Olpin**



**Woolley Family about 1850**



**Woolley Family Home in Salt Lake City**



**Edwin's last family photo, 1881**

