



Traveling to Arizona

Adapted from the diary of Sully Richardson
Edited with photos added by Diana Rice in 2007



Sully (pictured at left) was a boyhood friend of Edwin M. Whiting (on the right). They had many interests in common. Both friends, Sully's brother Edmund, Edwin's mother Mary and other Whiting family members all joined with other travelers headed for Arizona in ox-driven wagons. Charles and Albert had already been, but this became Edwin M. Whiting's first trip to Arizona!

In 1878, a company of ox-driven wagons was assembling to travel to the newly established united order settlement of Brigham City, Arizona. Mary Elizabeth Cox Whiting, six of her sons and her daughter May, were among those who had decided to go.

Sully's diary explains: "This trip appealed to us so we decided to go with them. I was seventeen years of age when we turned our backs on all that had been so dear to us in childhoods. We started for a new country and a new phase of life and I believe the feelings guiding my life at that time, meant to me, what the spirit of gathering meant to the saints of the world." In Manti we made one stop. Walter Cox said to us "I am glad you are going to work in the United Order for even if you do not work long, it will give you new feelings toward your fellow men that you get in no other way."

"We took with us drawing paper and colored pencils and had fun using them to paint our comic situations which were indelibly pictured in glowing colors in our minds."

The boys composed songs as they went along, also the music to go with them.

Arizona Song

Written by Sully Richardson, Edwin M. Whiting and friends

Come listen to me gentle folks, I'll sing to you a ditty,
'Twas in the year of seventy-six, when we left Salt Lake City.
We started for Arizona, a place that you've heard tell;
It's the roughest country I ever saw; 'Twas there we went to dwell.

When we left Salt Lake City, everything was fine,
But when we got to Panguitch, 'twas there we had a time.
When we began to look around, our eyes we opened wide;
The snow was six feet deep they said, on top of the divide.

Our captain then informed us, no doubt he thought it right,
We'd made a start right through that snow before another night.
When we had passed that old divide, now jolly we did feel
To think we'd come though all that snow, and left it at our heels.

We struck what's called Long Valley, a place of great renown
And sure such mud and chuck-holes, nowhere else could be found.
We then struck the town that's called Knab, now we were glad you bet,
But as for all our troubles, why—we are not done just yet.

'Twas there that we divided into companies of ten,
And then we started for the Buckskin mountain.
On that was where we thought of making us a boat,
The mud and water was so deep, our wagons for to float.

We then struck House Rock Valley, a place to see.
The water was so scarce, we divided our company.
Our oxen they began to lie around the camp close by;
We did all that we could for them, but one of them did die.

We then went on to Jacob's Pools, and Soap Creek came in next.
We then went on to Badger Creek, and lost another ox.
We then made for the Ferry, and there we had to stop.
We made our bed that night, my boys, upon the solid rock.

Next day we crossed the river, and we had a shower of sand;
But then we got across all right, again upon dry land.
Then over Lee's Back-bone, oh what a country to explore!
If our wagons had upset, they'd have gone a thousand feet or more.

