

Edwin Ruthven Westover
1824-1878

Edwin Ruthven Westover was born 27 Aug 1824 in Franklin County, Ohio. He was the oldest son of Alexander and Electa Beal Westover. His brothers were Albert, who died in infancy, Charles and Oscar Fitzland.

The Westovers were among some of the earliest settlers of Windsor and Simsbury, Conn. Later most of the families moved north over into Mass., and then into western Mass, Berkshire County. As the frontier pushed over into New York, Amos and Ruth Loomis Westover went there, living there several years before moving down into Ohio in the very early 1800's. Electa's parents were born in Mass., but moved north into Vermont as that state developed; but the great droughts drove out much of the population, and the Beals moved directly to Ohio from there.

Edwin's family eventually settled in Goshen Township, Champaign County where his father leased a piece of timber land and built a log cabin. His father was ill for sometime before he died in 1832. They were very poor and his mother tried to keep them together for a while, but finally had to place them in families where they could help pay their way. Edwin was put first with a family near Springfield, Clark County. He was later hired by a Mr. Lapham for whom Charles worked for several years. Oscar also worked with him after Charles quit to learn the carpenter trade. When he was nineteen, Edwin married Sarah Sophia Darrow. She was born 6 June 1826, a daughter of James and Sarah Longley Willard Darrow. The Darrows and the Willards were also some of the earliest settlers of the new state of Ohio, coming from Conn. and New York States.

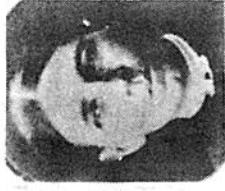
Edwin and Sophia welcomed a son born to them 2 Apr 1845, and named him Edwin Lycurgus. The young mother died 31 July 1845, a few months after the boy's birth. She is buried in the Hazel Cemetery in Goshen Township, Champaign Co. Edwin's mother now took charge of the infant.



Edwin Ruthven
Westover



Sarah Jane
Burwell



Agnes Ann
Findley

About this time, Mormon Missionaries were in the area. Elders Jackson Goodale and Wakefield Howe were two of them. They had been preaching on the Scioto River above Columbus where Edwin's mother's sister Hannah Brown lived. Hannah and her daughter Adeline were converted and baptized into the church. They persuaded the Elders to go over where the Westovers lived. They made many friends, but baptized only three. Edwin was touched with the promise of again having his wife, by following the teachings of Christ, and was baptized 13 Sep 1845. His mother and a cousin of his wife Sarah Sophia were the other converts. His brother Charles received a testimony of the truth the Elders taught, but wasn't baptized until later at Winter Quarters on their way west. His brother Oscar planned on going west with them, but was influenced away from the truth.

The 10 Feb 1848, Edwin married again. She was Sarah Jane Burwell who was born 29 Jan 1833, a daughter of Joseph and Sarah Bleake Burwell, and was just passed fifteen years old. Her mother and one sister had joined the church.

Sarah Jane had inherited some property from her father, and they sold a piece of this in preparation for their trip west. The rest of her part of this land was sold in 1855 and 1857 after they had been in the Salt Lake Valley a few years. The husband of Edwin's Aunt Sally, Alanson Perry, handled the business of the transactions.

About the first of April 1848, a rather large group of Ohio converts met at Sister Date's place in Springfield. They boarded the railroad cars at Urbana, county seat of Champaign, then took a steamboat for St. Louis. There they went aboard another boat, the Mandon, bound for Council Bluff, Iowa. Besides Edwin and wife, there were his mother, Charles, Jane's mother, and step-father (Sarah and William A. Morse), Gilbert Morse, Aaron Sceva, Edwin's Aunt Hannah and her daughter Adeline and her son, John Kempton, James Bay (a cousin of Edwin's first wife) and others.

On the 13th of April while they were on the Missouri River, their boat ran on a rock and was held up for 16 hours. The next day they got the boat off the rock, but struck a sand bar and were held up until about 9 o'clock the next night. From the 16th to the 28th, the company was unloaded. They pitched their tents on the banks of the Missouri River and waited for the boat to come back. Ezra Taft Benson was in charge of the group. Some of the men had a chance while on shore to work some to get provisions. The 29th they boarded again and arrived in Council Bluff on the 9th of May about sundown. They crossed the river to Winter Quarters, Neb., and until the 19th of May they all made preparations to travel to the Great Salt Lake Valley. Charles drove a team for Erastus Snow, Edwin, his own.

Since the first company of Saints arrived in the Valley about ten months before these, there had been several companies cross the plains. So the roads were more or less formed by this time. It was still a long tiresome trip and took them four months and one day to cross what is now the states of Nebraska and Wyoming and reach the Valley. It was still Indian country; but they were getting to be less of a threat than when the first company came. Although they traveled in the plains during the hot summer months, some of the road led through areas that were quite pleasant. The choke cherries, gooseberries and wild currents were ripe and were a delight. The hunters brought in antelope and mountain sheep to eat. Sometimes good spring water was available. The previous companies had designated camp grounds for others to use. So they usually had water; but at times it was a problem. This was Brigham's second and last company. Some had gone on ahead and waited at the Elkhorn. There Pres. Young took command and led them across. Wednesday, 20 Sep, they arrived in the beautiful valley where they expected to make their home.

