

Edward Bunker

A PIONEER TO THE END



Family History StoryBooks

In the beautiful town of Atkinson, Maine, in a bustling household filled with love and laughter, Edward Bunker grew up as the youngest of nine children. His ancestors had settled Bunker Hill in Massachusetts, the site of one of the most famous battles of the American Revolutionary War.

Surrounded by the green expanse of their family farm, Edward's days were filled with chores and play under the vast, open skies. But even as a boy, Edward dreamed of seeing more of the country. His heart yearned for adventures beyond the farm's fences.







When Edward was 19 years old he left to see the country, working odd jobs to support his travels. Edward's journey took a turn when he passed through Kirtland, Ohio. It was here that he met Martin Harris, one of the Three Witnesses of the Book of Mormon. Although Martin wasn't participating in the Church at the time, his powerful testimony stirred something deep within Edward.

In April 1845 after months of study and prayer, Edward embraced the teachings of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and was baptized. He finally knew why he had felt inspired to leave his home, and knew where he was needed. With newfound faith guiding him, Edward moved on to the growing city of Nauvoo, a place buzzing with the energy of a community united in belief.

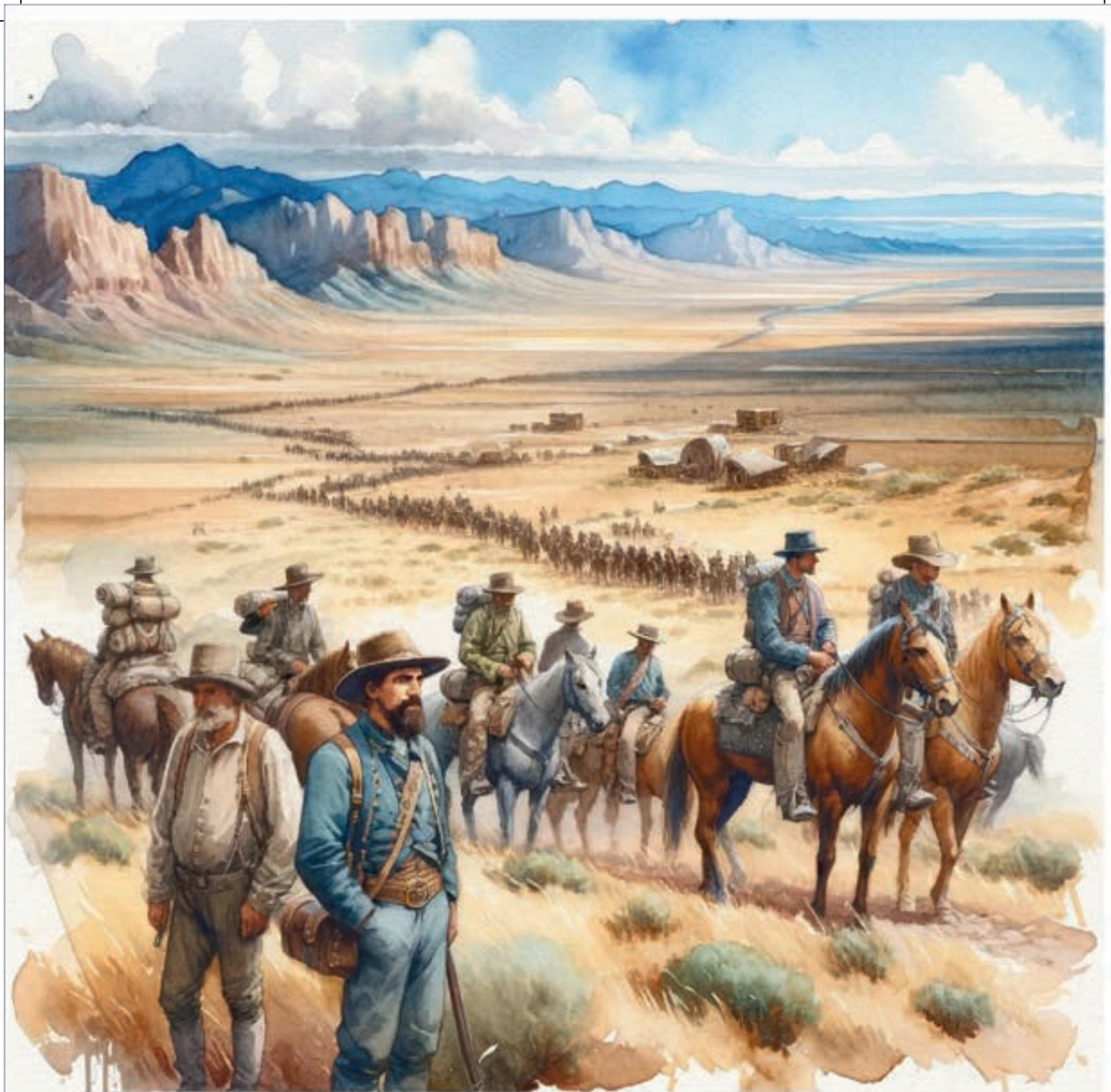


In Nauvoo, amidst the challenging times and significant persecution of the early Latter-day Saint community, Edward found love. He married Emily Abbott, and they were sealed in the sacred Nauvoo Temple by John Taylor.

Their union, blessed in the holy walls of the temple, was a beacon of light they could rely on as they faced the harsh reality of the pending expulsion. They, along with the rest of the Nauvoo Saints, were soon driven out of their beloved city onto the snowy plains. It was a test of their faith and resilience.







After being driven from Nauvoo, Edward and Emily had little money. They lived in a tiny log shack without windows or a door. The Mexican-American War had just started and there were opportunities for work as a soldier, so Edward joined the Mormon Battalion along with a courageous group of Latter-day Saints.

This historic journey led them on an incredible trek across the American landscape to California. Each step was a testament to their dedication to their families and their church. They marched through deserts and over mountains, driven by the goal of earning much-needed funds to support their families on their journey to Utah.



The pioneer refugees were destitute. Emily saw one particular baby dressed in an old curtain and felt embarrassed for the mother. She wondered why the mother didn't do more to clothe her child! When Emily's own son, Edward Jr., was born a few months later though, she had nothing to dress the baby in.

