

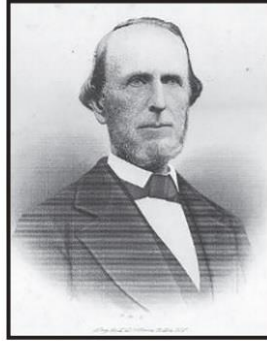
# George Woodward: Faithful Responder To The Call Of Service

By Gerald Pare, Pioneer Courthouse Contributor

George Woodward, another early settler of St. George, was born on September 9, 1817, in Cream Ridge, Monmouth, New Jersey, to George Woodward and Jemima A. Shinn.

As a young man, George became a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints and felt his first calling to move to Nauvoo, Illinois and take active part in the Mormon community. In Nauvoo, he applied his training as a stone mason to build homes and work on the Temple that was under construction. It was

here he met and married his first wife, Thomazine Downing.



For seven years in Missouri prior to moving to Nauvoo, the Saints experienced continuous tension and conflict with non-Mormon

residents. This led to an estimated 10, 000 Missouri Mormons fleeing to a new settlement in Commerce, Illinois, later named Nauvoo.

Nauvoo grew rapidly and for a few years was one of the most populous cities in Illinois. The city teemed with activity and growth and George Woodward's stone mason skills contributed greatly to this building expansion period.

In the spring of 1844 tension and conflict revisited the Saints. George served in the Nauvoo Militia to help keep the peace. But by the summer of 1845 violence and hostilities had escalated to the point the only peaceful solution was for the Saints to

abandon Nauvoo.

George and Thomazine fled to Winter Quarters Nebraska, a temporary community to lay over on the trek west. It's here that George



answered the request to be a member of the Brigham Young Vanguard Company headed to the Salt Lake Valley.

Once organized, the Vanguard group consisted of

142 men, 3 women, 2 children and 72 wagons. They traveled 1031 miles before reaching their destination on July 24, 1847.

In March of 1857, George married his second wife Mary Ann Wallace in Salt Lake City. They had one daughter who died at age 1, in August of 1862 after they had moved to St George, Utah. For the next several years, George was busy establishing his home in St George and helping this community grow.

During the 1870's and 1880's, overflow from the regular schools spilled into the basement of the Tabernacle, the upper floor of the old Courthouse, the

Gardener's Club, and others. By the 1890's, it became clear that something had to be done to expand schools. In April of 1897, meetings were held, and it was decided

construction. George Woodward donated a substantial sum of money (\$3000) for the hard-

particular the history of St George. He was not caught up by the attraction of fame and bright lights, but felt more comfortable doing the hard work behind the scenes.



that a new central school building would be constructed on the northwest corner of the public square. The school was finished and opened its doors in September of 1901. It was named after George Woodward, while a childless resident, had served as chairman of the school board during con-



struction. The Woodward School established a sense of permanency and structure to the St. George educational system.

George Woodward was an important historical figure in Mormon history, and in

George Woodward died at age 86 on September 9<sup>th</sup>, 1903, in St George and is buried in St George Cemetery.

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