

*Salt Lake Telegram, April 25, 1921*

## State's Foremost Woman Dies



THE LATE EMMELINE B. WELLS.

MRS. EMMELINE B. WELLS, better known as "Aunt Em," died this morning at 4:50 o'clock at the home of her daughter, Mrs. Annie Wells Cannon, 1354 South Ninth West street. No hope had been held for her recovery since Saturday, and relatives had been constantly at the bedside.

### STATE'S FOREMOST WOMAN DIES

Mrs. Emmeline B. Wells, better known as "Aunt Em," died this morning at 4:50 o'clock at the home of her daughter, Mrs. Annie Wells Cannon, 1354 South Ninth West street. No hope had been held for her recovery since Saturday, and relatives had been constantly at the bedside.

Mrs. Wells was 93 years of age. A few months ago her life was despaired of, but she rallied and for a time enjoyed better health. About a week ago her condition again grew critical and she sank rapidly.

Funeral services will be held at the Tabernacle at 2 o'clock Friday afternoon.

Emmeline Blanch Woodward Wells was born February 29, 1828 at Petersham, Worcester county, Mass., the daughter of David Woodward and Deiadama Hare. The Woodwards came from England in the year 1630. They were of noble Norman extraction and fought at Hastings, Agincourt, Edge Hill and upon other fields of fame.

Emmeline's grandfather and her father served respectively in the Revolutionary War and the War of

1812. Her father died when she was 4 years old, the victim of a runaway accident. As a child Mrs. Wells was given the finest educational advantages to be obtained and was so quick to learn that she graduated when very young. At 15 she taught school.

### BAPTIZED IN 1842

On March 1, 1842, when 14 years of age, Mrs. Wells was baptized in the Mormon church. The following year she was married to James Harvey Harris, a son of an influential elder in the church, the president of the local branch. She was only 15 years and 5 months of age on her wedding day.

In 1844, Mrs. Wells, with her husband, journeyed to Nauvoo, Ill., the gathering place of the Latter-Day Saints. Here she became acquainted with Joseph Smith, the father of Mormonism, records in the historian's office show.

In 1846 Mrs. Wells went to Winter Quarters where she taught school. It was there her husband died. In 1848 she started with others of her religion across the plains to the West.

## ARRIVES IN SALT LAKE

Mrs. Wells arrived in the Salt Lake Valley in 1848. She was then the wife of Bishop Newel K. Whitney. They camped on the site now occupied by the LDS university. A few weeks after her arrival on November 2, 1848, Mrs. Wells gave birth to a daughter, Isabel Modelena (now Mrs. S. W. Sears of Salt Lake). On August 18, 1850, another daughter was born, Melvine Caroline (now Mrs. W. W. Woods of Wall, Ida.). Several weeks later Bishop Whitney died, leaving Mrs. Wells a widow with two children.

In 1852 Mrs. Wells became the wife of Gen. Daniel H. Wells. Of this union three daughters were born, Emmeline, Elizabeth Ann and Louise Martha.

## VOTED 50 YEARS AGO

From 1852 to 1886 Mrs. Wells resided on State street, a little north of where the Auerbach store now stands. While her children were young she devoted herself almost exclusively to home, and sang in the choir at the old tabernacle. She was always deeply interested in people, in the culture of youth and the progress of communities and notions. The advancement of her sex was a favorite field with Mr. Wells. When the women of Utah were enfranchised in February, 1870, she was one of the first to wield the ballot and to recognize in the event one of the indications of a new era. About this time she commenced to devote herself to public affairs.

At a very early age Mrs. Wells showed remarkable literacy ability and quietly pursued her work in this line during the early years of her life in the valley.

## RISES TO EDITOR

In 1873 Mrs. Wells' writing began to appear in the "Woman's Exponent" over the nom de plume of Blanche Beachwood. She was assistant editor and afterward became editor of this publication, which had the distinction of being the first for the advancement of women published in the West.

Early in life she had become interested in the Relief Society of her church. She traveled extensively in Utah with Eliza R. Snow, Zina D. H. Young and other leading women, in the interest of the society.

In 1874 Mrs. Wells was appointed vice president of the National Woman's Suffrage association.

## HELPED SAVE GRAIN

In September, 1876, she was called upon to lead the sisters of the church in saving grain by President Brigham Young.

She attended the convention of the National Woman's Suffrage association in Washington D.C., in January, 1879, at which time she and two other Mormon women presented Congress with a memorial asking that the children born in plural marriage be made legitimate.

In 1882 Mrs. Wells attended another national suffrage convention, this time in Omaha, upon which occasion she read a paper on the conditions in Utah. Three years later, during the heat of the crusade under the Edmunds law, she attended another suffrage convention in Washington and had interviews with prominent members of Congress on "Mormon" questions.

## RELIEF SOCIETY HEAD

Mrs. Wells became the corresponding secretary of the General Relief society and in 1892 was elected general secretary of the organization, holding this office until elected president in 1910. She held the latter position until a few weeks ago.

In 1893, at the time of the world's fair in Chicago, Mrs. Wells gave a paper, widely copied and quoted, upon "Western Women in Journalism," at the Relief society meeting. In 1895 she represented Utah at the National Woman's Suffrage convention at Atlanta, GA. Her address upon Utah's prospective admission to statehood was enthusiastically applauded, and Miss Susan B. Anthony came forward and embraced her on the platform. At the National Council held in Washington in February, 1895, she read a paper entitled, "Forty Years in the Valley of the Great Salt Lake," which was reproduced in leading journals.

## ENTERS POLITICS

When the people of Utah divided upon party lines, in 1892, Mrs. Wells declared herself a Republican and was selected by that party as chairman of the Utah Woman's Republican league.

She represented Utah at the National Suffrage convention at Des Moines, Iowa, and with Miss Anthony and other women spoke on the suffrage question before the Iowa legislature.

Up to 1899, Mrs. Wells had not left her native land, but in 1899 she crossed the Atlantic and attended the Women's International Council and Congress in London. With other delegates she was entertained by Queen Victoria, the Countess of Aberdeen and other British nobility at various gatherings.

## WITNESSES INAUGURATION

In 1901 she witnessed the inauguration of President McKinley at Washington. In 1902 she was again in Washington at the National Woman's Suffrage convention and the triennial of the Woman's National council. She was the first Western woman to be elected an officer in that council. In 1912 the honorary degree of doctor of literature was conferred upon Mrs. Wells by the Brigham Young University. Another honor was bestowed upon her when on October 1, 1912, she was selected to unveil the monument to the sea gulls, erected on the Temple block.

Mrs. Wells had a wide experience and did much literary work outside of editing the "Woman's Exponent." Besides her many poetical productions on various occasions, she edited "Songs and Flowers of the Wasatch" for the Columbian exposition, and also a book of prose entitled "Charities and Philanthropies." Her poetic volume appeared in 1896.

For many years Mrs. Wells' home and office were meccas for tourists and visitors, in quest of information pertaining to the Latter-day Saints.