In a touching gesture of love and support, that same mother offered Emily the remaining curtain fabric. Emily had to swallow her pride and was grateful for the woman's charity and made a dress for her son out of the fabric. It was the only clothing he had for a long time.







The war finally ended and the soldiers were allowed to go home. Edward's return to his family was a dangerous journey of 2,000 miles in the harsh winter. He stopped along the way in Salt Lake City. There, he was encouraged to wait out the winter, but he was worried about Emily and decided to continue on despite the risk.

His only food was a 16-pound bag of flour, and what he and the other men were able to hunt along the way. They reached the brink of starvation, and even boiled and ate the leather from their saddle bags to stay alive. His desire to make it back to his wife and baby boy got him through the horrors of his journey. Edward was an excellent example of determination and resilience through difficult challenges.



When he finally reached Winter Quarters, Edward met his 11-month-old son for the first time. It was a moment filled with joy, but also pain as he thought about the months of separation. It took him several weeks to recover physically from the journey, but his work was far from over.

Edward started working odd jobs again and earned enough to provide wagons for Emily's mother and siblings, and then for his own family. This took two years. He was always willing to put in whatever time and energy was required to show his unwavering dedication and love to his family.







The Bunker family finally reached Utah in 1850, where they settled in Ogden. Here, Edward played a pivotal role in the community's development, overseeing the construction of roads and bridges. His contributions were essential in shaping the new frontier, exemplifying his leadership and commitment to the well-being of his fellow settlers.

In 1852, Edward was called to serve a mission in England. During his two-year mission, and an additional year in Scotland, he spent much of his time in leadership roles, guiding and nurturing the British Saints. His dedication to his faith and to serving others was evident in his tireless efforts and the growth of the Church under his guidance.



While Edward was abroad, his family in Utah endured the “grasshopper war.” Vast swarms of crickets threatened their livelihood, devouring their crops. The people did all they could to destroy the crickets, and fasted and prayed for help from the Lord. Miraculously, flocks of seagulls appeared, eating the pests and saving their harvest.

The crickets weren’t the only challenge the family faced while Edward was gone. The family also braved an especially severe winter, tragically losing 40 head of cattle to the cold. Yet, through these trials, their faith and resolve only grew stronger.







After his mission, Edward's journey home was a patchwork of travel modes. He went by ship, train, and even by steamboat. He hoped to travel the rest of the journey from Iowa to Utah as quickly as possible on his own, but was asked to lead a handcart company of immigrants.

