


600 miles of new and unknown country. On Friday, the 24th day of March 1876, Lot Smith and 115 families arrived at Sunset Crossing where President Young had instructed the Saints to settle. Each company organized into the United Order, a cooperative system where all things were held in common, each contributing to the common good and receiving an equal share of the surplus as needed. Their attempts to dam the Little Colorado River were unsuccessful. The river would frequently flood, washing out the dams, flooding the fields, and destroying the crops before they could be harvested and stored. Obed, St. Joseph, and Sunset relocated to higher ground and on Christmas Eve 1876, the Smith company moved into the newly built fort of Sunset. Sunset Fort was constructed of cottonwood logs and measured 198 ft. sq., consisting of:

- 31 dwellings 14x16 ft,
- One dining hall 55x15 ft,
- One school room 33x14 ft,
- One kitchen
- Two store rooms
- A granary
- And a corn crib

Sunset Fort housed 102 people: 19 men, 18 women, 43 boys, and 22 girls. The first post office on the Little Colorado River was established at Sunset on July 5, 1876. The postmaster was Mr. Alfred M. Derrick. The post office closed November 23, 1887. The local newspaper was called The Enterprise, containing short stories, poems, and news of visiting missionaries. These early pioneers settled the territory, befriending and sharing the gospel with the Native Americans. After many hardships, floods, and droughts, the pioneers were relieved of their calling in 1881. Many of the pioneers were called to other missions in the San Luis Valley at Manassas, CO, and to colonize along the Gila River Valley of the Arizona Territory. The last to leave Sunset was Lot Smith in 1888. Church President Brigham Young died on August 29, 1877. President Young called Lot Smith to the Arizona Territory and no other authority ever released him from his calling. Today, this lonely windswept graveyard stands in memoriam to these early, resourceful and resilient pioneering families.

