

A Sketch of My Life  
by Verona Snow Whiting

My father, Bernard Snow, was of the old puritan stock. His emigrant ancestor, William Snow, settled in Plymouth. He married Rebecca Brown, daughter of Peter Brown who came over in the Mayflower. (His son, Joseph married Hopedstill Alden, granddaughter of John and Priscilla Alden). We find by reading William Snow's history that the Snows were an educated, thrifty people. My father was born in Pomfret, Vermont 22 Jan 1822. Here he attended the common schools, the academy and graduated from Cambridge College in Mass. He married Louisa King of Pomfret and three children blessed this union though two died in infancy, the mother also died leaving a son that lived to be eight years old. Father, being bereft of his family and disheartened left for California during the gold rush. On returning from there he stopped in Salt Lake City and met my mother at a boarding house. She became the mother of five children, three boys and two girls. There were two older and three younger than myself. My mother's name was Alice Smith. She and her mother joined the church in England. They left all their family ties and when my mother was eighteen sailed for America. While still living in Salt Lake City my father filled a mission to England and visited my mother's people but no more of them ever joined the church.

While living in Salt Lake City two children were born, a girl and a boy and they continued to live there until the invasion of Johnson's army. By the council of Brigham Young a great many people moved south and they moved to Manti. There was a new house built of stone near where the Manti temple now stands. It had been built by Brigham Young but as Johnson's army had been held back he never moved from Salt Lake. However for many years this house was called Brigham's house and in it I was born, Mar. 17, 1859. This house still stands and is well preserved although built about seventy five years ago.

My father as a pioneer helped build up the country. He was a mill-wright by trade and built a number of mills in Utah. He built lumber mills in both Little and Big Cottonwood canyons near Salt Lake. When I was a year old my parents moved from Manti to Ft. Ephraim, a distance of about eight miles and here my father built a lumber and a flour mill. During this time two more children were born and I was about six years of age when he sold his mills and property in Ft. Ephraim and moved to Fountain Green about twelve miles distant. I feel that this place is where I began to live. Memory carries me back to those child days, where the world seemed ever bright and beautiful. We lived west of this little town and I with my brother and sister used to walk a mile to school. A mile further west from our home was the mountains or hills and of all the beautiful places that I have ever seen in my life or at least in my childish mind, this seemed the most wonderful. There was a large spring of cold water which supplied the little village and was also the stream that ran the lumber and flour mills which my father built here. A flume of heavy lumber carried the water from the lumber mill down the slope about the distance of a city block to the flour mill. Our home was about half way between the two

mills. This spring came out of the rocks and was surrounded by wild currant bushes and other shrubbery. The hills are covered with this same shrubbery and the village gets its name, Fountain Green, from this fertile spot. We children delighted in gathering the currants when they were ripe. In winter the water leaking slowly from the mill flume would freeze into icicles to the ground and these icicles would gradually get larger around until some of them would get to be one and a half feet in circumference and this ice instead of being crystal would turn a milky white and freeze into so many shapes that it was a most beautiful sight. There were little apartments where we children would play on sunshiny days. We played that these little apartments between the icicles were rooms or houses. We never seemed to notice the cold. This ice would stay for several months during the coldest weather.

When I was ten years old my parents moved to Springville, where we children could have the advantage of better schools. At the age of fourteen I was invited to join the dramatic association which I enjoyed very much as dramatics are my hobby if I have any. I followed this all the rest of my life off and on until old age came creeping on. Here was where I met my husband, Charles Whiting, who was also born in Manti seven years before I was. His father being a horticulturist moved to Springville also where the climate is more mild and more adapted to fruit and flower growing. He also kept a nursery and had lots of honey bees. In the year of 1876, Jan 24, my husband and I were married in the Salt Lake endowment house and three weeks later my husband was one of two hundred called to the Arizona mission on the Little Colorado River. We then became real pioneers. The men built a dam and brought water out on the land and we raised good crops for several years but in time the alkali raised to the surface causing the land to be worthless so we had to abandon this part of the country.

