

GEORGE MADISON WOOLF
1871-1949

George Madison Woolf was the 7th of 12 children born to Absalom Woolf and Lucy Ann Hambleton. His middle name came from his maternal grandfather, Madison Daniel Hambleton.

George grew up with a family of 22 brothers and sisters. 12 children were born to his mother, while 10 were the children of Absalom Woolf and Harriet Wood. On the advice of his bishop, Absalom Woolf married Lucy Ann Hambleton and Harriet Wood on the same day, 19 April 1857, in the President's Office. Absalom Woolf and his wives lived together for 52 years and 10 months before the earthly union was broken by his death, 16 Feb. 1910.

Even more importantly, the families lived together in harmony in the same house or adjoining houses. During his lifetime, George Woolf often told of the harmonious relationship that existed between the 2 families. He said, "Often on my return from a stay away from home, I would greet my mother and she would immediately say, "You had better go right over and see Aunt Harriet." He added, "The people in Hyde Park did not know whose kids were whose.

George Woolf was born 5 Jan. 1871, in Hyde Park and grew to manhood in and around Cache Valley before Utah was a state and while pioneering was in process. His heritage was a frontier life, a kind and fearless father, a loving mother, and a large multiple family. They knew no luxuries, but savored the challenges of subduing the territory. The environment was lush in the valley, but the rugged hills, the dry benches and the winters were very harsh.

George's early life often required him to be away from home while herding cattle, logging or doing other work requiring a team of horses. From this experience, his natural abilities to train and work horses were enhanced. In later life, this talent of horsemanship proved to be a disadvantage.

14 April 1897, after 15 month acquaintance, George Woolf married Lucy Flatt. She was born 2 Sep. 1867, in Wissett, Suffolk, England. At the age of one year, she came to the United States with her parents, Jonathan and Mary Ann Botwright Aldred Flatt. Jonathan and Mary Ann were converts to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

The Flatt's first residence in the United States was on the "North String," between Bear River City, Utah, and Malad, Idaho. Because of the hostile Indians, they moved to Hyde Park.

After 2 or 3 years in Hyde Park, Jonathan Flatt volunteered to live the United Order in the little settlement of Price Bench, in Utah's Dixie, about 4 miles south of St. George.

Here they raised cotton, cane and broom corn. During this time, the St. George Temple was built, and in the first sessions, in 1870, Jonathan did baptisms and endowments for his ancestors. To irrigate his crops he fought the floods and shifting currents of the Virgin River. His health worsened and his family prevailed on him to return to Hyde Park to recuperate. Jonathan Flatt passed away in 1887, one year after his return. Mary Ann sold the remaining Dixie holdings and also returned to Hyde Park.

George and Lucy were the parents of 5 children, 1 girl and 4 boys. The oldest, Violet Woolf Bingham, was the "apple" of George's eye. As a young girl, her long flowing hair reached to her knees and like a good Woolf she learned to ride horses. George even trained her to box. She was the reigning champion boxer of the family until she was about 12 years old, when Dell, the oldest boy, 2 years younger than Violet, dethroned her in a boxing match. Violet crawled under the table to compose herself and heal her wounded pride. Ray Woolf, 2 years

younger than Dell, lived only 2 months after birth. Leo Gerald Woolf, the 3rd boy, was born in 1904, Frank Jay Woolf was born 3 years later.

In about 1923 George and Lucy moved from Hyde Park to a new white brick bungalow on the north end of Smithfield's Main Street. Among other things, George was farming a small tract of land between Smithfield and Hyde Park. Along with the friendly home there was a productive garden, milk cows, good horses and Rhode Island Red Chickens.

George was happiest when he was astride his favorite saddler, "Snakes." With George in the saddle, "Snakes" would perform to perfection; when the boys tried to ride him they usually ended up walking home. George was in charge of the horse events at the Cache County Fair in Logan for several years.

While astride his horse he could observe what was going on in the neighborhood and call out to his many friends. His horse knew where to go without constant attention. He did not fare so well with automobiles. On one attempt to drive, George ran off the road while waving to a friend. Later, while he was driving to Richmond, he sighted a herd of cattle crossing the road in front of him. Instinctively, he called out, "Whoa, Whoa." and for further emphasis he pulled back vigorously on the steering wheel. When the car failed to respond, he had no choice but to turn the infernal machine off the road and into the borrow pit to avoid hitting the cows. From that day on he never drove an automobile.

In the words of his wife, he was a "good horseman," not a "bronc buster." He was well liked and skilled in many trades. He sheared sheep, helped build telephone lines, worked on the Grace Dam, fixed breaks in the West Cache Canal and plowed and harrowed. It was hard work in remote places with exposure to the cold and the rain, but he seldom complained.

Later, he pursued his animal husbandry skills by shipping dairy cattle to California. Again he was away from home, but this time he would frequently see his oldest son, Dell, at the end of the line. Dell was then in Glendale, California, operating a car rental business. George prided himself in seeing that the cattle shipped by rail under his supervision arrived at their destination in good shape. He said they sold the cows to California buyers under the banner, "Clean Cows from a Clean State-UTAH."

Besides being a friend to all, and universally well liked, George Woolf had a very special relationship with his daughter Violet. His thoughtfulness and affection was expressed in many ways, such as his cheery and uplifting presence or a simple handful of wild flowers.

Bread and milk was a good meal for George, but even more so with a bunch of green onions. An occasional treat at the Smithfield home was steak and gravy. A thick slice of round steak from Joe Gutke's Meat Market provided the treat and cost the unbelievable sum of 25 cents, with a piece of suet thrown in.

Dr. G. L. Rees was George and Lucy's neighbor, family doctor and bishop. As a close and trusted friend, Dr. Rees helped Lucy medically and spiritually to live with her ailing heart. He also influenced them to do something they had neglected. They took out their endowments, were married and sealed in the Logan Temple 22 Feb. 1944.

After a troublesome illness and surgery, George Madison Woolf, husband, father, horseman, cattleman and friend, died 10 April 1949, at the age of 78 years and 3 months. At his funeral in the Smithfield 4th Ward Chapel on Wednesday, 13 April 1949, I William Hyde, a lifelong friend of the family, spoke of his intimate acquaintance with "Appy" Woolf, George's father, and how the 2 families lived the true order of celestial marriage. He paid tribute to Violet, who had died 3 years earlier, as a child who brought "sunshine into the home." George was

extolled as a friend to all.

Dr. G. L. Rees, George's bishop for more than 8 years, spoke at the funeral and characterized George Woolf as a true neighbor who took time to be friendly to all. He was referred to as a spiritual man who served as a solicitor for building funds, took a heavy assessment, and volunteered to pay more if necessary. He was, "A humble man who minimized his virtues and brought his shortcomings into the open."

George Madison Woolf preceded his wife, Lucy Flatt Woolf, in death by 18 months. He was survived by his wife and 3 sons: Dell Woolf of Sunnyside, Wash.; Leo Woolf of Grandview, Wash.; and Frank Woolf of Seattle, Wash.; 3 grandchildren, Jay R. Bingham of Bountiful, Utah; Tad H. Bingham of Amalga, Utah; and Barbara Woolf Harper of Longview, Wash.

Jay R. Bingham, Grandson

Typed into computer by Kathleen Jardine Woolf 21 Oct. 2002 Idaho Falls, Idaho
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