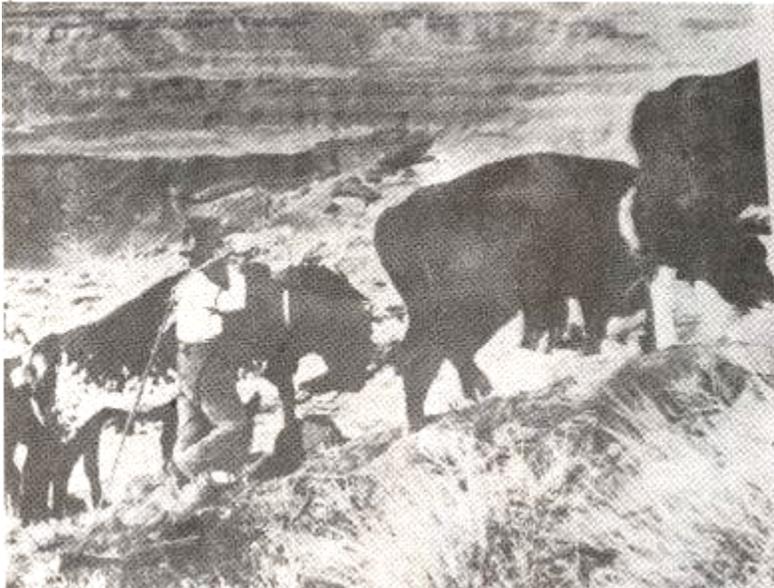


We then went down the hill, over lots of sand and rocks,
We then went on to Navajo Springs, and lost another ox;
Our boys they got together for, to see what's best to do.
It seemed to suit the majority, to lay over a day or two.

We then went on to Bitter Springs, at Limestone Tanks we stopped,
We then went on to Willow Springs, and lost another ox.
We went down the Mo-abby Wash, over lots of sand and rocks,
And when we left Mo-abby Wash, we lost another ox.

Then for the Little Colorado, we struck with all our might;
We traveled about a day and a half, when the river came in sight.
Off' in traveling up the river, our captain gave command,
"Boys, you'd better go and pull the oxen out of the sand."

We then struck Black Rock Falls, a curious place to see.
Some oxen were give out, so we divided our company.
We made our beds that night my boys, among the rough black rocks,
And as the crowd lay there next day, we lost another ox.



Oh when the boys they left us, It was a lonesome day;
So long and lonely were the hours, seemed ne'er to pass away.
We built us a log cabin to keep out the sun and sand.
I tell you it was dreary there, only four in our small band.

We camped at Black Rock Falls—we were there two weeks or more,
And when the boys came back for us, we'd lost two oxen more.
We then went on up to our camp, which we were glad to find;
'Twas occupied by all our friends, except those left behind.

It's not the best of country, my boys, I can tell you,
Our food is not first class of course, but then it has to do.
The water's nothing extra, as probably you know,
It's a little salt and brackish, but down it has to go.

And now, kind friends, my song's complete, of troubles we've had few,
And though they are not done just yet, I guess that this will do.
Some thought it was a pleasure trip, and they would like to go;
But if that's what's called a pleasure trip, I want but very few.

We're an Outfit to Dread

Composed by Sully Richardson and Edwin M. Whiting as teenagers

Kind friends give attention I'll quickly tell you
Of how we left Springville when feed was so few.
But then we concluded our long trip to try,
We'd steal what we could, and the rest we would buy.

Chorus:

Hurrah! Hurray! We're an outfit to dread.
We'll keep our teams fat or steal straw from the shed
Look out, we're a coming, we're a coming, we're bound to go through.

When we got to Salt Creek a storm did arise
And we had to wade through snow up to our eyes.
As over the ridge to Lavan we did go
A hundred of flour we found in the snow.

Chorus

We got into Salina that place of renown
Where salt signs are scarce but they're all over town.
From Monroe we did drive up the Mary's-vale hill
From a load of good hay our wagons did fill.

Chorus

We got into Panguich on Winter's first day
O'er the rim of the naisim next our way
But we hadn't gone far in the way that we steered
When all of a sudden a snow-storm appeared.

Chorus

When we got to Johnson the fences were past
And we had to come down to shadscale at last.
With the fences all past a sad havoc we made
The old men never chirped for they were all afraid.