My husband then went into the cattle buisness and was quite prosperous for those days. We moved to a little place called Wilford in the White Mountains, about twenty five miles west of Snowflake. This was a fine place for raising stock but it became infested with outlaws of the worst type. My husband was in partnership with J.J. Adams. ((Wasn't Hettie Adams Tenney a daughter of this J.J. Adams? W.W.S.) At one time they missed seven head of their best horses and in tracing them they found that they had been driven off over the mountains, so they followed them. My husband by practise had become expert in tracking horses. When they strike solid rock they would lose the tracks entirely. He would hunt around until he would find a mark on the rocks where a horse's hoof had made a little scratch. This was slow work but he followed this up until he struck ground again when the tracking would be easy for a while. This was in the fall and during the summer of this year two men entered the Woodruff Co-op store and held up two men (Joseph Fish being one, I do not remember the other) and robbed the store. Among other things they took a pair of field glasses and got away. No one knew where they came from or where they went. Now back to my story, as Whiting and Adams proceeded on their journey they camped on top of the mountain for the night and the next morning as they were going down on the other side they came onto a log cabin and a garden spot with a spring

near by. No one was there so they dismounted and each pulled a turnip. As they were peeling them two of the toughest looking men they had ever seen rode up. They both had rifles swung across their saddles and belts well filled with cartridges. Our men knew in a minute that they were the horse thieves and they also knew that they had better not let them know that they were after the horses if they valued their lives. One of them carried a pair of field glasses over his shoulder. My husband knew at a glance that these were the men who had robbed the Woodruff store as he had heard the description of them and also felt that these were the men who had robbed the store. They seemed puzzled to know whether our men were after the horses or if they were prospectors going through the country and asked all kinds of questions. Whiting told them that they were on their way to the Tonto Basin to see a friend by the name of Martin Sanders. They enquired where they camped the previous night and (Whiting) pointed to a different place from where they had camped. One of the outlaws answered, "Like hell, you did. You came over the hill there." My husband and Adams knew that they had been watching them, then and that they were in real danger. Their own rifles were in their scabbards tied on their saddles. The outlaws finally offered to direct them to Tonto Basin. This mountain in those days was very rugged and not passable for wagons, there being just narrow trails for horsemen. The outlaws took the lead, Whiting and Adams following. While riding along they came to a little nook by the side of the trail just large enough for a horse to stand. One of the outlaws turned his horse in here pretending to fix his saddle and then rode in behind leaving our men in between the two. They knew then that they were in close quarters and could only trust in God for their protection. After a while they came to a little open spot and the desperados left them saying, "When you come here again come and camp with us, like white men and don't come sneaking around."

Our men followed this trail for some distance then turned their horses heads toward home, glad to get out of a hot-bed with their lives. But undaunted they kept quiet three weeks, then got four more men and went back over the mountain to search again for their horses. They separated into couples and it was understood that they would all meet at camp in the evening and report. The second day of their search my husband and Ira Porter saw a man coming toward them. They thought they had seen them and hid behind some rocks. Whiting remarked, "I have hoped all my life that I would not have to shed blood but I'm afraid that the time has come. We will let him come up but we will not let him go away. It is our life or his."

Happily providence overruled, for when he came to the turn in the road he went the other way, evidently he had not seen them. They returned to camp to report and found two of the men there but they had seen nothing. While they were preparing supper, Adams and his son came with all seven of the horses. They had found them staked out and the man Whiting and Porter saw had just been there staking them on fresh feed. The horses' brands were burned and disfigured. There were big scabs like they had been burned with an iron. Stealing horses was the outlaws profession and when there were no trace of their former brands they would take them to other parts of

the country and sell them. Horses brought good prices in those days before automobiles ran the country wild.

