



*History of the Woodward School*  
*99 Years*  
*1901 - 2000*

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*99 Years - 1901 - 2000*

By

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Prepared for

The Committee for the Restoration of the Woodward School

2000

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### *About the Author*

**H**eber Jones was born in St. George, Utah in the Old Cotton Home on Tabernacle Street. He attended early school in Veyo, Utah, then rode the bus to Woodward and Dixie High Schools.

He graduated from high school at the age of 16, and Dixie Jr. College at 18 years of age. He then transferred to the University of Utah, where he earned his B.S. and <sup>U.S.U.</sup> Masters Degrees. He was the first person to earn a college degree from Veyo, Utah.

Heber taught school at Woodward Jr. High, Dixie High School, and at Dixie College when Bob Slack was at the Utah State Legislature. Mr. Jones retired from teaching in 1987. He worked for the Five County Travel Bureau at the Port of Entry. Since retiring from there, he has been very busy writing, lecturing, and keeping up with his family. He is married to LaRee McAllister and they are the parents of five sons. They reside in St. George, Utah.

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## *INTRODUCTION*

**T**his history of the Woodward School is a part of the activity generated by the Committee for the Preservation and Restoration of the Woodward Building. This history tries to acquaint the reader with some historical background of the educational pursuits which led to the building and the establishment of the Woodward School. It also attempts to trace the workings of the school through its four major phases form 1901 through the year 2000 when it was retired as a normal functioning elementary school.

The quest for an adequate education has been one of the many aims of people living in Utah's Dixie from the pioneer period to the present. This short narrative is but one of many attempts to help the reader of today understand the challenges of yesterday and the zeal with which they were pursued.

# Chapter 1

## *Woodward School -- 99 Years -- 1901 - 2000*

One of the first actions taken by the band of pioneers who settled in St. George was to appoint a board of trustees with a mandate to establish and administer a school system. The trustees were Angus M. Cannon, James G. Bleak and John Oakey. They had a large tent set up in camp for a school. This school didn't last long because the camp was abandoned as people moved to their designated city lots.

The city was divided into four wards, each with its own school district. For the first few years many different arrangements were made for schools. Some buildings were made from willows, others used tents or boxes to house their scholars. Private homes and public structures were used. However, work was begun on permanent buildings and between 1863 and 1868 four ward school buildings were completed. They were built of adobe on a rock foundation. Each school had its own board of trustees. Three of these buildings doubled for church and civic activities until the Tabernacle and Courthouse were completed.

There were numerous public and private schools in operation in Dixie between 1862 and 1901 when the Woodward School was completed. Schools were usually held for two or three months each year. The teachers usually provided wood, candles, lamps, clocks, brooms, janitorial services and in most cases had to collect their pay from the parents.

Thomas P. Cottam said that he graduated from the back of a wagon box. He must have graduated with honors because Josephine Jarvis, his future sister-in-law stated, "In 1878, Miss Mary E. Cook came to St. George and taught in the basement of the Tabernacle for 10 months. She was a good teacher for the times, but we little girls thought that she favored the boys, especially one day when she kept her whole arithmetic class in during the entire noon hour, with the exception of Thomas Cottam, whom she dismissed with the remark, "Mr. Cottam, I think your head aches....."

Thomas P. Cottam, along with Edward H. Snow and George F. Whitehead became leading advocates of education and were largely responsible for Dixie College and free public education throughout the first quarter of the 20th Century.

In 1890 a free public school system supported by taxation was put into effect. The old tuition system was still used for some advanced training. An attempt to start a high school was made in the Third Ward as early as 1871 and a group of citizens started a movement for a St. George Stake Academy. Its purpose was to train teachers and provide advanced training in specialized areas.

The basement of the Tabernacle was used by a German, Eugene Schoppman, supported by tuition to teach advanced studies. In the 1880's Professor Albert Whitelock, Martha Snow and Josephine Jarvis taught in the basement of the Tabernacle. In 1888 the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints sent Nephi M. Savage to teach in the St. George Stake Academy which was held in the basement of the Tabernacle for 5 years. Due to pressure put on the Church by the federal government's threat to confiscate Church property, the Academy was discontinued and Nephi M. Savage went to work for the local district for the next 3 years.

