

LORENZO ELMER WHITING

Memories of my early days

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### My father

*As a young boy of 16-20 my father (Lorenzo Snow Whiting, Jr.) used to go with other boys and have a shooting contest with pistols and he could outshoot anyone in Arbon and McCammon. When he was about 25 he started to use cigarettes and in only a little while he was not able to shoot any better than the rest.*

*He used cigarettes until after he was married and I was born. I remember one winter when we were running a sawmill. We had to buy all our groceries in the fall, because during the winter we could not go to town to buy groceries. The snow was too deep. So my father always had a supply of tobacco for the winter. He kept this habit until he was about 32 years old. He would come in the house and smoke, which would make my mother sick. He tried to quit the habit but it didn't work.*

*One day he came into the house and sat down and pulled a sack of Bull Durham out of his pocket and rolled him a cigarette. My mother came over and sat down on his lap, pulled the sack of tobacco out of his pocket and rolled her a cigarette and stuck it in her mouth and lit it, saying that "I had better get used to using cigarettes so I won't get sick all the time." In those days women were looked on as cheap who smoked. He looked at her for a moment and thought about it, then grabbed the cigarette out of her mouth and gathered all the tobacco and threw it in the fire so they could not have any until spring when they could get to town to buy some.*

*That is when he quit smoking, and when he went to Pocatello he would start down the street walking and if he would meet someone that was smoking he would follow him to smell the cigarette smoke. My father taught me to never smoke – that it was a bad habit and hard to get over.*

*My father was a blacksmith and was very good at it.*

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NOTE: Text in italics is Elmer's own words. Minor edits have been made to improve clarity.

1913

I was born December 25, 1913 in Crystal, Power County, Idaho. My father was Lorenzo Snow Whiting Jr. and my mother was Perlina Fannin Whiting. I was the oldest of 8 children: Elmer, RoseZella (Black), Vern, Verona (Cowgill), Laura (Brough), Albert, Alvin, Joseph Merlin.

THIS IS TO CERTIFY That this is a photostatic copy of a certificate filed in the Idaho Department of Public Health under Title 59, Idaho Code Annotated.

Sept 2-1944 (Date issued) Malcolm H. Keeler (Director of Vital Statistics)

Form 7, S. No. 11-C-200-2-24-12  
STATE OF IDAHO  
BUREAU OF VITAL STATISTICS  
CERTIFICATE OF BIRTH

County of Power Registration District No. \_\_\_\_\_ File No. 18157  
City of \_\_\_\_\_ St. \_\_\_\_\_  
Hospital \_\_\_\_\_ Primary Registration District No. \_\_\_\_\_ Registered No. \_\_\_\_\_

MARGIN RESERVED FOR BINDING  
WRITE PLAINLY, WITH UNFADING INK - THIS IS A PERMANENT RECORD  
It is to be completed only in cases of blood tested.

Sex of Child Male  Male  Female  
Date of Birth Dec 25 1913 (Month) (Day) (Year)

FULL NAME OF CHILD Lorenzo Elmer Whiting

FATHER: FULL NAME Lorenzo S. Whiting Jr. RESIDENCE Crystal Ida COLOR White AGE AT LAST BIRTHDAY 30 (Years)  
MOTHER: FULL MAIDEN NAME Perlina Whiting RESIDENCE Crystal Ida COLOR White AGE AT LAST BIRTHDAY 18 (Years)

OCCUPATION Rancher OCCUPATION Housewife

Number of child of this mother, including present birth \_\_\_\_\_ Number of children of this mother now living, including present birth \_\_\_\_\_

CERTIFICATE OF ATTENDING PHYSICIAN OR MIDWIFE:  
I hereby certify that I attended the birth of this child, who was \_\_\_\_\_ on the date above stated. (Sign name or initials) Dr. J. J. [unclear] 1880  
\*If there were no attending physician or midwife, this report should not be returned. A voluntary child is one for which no certificate was shown any evidence of life after birth.  
Give source added from a registration report \_\_\_\_\_ (If physician or midwife)  
Address Crystal Ida

Registrar \_\_\_\_\_ Filed \_\_\_\_\_



Elmer was blessed May 25, 1914 by his grandfather, Moses Fannin.