Chorus

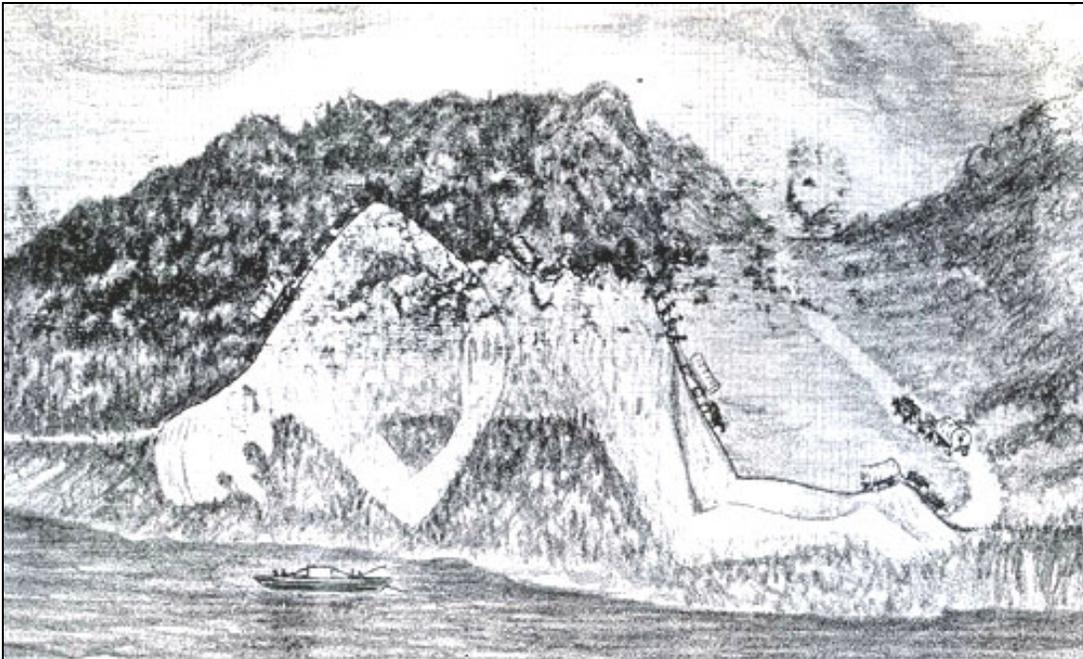
We stole some dry poles as we entered Monroe
Out came an old farmer, off his coat did go
We've got some brave hearts, but our legs they wont stand
Soon all he could see was big tracks in the sand.

Chorus

And now we've related most all our brave deeds.
Although there may be some left under the weeds
We've finished our song and we hope its pleased all
But we wont sing again till you give us a call.

Chorus

They drew a picture of Lee's back-bone (they called it) after crossing the Colorado River at Lee's Ferry, traveling south over that big mountain. One said, "Now that road was not that steep, you couldn't get a wagon over that." From his diary—"At times we had to chain the back wheels of the front wagon to the front wheels of the back wagon, sometimes fastening to the cliffs as we very slowly moved them along. When we got near the brink of the Grand Canyon we went over and feasted our eyes on the grandeur that the view can never fail to give.



Sketch of Lee's Ferry and Lee's backbone, the sheer rock on the Arizona side of the Colorado river that every wagon must scale in order to travel further into Arizona. This was drawn by Sully Richardson and Edwin M. Whiting.

"The trip was tedious, hard and long. At a snow-storm at Salt Creek, I took cold and it settled in my lungs and in my throat. My throat became so sore, and my breathing so affected, as they steadily grew worse, several times Edwin woke me in the night greatly alarmed and fearful that I was dying.

"It was so serious that at Lee's Ferry when we camped near 'Tump' Freeman, he came up, looked at me awhile and said: 'By---young feller, I'm sure sorry for you!' and freely expressed his opinion that I would never reach the settlement.

“But how different was the expression of Brother Jacob Bigler, a German convert, who lived at Willow Springs. He was out hunting cows just before we drove up to the Springs and for sometime walked with Edwin by the side of the wagon, talking of the road and work of our people in Arizona. Seeing me ride through the sand, he asked: ‘What is the matter with the young man?’

When told my condition, he said, ‘I feel like I wouldt be gladt to ad-min-iss-ter to him. May I?’ When we unhitched by the little stream, he brought some oil from his little rock house; but his words were in German and I did not know what he said in the administration. But he added, ‘You will get well. I know you will. I feel the strength go out of my arms to you.’

“The next afternoon all soreness was gone, but I could hardly believe a sore throat could have made me so weak as I felt for some time. I have never been seriously troubled by my throat since.

“At the Mo-abby Wash, we came upon Brother Foster who had lost a horse. I hitched my little mare in and drove the outfit to Brigham City. We arrived there 15 December 1878.

