

The Whiting Family
by Verona Snow Whiting
(Amy Whiting Thurber)

Grandmother and Grandfather Whiting lived in Springville, Utah and were prospered and happy there until about 1876. Albert and Charles were called to go to Arizona and help settle there at Sunset. Albert returned to Utah that same summer, but Charles stayed until 1878 when he went back to Springville and spent the summer, returning in the fall to Arizona. (His sister) May's health had been very poor for a number of years and she seemed to be getting worse all the time. The doctors thought that a change of climate and a journey might do her good, so grandfather encouraged them to go. Grandmother and her unmarried sons fitted out an outfit and went to Arizona with Charles. The two baby boys of course (went) with us. The two Richardson boys, Edmund and Sully, being orphans and friends of our boys, fixed up an outfit and went with us making quite a company.

On our way we camped one night by a pasture and after we women had gone to bed a woman came to our camp complaining to the boys that her fence was down and she was afraid that our horse would get in on her land. She was quite riled up. After she left grandmother said if she came again she would talk to her. Early the next morning the boys saw her coming. They began calling grandmother. Edmund called, "Hurry, Aunt Mary, the old hag is coming." Grandmother talked to her and won her over. She left feeling alright toward us.

We reached our destination in due time, about six weeks on the way. May's health greatly improved and for four years she seemed to enjoy life. She took parts on the stage and in entertainments and was so sweet and jolly until the year the railroad came through Arizona and a half mile from where we lived at Winslow, as they called it. Here the round house was built. Merchants came and established stores in tents until they could throw up something better. May, during the Christmas holidays, went with some of our family to purchase goods and caught a cold and was never well again.

When spring came her mother and all of us thought it better to take her back to Utah to a doctor as soon as possible. We formed a company of four teams and four wagons. Our company consisted of the following: Grandma, May, Edwin, Arthur, John and Fred, also Henry and Harriet Curtis and children. Harriet was an older daughter of Grandma's and sister to May and the rest. I, myself and two children were along. Also Bro and Sis Adams and their daughter, Fannie Merrill. They were on their way to St. George, and how thankful we were to have them along with us in our trouble.

Never will I forget the day we reached House Rock. We drove along all day so anxious to get there for it seemed that any minute might be the last. She could not lie down without smothering. It would break your heart to hear her every little while exclaim, "Oh in this lonely wilderness! I wish I was home. Oh! This lonely desert." I believe she knew her time was short. Finally we reached House Rock. There was a family living there by

the name of Adair. Surely the Lord raised up friends unto us. They were lovely people and did everything they could to help us. It seemed a haven of rest to poor May. The company camped down a little way in the cedars and pinon pines. Sis Adams, myself and Fannie Merrill helped Grandma nurse May. Harriet, not being well stayed at the camp with her little children, Clara, being the baby. Brother Adair rode horseback to Kanab for a doctor and the doctor arrived next morning at daylight. When he looked at May he shook his head and said, "I think she is a poor suffering girl." We knew then, that he had no hopes. We had persuaded grandma to lie down before the doctor arrived. He prepared a little medicine for May. As she sat on the couch talking, she leaned back on the pillows and was gone. I called, "Grandma, May is dying." How could I tell her she was dead. I was weeping. She began to try to comfort me and said, "Don't weep. Let her die in peace." And if she ever shed a tear I do not remember it. I knew that her heart was breaking. These are some of her characteristics, her quiet nature and self dominant resignation. It was not, "What will we do? but rather what can we do?"

Brother Adair happened to have some lumber. That very morning two sons of Bishop Stewart of Kanab came. (I know our Heavenly Father sent them to us.) They had come to round up some horses and they made the coffin, which was a nice roomy box. Grandma had along some bleached muslin which we used to line the coffin inside and out. She had no lace or trimmings, but some of you here may remember when we were young of cutting out paper lace. Well, I took some of this muslin and cut it in strips six inches wide, then I cut scallops on one edge, then cut notches around the scallops on one edge, then I cut a design in each scallop. This we pleated all around the inside of this crude coffin.. We made her a soft bed with our own choice pillows. When she was dressed in her endowment robes we placed her in and she looked more comfortable than crowded up in a casket. I thought so myself for I do not even like to look at a casket. I feel like all of this had to happen. There was a greater mission for her on the other side. Never will I forget that sad funeral. I believe her brothers dug the grave. They carried her up on that mound and buried her just as the sun went down or a few minuts later. This was the sadest funeral I ever attended. I think Bro Adams dedicated the grave. Sad! Sad!

The above was written for the Whiting reunion held at House Rock (1936) (where Aunt May was buried. Verona Snow Whiting (Amy Whiting Thurber)