

Richards, Silas

LDS Biographical Encyclopedia, Andrew Jenson, Vol. 2, p.327

Richards, Silas, Bishop of the Little Cottonwood Ward, Salt Lake county, Utah, from 1851 to 1864, was born Dec. 18, 1807, in Highland county, Ohio, the second son of Augustus Richards and Francis Lee Doggett. When Silas was about fifteen years old the family moved to Shelby county, Ohio, where his father practiced medicine, and together with his brother Milton he ran a farm, attending school in the winter, until he was married Nov. 5, 1829, to Elizabeth McClenahan, daughter of Elijah and Elizabeth McClenahan.

They started their married life in a humble way, living for a short time on a rented farm. Their first children, Frances Marie and Elizabeth Ann, were born Dec. 20, 1830. In 1835 Mr. Richards moved to Illinois, where his father-in-law had gone three years previous, settling in Stark county, where he bought two hundred acres of rich land. He soon had a good farm thoroughly established and was not long in gathering around him the comforts of life. He prospered in the accumulation of means, which in after years he used unsparingly in helping to establish Zion and roll forth the work of the Lord.

In 1839 the true gospel of Jesus Christ was introduced into the neighborhood by Elder Joshua Grant and others, who, having been driven from the State of Missouri the previous year, settled in the vicinity. Mr. Richards house was used to hold meetings in, and in the spring of 1840 he and his wife were baptized by Elder Peter Nichol. A large branch of the Church was subsequently raised up in which Mr. Richards' parents and most of their children were numbered; also some of his wife's brothers and sisters. Of his father's large family Silas was the only one who came with the saints to Utah. In 1844 Bro. Richards exchanged his farm in Stark county for a valuable one near Nauvoo, Ill., where he moved in the ensuing spring.

During his nine years' residence in Stark county he held the office of justice of the peace and postmaster a greater part of the time, giving general satisfaction.

Jan. 22, 1846, he was ordained a High Priest by Patriarch John Smith. Soon after this, when the Temple was so far completed that some of the saints could receive their washings and anointings therein, Brother Richards and wife were among the number, they having contributed liberally of their means for the erection of that building. Together with the rest of the saints the Richards' were compelled by the hand of persecution to leave their homes in Illinois. Bro. Richards, however, was more fortunate than many others, being able to sell his farm (which one year before was worth \$3,000) for \$800. The family crossed the Mississippi river May 4, 1846, arriving in Council Bluffs the following June 24th.

Soon after Bro. Richards was appointed counselor to Elder Moses Clawson, president of a branch of the Church, and counselor to Bishop Daniel Miller; he was also chosen as a member of the High Council in Pottawattamie county, and in 1848 he was ordained a Bishop. In 1849, having prepared to follow the saints to Great Salt Lake Valley, Brother Richards was appointed by Elder Geo. A. Smith to lead a company across the plains. They left Winter Quarters July 10, 1849, and arrived in the Valley Oct. 25th, having had a prosperous journey with but little sickness and only one death.

Elder Richards settled on the Little Cottonwood creek, where he remained until his death. Here he assisted in building the fort at Union, for protection against the Indians, taking an active part in the move south at the time of the Johnston army troubles in 1858. He held the office of Bishop from the first settlement of Union until the early part of 1864, he having been called some time previous to this to assist in settling up the Dixie country, which he did by establishing ware houses in St. George, putting out trees, and starting a vineyard, assisting the people by giving employment to

many. Having been advised by Pres. Brigham Young not to move his family, his work in St. George was conducted by Brother B. F. Pendleton.

Nov. 1, 1869, Bro. Richards, in company with about one hundred others, started east on the U. P. R. R., having been called on a special mission for the winter. He visited relatives and friends in the States, wherever opportunity permitted, teaching the principles of life and salvation and removing much prejudice which existed toward the Latter-Day Saints. Meeting many influential men who exhibited an interest in the doctrines taught by the Elders, Bro. Richards spared no means in leaving a favorable impression on their minds toward the people whom he represented. He returned home in the spring of 1870, having done a good work, besides gathering some genealogy of value to himself.