“Here we found ourselves in a new world. All ate at one table and slept in the little rooms which made up the fort.

The Fort itself was a square, containing perhaps an acre and a half. A rock wall surrounded it with a gate wide enough for a wagon to drive through in the center of the north wall and a small gate in the east and west.

The rooms were built on the inside with the rock wall for the outside wall of each room. The other walls were logs up to the square, the walls between each two rooms being built on up to the little gable shape, with lumber. They each had a dirt roof, one small window and a door toward the center of the fort.

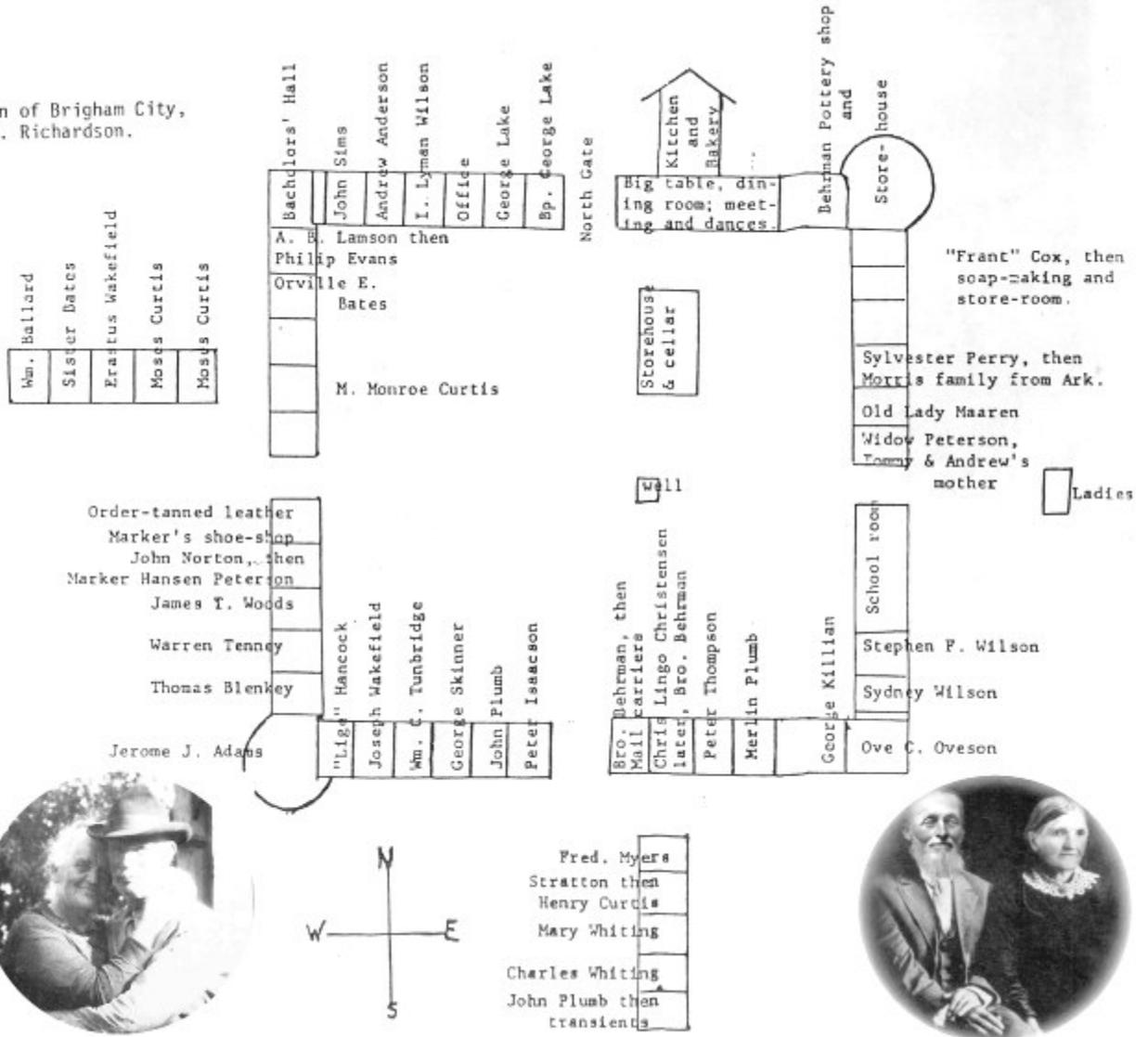
In the middle of the fort was a well, and near it was the store-room with a cellar beneath. The northeast corner of the Fort was taken up with a pottery shop and a large dining room.

