

Ethel Whiting

My personal history as I remember life.

I was born 1909 in Pocatello, Idaho; delivered by a midwife to Moses Fannin and Cora Skaggs. When I was 9 months old my parents homesteaded a ranch south of Pocatello in a place called Crystal, Idaho, Power County. When I was 3 years old I was given a fat male puppy and we named him Tip; as he had a white tip on the end of his tail and one white spot in his forehead. he had heavy curly black fur. he was a lovable dog and a very good watch dog; also a cattle dog. we used him both to play with and work. He was very obedient and loved by my father and would do anything he would ask him to do. When meat was hard to get my father would sometimes kill young wild rabbits when he was plowing or sometimes shoot a prairie chicken. He would call Tip to come to him from a hillside where he would be plowing fields. the dog would jump to his feet when he would hear my father's whistle and then the second Tip heard the second whistle he would bound to the trail to my father's side; it would be about a half mile away. My dad would tie the rabbit^(or) of chicken to his collar with his red handkerchief he always carried and say to Tip "Now take it home," and the way he would go and wouldn't stop until he would get to my mother's side and he'd stand so still until she would notice and take it off and prepare it for dinner when my dad came home.

I grew up to school age and went to school at Crystal where all the classes were in one room and one teacher. In the winter, when it was so cold we would almost freeze to death going to school. We would take turns

bringing meat and vegetables to school and our teacher would make vegetable soup in a large kettle on top of a coal stove that stood about 3 or 4 feet high. When that soup started to boil, my goodness, nothing ever smelled so delicious. There was always enough soup for all to have plenty and what a lifesaver that was and it made going to school worthwhile. We would play group[games like pomp pomp pull away and hide & go seek along with other games. All ages would play together and sure have fun.

In the winter the snow would be 10 to 12 feet on the level and the roads would be blown full and only the horses could feel the tracks, we rode to school in a bobsled hewn out by my father. the tongue would be stiff and turn the whole sleigh around when the tongue was moved one way or another.

Edna Burwell ,our neighbor girl just older than my brother, James, would take turns to drive because one of the horses was hers and the other was ours. When it was real cold my parents would heat large rocks and put them in the bottom of the sleigh and cover them up with heavy patchwork quilts and when we would get going sometimes we would pull the quilts over our heads to keep warm. The sleigh had two boards crosswise with a little board for our backs to form a seat. And away we would go and if ever there was a bad storm our father would go to school with us and sit there and wait to take us home after school.

When the creeks would freeze and flood over and spread out on the fields it made an ideal skating pond. And we would sure have group fun. Some of us that were too small to skate would pull each other on our sleighs. What a time we had! One day when we girls were on the sleigh 3

deep Willie, who is now my husband, would skate over and grab the sleigh by the side and give us a spin. and would we ever spin! Then we would strike a bump on the ice and we'd tip over scattering girls all over the place bloomers and all showing colors every which way. It made us watch this boy very close as he had fun with everyone and we all loved him for it. One day he was skating round & round and all the kids watching him said he watched me write 'Willie' on the ice and that's just what he did. but when he dotted the "I" he hit a soft place in the ice as he jumped up and came down with his skates point first. He went right on down in the icy water to his waist; all of us sure felt bad, but had to turn our heads making sure he didn't see us grinning. As we all watched all the time to see what he would do next. As we were always sure it would be something interesting. He was so much fun and would treat everyone alike. When he was a teenager, he had a car without a top, and ^{had} two seats. He would fill it clear full having us all take turns for a ride in his car and then he would high tail it down the dirt road around corners and almost on two wheels leaving a cloud of dust behind us, like you never did see in your life! There were two hills along the way where the people riding horseback would take short-cuts instead of going around the roadway. He decided that if he could go over the horse trail down the steep part it would make every girl scream at the top of her voice. And that sure made him feel like a real hero.

Willie, as he was called at school, would have a black whip to drive the buggy horses with and he would chase the girls around the schoolhouse and just as we would get to the corners he would crack his whip so it would sound like a shot from a small gun, but it would never strike anyone. And

we loved it and his big grin as he did it; we'd all be waiting for his next prank.

