

Augustus Weber Belnap

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Augustus Weber Belnap was born March 25, 1860, in Ogden City, Weber County, Utah. His parents were Gilbert Belnap and Adaline Knight, and at the time of his birth, their home was located where the Swift Packing Co., now stands, near the banks of the Weber River. He was blessed with a father's blessing on April 2, 1860, and was the seventh child in a family of thirteen.

At the age of six years, he worked for a Mr. Pingree who had bought some town lots and hired the small boy to herd the cows on them. For this work, Mr. Pingree had a shoemaker make Gus his first pair of shoes. The shoes were rough and heavy but were surely appreciated by the boy, especially after running around barefoot for several years - he told of playing barefoot on a large snow drift in front of his home in the dead of winter. In the year 1868, his family moved to Hooper, Utah, and here at the age of eight he got his first hat.

Augustus was baptized in Hooper in 1870 by Henry Hamilton and was confirmed by Levi Hammon. He was given a Patriarchal blessing at Hooper on February 16, 1872 by John Smith, Patriarch.

When he was about fourteen years old, he was struck in the left eye by a splinter from a maple log he was cutting. His eye was almost blinded, but he was treated in Salt Lake City by a doctor from the East, and his eyesight seemed to improve. He was ordained a Deacon by John Flinders on September 23, 1877, and on July 7, 1878 was re-baptized in Hooper by Gilbert Belnap and was confirmed by John Flinders. On July 27, 1884, he was ordained an Elder by Charles Parker. He was a teacher in Sunday School, beginning on August 24, 1884. Augustus was baptized a third time, on April 15, 1886, just before going to the Temple, by Thomas Read and was confirmed by Gilbert Belnap.

On April 21, 1886 he was married to Mary Read in the Logan Temple in Logan, Utah, by Marriner W. Merrill. Their courtship had extended over a period of about six years. Augustus once remarked, "Good heck a mighty, we went together so long that Mary's parents were glad to see us get married. You should've seen their faces light up when they learned we were going to the Temple at Logan to be married." Their first home was one they rented from Will Brown at West Weber, just across the line from W. Staker's place.

Their marriage was blessed with eleven children: Augustus Ruben, born August 7, 1887 at West Weber, Utah; Charles William, born July 12, 1889 at Wilford, Idaho; Thomas Gilbert, born July 13, 1892 and buried February 5, 1893; George, born August 7, 1894; John, born September 27, 1896 and died soon after birth; Earl Read, born August 21, 1897; Joseph Francis, born October 28, 1899; Ezra Leonard, born January 21, 1902; Elmer, born January 4, 1904; Mary Adeline, born October 5, 1905; Lola Ethel, born December 2, 1907. All but the first two were born at Salem, Idaho. They also adopted on February 6, 1893, two-month-old Orpha Gertrude Stephens, daughter of Coriantimer Francis Acenath Thompson. Orpha's mother had died at the time of her birth and her father, who was severely ill at the time, died of heart trouble in about 1904.

Augustus made a visit during the summer of 1887 to his brother Reuben's (or Ruben) place at Wilford, Idaho, and in April of 1888 he and his family moved to Wilford. It took nine days to make the trip from Hooper to Wilford with a new canvas-covered wagon and a good team of light bay horses. On June 7, 1888, Augustus made a homestead filing

entry at Blackfoot, Idaho, and on October 13, 1888, moved to Salem. They moved back to Wilford in the spring of 1889 and rented a farm for the summer. During this summer, he was a home missionary and, riding a horse, he visited as far away as Lyman, which was a trip of from twenty to twenty-five miles.

They moved back to Salem in about October of 1889 and lived in John Barber's cabin on Oscar Anderson's place while they finished their home on the farm just east of there. The prospects were not too bright at that time in Idaho - sagebrush covered most of the land and the country was very sparsely settled. These were lonely and discouraging times for his wife, but he said he learned during these trying years, to appreciate and care for his wife more than ever before.

Augustus was set apart as President of the Teachers Quorum in the Salem Ward of the Bannock Stake of Zion by James H. Wilson on January 21, 1890. He was ordained a High Priest and set apart as Second Counselor to George G. Harris, Bishop, on May 11, 1890 by President Thomas E. Ricks.

On November 3, 1896, he was elected Justice of the Peace for Salem Precinct. He believed in law and order and was a very fair judge.

He was called to teach a class in the Salem Ward and received a license from President Woodruff. He started this class on March 15, 1897, with Zina Walker and Harriet Hill as assistants. On March 24, 1900 the Bishopric, of which he was a member, was honorably released and on March 25, 1900, he was chosen to be an alternate member of the High Council of the Fremont Stake and was set apart by Apostle John Henry Smith.

On June 14, 1905, he helped fight crickets above St. Anthony, Idaho. In November he bought William Anderson's place in Salem Town site and moved his family there in December, 1905. In the year 1907 he was set apart as a member of the High Council of the Fremont Stake by Apostle Orson F. Whitney. In 1913 Augustus was called on a short term mission in the Northwestern States Mission. He arrived at Mission Headquarters in Portland, Oregon, on January 15, 1913 in the company of G. H. B. Harris, L. H. Parkinson and Sister Ellie Condie. On the 16th he was assigned to labor in the Sellwood District of the city of Portland. He was honorably released on March 30, 1913.

His wife, Mary, died on June 15, 1925. On September 27, 1925 he was honorably released from the High Council of the Fremont Stake.

Augustus Weber Belnap died on March 15, 1948, at Idaho Falls, Idaho, and was buried at Salem, Idaho. His seven living sons and two daughters were all married.

Augustus was a kind and affectionate man, but believed in obedience. His deepest sorrows were usually kept to himself and he was a man of few words, but gave timely advice. He was a strong living testimony of the true faith passed on to him by his parents, and was a man of great wisdom and foresight. He was a hard worker and his life was one well spent.