Sunday, the 8th of Oct, they were with the Saints in conference. They were soon involved in getting wood from the canyons, salt from the lake, making adobes for homes and the Council House, and helping harvest the crops that were ready. Every tenth day was for tithing on which day they donated their labor to the church.

When the Westovers arrived, the settlement was harvesting their first year's crop. The season of 1847 was already over before they arrived. The harvest of 1848 was hardly adequate for the thousands that moved into the valley. Food had to be rationed. Sego roots, thistle greens, and weeds aided to make an exist nce.

By the next summer the gold seekers left and traded with the Saints to lighten their loads to the extent that necessities were more available.

Each man had a city lot and a ten-acre lot for farming by the first of December. By the spring of 1849, the city was laid off into eccesiastical wards, and both Edwin and Charles and their mother were in the 9th ward, a 9 block area. Their ward house was on the corner of 5th East and 4th South in Salt Lake.

Edwin and Jane's first three children, Sarah Emaline, Electa Jane, and William Albert, were all born while they lived in the Ninth Ward. William lived only six days. Edwin attended the School of the Prophets while here.

Having been raised to till the soil, by 1855 Edwin was located on a farm in South Cottonwood where the family lived until about 1860.

Edwin married 2 Feb 1857, as a plural wife, Agnes Ann Findley, daughter of William and Lindsey Hughes Findley, some converts from Scotland.

The winter of 1857-58 Edwin spent with hundreds of other men who were called to serve with Lot Smith, Porter Rockwell, and others to help hold back Johnson's Army at Echo Canyon until an investigation could be made to the charge that Utah was in insurrection to the United States.

About 1860, Edwin moved to Grantsville, west of Salt Lake City

about forty miles where his mother's sister Hannah lived with her daughter who had married another convert from Ohio, Aaron Sceva. Their stay there was rather short for in October 1862 he was called with others to help settle Utah's Dixie, what was soon St. George country. In some ways this trip was more difficult than that of crossing the plains. Several thousands had proceeded them to the Valley; but here a road had to be cut through the lava rock of the Black Ridge, which was a great hardship. He was now 42 years old, had two wives and eight children, and a calling to make a new life.

For a while the families lived in St. George where Edwin was a member of the 8th Quorum of Seventy. Here he assisted with the building of the St. George Temple where later he and his family did much work for their dead. He took his cattle and sheep up on Shoal Creek, north of St. George, where he also cared sometime for the church's herds too. He was fairly successful; but money was scarce. He took cattle to Peoche, Nevada to sell to get money to pay taxes. He hauled cowhides to the tannery at St. George to get made into shoes for his large family. One pair would last a year. He hauled wool to Beaver and exchanged it for coarse cloth which his family used to make clothing.

Later small settlements, Hebron and Hamblin, were established in the Meadows where his family lived several years. Several of his children were born there. When the telegraph lines went through their valley (for which Edwin contributed \$2.50 of the \$20.00 that was raised) and the mail route came through there from Salt Lake to Nevada, they felt far less isolated. This valley was one of the most beautiful valleys in the mountain region until drought and flood erosion made it impossible for the people to still live there. Eventually the inhabitants all moved away, some establishing the town of Enterprize, others elsewhere. Because of the extreme hardships, Edwin's wife Ann had moved to Mendon in northern Utah where her parents lived. Edwin went to Arizona. In February 1877, Edwin and his wife Sarah Jane with their younger children, Joseph Ernest, age 13, Arthur Lee, age 10, and Florence, age 6, left wife Joanna and children Laura and baby Edwin and Joanna's father, Sven Erickson, who had just filled a calling to work on the temple there. Another company caught up with them and they traveled all together. These people were John Hunt and family; John Bushman and wife Mary and his little five year old daughter

Lois; Henry and Eliza Tanner; and two young single men, Manassah Blackburn and Isadore Wilson. The group were to go due south of St. George to Pearce's Ferry seeking a better road to travel than Lee's Ferry. This road took them through Walapai Valley passing near Peach Springs to San Francisco Mountains through dense timber where the present town of Flagstaff is, and on to the Little Colorado. Some of the party stopped here at Sunset; but the Westovers and Bushmans went on to St. Joseph. The Hunts went on to San Lorenzo, New Mexico, a short distance over the present Arizona line, and made their home there for sometime. Lycircus and family stayed at St. Joseph where they had established residence the year before. Edwin and family arrived in San Lorenzo 10 May 1877 but only stayed till 11 July when they started back to St. George, taking Bro. Lorenzo Hatch's sister Elizabeth Winn with them. They arrived back in St. George in August. On their way back, there was no one to ferry them across at Lee's Ferry. They were held up here for several days and were getting concerned that they would run out of food and starve. After much waiting, Edwin had his son Ernest kneel with him and they plead with the Lord for help. As they arose, they saw several Indians. Edwin made signs with his hands that they wanted to cross the river. So one of the Indians got on his horse, rode into town and got the operator of the ferry.