The Tabernacle basement proved to be a poor place to hold school. The lack of light, heat, and poor ventilation made it undesirable for a place to learn. Willie Jarvis was attending school there on April 5, 1881. He was killed by lightning while playing on the Tabernacle steps during recess time.

The upper floor of the Court House and the St. George Hall were used for educational purposes.

The Presbyterian Church opened a mission school in St. George in 1880. Some form of this school continued until about 1944. The last 31 years was under the direction of Miss Louisa Conklin.

By the 1890's it was obvious that there were too many students for the available facilities. There were about 500 students using buildings designed to serve about 200. The four ward school districts were consolidated into one and a school board for the entire city was organized.

The state <sup>appropriated</sup> about \$.50 per student for a 12 week term. Schools were graded for the first time. Prior to this time, all grades were in the same room with one teacher in each ward. Some rooms had as many as 85 students who had to get by with one small blackboard, no maps, charts, etc.

In 1894-95 Josephine Jarvis taught 5th and 6th grades along with some leftovers from other grades in the Court House. She had 129 students in one room with no playground and no assistant.

Mrs. Josephine Jarvis Miles in her History of Education in St. George states that E. H. Snow, clerk and Horatio Pickett, John E. Pace and Zaidee Walker, trustees, were responsible for promoting the idea of building one central school for St. George. Mabel Jarvis in her poem, Yesterday - School History in Saint George gives the credit to E. H. Snow, John E. Pace and Horatio Pickett. Albert E. Miller in Immortal Pioneers and the D. U. P. publication Under Dixie Sun indicates that the school board consisting of George Woodward, F. L. Daggett and Joseph Orton with Edward H. Snow as secretary, pushed for a more adequate arrangement for housing the students.

Edward H. Snow was directed to get plans for a suitable building. He commissioned Joseph Monson of Cache County to prepare the plans. The building was to consist of 12 rooms, six on each floor with a 16 ft. hall through the center on each floor. It was to be built of brick.

Several meetings were held to get support for the new building. There was considerable discussion as to whether there should be one building or additions to the existing structures. Some argued that there were not adequate materials for making brick and others wanted to use adobe. Karl Larson in I Was Called To Dixie put it this way, "Miss Zaidee Walker was one of those who talked in favor of the large central school. She had received her training in pedagogy at the University of Utah, and this training, with her natural firmness, keen intelligence, and understanding sympathy, made her one of Dixie's finest instructors. She got a bit impatient with some of the brethren who held out for building an additional room to the small outmoded schoolhouses, and tartly remarked that their thinking on the school problem was similar to a polygamist's reasoning as he prepared to take a new wife -- just add another room to the old house! Some of those at whom this barb was leveled were polygamists themselves, and they were considerably upset, to put the matter mildly. But the advocates of the central school won the argument." In the end it was decided to build a large building out of rock. The rock would not be dressed as was done on the Tabernacle. They would use the same stone cut with what they called a course pitched ashlar.

In April of 1897 the people approved a two percent tax for one year to be used for the new building. Part of the tax was to be paid in goods and/or labor. The building was to be constructed on the northwest corner of the public square. On May 3, 1897 the St. George City Council authorized the Mayor, Edward M. Brown, to issue a deed for the property to the School District. The deed was to be held until the building was complete. The deed was issued to the School District by Mayor Thomas P. Cottam on November 28, 1902. The building was expected to cost about \$15,000. The actual cost was closer to \$30,000. The first year of construction cost about \$7,000. The ground was prepared under the direction of William J. Davies. He was assisted by Joseph and George Worthen. They pounded small, volcanic rock into the foundation as had been done in building the Temple. Financed by another two percent assessment, the volcanic rock that had been prepared for building a St. George Stake Academy was used as a foundation for the red sandstone walls. The red sandstone was quarried from



sandstone was quarried from the Tabernacle and Temple quarry where the Red Hills Golf Course now is. The quarrying was done by John F. McNeil, F.A. Blair, John Bleak, Alex Fullerton, Horatio Pickett and Joseph Riding. George Brooks, William G. Miles and James G. Bleak Jr., along with others, were hired to cut the stones. Another two percent was levied for 1899 but the trustees decided that the building progress was too slow. They contracted out the quarrying of the rock and a contract for the cutting of the stone was let to Mahonri M. Snow Jr. and Charles Whipple. Another contract was awarded Snow and Whipple in 1900.