Edward was tasked with guiding over 300 Welsh Saints, many of whom didn't speak English, across the plains. Their journey, covering 20 miles per day and lasting 65 days, was a remarkable feat. Their speed helped them avoid the tragic fate of the Martin & Willie handcart companies later that year.

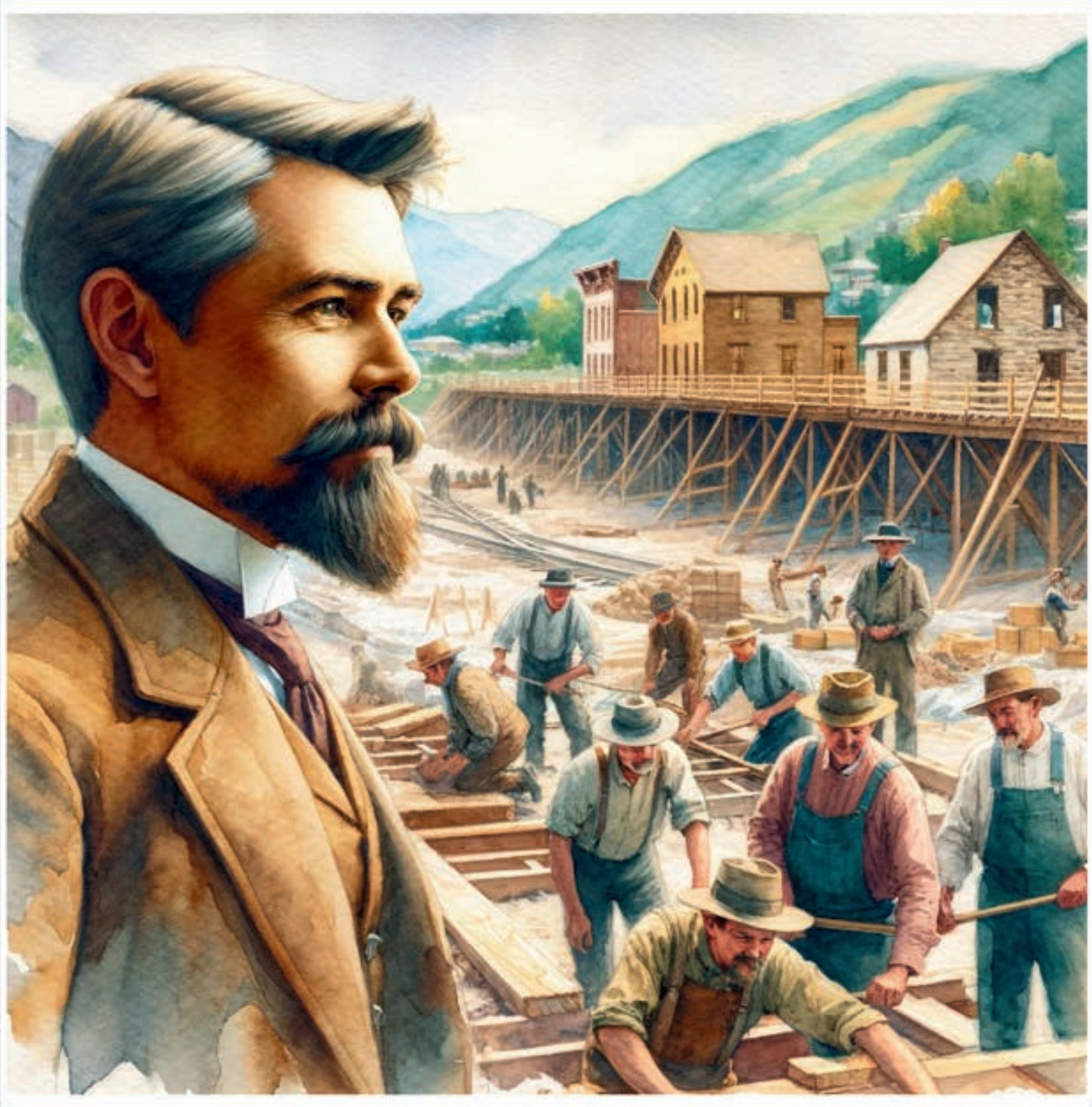


One day along their journey Edward's group faced a frightening attack by Indians. Some people panicked, while others suggested stopping and praying for deliverance. Edward countered that he was 'up-to-date' on his prayers, and ordered everyone to circle the wagons and handcarts and prepare to fight! The Indians saw that the pioneers were ready to fight, and left.

