

Edwin Whiting

About the year 1800 in the little town of Lee, Berkshire County, Massachusetts, near the border of New York, lived the family of Elisha Whiting and Sally Hulett. Elisha's father was a sea captain and lived in Connecticut. He died when Elisha was very young. His mother, not knowing what else to do bound him to a quaker, who was very cruel and after a few years he ran away to Massachusetts and worked on a farm with a wheelwright. Here he was married to Sally Hulett. They were highly respected, honest, generous and firm in their convictions.

Elisha followed the trade of wagon and chair maker and did his work well. His wife was very gifted in making prose poetry, a characteristic that has been bequeathed to many of the Whiting descendants. To Sally and Elisha twelve children were born, eight sons and four daughters as follows: Charles b. Sept. 1806 d. same day. William b. Sept. 19, 1807, Edwin b. Sept. 9, 1809, Charles b. Mar. 24, 1811, Catherine Louisa, b. Oct. 3, 1813, and d. May 27, 1900, Harriet b. Aug. 16, 1815, Emiline b. July 1817, Chauncy b. Aug 18, 18(19) and died June 7, 1902, Almond b. Nov. 1821, Jane b. 1824, Sylvester b. Ju(ne) or Ju(ly) 29, 1;829 and d. June 19, 1915, Lewis b. Sept. 22 1831.

When Edwin was six years of age his parents moved to Nelson, Portage County, Ohio. At that time it was the western frontier of U.S.A., a place suitable to get timber for his trade for the support of his large family.

Edwin's chance for education was very limited but they were taught the "3Rs", Reading, Writing and Arithmetic. and he wrote a legible hand, an extra-ordinary feat for his time. At an early age he wrote creditable verse.

His early life in the forest, no doubt accounts for his love of the out-of-doors, the beauties of nature, the trees, the flowers, mountains and the desire to hunt.

One Sunday morning, when a small boy he decided to go hunting. He knew this was contrary to his parents teachings so he tried to draw his gun through the cracks between the logs of his bedroom and go unnoticed. His gun caught and was discharged, inflicting a serious wound in his left leg. This, he said, was a lesson to him to observe the Sabbath Day and obey his parents.

He learned the chair making trade from his father and his workmanship was considered very good.

In 1833 when he was twenty four years old, he married Elizabeth Tillotson, an Ohio girl of French descent. She was a highly educated school teacher, quite an accomplishment for those days.

In 1837 the gospel was brought to the Whiting family - Edwin (joined) the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. They were baptized by Thomas Marsh in 1838. Here as in the time of Christ and his apostles, the humble hard-working class of people were the ones to listen and accept the gospel of truth.

They were among the early members of our church and soon joined the church in Kirtland, Ohio and it took true manhood, womanhood and faith in God to endure. They were forced to leave their new, comfortable home, complete with furniture, orchards and land in Kirtland, Ohio and took only their clothing and a few valued relics and went to Far West, Missouri. By this time Edwin and Elizabeth

had four children, Sarah, Emily, Jane and William. They were only in Far West a short time and had just built a new home, when, the mob, several thousand strong, ordered them out. Every house in the village was burned except Father Elisha's because he was so sick they could not move him.

We remember of hearing Aunt Elizabeth tell how she sat on the pile of bedding far into the night with her little daughter, Jane in her arms. Little Jane died soon after from the exposure and lack of proper food. Sarah clapped her hands at the big bonfire the mob had made with their fences and the select wood from her father's chair shop, They were compelled to flee again so they joined the Saints at Lima in Father Mosley's branch, when Edwin acted as counselor to Bro. Mosley.

For several years the Saints were happily building up the city of Nauvoo and their temple. Here they worshiped God without so much persecution as they had experienced at Lima. Edwin was appointed colonel in the Nauvoo Legion and was an active worker all the time for the upbuilding of his church.

Through the advice of those in authority and for a righteous purpose, he entered the law of plural marriage. In the year of 1845 he married Almira Meacham, the next year in 1846 he married Mary E. Cox. The same year he was called on a mission to Pennsylvania and was there at the time of the martyrdom of the Prophet Joseph Smith and his brother Hyrum. He soon returned home and took up arms with his brethren to protect his property and the lives of his loved ones.

During the battle of Crooked River his brother Charles was killed by the mob. Still another test awaited him, his brothers Almond and Sylvester, Chauncy and Lewis and his sister Louisa did not feel that Brigham Young should be leader of the church so they followed a Mr. Cutler and called themselves Cutlerites and moved into Cletheral, Minnesota. To this day they hold tenaciously to the teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith. They still correspond with the children of Edwin Whiting and have given us, for temple work, an extensive genealogy of the Whiting family.

Edwin, his families, his father and mother, stayed with the Saints, who were compelled to move west as far as Mt. Pisgah. There they stayed to prepare for the journey across the plains. The dreaded disease, cholera, took the father and mother of Edwin, his little brother and little daughters, Emily and Jane. Their names are on the monument lately erected at that place in memory of those who died there. So many in his family were sick at one time that there was no one to get the sick ones a drink, but even in those trying times they still had faith and rejoiced in the gospel for the Lord was with them. Emiline, a sister of Edwin, married Walter Cox and they were all as one big family for years. They established a chair factory and hauled them to Quincy, Ill. Aunt Mary taught school two terms and helped the family some. While at Mt. Pisgah three sons were born, Albert, Lucius and Oscar.