## 1918 – A solar eclipse

*I remember one time when we were there (in Crystal) that the birds began to twitter and Mother came out of the house in wonderment for in the middle of the day it started to get dark. We were very much afraid for it was getting dark very fast for it was the eclipse of the sun.<sup>1</sup> Mother and I were very much afraid. If I am right, we got down on our knees and prayed to our Father in Heaven for protection for we were the only ones at home.*

## Steam-powered tractor

*Elmer: The first thing I can remember in Crystal was when I was 5 years old. I wanted a wagon, so my father made one for me from the lumber at the sawmill. It was small but I enjoyed it. Sometimes I would haul grain in my wagon.*

*One day I was riding it down a roadway in the lower part of Crystal Valley when I saw my father and others coming up the road in a steam engine or tractor. It was a 40 horsepower under-mounted Avery. The drive wheels were six feet tall and over 3 feet wide, steel, and it would pull a 20-bottom plow, which would plow ground as fast as any modern tractor today. When I saw it coming up the roadway I was sure frightened and left for the house.*



An Avery undermount steam engine

## “Mining”

*I used to play on the hillside. We dug a hole in the hill and hauled the dirt out with the little wagon and built a road in the little grove of trees that grew there. It was fun. The hole was about 10 feet deep in the side of the hill.*

*This was where we used to sleigh ride in the winter down to the house. One evening the snow was wet and we went with our sleigh to where the hole was that we had dug in the hill, and one of us got on the sleigh. The others pulled the sleigh to the house or to the board fence beside the house. Next morning Lester Fannin and I took the sleigh and went to the top of the hill where we had dug the hole. It had frozen hard that night. We piled on and started down the hill and got in the same old tracks that we had made the night before. We were gaining more speed, the two of us on one sleigh. When we came to the bottom I could see the fence coming at*

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<sup>1</sup> This had to be the solar eclipse of 8 June 1918. Elmer would have been about four and a half years old.

*us as we tried to turn but couldn't so I slid back on the sleigh and he didn't and we hit the board fence very hard. His head smacked the fence and about knocked him cold. I didn't get hurt at all.*

## **Memories of Elmer: Portents of His Future Profession**

(Elmer's brother Verne described the hole digging experience)

Verne: Children growing up have a lot to learn. And living on a farm was a chance for a big education. We learned many things on the farm. I can remember my older brother, Elmer digging a hole up the side of a hill. He was going to make a mine. He wanted me to help him. We'd dig and then take the dirt in a wagon, haul it along the side of the hill and make a road. We'd dig some more out of the mine and then haul it through the sagebrush and dump it again, continuing to make a road. We kept digging and digging, until we finally had dug quite a sizeable hole back into the hill.

Dad kept watching us. Once in a while he'd come up there. When he saw that we had a pretty good size hole he told us to quit. Of course Dad had been a miner and had worked in coal mines down on the Indian reservation. He'd been way down in the hill. He had these mining lanterns and things that you would carry candle sticks in and stick in the side of a bank of dirt as you were mining. He had a lot of experience that way and didn't want this mine to cave in on us. And of course if a horse or a cow happened to come running down the hill right in that spot they'd have tumbled right down into the hole. But as far as I know, this didn't happen.

When winter came, the snow would blow over the opening, filling the opening but still leaving a big cave down below in which there was no snow. So we would go up where the mine was and dive into the mountain. We'd go in the hole and be in a room with frost hanging out of the dirt all the way around over our heads. When our cousins or uncles, Lester or Delbert, would come from the ranch up above, we'd have snowball fights and then go into this cave. In later years when we were back at Crystal the cave was filled in.