  
**HOMOLOVI**  
 STATE PARK  
**SUNSET CEMETERY**

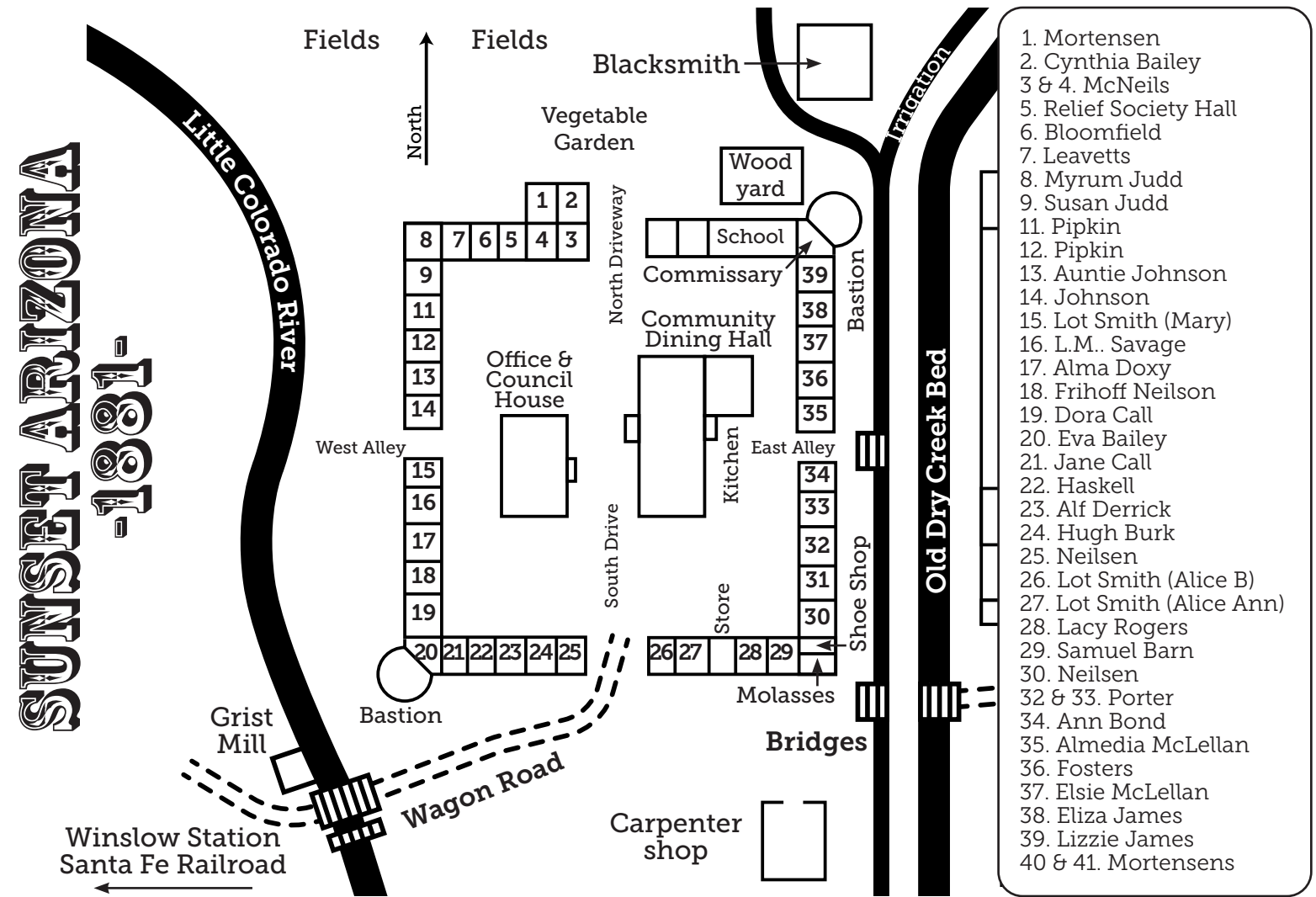


9/21

Although **Homolovi State Park** protects ancestral Hopi lands and cultural artifacts, the park also contains a small cemetery from a group of 19th-century settlers who founded the Fort of Sunset. **Sunset Cemetery** stands as a mute testimony to the undaunted spirit of the brave pioneers who forged a living from this once desolate and forbidding land.

On January 24, 1876, over 200 men, women, and children were called as missionaries to settle the Little Colorado River Valley. James Brown and Lot Smith were appointed to lead the expedition by President Brigham Young of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The families had ten days to prepare for the journey south. It was necessary that they depart before the melting snow swelled the rivers and streams, making travel impossible. On February 3, 1876, teams of horses, mules, and oxen pulled wagons filled with the necessities of life to establish new communities in the Arizona Territory. The journey took six weeks, covering

*(Continued on back cover)*



**About Historic Cemeteries...**

Historic cemeteries are important to families and communities. This importance has been recognized in state legislation. They are the final resting place of our ancestors. They have religious, cultural, and research values. Inappropriate actions, whether intentional or not, may cause irreversible damage to these fragile resources. When visiting a historic cemetery, leave as you find it. If you find vandalism or maintenance issues, contact the landowner. Cemeteries occur on both public and private land. Local mortuaries and/or cemetery associations will have information on land ownership. Help preserve Arizona's historic cemeteries by following our visitor etiquette guide.

**Historic Cemetery Visitor Etiquette Guide**

- Obtain permission to be on the land from the landowner.
- Be respectful.
- Follow specific rules established by the cemetery.
- Report damage and/or vandalism to the landowner and/or local law enforcement.
- **Do not make rubbings of grave markers.** Take pictures or make sketches.

- Do not stand on, remove, move, deface, damage, handle, or tamper with any of the grave markers, fences, rock outlines, graves or cemetery architecture.
- Do not weed, dig, or plant without landowner permission.
- Do not clean gravestones without following prior evaluations, recommendations, and preservation plans completed by professional conservators and filed with permit to the cemetery conservator.
- Violations may result in criminal prosecution under ARS 13-1604, 13-1802, and 41-865, or civil prosecution under ARS 41-856, and 41-841 through 41-846.



## **INTERNMENTS**

As of May 10, 2018, this is the most complete list of those interred at Sunset Cemetery.

### **Marion Benjamin Black**

**Birth:** 4 Jul. 1881, Apache County, Arizona Territory

**Death:** 4 Jul. 1881, Apache County, Arizona Territory

**Mother:** Lucretia Jane Maxwell

**Father:** William Grant Black

**Burial Information:** 5 Jul. 1881, LDS Archive record has 26 Jul. 1879, Sunset, Apache County, A.T. Note: Only hours old from Journals of Levi Mathers Savage 1876 - 1935