Elder Richards died March 17. 1884, in the Union Ward ([cemetery marker](#)), where he had lived so long, endearing himself to the people by his good works and friendly council. His noble deeds and integrity will ever live a monument to his name, and an example worthy of emulation by his numerous posterity as well as by every Latter-day Saint.

Union Ward, East Jordan Stake

Andrew Jenson, Encyclopedic History of the Church, p.898-899

UNION WARD, East Jordan Stake, consists of the Latter-day Saints residing in the village of Union ([map](#)) and the surrounding

farming districts, in Salt Lake County, Utah. Union is about 12 miles south southeast of the Temple Block, Salt Lake City.

Union was known as Little Cottonwood from the time of its first settlement in 1849 to 1854. Among the first settlers on the south side of Little Cottonwood Creek, in the spring of 1849, was Jehu Cox, who built a house on the present site of Union Fort and commenced farming. Elijah Elmer located about two miles further up the creek about the same time. In the fall of 1849 [Silas Richards](#) ([cemetery marker](#)) bought out Elijah Elmer's improvements and settled there with his family, together with a number of saints who had just crossed the plains in a company of which he was captain. The following year more settlers arrived and a comfortable school house was built, in which Silas Richards taught school during the winters of 1850-1851 and 1851-1852. Captain Richards was appointed to preside over the settlement immediately upon his arrival, but on July 13, 1851, he was ordained a Bishop and in that capacity, appointed to take charge of the saints at the Little Cottonwood settlement and in the vicinity. As the Indians were somewhat hostile, and depredations were frequent in other parts of the country, an adobe fort was erected at Union in 1854, with walls 12 feet high and six feet thick at the base. But although most of the people moved into the fort, they were never molested by Indians. On account of this structure being erected, the place was known as Union Fort for many years. The name Union was chosen on account of the unity which prevailed in the settlement.

On Oct. 26, 1856, a call was made for the people of Union to furnish five good wagons with experienced teamsters, five span of horses, with feed for the animals, and the wagons to be loaded with clothing and provisions to be sent out to meet the belated Willie and Martin handcart companies, which were snowbound in the mountains. By sunrise the next morning the company was ready to start and the ready response made to the call was astonishing to all.

Bishop Richards having been called to help settle southern Utah, in the beginning of 1865, Union, or Little Cottonwood, was amalgamated with the South Cottonwood Ward. Branch meetings, however, were held occasionally at the old fort at Union, presided over for a time by Richard Taylor, and later by [Ishmael F. Phillips](#).

For some years religious services were held in the Union school house.

History Of Union Fort Cemetery

(Located eight tenths of a mile east on Creek Road. This streets starts from 13th East at about 7400 South ([map](#)). A set of [pictures](#) from the cemetery is available.)

Rufus Forbush came to the valley in 1847 and he settled on Little Cottonwood Creek just east of the present site of Union, where he had his farm. In the winter he came down to the settlement to live. On August 22, 1851, his wife, Polly Clark Forbush, died at the age of 62. At that time there was no graveyard except in Salt Lake City, so he chose the highest spot of ground on his farm and buried her there. During the winter a severe epidemic of Black Smallpox broke out in Sandy, an adjoining town. When Mr. Forbush went back to his farm in the spring he found that other graves were made upon his land. There was nothing to do but to turn the land over to the community for a cemetery. Some of the graves were left unmarked and several times in later years, when graves were dug, they often run on to a box and had to dig some place else.

Gradually as irrigation on the benches increased, sub-water began to rise, and people began to abandon their lots. Only a few persons have been buried there since the water took over. Jake Galbraith, a southerner wounded in the Civil War and who lived nearby, was the grave digger and sexton for many years. After his health failed the friends of the dead dug the graves free.

Sarah Ann Griffiths Forbush died 9 Nov, 1939, and was the last adult to be buried there. The last baby being buried there was Karen Van Valkenburg in 1942.