As I reflect back, my brother, Elmer, liked to build roads then, and dig holes and mines. This is what he has since done as a profession and made a good living with bulldozers, cats, carry-alls etc. in the construction business. I feel that he probably still enjoys it today. I didn't follow that trade, although I worked with him for a while when I was about 24 years old down at Pocatello working for Morrison Knutson Construction Co. just prior to being inducted into the army. I was a mechanic 8 hours and two hours a grease monkey. I worked 10 hours a day. We worked there 3 and a half months when I got drafted. But Elmer followed the trade and went on working with diesels. Finally he bought his own tractors and is still in the business. At the present time he is over in the Rexburg area, specifically in Idaho Falls where they are cleaning up after the Teton

Mountain Dam disaster with his two sons, Leon and David. They each have their own equipment and their own business.

## Cactus

*One day my father took me and we walked to the top of a small hill where the road ran over the ridge. There was a lot of cactus on this particular place. My father said "stay here for a while and wait for me and I will be back." It was agreed upon; he went to look for more large trees to cut for lumber. He was only gone a little while when I became frightened because of some noise I heard in the trees. I started to run for home, I was bare-footed and I hadn't gone very far before the Cactus thorns got in my feet so I couldn't run any more for my feet hurt so bad. My father heard my cries and came running. He spent a long time pulling the prickly pear thorns out of my feet.*

## 1920 – Sawmill

*When I was seven years old my folks owned a sawmill. We would play in the sawdust and also Forest Whiting my cousin would come over and play with me. We would have lots of fun, but when he would get angry at me he would get in a fight with me on purpose for he knew that when we did I would also get a whipping when I got home.*

*I can remember we moved up to a place where there was a store in the middle of the valley and that is where I was burned on the arm with some hot water that was on the table. It spilt down my sleeve.*

## Snow in the winter

*Sometimes the snow was light like goose feathers. It was so fluffy that when you breathed it would get in your nostrils and you had to brush it away from your face. The drifts would have a crust on top and when you jumped in you would break the crust and go under and couldn't get out, 5 or 6 feet of snow. When we landed in these drifts we would go clear under & couldn't get our breath. Sometimes we played in the snowdrift south of the*



Elmer, Rozella, and Verne with their parents

school. Once, when going to school I jumped over a big snow drift and almost choked to death. Delbert or Lester<sup>2</sup> did this and about choked to death and we had to dig them out.

One time, Delbert got kicked in the chest at school and all the breath knocked out of him.

We would build our own skis out of straight-grained 2x6. It would take a lot of work but it was fun. We would get a big chunk of wood and chisel it off until it was round. We would plane the 2x6 down to where we wanted them and then boil them in linseed oil and water so they would be limber, and then bend it over this chunk of wood and tie it on the end and tie it down in the back until it had the arch we wanted. We would leave it for a week until it was all dried. We would then take it off and have the prettiest pair of skis. We were proud of them. We would wax them good so they would not absorb moisture.

When I was a child, dad made a bobsled for us with a box built on it that we would get in and ride to school with a team of horses. We had 2 ½ miles to go and Delbert & Lester had 1 mile to go before getting to us and we'd get in and ride with them and go to school.

Charlie Riggers place had a mean dog that would come out to the road and bark at the horses and make them run and we would have a hard time to hold them back. So one day while we were going by his place I sat in the back and when the dog came out I whacked him over the head with a large stick so hard that he lay down in the road as though he was dead. I worried all day at school because I thought I had killed him, but when we came home he sat beside the house and never came out to bark at us again.

We dry farmed there and the snow would get to the top of the fence posts in the winter. We had a 30 or 40 foot long rope. We'd tie it on to the back end corner of the sleigh. We had a box built so we could sit two or three in it with blankets over the top so we didn't freeze to death & we'd go down in the field. We couldn't follow the lane because the drifts were up above the fence posts so we'd go in the field. We would lean out of the box on one side and then on the other with the horses running so fast. One time I was leaning way out and then swerving back on the other side. We came around to a crusted part the skis and the box would not hold. The skis went out from under me and I dove head first into that crust about 2 ½ inches thick on the snow. It about broke my neck. My shoulders went down in. I let loose of the rope and was buried in the snow up to my elbows. I was pinned tight and could not breathe. I tried to get my hands free to get the snow away from my face. I had skis on and was kicking around trying to get out. I made it but it was scary.