The arched entrances on the east and west, along with the inscriptions on the building, were done by George Brooks. Between 1897 and 1901 the citizens of the school district had voted a school tax of nine and one-half percent for the construction of the Woodward building. In order to complete the project in 1901 the board bonded for \$6,000. They let a contract to Grace Brothers of Nephi for \$8,000. This contract was probably necessary because of the number of local craftsmen away on missions. Joseph Worthen, Isaac Hunt, William J. Davies and others were hired to do the mason work. George T. Cottam and Samuel T. Bleak hauled much of the rock for the building and Charles S. Cottam was hired as inspector.

For about one hundred years this red sandstone two story building standing on the City Square has hosted a school. In its' 100th year it will conclude its use as a public school and will revert to its place in the memories of thousands of people who have fond feelings of their having gone there.

In 1899 the building was named the "Woodward School", using the name of George Woodward who was a member of the school board and who helped in the financing of the building. The name Woodward has many ramifications because Jabez Woodward was an early school teacher in St. George. It is believed that Jabez was the first to teach school in the community. A decade after the Woodward School opened, Hugh Woodward was imported to become the first principal of the St. George Academy (Dixie College) in 1911. The Woodward name even continues today on the local education scene with Mike Woodward who teaches at Dixie College. George Woodward contributed \$50 toward preparing the rock used in the foundation and \$3,600 for the heating plant for the building. He also contributed \$4,000 to modernize the plumbing in the Temple and hook it to the city water system. Mr. Woodward was a brick mason by trade. He had made some money on property sales prior to his leaving Salt Lake City. He is said to have given \$7,793.95 for a hearse and harness, an organ for the Tabernacle, bathrooms in the St. George Temple, help for the 4th Ward school building, missionary fund, the Brigham Young monument, a piano for the Woodward building and an organ for the Primary Association.

George M. Woodward was born in Monmouth County, New Jersey on September 9, 1817. He was baptized a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints by Erastus Snow in September of 1840. He moved to Nauvoo that same year and helped in the construction of the Nauvoo Temple. He married Thomazine Downing while in Nauvoo. They had no children. He migrated to Salt Lake City in 1847. He was with Heber C. Kimball's group when they had the famous meeting with Jim Bridger who tried to discourage the Mormons from settling the Salt Lake area. Before reaching the Salt Lake Valley, Brigham Young sent Woodward with a group to locate their families and bring them from Winter Quarters. They found their families who had already started for the West and accompanied them into Salt Lake City. George Woodward was among the first group to be called to settle St. George in 1861. The Woodward building was completed in 1901 and is described as Nellie Gubler remembered it: "The building had twelve classrooms and a sixteen-foot hallway running through the center of each floor. The west end of the second floor hall provided an office room for the principal. Also, between the two floors and about in the middle of the building was an orchestra stand.

On the east side, just inside the building was a flight of about twelve steps that led to this stand and on either side, continuing on up to the second floor, were more steps. At the west end of the building, just inside the west doors, was a set of stairs that went clear up to the second floor with one broad step at about half-way up. On either side of the east and west stairways were halls leading to the downstairs classrooms....There was no water system for indoor rest rooms as the toilets and wash basins were outside to the south of the building. It was 1910 before 'modern conveniences' of indoor toilets and wash basins were provided. There was no sewer system, only a cesspool, which by 1914 - 1916 was full to overflowing and the stench was very unpleasant, as well as unsanitary. I attended this school and remember very vividly the offensive odor and how it plagued the custodian, Brother Sam Bleak. As to electricity, there were drop lights in the center of each room and the rest rooms were dimly lighted by probably 25 watt globes. The boys' room was on the north side of the downstairs hall at middle north, and the girls' room on the south side, opposite. A small dark alley led to each rest room. By the time I had advanced to the upper realms, conditions had improve." In later years the middle room on the north side of the bottom floor was split in two sections and both the boys' and girls' rest rooms were put there.