In a moment of crisis, Edward showed the importance of action coupled with faith, and of living close enough to the Lord to receive His guidance whenever necessary. His decisiveness and bias for practical action, as well his trust in spiritual guidance became a powerful lesson for all.







Back home in Ogden, Edward continued his work planning and building roads and bridges. There was always work to do in the Utah territory. He was asked to serve as a Bishop, a calling he fulfilled with deep sincerity and compassion.

Future Church President David O. McKay's father, who worked for Edward, once overheard him praying fervently for his family. The prayer was so sincere and powerful that David's father remembered the experience for the rest of his life and shared it with his children.



A few years later when an army from the United States threatened the Saints, Edward moved his family to Payson for safety. It was difficult to abandon everything they had built in Ogden, but he had to do what was best to keep his family safe.

Once the army left, Edward's leadership skills were again called upon as he was sent to settle Southern Utah. They settled Toquerville, and then had to move again when he was asked to serve as Bishop in Santa Clara. He served in that calling for 12 years, guiding and supporting his community through times of change and challenge.







Edward's wisdom and compassion was exemplified in his dealings with others. One time some men brought an Indian boy who had been caught stealing cattle to Edward, and asked him to punish the boy. Edward told the men not to punish the boy, but just to scare him and let him go.

Years later, a band of Indians led by that boy's father ambushed Edward's son as he was traveling between settlements. When the father realized that this was Edward Bunker's son, he let him escape in order to return the favor. Edward's compassion for the Native Americans saved the life of his son.



On another occasion Edward and Emily were traveling through the Arizona Desert and planned to stay at a well-known watering hole. A few miles before the campsite, Edward felt prompted that they should stop for the night and stay where they were. There was some grumbling, as everyone was looking forward to resting at the oasis.

The next morning when they reached the watering hole however, they found that a band of Indians had attacked the group of people who had camped there the night before. Because Edward followed the spiritual prompting, his family was spared.



