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A Sketch of the Life of Bernard Snow
by Amy Whiting Thurber

Bernard Snow was born at Pomfret, Vermont January 22, 1822. (He was a) son of Ebenezer Snow and Polly Hayes. The old homestead at Pomfret where his childhood days were spent held a very sacred place in his memory. It was reflected in his character through out his life. He was a graduate of Cambridge University (College). On Nov. 24, 1841 he married Louisa M. King at Boston, Mass. They were very devoted to each other but this union had a very tragic ending. Three children were born to them; Sydney, Flora Melissa and Bernard. Flora and Bernard only lived a few months. A short time after Bernard's death, he (Bernard Sr.) sailed from Boston Harbor for California with a small group of people. To make the voyage around Cape Horn to the west coast in the poorly equipped ships of those days (1849) took courage and a great deal of faith that God would help them to reach their destination in safety.

While he was in California it was impossible to get a letter to the east coast where his wife and son were or to hear from them. Louisa grew weary of waiting and started for Utah. Her plan was to stay with her sister, Melissa King Wallace, until her husband could come from California to join her. Grandfather did not know that she had undertaken the trip. He said he never would have consented to it because her health was so poor! She only got part way, dying July 7, 1850 on the plains. This left Sidney who was 6 years of age to come on with the company. Grandfather learned of his wife's death months after from her sister Melissa. He came from California to Utah in 1851 to be with his son, Sidney but Sidney died one year after his own arrival on Oct. 19, 1852.

It was at this period of grandfather's life that he found comfort in religion and after studying Mormonism he joined the church. He had a difference with Pres. Brigham Young over the sub-contract for the Union Pacific and was disfellowshipped from the church. At the meeting where this took place he stood up and said, "There is no knife sharp enough to cut out of my soul the spirit of God that is burning within me." He was true to his religion as long as he lived, he felt that God would understand the misunderstandings between men in the earth life and they would be righted in the life to come. His second son, Seymour B. Snow went to Pres. Lorenzo Snow after grandfather's death and all of his priviledges were restored to him by the "laying on of hands", Seymour acting as proxy.

In the church historian's office are many recordings of eventful happenings in the life of Bernard Snow. The first was recorded Feb. 12, 1854. Pres. Young directed Bernard Snow to take charge of the children and property of Bro. Thodes and share the same on his return home. Grandfather loved to write poetry. In spite of the fact that he lived a busy life, making enough money to support six wives and twenty two living children he found time to give some beautiful contributions to the literature of our state. He wrote the hymn "Our God We Raise To Thee." It is sung to the tune of "America". Tuesday, June 27, 1853 at the Salt Lake Tabernacle it was sung for the first time at confrence. Recently Prof. Edward P. Kimball has written music especially for this hymn. It is

published in the new Latter Day Saint Hymn book. At the death of Flora Kimball, the young daughter of Mrs. Heber C. Kimball, grandfather composed a poem and sent it to her. I'm sure she received a great deal of comfort from this hymn, "Your Sweet Little Rosebud has left you." This poem was published in our church songbook under Eliza R. Snow's name. She wrote a letter to grandfather telling him she was sorry of the mistake and would have it changed but it was never done. We have the letter among the family heirlooms.

One of the outstanding characteristics of grandfather's personality was patriotism. In 1855 he delivered an oration in Salt Lake. It was published by the Deseret news and recorded in the church historian's office. One year later at the 4th of July celebration Bernard Snow Esqr. read the constitution of the U.S. at the ten o'clock program, history records. July 24 1863 a report was sent by the Deseret News reporter of Fountain Green - "Wonderful Celebration. The honored people of the procession were Bp. Johnson, Bernard Snow, Edward Collard, C. Ottison Jackson and Samuel Miles. Bernard Snow gave a fine oration."

While grandfather was a member of the 27th quorum of Seventies he did a great deal of missionary work. His wife, Alice, went with him on many occasions. One speech we have was published in the Deseret News, Sept. 9, 1855. The subject was Mis-using Useful Weapons. He explained the value and usefulness of a saw, razor, axe, good thoughts and good words. The saw helps us in cutting large trees to uniform sizes so we can make an attractive building, but if a man was caught in the clutches of the saw it would perhaps kill him and become a thing of horror. Razors are a necessity for men to keep neat in appearance but lives have been taken by this useful article so we look upon it with fear. A sharp axe is used to cut trees and dry wood but many accidents have been caused by them so we should use them with caution. Good thoughts are a useful weapon in building a beautiful character but bad meditation will destroy it. Charatable words to and about people will encourage them to do better, to do fine things and cause them to love you. Where evil words are spoken it brings only regrets and sorrow. Let's strive to make the best use we can of these weapons. We then will be following the teachings of our worthy ancestors." April 27, 1856 at the morning session of conference in the Salt Lake Tabernacle, grandfather and Pres. Young were the speakers.