We used to go Jack Rabbit hunting. We could get about 35 cents for each of their hides and .22 shells were only 50 cents per box for 50 shells or shots. We would go out in the fields where

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<sup>2</sup> Lester and Delbert were the half-brothers of Elmer's mother Perlina. They did many things with Elmer because they were near his age (Delbert was younger than Elmer).

*the haystacks were and in the moonlight shoot them. It was a lot of fun. Sometimes we could get six or seven.*

*One day we were out ski riding and had our guns and were after rabbits. We were coming home downhill when we saw a rabbit. Lester Fannin pulled up his gun and shot the rabbit and killed him, and as he rode by he picked up the rabbit and never stopped.*

*My father had horses and two of their names were Rock and Blackie(?). One of them had something wrong with its jaw and the whole side of its head swelled up. He thought so much of them that he took a whole side of bacon and tied it to its head that night, and the next morning its head was better and soon got well.*

*When I was young a horse kicked me on the eyebrow.*

*I can still see the header boxes that were used to haul the wheat to the thrasher. My father told me about a red river special thrashing machine that burned to the ground when they were thrashing some smutty grain. He said it went up in flames like gasoline and got very hot.*

*One time a storm came up over the hill. It was thundering and lightening. Dad, Momma & I was watching it. A bolt of lightning came out of the sky just over our heads and hit the old cellar on the other side of the house. A white shaft of light hit a rock and broke it.*

*Living on a farm away from a city was a blessing to us. Our recreation was enjoying our relatives and their children that lived on farms next to ours.<sup>3</sup>*

*Grandma Flora Waterman Whiting was staying with them. After they had their breakfast she would say, "Ok, you kids run out to the wishing well and make a wish", and when they came back she would give them a piece of candy – the very thing they had wished for. Elmer's sister Zella said Grandma always looked so pleased when she would do this.*

*One time, a calf ate some poisoned grain. It was tied up to the drill press. There was poisoned grain in the loft and some must have fallen down and the calf ate it. The calf went crazy. It tried to climb the wall and was banging its head against the objects around it. Mother told them to pray, but the calf died.*

*We would buy enough grain and groceries, sugar, canned goods, to last all winter because the snow would be too deep to go to town. There would be soda crackers in large boxes, enough for the winter.*

*In the winter they would cut ice into blocks and stack it up and cover it with 2 feet of saw dust so it wouldn't melt. It was stored in layers (ice, sawdust, ice, sawdust, etc) in a shed at the*

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<sup>3</sup> The group included Vern & Elmer (brothers); Lester, Delbert & John (brothers) and Vern & Elmer's uncles, all about the same age.



*sawmill. This was used to put in the ice box<sup>4</sup> to keep things cool – and for making ice cream. Mother made the best ice cream! Everyone enjoyed it, even on the 4th of July.*

## **1927 – Gas barrel explosion**

*In the spring of 1927 a 50 gallon barrel exploded in my face.<sup>5</sup>*

*One Sunday morning at Crystal, my cousins and I went to build a fire in the church,<sup>6</sup> to warm up the building. The birds had built a nest against the chimney and the dry leaves and sticks caught fire and burnt the roof of the building. We had to put a new roof on the building.*

*My father was coming home from Pocatello in a truck when he came within ¼ mile of home he ran off the road with the truck and tipped it over on a curve. The dust was so bad he couldn't see the road. The next day we went up and got it out. It sure looked funny on its back on the side of the dugway.*

*One day about this time I was running home from out in the field and as I came over the hill I met face to face with a coyote. We came within 10-15 feet of each other before we saw each other. It was quite a shock to see and be that close to one of these animals.*

*One time we tried to dig out the badgers.*

*One day I was walking in the alfalfa field. I was hurrying along and a sage hen flew up in my arms. It was a shock to me to catch one of those chickens.*

*We were coming home from Pocatello around by Shillard in the snow with the old Dodge touring car; I walked to Uncle Williams place to get help.*

## **1929**

Elmer was ordained a Teacher November 3, 1929 by his uncle Ralph Whiting, a month before his 16<sup>th</sup> birthday. Four months later he was ordained a Priest by his father, Lorenzo Snow Whiting, Jr., who was bishop of the Crystal ward at the time.

