Life Story of
Ada Belle Bruesch Whitaker
(1910-1987)
As Told by Herself
PREFACE TO REPRODUCTION

Ada Belle Bruesch was born in Almo, Idaho on October 12, 1910 at the log-cabin home of her grandparents, Henry Dennison Durfee and Jane Isobel Barker Durfee. She is the daughter of John Jacob (Jake) Bruesch and Ida Durfee Bruesch. She married Mirl William Whitaker on June 3, 1938 in the Salt Lake Temple and I am their oldest child. Mirl is descended from John Nelson Whitaker and Sarah Josephine Mallory who came to Almo in 1882 and homesteaded by the Old Raft River Crossing. Their original homestead is now part of the ranch operated by Kent and Bruce Durfee. I decided to submit the life story of Mother to almoidaho.com in the hopes that it will be of interest to others with roots in Almo, and be more widely available. The original of her life story is in the possession of my sister, Lola Jane Whitaker Olson, and contains the original photographs and related documents. It was prepared on 8.5" x 14" paper, and photographs were glued at the bottom of the pages and in the text. She made photocopies based on her original and distributed them to her children and other family members in the mid-1980s, shortly before her death in 1987.

The reproduction presented here is a faithful transcription of her original text. It was typed into WordPerfect and carefully proofread to assure that every word and punctuation are the same (special thanks to my former assistant at Utah State University, Katherine Allred McConkie, who did the typing). The photos in the original were scanned by my sister, Lola Whitaker Olson, and her daughter, Kristen Olson McKamey. I edited the photos by cropping them to better define the edges and kept Mother’s hand-written captions, which she included at the bottom and the sides of most of the photos. I reproduced this edited version of her life story using my Xerox copy of her original as my guide. The original in Lola’s possession has more photos, which Mother didn’t include when she made the copies for her children.

My edited version incorporates the edited photos into the text. I also have added a brief caption and comments (as needed) to each photo. The result is, I believe, one that Mother would approve because each picture is placed where its subject is referred to in the text and several more photos from her original are added which were not included in the copies she gave us.

I highly recommend that you read my mother’s history thoughtfully so you can glean the lessons to be learned. She was a highly accomplished woman who achieved much in her life, set a wonderful example of courage, kindness, optimism and charity for all of her children, and loved us unconditionally. None of us could ask for anything more. My effort here is dedicated to her cherished memory.

Morris D. Whitaker
Logan, Utah
May 2009
In the pre-existence, I was destined to be here on Earth in this generation. I came here on the crisp October morning of Wednesday, the twelfth day, of the year 1910 – hence my profile 10/12/10 is easily remembered.

I drew my first breath and saw the light of day in the bedroom of my grandparents’ log home, under the care of a midwife, Mary Peterson, my Father, Mother, Grandpa and Grandma Durfee. Since I was born in a breach position I know my Mother did not have an easy time. My nudity was scrutinized to determine that I had a flawless form. I had black hair and black eyes and no deformities. After the initial squalling, I was quiet and predisposed to the warmth and comfort of the blankets. With all the love at hand, the security of being near my mother, and the nourishment, I was now ready to grow up and find joy and excitement in the world.

My grandparents’ (Durfees) house, a log one with two bedrooms, living room, dining room and kitchen combined – carpeted with clean, fresh straw and covered with home woven carpets, was the coziest, most comfortable and happiest home I have ever seen.

I remember the choice moments we had sitting on my Grandfather’s knee while he scraped apples for us. I was always fascinated by his long black and white beard, and the humorous way in which he told us stories. (My older sister, Iona, always occupied one of his knees.) He had a pet name for us, “Idy’s Little Angels,” which seemed to cause some jealousy among the other folks around. We loved to hold his hands and walk through the orchards, garden, etc., and watch him check the cheese on the curing rack, or the pork he had wrapped and covered with wheat in the granary, and we always “helped” him gather the eggs.
My Grandmother always managed to have everything neat, clean, and orderly, and her table was always spread with an abundance of food – among the choicest for me being chicken, dumplings, and noodles, honey in the comb, the best kind of jellies, jams, and peach preserves with whole wheat bread and homemade butter. One of my jobs was to help push the churn ladle up and down in the tall stone jar to give a little assistance when the person churning became tired.