William H. Thompson and his nephew, Samuel T. Bleak did the plumbing for the Woodward building. They also installed the heating plant. Samuel T. Bleak became the first custodian and held that position for 26 years from 1902 to 1927.

Jabez Woodard - Not Woodward

The Woodwards (George and Thomazine) had a daughter - Mary she died young. The amount of money listed as contributed may be inflated. His (Woodward's) lists are smaller amounts. I located his account book after this book was printed. It also indicates his activities in St. George started in the 1870's. The information in this book was taken from several local accounts. He was called to Dixie with the first group.

# Chapter 1

## Appendix

The following poetic narrative by Mable Jarvis, describes the earliest establishment of organized education in St. George and how Woodward came to be.

### School History in Saint George

End of a wearying Pioneer trail,  
Settled at last in a hill walled vale,  
Where the lizard lolled and the cacti grew,  
On vermillion sands under skies of blue.  
And the rays of that early December sun,  
In the year of our Lord Eighteen Sixty-one  
Marked a toilsome journey through.

Following ever the well formed rule,  
Quoth Erastus, the leader, "We must hold school."  
And soon neath the arch of a spacious tent,  
Heads over slates and books were bent.  
The teachers were those whom life had prepared,  
And books from all sources were joyously shared,  
Given, and borrowed, and lent.

From the "Dobieyard Camp," when the lots were drawn,  
They moved into town as the Spring came on.  
And a wagon box, or a willow shed,  
Or a mud walled shack, with its trundle bed  
Made schoolhouse and home. And the teacher's pay  
Was food for her family from day to day,  
Which the patrons contributed.

At length into four wards the town was divided,  
And each with its own special building provided,  
Which served as amusement hall, ward house and school.  
And teaching continued by rote and by rule.  
The teachers "went north" and learned the best way,  
To govern the school children at work and at play.  
Though they still used the dunce cap and stool.

But enrollments increased in each ward year by year,  
Till the need of more classrooms began to appear.  
The Court House was pressed into service one fall,  
Also, what was known as the old Social Hall.  
But with these additions they still wanted space.  
And the problem stared every trustee in the face,  
For there seemed no resources at all.

Still anticipating the ultimate need,  
One wise city father had given much heed,  
To the problem, and knew that a good building site,  
Must come first, so proposed in the council one night,  
A School District Grant of the Public Square Corner,  
Which unused, would revert to the city as donor.  
And he won after a full six months' fight.

Now talking things over is reason and right,  
And oftimes, great problems are solved in one night.  
The citizens knew that the prospects were small,  
For financing any school building at all.  
But they did possess vision, and faith, and would stand  
Together for whatever built up the land,  
So they answered the Mass Meeting Call.

The Trustees presented the figures and facts,  
And the patrons agreed on a School Building Tax.  
Unto the laws limit; and tax script for pay,  
Was issued each workman by month, week or day.  
E.H. Snow, John E. Pace, and Horatio Pickett  
Were the trustees whose energy, urging and sweat,  
Got the mammoth task well under way.

The year eighteen ninety eight saw the ground cleared;  
And foundations laid, plus more work volunteered.  
Rock was hauled from the quarrie and skillfully drest,  
On the ground by mechanics who ranked with the best.  
The people were cheered as they gazed on the line  
Of the first story finished, eighteen ninety-nine;  
And knew they could count on the rest.

And up to this time not a bond had been voted,  
And Tax Script was still the good pay-paper floated.  
Then that year E.H. Snow on a mission was sent,  
To the State of New York where he joyously went,  
Well assured the school building would not be forsaken,  
Since Trustee Joseph Orton his position had taken,  
And everyone knew what that meant.

In the year nineteen hundred the citizens met,  
And voted a Six Thousand school bonded debt,  
To raise the cash needed for hardware and glass,  
For which they could never hope Tax Script to pass.  
Brother Orton, though childless, was bound soul and mind  
To his task, a more faithful man never we'll find.  
And there are but few in his class.

He was friends with George Woodward another great soul,  
And one also childless, but owning a roll,  
Of bills, and of gold a most generous supply,  
For that time, with no heirs to get theirs when he'd die.  
Trustee Orton's suggestion he gladly received,  
And his gift of three thousand the problem relieved,  
And the building for all could get by.