

"OUR LEI TO YOU"
A Biography of
Samuel Edwin Woolley

Samuel Edwin Woolley was born on October 22, 1859 in Salt Lake City, Utah. He was the eldest son of Samuel Wickersham and Mariah Angell Woolley. There were twelve children born of this marriage. Samuel W. Woolley had two other plural wives who bore him eight children. Before these children were grown, both wives died and Mariah raised all twenty herself. There were two other girls who were adopted by the Woolleys and lived with them until they were grown.

In 1863, the family moved to Grantsville, a small village in Tooele County, where they established a successful ranch. Samuel grew up under the guidance and influence of his father who instructed him in the duties and work of a ranch. He attended school a few months each year, when he could be spared from the ranch. In his teens, he was ordained a deacon, and acted as one of the presidents of the quorum.

When twenty years old, Samuel was called to serve a mission to the Hawaiian Islands by President John Taylor and was ordained an elder by Joseph F. Smith before leaving. His uncle, Henry A. Woolley, accompanied him. They arrived in Honolulu on the "City of New York" on December 30th and dined at the Hawaiian Hotel that night. The next day, he moved into the house kept for the elders and mentions in his diary that

it was a mile walk from the house to the restaurant where he was served meals for 75 cents a day.

At 7:30 a.m., January 7th, he started by horseback for Laie where he arrived at about 3:30 p.m.. Samuel E.'s journals are rather void of description or reaction and serve only to record events and dates. Those of importance as recorded by him are as follows:

April 9, 1882 - appointed to labor on Maui, Molokai, and Lanai

October 8, 1882 - appointed to labor on plantation at Laie

April 8, 1883 - transferred to Big Island

October 8, 1883 - transferred to Oahu

April 3, 1884 - released from mission

April 15, 1884 - sailed from Honolulu on steamer "Mariposa"

During the next six years, Samuel E. continued his missionary duties in Tooele Stake, laboring in the Grantsville area. Later, he was made an alternate High Councilman, ordained a high priest by Heber J. Grant, later to become President of the Church. Samuel E. was also president of the Tooele Stake YMMIA.

On May 6, 1885, Samuel E. and Alice Rowberry were married in the Logan Temple. Alice had been born in Grantsville on August 6, 1862,

and was the daughter of John and Harriet Frances Gollaher Rowberry. The young couple settled in Grantsville where Ralph Edwin was born on March 4, 1886, John Franklin on March 3, 1888, and Leone on January 19, 1890. In 1890, Samuel E. and Alice were called to serve a mission at Iosepa Colony in Skull Valley, Tooele, Utah. Harvey H. Cluff presided over the colony and Samuel E. was called to assist him, being put in charge of the livestock. In November of 1890, Bro. Cluff was released and William King, who had recently been released as President of the Hawaiian Mission, was appointed head of the colony. He served for a period of some fifteen months, dying in 1892.

It was at this time that Leona, Samuel E.'s daughter, died at Iosepa. The colony had been subjected to an outbreak of diphtheria.

After Bro. King's death, Samuel E. offered to manage both the farm and ranch for less than what the Church had been paying the manager, but the First Presidency decided to recall Bro. Cluff instead, and Samuel E. remained on to manage the livestock.

On August 9, 1895, Samuel E. and Alice were set apart to preside over the Hawaiian Mission. The Church had recognized that the frequent changes of plantation manager and mission president was detrimental to Laie's progress. What Laie needed was a man who could fill both positions. Thus Samuel E. was called to take ". . . the presidency of the mission and the management of the

plantation and make Hawaii his permanent home."

They arrived in Honolulu on August 31st, having sailed from Vancouver. With them were their three children, Ralph Edwin, John Franklin and Moroni Rowberry. The ship was quarantined for over a week before they were allowed to disembark. They left ship and immediately set out in horse-drawn wagons for Laie. They passed over the Nuuanu Pali just ten minutes before a guard was placed there to enforce the quarantine which prohibited anyone from entering or passing out of the city.

In the October Conference Report of the Hawaiian Mission in 1897 appeared a notice that Joseph Rowberry, son of Brother and Sister Woolley, had been born. Subsequently, in 1899, another son, Samuel Ray, was born.

At about the turn of the century, a young man, Lau Ah You, came to Hawaii from Kwantung, China. Ultimately, he became an integral part of the Mission life at Laie. Ah You became the cook at the Mission Home at Laie, and any missionary who came there remembers him with great fondness. Much of the cooking skills he acquired were taught him by Alice R..