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<sup>4</sup> An Icebox was the common way to provide refrigeration in the home before modern refrigerators became available. Commonly iceboxes were made of wood. Iceboxes had hollow walls that were lined with tin or zinc and packed with various insulating materials such as cork, sawdust, straw or seaweed. A large block of ice was held in a tray or compartment near the top of the box. Cold air circulated down and around storage compartments in the lower section.

<sup>5</sup> Elmer's son Leon Whiting tells how his dad told the story to him: "He mentioned that he had a very difficult experience one day when he was looking in the bung hole of a 55 gallon barrel to see if it had any fuel left in it. He used a match, and as he looked inside, the fumes ignited and he was blown onto his back. The end of the barrel or some part of it hit him in the face and pushed his front teeth back in his mouth. Grandmother Perlina came running out and reached her finger into his mouth and straightened his teeth back into alignment. He never mentioned the pain of this (which I am sure there was a lot of). I think he mentioned receiving a blessing. I also think he mentioned his face was burned. If he received other injuries I can't remember."

<sup>6</sup> The Crystal Branch was organized May 25, 1913. Three years later, on October 15, 1916 it became a ward. But it became a branch again in December of 1935 after the Whitings moved to Salmon. It was part of the Pocatello Stake.



**1931 – High school**

*I went to McCammon high school for six weeks before moving to Salmon, Idaho.<sup>7</sup>*

INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DIST. No. 24, McCAMMON, IDAHO  
HIGH SCHOOL PUPIL'S REPORT TO PARENTS  
School Year 1931 1932

NAME Elmer Whiting

| SUBJECTS         | 6 Weeks Period |   |   | Exam. Grade | Sem. Av. | 6 Weeks Period |   |   | Exam. Grade | Sem. Av. | Year Av. | Credits |
|------------------|----------------|---|---|-------------|----------|----------------|---|---|-------------|----------|----------|---------|
|                  | 1              | 2 | 3 |             |          | 1              | 2 | 3 |             |          |          |         |
| Algebra          | A              | ✓ |   |             |          |                |   |   |             |          |          |         |
| Gen. Science     | B              | ✓ |   |             |          |                |   |   |             |          |          |         |
| Study Hall       | P              | ✓ |   |             |          |                |   |   |             |          |          |         |
| English          | B              | ✓ |   |             |          |                |   |   |             |          |          |         |
| Community Civics | C              | ✓ |   |             |          |                |   |   |             |          |          |         |
| See Club         | B              | ✓ |   |             |          |                |   |   |             |          |          |         |
| P.E.             | A              | ✓ |   |             |          |                |   |   |             |          |          |         |

Interest in school work is very important and depends upon regularity of attendance, good health, plenty of sleep and nourishing food.  
Meaning of Marks  
A=90 to 100; B=80 to 89; C=70 to 79; D=60 to 69 (Condition); F=Failure

<sup>7</sup> This is his McCammon High School report card for the 1931-32 school year, showing attendance only for the first reporting period. He lived with Uncle Will Whiting & his wife Aunt Ethel Fannin Whiting then and helped with their chores while we was going to school. Other than this short time, Elmer was not able to attend high school because they were then were in the process of moving to Salmon. The elementary school was near where they lived in Crystal, but the high school was over by Pocatello. Elmer was intelligent and liked school so well that he attended the 8th grade for two years. It is unfortunate that he was not able to receive more education.