

PRESIDENT WOODRUFF'S BIRTHDAY.

BIOGRAPHICAL.

On Sunday, February 28, 1897, at 2 p. m., and on the following day, Monday, March 1, at 10 a. m., were exercises in the Tabernacle in honor of the ninetieth anniversary of the birth of Elder Willford Woodruff, President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and one of the first company of Utah Pioneers that entered the valley of the Great Salt Lake.

For this occasion the Tabernacle has been beautifully decorated. The speakers' stands are ornamented in white and old gold, with numerous flowers and potted ferns and other plants and around the organ. The table at the foot of the stands is covered with flowers, and in front of this seats are raised above the floor for President Woodruff and wife to occupy during the reception on Monday. Over this is a canopy draped with the Stars and Stripes, with electric lights in the top to throw light upon the couple. This canopy will remain thrown back upon the table until the time of the reception. The upper stand, which will be occupied by the President and his wife during the rendering of the program, has been raised about sixteen inches higher than its usual position so that a full view can be had of them from every part of the building. In front of and near the top of the organ is a beautiful star composed of sixty-one electric lights; over this and extending from south to north across the building is a white streamer bearing the inscriptions "Glory be to God," "Honor to His Prophet," and the three dates, 1807, 1847, 1897. Around the gallery hanging is stretched, with a star over each poet, and at the rear of the building is the inscription, "We honor the man so honored of God." Above the rear of the gallery is a banner on which is painted 1847-1897. Below this is a Union flag which passed through the war.

Herewith is a brief sketch of President Woodruff's long and eventful life, furnished by himself:

I was born March 1, 1807, at Northington, part of Farmington (now Avon), Hartford county, Connecticut. In my early life I worked as a farmer and miller. Of course my childhood was passed under the influence of the remnants of the Blue Laws of Connecticut. I remember the day well when the Baptists and the Methodists in Connecticut were almost as unpopular as the Mormons afterwards became. Presbyterians and Congregationalists were the ruling religious of New England in my childhood. In attending the Sunday school in my early boyhood, under Dr. Noah Porter, and learning chapters of the Bible by heart, I saw what Jesus Christ and the Apostles taught. Those principles were so firmly imprinted on my mind that I could never join any church, because the churches of that day did not believe them, until I heard Zera Pulsipher, a Mormon Elder, preach to me and my brother Azmon, and a large congregation of neighbors, at Richland (now Danville), Oswego county, New York, on the 30th day of December, 1833. On hearing the first sermon I and my brother Azmon were convinced, and we went forth and

were baptized on the 31st of December, 1833.

I went in Zion's Camp, in the spring of 1835, to Missouri, to the assistance of our people who had been driven out of Jackson county. Very few of the members of that Camp are living today. That thousand miles' journey with the Prophet Joseph Smith was to me a school of experience that I shall never forget in this world or the world to come. When the Prophet returned to Kirtland with most of his company I remained in Clay county, Missouri, until the 13th of January, 1835, when I left Lyman Wight's, in company with Henry Brown, to go on a mission to the Southern states. We passed through Jackson county, Missouri, and through Arkansas, and from Little Rock to Memphis, Tennessee. I spent two years in Tennessee and Kentucky. While there I was ordained to the office of an Elder under the hands of Warren Parrish, and afterwards a member of the Second quorum of the Seventy, under the hands of David W. Patten. I ordained A. O. Smoot to the office of an Elder in 1836, and he traveled with me through Kentucky and Tennessee, and accompanied me to Kirtland in the fall of that year. I organized four branches of the Church in Tennessee and Kentucky.

In 1837 I traveled through part of Canada, New York, Massachusetts, Connecticut and Maine and Fox Islands. During that mission I baptized several hundred persons and organized five branches of the Church in Connecticut, Maine and Fox Islands. In January, 1837, I was appointed to the First quorum of Seventies.

In 1838 I traveled on three islands of the sea and in twelve states of the Union, established three preaching places and organized one branch of the Church in Farmington, Conn., with nine of my relatives, including my father's house.

On the 26th of April, 1839, myself and George A. Smith were ordained to the Apostleship, on the Temple corner at Far West, Missouri. The same year I crossed the Atlantic ocean in company with John Taylor, to England, spending the next year there with the Twelve Apostles. First I went to Staffordshire and organized three branches. Then I went to Herefordshire, Worcestershire and Gloucestershire, where, in eight months, I brought 1,800 souls into the Church, including 600 of the United Brethren, who had broken off from the Wesleyan Methodists, with forty-five preachers, baptizing all of that sect but one member. I established three conferences and fifty-eight preaching places, and organized forty-seven branches of the Church.

I then went to London with Heber C. Kimball and George A. Smith. We organized the first branch of the Church in that city, consisting of eighty-five members.

In 1841, I traveled over 7,000 miles through England, Wales and parts of the United States, with the Twelve Apostles, to attend to the affairs of the Church.

I spent most of 1842-3 in Nauvoo, attending to the printing office and other business. An important year was 1844, in which the Prophet Joseph Smith and his brother Hyrum were killed. That

year I traveled over 10,000 miles in Canada and the United States, visiting the churches, attending meetings, etc. In the fall of the year I was appointed to go to England to preside over the British mission, setting sail at New York December 7th, and arriving at Liverpool January 4, 1845, during which year I traveled in England and Scotland, presiding over the churches, published 3,000 copies of the Doctrine and Covenants, and secured the copyright of the same in London.

In 1846 I returned from England to the United States, and gathered with the Saints at Winter Quarters on the Missouri, where I spent the winter.

On the 7th of April, 1847, I left my family and friends at Winter Quarters and traveled with President Brigham Young and the Pioneer company of 143 men, a thousand miles across the plains into the midst of the Rocky Mountains, arriving in the valley of the Great Salt Lake on the 24th of July. We laid out Great Salt Lake City and built a fort around ten acres. President Young and some others of us returned to Winter Quarters the same season.

In traveling across the plains, for three days and nights, we met an almost endless number of buffalo, going to their summer ranges to break up into smaller herds to feed in the Platte country. They were so numerous that we could scarcely find our way through them.

In the spring of 1848 I took my family and returned to Boston, Mass., spending the rest of the year and also 1849 in traveling through the New England states and part of Canada, gathering up most of the Saints remaining there and sending them to the Rocky Mountains.

On the 9th of April, 1850, with my family and about a hundred other Saints, I left Boston, and with steamboats, railroads and wagons again traveled to the Rocky Mountains, where I arrived on the 14th of October, having traveled 4,617 miles.

From 1851 to 1877, twenty-six years, I spent mostly in Utah, traveling and preaching considerably among the Saints, and also otherwise fulfilling the duties of my calling as one of the Twelve Apostles.

President Young died August 29, 1877, John Taylor succeeding him as President of the Church.

From 1877 to 1887, during the Presidency of John Taylor, I spent most of my time traveling, preaching in Utah and Arizona, and laboring in St. George temple for the salvation and exaltation of the living and the dead. When John Taylor was accepted as President of the Church, October 10, 1880, I became president of the council of the Twelve Apostles.

President Taylor died July 25, 1887, and it fell to my lot to succeed him in presiding.

I was accepted as the President of the Church April 7, 1889, with George Q. Cannon and Joseph F. Smith as my counselors, since which time I have endeavored to attend to the duties of that office to the best of my knowledge and ability.

I was appointed assistant historian of the Church in 1855, and historian in 1881. Franklin D. Richards was substituted as my successor in that office April 7, 1889.