When I was 6 or 7 years old our family all had scarlet fever and it was in the winter time and we were snowed in. The drifts of snow were well over the height of our house and someone dug a tunnel from our door to the spring that we got our drinking water from. And then my father took ill and had double quenzey in his throat; my sister Esther had mastoids and I had a fever so high before I broke out good. And the Doctor didn't know if I would live. I was unconscious for days. My fever was so high for so long I got infection in my mouth and tongue. they would have to force feed me with the handle of a spoon because my mouth was scabbed over with fever blisters and the center of my tongue all abscessed; and came out leaving the center of my tongue with a large hole in it. All they could do was wash it with boric acid until it healed so I could eat. My mother had four of us children and my father down all at the same time and I'm sure that she was pregnant because she had a baby every two or three years.

Our neighbors would cut fire wood and pile it outside the door; also drinking water, but not come in so not to carry the scarlet fever home to their own children. The county doctor came to operate on Esther's mastoids and I remember how sorry I felt because we were so close. she and I were so afraid when the doctor took out his sharp knife and started to cut, but it relieved her pain so fast I was thankful for him; but it was very gory to watch.

At that time my father's throat swelled shut so that he could hardly breathe and he was unconscious for days. My poor mother trying to keep

going not knowing if he would live or die. Finally the doctor said if we can break the abscess he will live and if not he will soon die. I remember how he looked with his face and throat swollen and so red the doctor decided to try to break the abscess so he rolled up a pillow to a hard round roll; then he put it tight against his shoulders under his neck. Then he lifted his head as high as he could and dropped it suddenly and by this action the abscess broke and drained so much you can't imagine how much came out of it and then he got better and was able to eat and gain back his strength so he could help my tired mom. And she was so thankful for his recovery!

We sure had long hard winters in Crystal, but at home we would always have things to do that made for a happy childhood. I remember when we would bring in some soft white wheat and my mother would wash it and toast it in the oven and put butter & salt on the wheat and then we would all sit cross legged on the floor while mother and father would sing songs and tell riddles & stories about their childhood. We sure enjoyed our evenings and there wasn't many nights that we kids didn't bring 2 or 3 neighbor kids home to sleep overnight with our already crowded beds. And sometimes we would have so many there would be three at the foot and three at the head and then we would have sometimes two left over and no bed so mother and daddy would put us at the foot of their bed and they would already have the baby sleeping between them, but you never would hear either one of them complain or say not to bring our friends home as they would always be made welcome.

The snow would be 10 or 12 feet deep on the level. And we could tell when it was nearing spring as the ground squirrels would dig their way

to the top of the snow. As their dens were down in the dirt and making so many trips back and forth tunneling out that they would be muddy so it *would show up plain* on the white snow.

We had to go three miles to school or church, that was held in the schoolhouse. And nearing the spring or when it warmed up a little there would be prairie chickens feeding on the birch trees along the creek that followed along the bottom of the canyon by the road. There was always something interesting going on in our lives to make it well worth being alive and we never thought of such a thing as there being hardships, but we were so thrilled over bob sleighs. Our dad would carve out of lumber for us to sleigh ride on in winters and we would wire the barbwires up together between the posts so we could slide under them. Then we would take our sleds up to the top of the hill beginning at the top of the grain field and going clear to the ice on the creek bed below. And sometimes we'd ride double making it more exciting.

While the snow drifts were 20 to 30 feet deep hanging over the hill tops, we would save all the old overalls in the fall and gunny sacks we could find and cut them into strips so we could wrap our legs so we could play in these big snowdrifts. We would make tunnels and rooms back into these drifts and it was so white and beautiful. It was a lot of enjoyment, but dangerous.

Our home was the half way place between Pauline where the mail and stage started from going to Pocatello, Idaho and then return. So my father would board four head of horses over night and the stage would change

horses on the way back and my mother would cook hot meals for all that were passengers and the carrier all winter.

