



Washington County—
Orin N. Woodbury Home

Orin Nelson Woodbury was born August 1828, at New Salem, Massachusetts, the fifth son and fifth child of Jeremiah Woodbury and Elizabeth Bartlett Woodbury. During 1841 missionaries came to their home and the family became converts to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. After their conversion

and baptism, the spirit of gathering rested upon them and they became imbued with a desire to assemble with their fellow religionists in Nauvoo, Illinois. They arrived there late in the summer of 1842. They endured the hardships and persecution brought upon the Saints in this area, but never questioned the divinity of the Church, helping all they could with its progress.

After the death of the Prophet, persecution of the Saints became even more relentless and vindictive, and as the autumn of 1845 drew near, many of the Saints began making plans to vacate their homes and take their journey into the western wilderness. Orin's father and his family were among the number making such preparation.

In preparing for the westward journey, the family provided themselves not only with suitable outfits and equipment for traveling but also with a full eighteen months' supply of provisions. They traveled in the Abraham O. Smoot Company, arriving in the Valley of the Great Salt Lake September 26, 1847. Immediately following their arrival, they began the erection of an adobe house within the walls of the Old Pioneer Fort. During the winter Orin and his brothers herded the cows on Mill Creek Bench south of town. The following winter also was spent in the adobe house within the walls of the fort; however, with the arrival of spring, the family moved into the Seventh Ward and shortly thereafter began erecting a comfortable home. Mother Woodbury was not to be permitted to enjoy such luxury for more than a brief period. She died May 18, 1851, leaving her husband, six children and several grandchildren to mourn her untimely passing.

Almost two years after Elizabeth's death, Orin married a beautiful young lady by the name of Ann Cannon, daughter of George and Ann Quayle Cannon. They had both come to Utah in the same emigration movement, but had not known each other until later.

Ann and Orin made several moves during the early years of their married life, but later purchased a farm south of Salt Lake and worked to make a permanent and comfortable home. With the wife carrying the adobes and the mortar and the husband laying up the walls, they built a fairly commodious house, which they hoped they and their growing family would be permitted to enjoy. However, their hopes were not to be realized. Shortly after moving into the new home, they received a call to go to Southern Utah and help establish the Dixie mission.

It took them four weeks to make the journey. With their four children, Eleanor, Orin, Annie Maria and George J., they arrived on the campground December 3, 1861. Almost immediately after their arrival, it began to rain, and it rained for many days. The soil at the adobe yard was heavy clay, very suitable for making adobe, but very unsuitable to serve as a campground during a period of spasmodic, drenching rains.

In making the allotment of land, each family was given a definite number of acres of farming land near the Santa Clara Creek or the Rio Virgin, and a city lot on the St. George townsite on which to build a home and a family-size garden. When Ann was taken to see the city lot assigned to them, she looked the sit-

uation over carefully and then declared with emphasis, "I will never give my consent to move from here unless we are called by those in authority over us." They were never called to move from the place, so all six of the children born after they left Salt Lake City saw the first light of day within the walls of the four-room adobe house which Orin built with his own hands.

The acreage which was allotted to Orin adjoining the Santa Clara Creek was planted in orchard, containing a variety of the highest quality fruits. With the excellent care he gave them, the trees developed rapidly and soon reached bearing age. Just as the trees had reached the full bearing stage, a disastrous flood came down the Santa Clara and began cutting into the bank where the orchard stood. Some of the older children recall standing nearby and watching the bank cave off, carrying with it tree after tree laden with luscious fruit of various kinds. This continued until the entire orchard had been carried away.

With the consent of Ann, Orin took as his plural wife a beautiful blue-eyed girl who had just arrived in St. George. They were married October 10, 1863. Her name was Frances Goddard, born in Stockport, Lancashire, England, October 27, 1844. They had emigrated in 1862, crossing the Plains in the John R. Murdock company.

After Frances's marriage to Orin, Ann shared their four-room house with her. Here she lived for fifteen years and seven of her ten children were born in the adobe house.

In 1878, Orin traded some of his farming land near St. George for a farm on the Santa Clara Creek, about fifteen miles northwest of St. George and seven miles south of the small town of Gunlock. He moved Frances there to make her home. A beautiful orchard was planted, but this town was too far away for the children to attend school, so after two years, Orin bought a house in St. George where Frances and her family could spend the winter so the children could attend school.

August 25, 1890, Orin died. This was a great shock to Frances and Ann, but they were thankful for their children who loved and comforted them. Frances's health was never good after the death of her husband. Fortunately, the government bought the farm to be used as part of an Indian Reservation and she eventually purchased a four-room log house in Beaver, Utah, where she lived until her death November 20, 1904.

Ann lived many years after her husband's death, continuing her work in the Church and civic organizations as long as her health would permit. For a number of years during her later life she made her home with one of her daughters. Death came in her ninetieth year, July 25, 1921, concluding a life that had been well and valiantly spent.

At the present time this old home is owned by Walder and Carolyn May, who have built a flower shop in front of the home called *May Flowers*.
--Dallas Coleman, granddaughter

On May 13, 2010 Our son David May had a fellow take down our old granary (where we have had older persons in town tell us that they lived in the granary when they attended Dixie College) to make more parking for his business. David later had the Woodbury home demolished as he intends to some day have a building built for his business programming. He currently uses the flower shop building in front for his office.

Walder and Carolyn May who in 2014 still own the lot at 84 S. 100 E. in Saint George had quite a railroad museum and puppet show upstairs in the Woodbury home where many classes of school children have come to climb the stairs to the attic and view the nostalgia. Some have mentioned recently that they did so in days past.