### **George Roselle Burk**

**Birth:** Dec. 1882, Apache County, Arizona Territory

**Death:** 8 Sep. 1893, Navajo County, Arizona Territory

**Mother:** Lois Hamblin

**Father:** Hubert Roselle Burk

### **Marion Aaron Burk**

**Birth:** 30 Sep. 1880, Apache County, Arizona Territory

**Death:** 6 Feb. 1881, Apache County, Arizona Territory

**Mother:** Lois Hamblin

**Father:** Hubert Roselle Burk

### **Mrs. Mary (Donald) Stark Buxton**

**Birth:** 4 Mar. 1829, Dunfermline, Fife Scotland, UK

**Death:** 14 Nov. 1881, Brigham City, Apache County, Arizona Territory

**Married:** John Buxton in Salt Lake City, UT on 9 Oct. 1873

**Mother:** Mary Shaw

**Father:** Malcolm Donald

**Burial:** 15 Nov. 1881.

### **James Allred Curtis**

**Birth:** 6 Jul. 1872, Salem, Utah County, UT

**Death:** 3 Jul. 1879, Apache County, Arizona Territory

**Mother:** Elizabeth Hanks

**Father:** Moses Curtis

**Burial:** 4 July 1879.

### **John Jones Edwards**

**Birth:** 6 Apr. 1798, Carmarthenshire, Wales, Wales

**Death:** 28 Dec. 1879, Apache County, Arizona Territory

**Mother:** Mary Jones

**Father:** Edward Edwards

**Wife:** Johanna Williams. Married 24 May 1827  
Five children.

### **Francis Asbury Hammond, Jr.**

**Birth:** 15 Sep. 1850, South Cotton Wood, Salt Lake County, UT

**Death:** 27 Apr. 1876, Sunset Fort, Apache County, Arizona Territory

**Mother:** Mary Jane Dilworth

**Father:** Francis Asbury Hammond

1 of 12 siblings: 6 girls, 6 boys

**Burial:** Reinterred in UT. Recorded in the Ogden Junction, 18 May: "Captain and secretary in Lot Smith's company, he was taken suddenly ill, with a severe pain in the right side."

### **Mrs. Walter Hill**

**Birth:** Date not documented

**Death:** 10 Mar. 1883, Apache County, Arizona Territory

**Husband:** Sheepman Walter Hill

**Burial:** 11 Mar. 1883. Not LDS. Buried in NNW of N fenced area of cemetery below cemetery fence.

Grave marked with wire pin flag. No marker known to have been manufactured for Mrs. Hill.

### **Maggie James**

**Birth:** 19 Dec. 1882, Apache County, Arizona Territory

**Death:** 20 Feb. 1883, Apache County, Arizona Territory

**Mother:** Elizabeth Salomia Bloomfield

**Father:** Joseph Henry James

**Burial:** Original grave marker replaced with granite marker by family in 1990s.

### **Joseph Ether Knight**

**Birth:** 18 Oct. 1840, Nauvoo, Hancock County, IL

**Death:** 27 Jun. 1878, Apache County, Arizona Territory

**Mother:** Lydia Goldwaite

**Father:** Newel Knight

**Wife:** Jane Lucinda Judd. Married 17 Feb. 1863, 7 children.

**Burial:** Grave marker placed by Israel Call, 2. Feb. 1886.

### **Joseph Reid McNeil**

**Birth:** 17 Jun. 1881, Apache County, Arizona Territory

**Death:** 14 Sep. 1898, Navajo County, Arizona Territory

**Mother:** Mary Jane Montgomery

**Father:** James (Thomas) Reid McNeil

### **Phoebe Deseret "Nellie" McNeil**

**Birth:** 16 Sep. 1876, Yavapai County, Arizona Territory

**Death:** 5 Jun. 1878, Yavapai County, Arizona Territory

**Mother:** Phoebe Ann Merrill

**Father:** James (Thomas) Reid McNeil

**From the Diary of WC McClellan:** "Wed. 5 Jun. 1878. Sawmill {McClellan}, very unwell. Sawing today. About noon Jas McNeil arrived here with dying child. It breathed its last in a few moments. Helped make coffin in afternoon. He started for camp about 5 o'clock."

**From the Diary of FG Nielson:** "6 Thu. Jun. 1878. Fast day. Fasted til noon... Attended fast meeting which occupied in paying respects to Bro. McNeil's little girl Nellie who died. The parents came here with child this morning. Remarks were made by... Funeral took place at 5 pm on hill southeast of fort..."

### **Baby Miller (Meiller or Mueller)**

**Birth:** Date not documented

**Death:** 14/15 Nov. 1881, Yavapai County, Arizona Territory

**Mother:** Not documented

**Father:** Not documented

Death information from the diary of WC McLellan.