The preceding information was given to Leila Brady Nix by Lucy E. Graham ?een, (copy off page), a great grand-daughter of Rufus Forbush.

In later years when cemeteries were established in surrounding communities, the Union Cemetery was almost abandoned. Some of the mounds and many of the wood markers have been destroyed; the headstones were nearly all pushed over and broken by stock or vandals. As all official records of the cemetery have been lost, it is quite impossible to identify the location of all of the graves, with the exception of a few that have been located from conversations with older residents. With the meager information obtained, a plat was made of the cemetery by Leila Nix and Kenneth and Ruth Nix.

It is a matter of dispute among a few, as to whether there may have been a few burials before 1851 on the ground that is now known as the Holladay Memorial Park. As far as records show the second oldest cemetery in this locality was the Cottonwood, it was know as such until about 1910 when it was changed to Murray City Cemetery. The first burial having been of a Thomas (stillborn) on 12 May 1874. The first burial in the Mill Creek Cemetary, now know as Elysian Gardens, was 15 ??? (off copy) 1879. First burial in the Sandy City cemetary was in 1883. The Midvale cemetery in 1895.

In 1932 a project was raised to clean off the cemetery grounds and was found that the W.P.A. would do it for a community project. Eddie Fernstermaker was in charge and it was cleaned up by the cutting of the willows, weeds, etc.

Again on the 6 June 1947, some of the descendants of the Pioneers who were buried there, met at the home of Clarence Wardle to

make arrangements to have the cemetery cleaned again and this time to have a fence put around it so that the cattle could not get in; also to fix a bridge so that entrance could be made into the cemetery.

Ezra Pate (father of Ora Pate Stewart) was chosen as chairman and Mrs. Verna Proctor Bishop as secretary, George Nowlan acted as Treasurer and Mrs. Leila Brady was appointed to get what names she could of people buried in the cemetery. Those present at the first meeting were, Ezra Pate, Clifford Nowlan, Clarence and Wardle, Kate Brady, Leila Brady Nix, Vina Fenstermaker and Verna Proctor.

An abstract was drawn up by Ezra Pate and Mr. Douglas McChue. It was decided to ask each family, who had people buried there, to contribute to defray the expenses. The cemetery was surveyed; a title and deed made and given to the Union First Ward. Ira Proctor had the ground sprayed and with the help of the County tractors, had the trees and willows dug up by the roots. A work committee cleaned the grounds. The ladies of the committee furnished the men with lunch each day that they worked. A wire fence was placed around the lot and at a later date a plan was made to have a monument placed inside the ground.

On May 30, 1950 at 3 P.M. a short Memorial service was held on the cemetery lot. An application was made for a marker for the monument that was to be built, In the winter of the same year (1950) the Central camp of the Daughters of the Utah Pioneers gave a marker to the Union Camp.

On July 7, 1951 the ground was broken, but it was two weeks before the work began, There is three feet of concrete base in the monument. It was designed by George A. Green and who also did the work with the help of other men of the community. It took 110

hours of work which was all donated. The rock was the best that could be bought for the purpose.

At 6:30 P.M. on August 22, 1951, the 100th anniversary of the first burial there, the monument was unveiled and dedicated in honor of our Pioneers who established the Community and endured the heartaches and trials of those days.

PROGRAM

Leila Nix, Mistress-of-Ceremonies

1. Selection: Male Quartet, *Utah, We Love Thee*
2. Unveiling of Monument: Lucy Green Oldest local living descendant of Rufus and Polly Forbush
3. Dedicatory Prayer: Heber J. Burgon
4. History of the Cemetery: Edna Proctor
5. Remarks: Ivy Towers, Monument Chairman, County D.U.P. Camp
6. Ceremony of Sealing Box in Monument: George Green, Jr.
7. Remarks: Ella Smith, President, County D.U.P. Camp
8. Presentation of Monument: Lois Richardson
9. Acceptance of Monument: Bishop E. H. Belcher
10. Tribute to the Pioneers: Ora Pate Stewart
11. Selection: Male Quartet, *The Lord's Prayer*

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