Next to this was the kitchen and then a small row of log rooms.

A blacksmith shop stood a couple of hundred yards south of the fort on the bank of the Little Colorado River.

To the southeast was the grist mill and to the north lay the fields.

Plan of Brigham City,
S.C. Richardson.



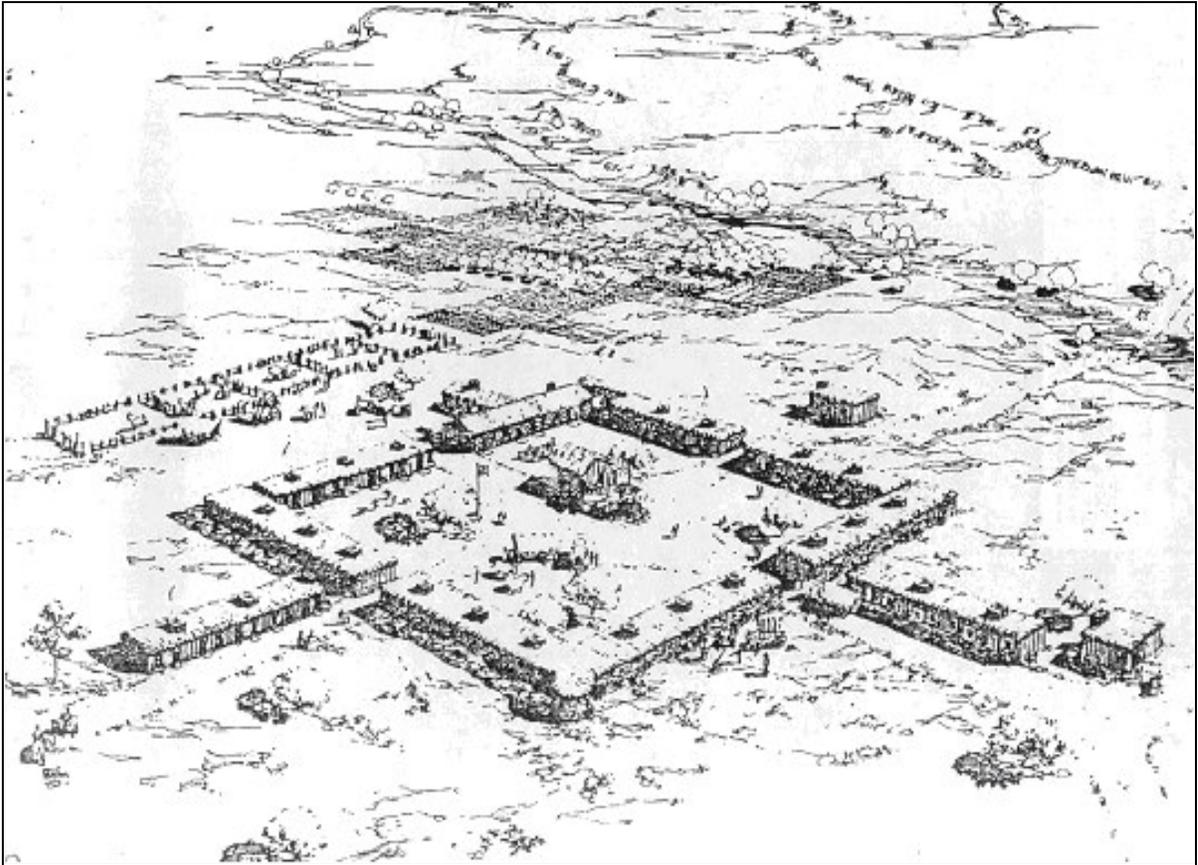
Maria & Edwin M. Whiting met at the fort, and lived there as newlyweds



Maria's parents, Peter and Martha Isaacson, had been called to fort leadership from Ephriam Utah

"In the year 1880, the U.S. census supervisor came to Bishop George Lake for help in gathering the census. He had been given a very large district and was under bond to have it done within a short time. Bishop Lake promised to get someone to help, but when he went to get Lyman Wilson to do it, Lyman had gone. So he came to me.