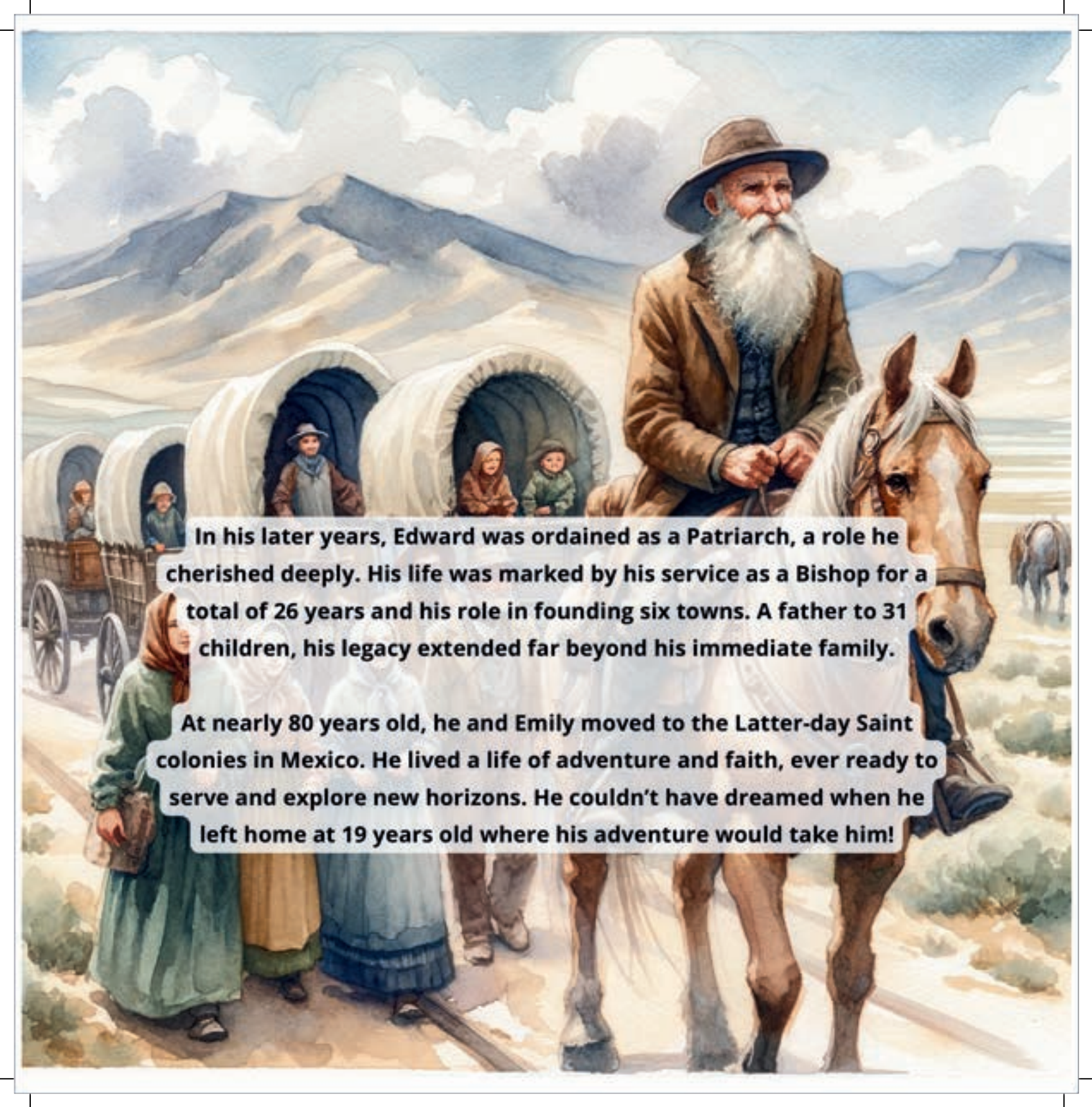




After years of living in the Saint George area, Edward wanted to try something different. He hoped to build a community of people who were completely united and shared all of their possessions in common, called at the time the United Order. This led to the establishment of Bunkerville in Nevada.

This settlement was unique, as it was the only instance where living in perfect harmony actually yielded a financial profit for those involved. For nine years, he served as bishop in Bunkerville, guiding the community in their efforts to live in unity and cooperation.





In his later years, Edward was ordained as a Patriarch, a role he cherished deeply. His life was marked by his service as a Bishop for a total of 26 years and his role in founding six towns. A father to 31 children, his legacy extended far beyond his immediate family.

At nearly 80 years old, he and Emily moved to the Latter-day Saint colonies in Mexico. He lived a life of adventure and faith, ever ready to serve and explore new horizons. He couldn't have dreamed when he left home at 19 years old where his adventure would take him!

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AUGUST 1, 1822 - NOVEMBER 17, 1901

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Edward Bunker



Bunkerville, Nevada



Edward and Emily on a Trip to Arizona



Edward and Emily Bunker Family



1. PVT John Rider
2. PVT Ralph Briggs Douglas
3. PVT Edward Bunker
4. Melissa Burton Corey Kimball
5. LT Lorenzo Clark
6. PVT Christopher Layton
7. Mary McRee Black Brown
8. PVT Charles Brent Hancock
9. PVT Zacheus Cheney
10. PVT George Washington Hancock
11. PVT John McCann Bybee
12. PVT John Crow Thompson
13. PVT Joseph A. Taylor
14. PVT Jarvis Johnson
15. SGT Reddick Newton Alred
16. Musician Willard Gilbert Smith
17. PVT Jesse Scwell Brown
18. SGT William Smith Mur
19. PVT James Wright Shupe
20. CPL Alexander Brown
21. PVT George Washington Boyd
22. PVT Oliver Gautrey Workman
23. PVT Clinton Donera! Bronson
24. PVT Orrin Hatch

Not pictured:

- SGT Daniel Tyler
- PVT Abner Blackburn



Survivors of the Mormon Battalion, photographed in 1897 at a jubilee celebration of the arrival of Mormon pioneers in the Great Salt Lake Valley on July 24, 1847. George E. Anderson photographed the Veteran Pioneers of 1847 as they were assembled in front of the Assembly Hall on Temple Square. The battalion was mustered by President James Polk to fight in the Mexican War, 1846-1848. The battalion's famous march began at Winter Quarters (now Omaha, Nebraska). Soldiers were equipped at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas and continued on to San Diego.

Included was Mary McRee Black Brown, widow of Captain James Brown, leader of Company C and the Sick Detachment.



1897 Mormon Battalion Reunion