Aug. 10, 1856 Pres. Young called Bernard Snow on a mission to Europe. Thomas Bullock received his call at the same time. The friendship between these two men lasted thorough their lives. They worked constantly together. They left Salt Lake Sept. 10 of that year and arrived in St. Louis on Nov. 11. From there they went by train to Vermont. There grandfather visited with his family before sailing for England. On his way across the Atlantic he wrote a letter and a poem to his brother Gary who lives on the old homestead. The poem was entitled, "The Old Tammarach Tree." The tree had been brought from a long distance and planted near the door of their home by his father. The children as they grew up had all carved their names in its bark and enjoyed playing under it in the shade.

One year after grandfather's arrival in England he was put in

charge of a section of the mission and given new missionaries to train. After his mission was completed he sailed from England in the ship, "Empire". There were forty missionaries and 25 saints. When they passed New Foundland they had a slight collision with an iceberg. It was not serious however. They passed many enormous ones near Sable Islands but God directed their course and brought them safely home in 28 days. They had a remarkably short trip. Some vessels were 65 days in crossing the ocean.

A company was organized at Elkhorn for the purpose of returning to Utah. John W. Berry, Capt. Thomas Bullock, clerk, Bernard Snow, Captain of the guard. Grandfather arrived in Provo at 10 A.M. June 28, 1858 and went immediately to southern Utah where his families were.

Soon Pres. Young called him to build mills in Sanpete County. He was a millwright by trade. The following are clippings taken from the Deseret News: The spirit of improvement continues unabated and saw and trist mills are being built in nearly every settlement through the county. The circular saw mill at Fort Ephraim owned by B.S. Snow and Co. is doing a cash business as reported, cutting from three to four thousand feet a day. The carding machine of Snow and Peacock at Moroni is doing a good business and there is said to be plenty of work in that county and Juab. At fountain Green, Bernard Snow and Bp. R. L. Johnson are putting up a good circular saw mill and from the known ability of Mr. Snow the people anticipate a good mill."

When the Union Pacific was being built grandfather took a sub-contract for Pres. Young. His work was at the narrows in Weber Canyon. Grandfather was elected representative of Sanpete Co. and met in the Social Hall with the house of Representatives at 10 o'clock, Dec. 12 1859. They met to appoint speakers so that interest would be created among the people regarding the forming of the State of Utah.

During the Black Hawk and Walker Wars grandfather displayed a great deal of wisdom and courage. In Whinnys History of Utah it says, "In one of the raids on Fort Ephraim, Bernard Snow, the veteran actor, who was building a mill at the mouth of the canyon near the settlement sustained during several hours a lonely but heroic siege. The savages surrounded the mill, but the gallant defender kept up a fire so vigorous that they were forced to retire." During these Indian war days he was presented with a Henry repeating rifle. It was the first gun of its type in the west. It held 15 shells in the magazine and of course grandfather was very proud of it. The Indians learned to fear and respect that gun as well as its owner. They knew him as the man who loaded his gun in the morning and shot all day.

Another of grandfather's avocations was acting. This talent has a been passed down to the third generation. In a letter written by Heber C. Kimball it says: The Deseret Dramatic Association gave a free party to their members and a few friends. They are performing on the evenings of Wed. and Sat., "She Stoops to Conquer." A benefit to Bernard Snow to be given on Mon. night when he will play the part of the Roman father in Virginius." Seven years later he played the same part in the Salt Lake Theater. Elder Geo. A. Smith wrote of his grand success. He said, "It was a magnificent

performance." Bro Geo E. Piper in his book, "Romance of an Old playhouse", tells of Bernard Snow playing in the drama, "Othello."

Grandfather built homes at Manti, Ephraim, Fountain Green, Springville, Salt Lake and Wieser, Idaho. This is where he died. As descendants of this fine and noble character may we carry on what he began and make our link in this family chain as strong and bright as our grandparents have made theirs and thank God for the heritage they gave us.

His granddaughter,
Amy (Whiting) Thurber