In the United Order one's interests was that of all, but I had never been given any responsibility and this seemed to me to be more than I could do. But Bishop said to me, 'I will promise you in the name of the Lord, that you will never be left when you need help. You shall be directed and the way opened before you, for the honor of our people here is now at stake.' So I accepted.



I went first to Ira Hatch, the Indian interpreter and missionary to get a description of the road. He told me which direction to go until I reached the watering tank. From there, he said, 'I can only tell you that the Moqui Villages are a out thirty-five miles nearly north. But you'll find everywhere little trails, valley, low mountains and waterless sandy country.

If you get lost and turned around there, you are lost indeed. But that is not the worst danger you will be in, for all around, you will find Indians with just enough civilization to ask you in to eat and steal everything you have while you are out of sight.' ”

It was a perilous, hazardous and dangerous mission among blood-thirsty Indians, but he was miraculously guided and protected from those who were seeking his life and was permitted to return home safe, having been successful in his assignment.

He was grateful to be back at the Order where all ate at one big table while each had his own work to do. Christmas day, there was a fine dinner; little remembrances; the greater part of the 'sweets' being from the usual molasses candy-making, pinion nuts, brought from the Indians, taking the place of the never-ending varities that fill the stockings today.

The pear and fine fruit preserves were made of citrons and melon rinds etc., in the molasses vat after the cane juice had been thoroughly skimmed, but the sugar preserves were no comparison to them, because—well I doubt if there was a pint in the city. But cheese never since tasted so good and hardship, health, and appetite all contributed to make those ‘big table’ meals most pleasing and enjoyable.

And especially that Christmas dinner with its squash pies, meat dumplings, cake (molasses) and puddings seasoned with all the products of mountain and valley; and finished up in the evening with the ever-enjoyable dance with Stephen Wilson’s fiddle for the orchestra! Well, such a time! Till its close. When they called for those on the floor at the last dance to stand, the others to rise and it was dismissed with benediction.



Photo of the fort at Brigham City Arizona taken many years later.

The success of the Order in sustaining them, opened the way for the permanent settling of that desolate country, the wonderful blessing it was to those on their way to the upper valleys; some times giving such aid in awful circumstances, cannot fail to be a testimony to any one, of the inspiration prompting the call. And it was plainly shown that in no way except working together as in that Order, could it possibly have been accomplished.

--Sullivan (Sully) Richardson’s diary excerpts taken from the book *Charles Edmund Richardson, Man of Destiny* edited by Annie Richardson Johnson and Elva Richardson Shumway printed in 1982

Photos of the fort at Brigham City and the trip over Lee’s ferry with wagons and oxen were taken years later by Sully’s son and namesake S.C. Richardson who retraced his father’s journey with a camera. S.C. also made the drawing of the fort with the names of the inhabitants. These are found in the above listed book by Annie Richardson and Elva Shumway.

The photo below of the Whiting brothers is courtesy of Jim Whiting.

All other photos are from the Revised edition of the Story of Edwin Marion Whiting and Anna Maria Isaacson.



The Whiting brothers of Springville, Utah. From front right: Charles Whiting, Albert Whiting and Edgar Whiting. Back left: Fred Whiting, Arthur Whiting, Edwin M. Whiting and John Whiting. Charles and Albert were called to settle Arizona initially. Charles returned for the others and the rest of the brothers, along with their mother, Mary Elizabeth Cox Whiting and their sister May all traveled together to Arizona to help establish the united order in Brigham City Arizona and to improve May's health..