The following winter in February my husband was called again with others to settle in Old Mexico and help establish colonies there. There were not enough men left at this place of Wilford and surrounding country to hold the watering places and this gang of outlaws jumped them and it became a hot bed of thieves and they ran all the decent people out. There were three outfits of them, Blains, Tewksbury brothers Grahams and Blevins. In the Blevins family there were the old man, his wife and several sons, also a man by the name of Cooper, Mrs. Blevin's son by a former husband. They were all desperate men. There sprung up trouble among them and Blain got shot in the mouth but he was too tough to die. Soon after this Blain and one of the Tewksburys were arrested and taken to St. Johns for trial for robbing the Woodruff Co-op. Having in those days mostly Mexican officials, it was easy to buy off and they were soon turned loose. At one time Cooper, his mother and her baby boy, thirteen years of age with two more of their gang came to Holbrook. The officers had been wanting to get them for some time, so sheriff Owens offered to go and arrest them. He went to the door, knocked and Cooper came to answer. Owens notified him that he had a warrant for his arrest and Cooper started to pull his gun and the officer shot him. Then the baby boy leveled a gun on Owens and the officer had to kill him to save his own life. The old feud between the three gangs continued until they killed one another off. There was only one of the Blevins left and the last I heard of him he was living in the southwest part of Arizona. They say he is a good citizen. From these incidences the plot of Zane Grey's novel - To the Last Man - was written.

In the year 1884 (1885), my husband with others moved to Old Mexico. Through stock industries and farming we overcame the hardships of a new country and we liked that land.

In the following summer we returned to our old home in the White Mountains to look after our stock which we had left there. In the fall we prepared to return to Old Mexico and expected to travel back with Joseph Cardon. When we reached Taylor he was ready to go but word had come from Fort Apache that Geronimo, chief of the Apaches with other Indians had stolen away from the fort and was on the warpath and it would not be safe to travel over the mountain at that time. It was a disappointment to us being ready to go and not able to reach our destination before winter set in. So we conferred with the officials at the fort and they told us if there was quite a number in our company perhaps we could cross the mountains in safety. We ran the risk of our lives, having only two married men and three boys between the ages of sixteen and eighteen. With these we started out, passed Fort Apache and crossed Black River, climbed the big dugway and camped on top. We made a large fire and was standing around it enjoying the warmth after being crowded on two wagons all day. One of the old ladies said to me, "I wish we had camped down by the river. I believe it was here that the Indians killed Mr. Henderson. At that the cold chills ran down my back. When I was a child I was just old enough

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to remember the horrors of the Black Hawk War. Just then a little Indian dog ran up to the fire and we knew that the Indinas were near. Our horses began to make a fuss. My husband and Mr. Cardon went to quiet the horses and they saw about twenty Indian warriors coming up the dugway. When they saw our fire they turned off the road and passed close to our campk turning their heads to look through the cedars at us. Our men watched them as they rode on. Before this when we saw the dog we knew we were in danger so we kneeled around the campfire and prayed for protection. The men and boys stood guard all night and when morning came we gave thanks to God for preserving our lives. Later we learned that Geronimo had gone to Fort Apache and stolen three squaws. One had a papoose and the bucks wanted to kill it but the mother cried so much that they let her take her baby and go back to the fort. She told them there that the Indians had killed all our company. This word was sent to Taylor and the people fomed a posse of men to investigate when word came from the fort that our company was safe. Another squaw had returned and said that the wild band had intended to kill us but they saw us praying to the Great White Spirit and they were afraid to harm us, so we felt that our lives had been saved through prayer. The soldiers told us that the Indians had gone up there to Deer Creek and murdered two men who were herding beef cattle for the government. They killed people ahead of us and behind us so we were thankful when we reached our destination in safety.

We were established in Old Mexico when the revolution started and then we had grief and were finally driven out of the country by rebel bandits. We were finacially well fixed and lost it all. Our nice homes were burned to the ground and after all we came back to our own country under the shadow of Old Glory and the protection of Uncle Sam.