

Bringing History to Life

The St. George Red Sandstone Quarry Project Its History, Location, and Pathway Construction

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with contributions by Richard Kohler, David Peterson,
Larry Robinson, & Adam Hales

This monograph commemorates the opening for visitation and study of the old red sandstone quarry from where stones were taken to construct most of the early buildings and many pioneer homes in St. George, Utah. The construction of the Entry, Pathway to the Quarry, and the Monument and Interpretive Plaques were completed in 2016 and dedicated on Saturday, 19 March 2016.

Pace, R. Wayne

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1. History of St. George, Utah

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Summary: This booklet reviews the history, location, and opening of the St. George Red Sandstone Quarry for visitations and study.

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Preface

The Dixie Encampment Chapter of the Sons of Utah Pioneers was founded on March 18, 2010. By September, 2010, the chapter had organized a visit to what many called The Old Sandstone Quarry located in the cliffs near the Dixie Red Hills Golf Course. To get to the quarry, it was necessary to struggle through years of shrubbery, trees, and massive undergrowth as well as across an area referred to as the Tortoise Habitat which was designated as an endangered species territory. In addition, part of the distance required passing near or across parts of the golf course, making the trek mildly dangerous, some said. The chapter members, nevertheless, did arrive in good stead, took some pictures and had an article about their adventure published in the local newspaper. At that time, the chapter members agreed to initiate action to create a pathway to the quarry. This would mean getting approvals from the various agencies, groups, commissions, and other bodies that had jurisdiction over the property. A member of the chapter was appointed to inquire into procedures for getting approvals and developing a plan for completing a pathway to the quarry with an entry, a monument, and some interpretive plaques for explaining what was involved in quarrying stones, getting them from the quarry to building sites, and what the costs might be. Initial inquiries were discouraging and suggested that no such approvals had ever been given for such a purpose, so the project lagged in interest for a couple of years. In the fall of 2012 another member was asked to pursue inquiries further and submit a plan for where and how to erect a monument to the quarry and those

who had worked there. That inquiry resulted in the recommendation to abandon all efforts to get a pathway to the quarry and erect a plaque on the famous Owens Loop Trail above one part of the quarry. The chapter accepted the resolution and eventually a post and plaque were placed on the Owens Loop Trail. A third attempt to pursue a pathway from the entrance to the maintenance of the Dixie Red Hills Golf Course to the quarry was approved by the chapter in mid-2013. All other tentative arrangements were cancelled and a slightly different strategy was taken, resulting in approvals by a multitude of committees and councils. After initial approvals were secured, a fundraising program was undertaken, with enough donations and pledges to construct a beautiful entry, a pathway and stairs, and walk-over bridges along the length of the pathway, as well as a monument and five interpretive plaques. On March 19, 2016, an appropriate dedication was held and the pathway to the quarry officially opened. This monograph recounts the process by which the old sandstone quarry was opened for visitation and study. As you read and study this monograph, hopefully, you will discover a great deal about the ways in which approvals to complete projects are secured. You should also develop an appreciation for what it takes to commemorate an historical site. Please enjoy yourself as processes are revealed and the beauty of the quarry radiates.

R. Wayne Pace, St. George, Utah

Introduction

As was mentioned in the dedication services, “there is nothing more difficult to take in hand, more perilous to conduct, or more uncertain in its success, than to take the lead in the introduction of a new order of things.” Such was the case in getting approvals, raising funds, and constructing all parts of this interesting project to create a pathway to the quarry. The struggle, however, was worth the perilousness, uncertainty, and difficulty involved. The result was opening a significant historical site in the St. George area and the gradual evolution of a lovely pathway and erecting a commemorative monument. We believe that much can be learned about project management and the processes by which agencies, councils, and committees deliberate on propositions, resolutions, and proposals. A great deal may be revealed about how community members can be involved in the community and what it takes to persevere to the end. The historical richness of the St. George area may also be observed in the results of some persistence and dedication to achieving this extremely worthwhile project.