I can remember when my sister, Della, was just weeks old. She was crying night & day and sometimes my mother would cry along with her until both were worn out. Then one day, one of the passengers on the stage said, 'Let me see that baby, I'll walk the floor with her and you rest'. And he held her up to his face and found out she had an ear ache and he blew tobacco smoke into her ear and she went sound to sleep and slept eight hours. And my mother got some rest that she needed. then after that mother would put warm olive oil in her ear and keep cotton in them until she got over it. And I'm sure it was because this oil had been consecrated for use by the sick and it was a special blessing for her as you know the doctor told us not to put oil in the ears, but we were 27 miles from any doctor. All we had was faith.

One night when all us children and some of our friends were playing on the floor, the baby mother was holding in her arms had a very bad convulsion and turned as black as coal. And my mother said, 'Daddy, anoint him and give him a blessing or he will die.' The baby being my brother, Delbert. So my father did give him a blessing and he came out of the convulsion. This was a great testimony to me to witness and I've never forgotten it. And it has always stayed with me and I know and bear witness that the Lord does answer when a priesthood holder anoints one in faith. And the Lord will raise them up if they aren't sickened unto death.

We had one milk cow we named Bob, because she had a short tail. She was a gentle old cow and we all learned to milk her. And we had to

have all the milk she gave. And we would turn her out to get the new spring grass, and at the time there weren't any fences, so cows would just go as far as they had time to go looking for greener pastures. As they say so at nightfall, we three oldest children, James and I, would have to go after at milking time and sometimes we would walk 2 or 3 miles and most of the time bare footed, as we had to save our shoes for school and Sundays. We would walk over rocks and sagebrush and sometime it would be raining and our feet would get chapped until they would bleed. So one day our parents got us some new shoes, but our feet were too sore and swollen we couldn't get them on our feet. So our oldest half brother, John, told us to soak our feet in warm water until they were soft and he would put some Sloans liniment on them. He used it to put on sore muscles after a wrestling match, so we thought it really would help us, so we did what he had told us to do and when the liniment was rubbed into our bleeding red feet we started screaming. You can't imagine how hot that got and kept getting hotter. And when we could see it wouldn't stop hurting, he told us to go jump in the cold spring of water. So we did and that made them hurt worse, so we danced until we wore ourselves out and then we just went to bed and cried ourselves to sleep. When we awakened our feet were much better, but what a price to pay for a quick cure. We sure stayed clear of the liniment!

I used to work out in the fields with my father to put in our crops. And in the spring of the year, we would have to turn our work horses out to graze grass as soon as the grass was up enough for them to get it in their teeth. so every night we would drive them out on the range, they called it then. Each morning, we would have to round them up with a saddle horse

and no saddle, so most of the time I was the one that had to round up horses. And I'd leave home before it was light in the morning and ride 2 or 3 miles into the hills and open the gates and have to close them. And I was so short I sure had a time getting back on the horse but I always made it some how. sometimes when I'd go ahead of them to open a gate they would all turn and run back into the hills to keep from being brought in to be worked. So I'd have it to do over again, but some how I'd get them in and we would work them till noon and then have to unharness some of them. We used chaintug harnesses so they could graze. So we could go back to the field to finish the day's work. then back to the range at night, I guess that is why my legs are bowed. they look like I've been strapped onto a barrel.

We didn't have a saddle as there just wasn't money for one, but our good neighbors had one and we would barrow theirs, and we had it most of the time. And now looking back, I don't know how they tolerated us kids, because if we ever had to take it home for them to use we'd watch and when they were through we'd be right back to barrow the saddle again. By the time I was 12 years old, we bought us a saddle from some neighbors that left ranching and went back to Pocatello to live. And I'm sure these neighbors couldn't believe it, that we wouldn't be back after their saddle again. What a happy day for them!

I was baptized by Bishop Staley in Crystal with three other children in a mossy pond. My father was Bishop of our small ward and he was a faithful man and had no malice towards any man and did many things for his members and friends. I have never heard him swear or use any language unbecoming to a gentleman. One time he went to feed his horses and see to