Frank Woolley, Samuel E.'s son, often told the story of how he attached a string of firecrackers to Ah You's queue while Ah You was doing the dishes, and the sound of them going off scared him so badly that he landed in the dishpan, much to Frank's amusement. Frank dearly loved playing tricks on the young Chinaman,

and received a nickname of "Big Malau", something he carried the rest of his life. Frank's children became known as "Small Malaus".

Ah You retired from his position as cook and died quietly at his roominghouse on Maunakea Street on June 9, 1956 at the age of 78. We all remember him with much love. He is buried at Nuuanu Memorial Park.

Ah You didn't join the Church until 1932 when a young enterprising missionary asked him why he had never joined. His answer was simple. "No one been speak to me." He was promptly baptized.

Ethel Woolley Bayles, Samuel E.'s daughter, described her life at Laie with:

I had a very dear little girl that I chummed with named Kapiolani, and we became very close. We sang together. I sang alto and she, soprano. We used to sing a lot. I would go to Sunday School with her mother - father had gone earlier. Mother would put stockings on me and I'd go and take them off and put them in Father's pocket. I remember that I thought Dad was pretty straight-laced. We had to be right there for family prayer with all the missionaries. We took turns saying it. I can remember that Mother trained that young Chinese boy, Ah You, from the time he came to the Mission Home, so he could manage everything in the kitchen. Mother had a tough life there. She wouldn't admit it though. She used to have fourteen or fifteen of

those white stiff-bosomed shirts that she had to iron with the coal underneath. And she used to visit the other islands. She told me many times how when they had no bathing facilities she had to go out in the creek and bathe in the ice water. She was a mid-wife. Delivered a lot of babies. And she had charge of the Relief Society and all the things for the women.

Alice's health was never very good while she was at Laie. She contracted asthma soon after arriving, and at times it became very bad. She had five miscarriages while on her mission, along with the two children who survived. In all, she would have had twelve children.

In September of 1902, when her health had become so bad as to endanger her life, Alice R. was released from her mission, and she and Samuel E., along with their children, sailed on the "Alameda" for Utah. Samuel E. helped her get settled in Grantsville and then returned to continue his mission.'

It was at this point that Samuel E.'s sister, Rachel, was called to serve a mission in Hawaii, and she became the manager of Lanihuli, along with her other mission duties of teaching school. She was a great help to Samuel E.. Rachel remained in Hawaii for two years, and then returned to serve another mission in 1907. This second mission lasted just one year.

Although she never married, Rachel made a great contribution to the Church through her many talents. She

was an accomplished singer and was a member of the Tabernacle Choir. Rachel died in 1922 at the age of 55.

During the period of 1902-1906, Shadrack and Florence Lunt came with their young family to labor as missionaries. Sister Lunt kept her diary while she was here, describing in colorful language incidents as they occurred. It seems that Shad discovered that Samuel E.'s beloved palamino, Old Dick, was missing from the pasture. After searching everywhere, with no luck, Sam Kekauoha told Shad he saw a Hawaiian boy riding a horse towards Honolulu and it looked just like Old Dick. Poor Shad had to go all the way to town to retrieve it, stopping on the way back at the courthouse in Kaneohe to file a complaint. Shad was told that the boy had not only stolen Samuel E.'s horse, but also the horse belonging to the Sheriff of Kaneohe.

Samuel E. became very close to the Lunts and spent most of his evenings with them after his wife left for Utah. Sister Lunt mentions over and over in her diary the fact that he was so lonely, and turned to them for companionship.

John Franklin, Samuel E.'s son, arrived on May 24, 1905, to begin his mission. He was seventeen years of age at the time. Frank remained in the Islands for four years. No doubt this brought much joy to the father to have one of his family with him again. Although Samuel E. spent at least one month of each year, usually during October, in

Utah with his wife and children, there were still the other eleven months when he was alone.

Sometime around 1906 and 1908, Samuel E. took Harriet Pomaikai Davis, daughter of Keumi-Kalakaua and William Lyman Davis, as plural wife. Hattie D., as she was known, was the sister of Minerva, wife of Abraham Fernandez, an early convert to the church. The Fernandez family opened their home to the missionaries and anyone visiting from Utah. The house on King Street became a spot where one could refresh himself after a long ocean voyage and prepare for the arduous trip to Laie. Abraham and Samuel were very close, and no doubt Abraham helped supervise the activities of the church in Honolulu.

A daughter, Minerva, was born on June 30, 1909, and Hattie D. moved to Salt Lake City where she remained until her death in 1960.