In April, 1849 Edwin and Emiline, the only children of Elisha Whiting who stayed true to the church started westward in Bro Mosley's company. Volumes have been written of the westward journey of the Saints and a congressman Leatherwood has said, "It is the greatest emigration trail there was ever blazed and our pioneers

will some day stand out in history as the greatest pioneers of the world."

They fought Indians, had their cattle stampeded, suffered for lack of proper food, and even though tired from that long, tedious trek, still they went on.

After reaching the Black Hills a heavy snow storm came and for three days they were shut in. Many of their cattle died and perhaps they would have died also had not teams and provisions, sent by Pres. Brigham Young come to their aid. On Oct. 28, 1849 they reached Salt Lake City. "We were so thankful our journey was at an end." But their rest was of short duration for in a few days Edwin Whiting, the Mosleys and Coxes were called to settle on the Sanpitch River, now known as Manti, Utah. Again they journeyed on. It took three weeks to go from Salt Lake City because they had to build their own road. Provo was then a village of about six homes. As they passed Hobbles Creek afterwards known as Springville, Edwin remarked, "This is a fertile spot. I would like to stay here."

They arrived in San Pete County Dec 1, 1849 with almost nothing to eat, no feed for their cattle, no shelter to keep them warm and cold weather was on them. They made dugouts on the South side of the hill where the temple now stands. It was a severe winter, with snow so deep the cattle could scarcely get any grass and most of them died. Food had to be divided with the Indians to keep peace. Pres. Young promised them provisions and help but none came so Edwin and Orville Cox put on snow shoes and with a little parched corn in their pockets for food, placed their bedding on a sleigh and started for Salt Lake for help. When they reached Nephi Canyon they met Bro Dace Henry, his young wife, her brother, Mr. Dags and an Indian snow bound. Their cattle had died and their wagons were all covered with snow. The young wife was very sick so Edwin gave them the sleigh to pull her to Manti. They put their quilts on their backs and walked on to Salt Lake and reported conditions to Pres. Young. Aid was immediately sent but some of the company went back to Salt Lake.

Edwin's family now numbered fourteen. They had a large room in the side of the hill with their chair factory in one end. The men and boys hauled wood from the hills on hand sleighs.

The following spring, 1850, two girls were born in that dug out. Louise, daughter of Elizabeth and Harriet, daughter of Mary.

For several seasons very little was raised. It became necessary to erect a fort to protect themselves from the hostile Indians. The gates of the fort were locked while the men went to the fields with their guns. From this developed the Walker War. Edwin was appointed captain of the militia. Twice the Indians drove his cattle away and stole whatever they could. Edwin often told us of one big ox he owned who rebelled whenever an Indian tried to drive him. He would always turn on his captors, break away and come home. He hated Indians and would always lower his head and challenge them if they came near.

Edwin tried planting fruit trees, shrubs and flowers but they could not survive the very cold winter. Their crops were poor but they managed to exist and were a happy family in spite of it.

In 1854 he was called to Ohio on a mission for two years. While he was away the grasshoppers came and took nearly everything they

raised. They faced starvation but miraculously where the crops had been a patch of pig weeds grew and they lived on them until corn ripened in Utah County. A strange thing it was for the Indians said pigweeds had never grown there before nor have they since. Walter Cox divided with his brother's family while he was away.

Edwin on his return brought many kinds of fruit trees, some from his father's farm that he had helped plant when a boy, shrubs and flowers and tried to grow them again but the climate was too cold.

In 1856 Edwin married Hannah Brown, June 13, 1858, here at Manti Abby Ann was born.

While he lived at Manti Edwin was among the foremost in religious and civic affairs. He was counselor to the Stake president, mayor of the city, member of the legislature two terms and as stated before captain of the militia in the Walker War.

After finding the climate of Manti unfavorable for the raising of fruit, his special work, he was advised by Pres. Young to try out his nursery at Springville. He moved there in 1861 and was able to grow all kinds and varieties of fruit trees, vegetables and flowers.

He built a home on the lot where the Second Ward chapel now stands. That two story adobe house will stand in the memory of the members of the Whiting family as a place of many happy evenings of fun and amusements. ←

He transplanted in different towns many evergreens from the mountains. Those around the old courthouse in Provo, those at Springville City Park and one large evergreen that stands southwest of the Manti temple which can be seen for miles around. He said "I brought that in my lunch basket and I think it was first evergreen transplanted in Utah." His life was typical of this great tree. ←

He had one of the largest families in Utah. Many of these stand at the head of Stake and Ward organizations in our church. Among the descendants we find seven bishops.

In his later life he did temple work for his dead relatives in the Salt Lake, St. George and Logan temples. He lived the principles of his religion. He was honest, charitable and never accumulated great riches, but was thrifty and loved his wives and children and gave them the comforts of life.

He died at Mapleton 9 Dec. 1890 at the age of 81, firm in his belief of the truthfulness of the gospel.

His descendants are numerous and found in Idaho, Arizona, Mexico, California, New York and Utah.

Aunt Louisa Whiting Johnson suppld the material for this history and it was compiled by Jennie Bird Hill, his granddaughter.