### **Pvt. James Gadison "Gad" Morris**

**Birth:** 1830, Franklin County, GA

**Death:** 21 Mar. 1878, Yavapai County, Arizona Territory

**Mother:** Lucy Parham

**Father:** James Morris

**Wife:** Elizabeth Wanslee, married 6 Jan. 1852, 11 children. Lived in Ballenger's (Brigham City) Camp, may have died from a heart attack. Gad was enlisted as a PVT in Co. C, 40th Reg. Georgia Infantry on 1 May 1862. He was captured at Vicksburg, MS, 4 Jul. 1863, and again in Jul. 1864. War Dept showed him being 6'1" tall, dark hair, and eyes.

### **Frihoff Brigham Neilson**

**Birth:** 10 Jan. 1878, Yavapai County, Arizona Territory

**Death:** 22 Aug. 1879, Yavapai County, Arizona Territory

**Mother:** Emma Waitstill Mecham

**Father:** Frihoff Godfrey Neilson

**Burial:** Buried on 23 Aug. 1879.

### **Silas Harvey Norton**

**Birth:** 3 Jan. 1872, Salt Creek, Nephi Juab County, UT

**Death:** 16 Feb. 1878, Yavapai County, Arizona Territory

**Mother:** Mary Sophia Marble

**Father:** John Merlin Plumb

**Burial:** Buried on 17 Feb. 1878.

### **JC Plumb**

**Birth:** 8 Feb. 1879, Yavapai County, Arizona Territory

**Death:** 16 Aug. 1879, Yavapai County, Arizona Territory

**Mother:** Mary (Polly) Ann Clifford

**Father:** John Merlin Plumb

**Burial:** 1 of 14 siblings: 10 girls, 4 boys.

### **Marius Earl Porter**

**Birth:** 8 Jul. 1880, Porterville, Morgan County, UT

**Death:** 10 Aug. 1881, Apache County, Arizona Territory

**Mother:** Nina Melinda Leavitt

**Father:** Sanford Marcius Porter

### **Smith Doolittle Rogers**

**Birth:** 31 Aug. 1878, Parowan, Iron County, UT

**Death:** 10 Jan. 1879, Yavapai County, Arizona Territory

**Mother:** Eliza Snow Smith

**Father:** Smith Doolittle Rogers

### **Baby Smith**

**Birth:** Date not documented

**Death:** 25 Sep. 1881, Mormon Lake, Yavapai County, Arizona Territory

**Mother:** Sylvia Stoddard

**Father:** Jedediah Heber Smith

**Burial:** Died at Mormon Lake. Buried at sunset on 26 Sep. 1881.

### **Rhoda Minerva "Minnie" Smith**

**Birth:** 8 Jun. 1885, Apache County, Arizona Territory

**Death:** 12 Jul. 1886, Yavapai County, Arizona Territory

**Mother:** Alice Ann Richards

**Father:** Lot Smith

**Burial:** Died from scarlet fever. Buried on 13 Jul. 1886, in NE corner next to brothers George Albert and Wilford Woodruff Smith

### **George Albert Smith**

**Birth:** 9 Sep. 1874, Farmington, Davis County, UT

**Death:** 19 Jun. 1883, Apache County, Arizona Territory

**Mother:** Alice Ann Richards

**Father:** Lot Smith

**Burial:** Drowned in Little Colorado River. Buried in NE corner next to brother Wilford Woodruff Smith and sister Rhoda Minerva Smith.

### **Wilford Woodruff Smith**

**Birth:** 28 Dec. 1879, Apache County, Arizona Territory

**Death:** 14 Mar. 1883, Yavapai County, Arizona Territory

**Mother:** Alice Ann Richards

**Father:** Lot Smith

**Burial Information:** Died from burns suffered after falling into a vat of lye water during soap making on 11 Mar. 1883. He died three days after the accident. Buried in NE corner of cemetery, next to brother George Albert Smith and sister Rhoda Minerva Smith.

### **John (Baby Boy) Wright**

**Birth:** 21 Jan. 1877, Yavapai County, Arizona Territory

**Death:** 21 Jan. 1877, Yavapai County, Arizona Territory

**Mother:** Betsey Jane Bowers

**Father:** Joseph Wright

**Burial Information:** Lived one hour, buried 21 Jan. 1877, from the journal of Levi Mathers Savage.

### **Additional Resources**

**Arizona State Library and Archives**  
azmemory.azlibrary.gov/digital/custom/newspapers

**Find a Grave**  
findagrave.com/cemetery/857921/sunset-cemetery

**Arizona Genealogy Birth and Death Certificates**  
genealogy.az.gov

**Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Genealogy**  
familysearch.org