President Joseph F. Smith arrived in Honolulu on May 21, 1915, to dedicate the site for the temple that was to be built at Laie. The site was dedicated on June 1st.

Ralph E. Woolley, Samuel E.'s son, arrived in December of that year and was placed in charge of the work on the new temple. It is interesting to note that the temple was to be erected on the site where the meeting house stood, so the latter structure was moved to a point nearer town. This was quite a task as the building weighed some one hundred tons.

Samuel E.'s son, Frank and his bride, Harriet, arrived on August 15, 1917,

aboard the "Matsonia", staying at Lanihuli for the first year or two of their married life.

News of the death of President Joseph F. Smith was received on November 10, 1918, and memorial services were held at Laie on the 24th. Heber J. Grant was sustained as President of the Church.

On March 17th, an article appeared in the Deseret News naming E. Wesley Smith President of the Hawaiian Mission. "...Elder Woolley, whom he succeeds, has been President of this mission since 1895. The crowning effort of his achievements is the erection of the Hawaiian Temple which is nearly completed. Hundreds of missionaries have served under Elder Woolley, and, like Elder Smith, he is greatly beloved by all who know him, and his hosts of friends among both the natives and the people at home."

President E. Wesley Smith and his family arrived in June to take over the mission. In July, Alice and daughter Ethel, arrived to visit Samuel E.. They were in the islands for about a month.

In August the mission safe and records were transferred to Honolulu, and Samuel E. was released as mission president. However, he remained to manage the plantation at Laie, continuing to live at Lanihuli.

On November 27, 1919, the Laie Temple was dedicated by President Heber J. Grant. This was on Thanksgiving Day. It is recorded in the History of the Mission that "Samuel E. Woolley spoke and expressed the feeling that this was the

greatest of all days to him. It was the fulfillment of hopes long entertained. He said he had been thinking about it and dreaming about it and laboring with all his power to bring about conditions favorable to its accomplishment. He then addressed the Saints in the Hawaiian tongue."

Ralph E. Woolley sailed on August 15, 1920 "to claim his fair bride," and Samuel E. Attended his 61st birthday at Lanihuli on October 22nd of that same year.

Antone Ivins arrived in the Islands on May 17, 1921. He had been appointed to succeed Samuel E. as manager of the plantation. Samuel E. was aboard the same boat as he had been visiting his family in Utah.

It wasn't until September of 1921 that Samuel E. sailed for home. The following account is given:

The Laie Saints, in order to show their love for him, prepared a sumptuous luau in his honor. A feast was laid for 500 persons. Tuesday evening, a delightful musical program was rendered in the Auwaiolimu Chapel in Honolulu. A large crowd turned out to hear the program and to bid President Woolley goodbye. He gave a resume' of his work in the Islands since his arrival on August 21, 1895, and delivered a splendid Gospel sermon.

Riley Allan of the Honolulu Star-Bulletin wrote an article about Laie and Samuel E. which reads in part:

The rehabilitation plan adopted by the LDS Church at Laie is used as an argument in favor of the Hawaiian Rehabilitation Bill recently passed in Washington. Summing up the accomplishments of the Laie Rehabilitation plan, Mr. Woolley is also credited with stating that the colony now comprises 500 men, women, and children, the majority Hawaiians; that Laie had paid back its purchase price years ago; that all artesian wells have been driven with five big pumps now in action; that an electric light plan had been inaugurated; that on 6,000 acres of the original site where before there was but one tumbled-down ranch house, there now exists houses, church, schoolhouse, barns, roads, sidewalks; that this community contributed between \$8,000 and \$9,000 to the building of the temple; that most of the cottages cost from \$1,000 to \$3,000. Mr. Woolley is also given as the authority for the statement that the birth rate is probably the highest per family of any group of Hawaiians in the Islands; that no one is ever hungry in the colony; that no one is ever intoxicated and that the colonists are of good physical type."

Upon his arrival in Salt Lake City, Samuel E. became the manager of Warm Springs, a swimming resort complex. He resided with his second wife, Hattie D., on Driggs Avenue, Alice R. remaining in Grantsville. The transition from the life he led in Hawaii to that in Utah must have been very hard for him, and ill

health plagued him for the next three years. Samuel E. died on April 3, 1925, in the LDS hospital. Funeral services were held at Forest Dale Ward in Salt Lake City, in Grantsville where he was buried, and at Laie. He was survived by his two wives, four sons and two daughters, and ten grandchildren.

Elizabeth Woolley Reigels and

Ruth Woolley Austin-