30 Dec 1877, Edwin was set apart by John M. Young, assisted by John D. T. McAllister and Jacob Hamblin, for a mission to Arizona. He traded his Hamblin property to his son-in-law Moroni Canfield for a team, wagon and harness. As they started to Arizona, Edwin, his wife Sarah and three children stopped over with their friend Jacob Hamblin while they were waiting for a company that was coming from St. George. They had been there just a few days when Edwin developed typhoid fever. His family had had it before they left St. George. The family stayed in Kanab three weeks waiting for the company. Edwin was so sure he would get well that he insisted he and his family would go on with the company. But at the foot of the Buckskin Mountain, he was too sick to travel. So they took him back to Johnson, a small settlement a few miles east of Kanab. Bishop Willis and others there did all they could for him; but he died and was hurried 8 Dec 1878. Years later his son Ernest had the area fenced where his father and others were buried.

Before he died Edwin told his wife and family they were all called to Arizona on that mission and it was his desire that they should go on to Arizona. We do not know who the other members of their company were, but they did go on to Taylor, Arizona. Here Lorenzo Hatch and Bishop John Standiford helped watch out for her family. Bro. Hatch made a bedstead for her. Bishop Standiford employed Ernest and Arthur on his ranch, and both men took her to Holbrook and other places she need to go. Arthur went to the Standiford ranch once to alert the men of the Indian raid that caused all the near settlements to come together for a short time. Bishop Standiford administered to Sarah Jane the day before she died, 24 June 1844. She had finished her mission after five years of helping to establish another center for the Saints of her Maker. Some of her children, Rupert Wilton and family, and Ella, wife of S. A. Windsor and family, lived in Taylor; but soon after her death moved to the southern part of the state.

In his record Edwin gives this:

Edwin Ruthven Westover
Dark brown hair
5 ft. 6 inches
Grey eyes
Weight 160 lbs.

Sarah Sophia Darrow
Auburn hair
Blue eyes

Sarah Jane Westover
Black hair
5 ft. 5 inches
Weight 125 lbs

Agnes Ann Findley
Brown hair
Blue eyes
5 ft. 4 inches
Weight 130 lbs.

He did not accumulate much worldly wealth, but shared what he had with his mother and blind aunt who lived with him much of the time. He loved to sing and had some musical talent. One of his favorite songs was "Oh Stop and Tell Me, Red Man" and his family was always kind to the Indians.

He had a cheerful disposition and even temper and was a hard worker. He was a democrat in politics but wasn't much interested. It is said he was postmaster at Hamblin for many years.

Sources:

Edwin Ruthven Temple Records; family group sheet compiled by members of the family; Life Story of Charles Westover; Journal of James Willard Bay; Franklin and Champaign County Marriage Records; Franklin Deed Records; Essentials in Church History; St. George Ward, Hebron Ward, Taylor Ward, Ninth Ward, Cottonwood Ward, Grantsville Ward, and Mendon Ward records; Lorenzo Hatch and John H. Standiford Journals; Journal of Ida Frances Hunt; compilations made from Edwin Ruthven Westover's records; reminiscing of Joseph Ernest Westover, Florence Westover Platt, his granddaughter Edna Canfield Jones, and other descendants.

Agnes Ann Findley Westover was born in Scotland 3 Nov 1838 to William and Lindsey H. Hughes Findley. She and her parents and brother joined the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in 1854 and came to Utah in a handcart company. She married as his third wife, Edwin Ruthven Westover, 2 Feb 1857 in the Endowment House in Salt Lake City. She was the mother of five children, two girls and three boys. Life was hard in the newly settled country of St. George and at the sheep camps of Shoel Creek and Hamblin, food was scarce. Her parents went to St. George with team and wagon and took her and her children to Mendon, Utah where they lived. Her last child, Edwin, was born after they arrived there. His father Edwin came from St. George and blessed the baby.

She was given a little log house north of her parents home. While living in the little log house, a wonderful thing happened to her. After supper and dishes were done, an aged visitor came to the door. She invited him in and prepared supper for him. He ate very little, but told her he had come to give her a blessing. He told her that her life had been a hard one, she had suffered many hardships, but said that from now on things would change and she would have plenty. After he left she went to the door, but he had disappeared. Her folks hadn't seen anything of him either, and later they decided he must have been one of the three Nephites. This blessing was fulfilled soon. She had an offer to work in a store and was told she could take the baby with her. The other children stayed with her mother. When her parents died, their little rock house was left to her. She died at the home of her son Edwin, 17 Feb 1919.