Aunt Alice Rice, a widow with a large family, did all the weaving on a hand loom in a building near by. She could make such beautiful designs and color schemes. I was more than happy to watch her and hand her spools of carpet thread and pick up the empty ones to cache away for play later on. She taught me how to thread the loom to make different designs, and also how to weave on an ordinary spool as the children of today.

Although I do not like my name, I am proud of the fact that I was named after both of my grandmothers – Isabelle and Hannabelle – result, Ada Belle. Grandma Durfee has knit me many a pair of mittens, and doll clothes for my rag dolls, and she made many beautiful quilts for people throughout the valley – all these being sewed by hand.

I feel very fortunate in the fact that I knew and lived with all four of my grandparents. My Mother’s folks were all Mormons, having come across the plains and settled in Ogden, Utah and vicinity, my Grandparents later coming to Almo to live. They knew first hand about the stage hold-up near the City of Rocks and the never-discovered loot; also the Indian massacre south in the sage brush flat, in which all people were murdered except maybe two or three who managed to crawl on hands and knees for miles in the brush.
My Grandmother had a tell-tale scar, at the base of her thumb, where an Indian had slashed her, as she attempted to protect herself from him. She had had some freshly baked loaves of bread turned out on the table, with a knife in her hand, where she had been spreading “pieces,” when she sensed something amiss, and looked up to see an Indian standing in the doorway. He advanced and grabbed the knife from her hand, cutting her. Just then the men drove into the yard in the wagon, and the Indian dashed away.

My Grandpa Bruesch said that his folks came from Rome. They left during the time of Martin Luther and followed him up into Germany and Switzerland, to escape the Catholic Church persecution, where Grandpa was born in the village of Jenins, now a city of 5,000 inhabitants. At the age of 19 he came to America (1870). His Father and some of the family came later and they settled in Vermont where he met and married my grandmother. The parents were against this marriage – so the couple eloped. No date is given. (I found the date – 29 June 1873 – at Orange, Orange, Virginia – in the spring of 1873 – after twelve years search.) They first went to the Florida Keys, but didn’t like this area. Then they moved to Silver City, New Mexico, then to Central where my Father was born and seems to have had an enjoyable childhood from the stories he tells. They lived on a big cattle ranch where he learned to rope, and break wild horses. He still bears a horse
shoe-shaped scar in the top of his head, where he was bucked off into a pile of rocks. He had to have a doctor sew up the wound. It took sixteen stitches.

My Grandfather (not a member of any church) was a butcher by trade but he grew tired of this, and decided to move away from poor range for cattle, too many Mexicans with their diseases, and a desire for a new place to live. Intending to settle in Oregon, he traveled north from New Mexico by wagon, chasing some livestock along. The family slept by the roadside at night, got lost as there were no roads – only a few trails. They arrived in Park Valley, Utah in September in the middle of a blizzard. (My Father crossed the Utah-Idaho border on his 14th birthday, 20 September.) They finally settled in Almo, Idaho, where my Father met and married my Mother.

After Grandpa Bruesch’s family were all married, he went to live on 12th Street in Ogden, Utah, where he had bought a home. Then on account of failing health, he and his wife came to live with us in Almo, where we really became intimately acquainted with them. Grandma Bruesch died with cancer of the female organs. She suffered miserably for months, with us waiting on her. One time Dad rode Old Sheik, a white Arabian horse, clear to the Declo highway to meet Uncle Bill with morphine to kill the pain. Druggists required person to person delivery of this and the wintertime snow was so deep all roads were closed.

My childhood was a happy one with all the peace and contentment one finds in an ideal place for growing up. We lived right at the foot of a mountain and on the bank of Graham Creek, where we could go hunting, fishing, picking wild flowers, climbing rocks, riding horses,
gathering pine nuts, skiing, sleigh riding and ice skating; and believe me, we made good use of our time with all of these.

We hunted rabbits, squirrels, rock chucks, coyotes, and sage hens with the .22; also with the dog and tom cat. Neither of these animals ever had a name! The tom cat would tag us along out into the brush and help us catch squirrels. The minute he saw us leaving the house, he would be right with us. He has leaped out of my arms many a time and captured a poor unsuspecting squirrel, or sneaked up on it through the brush. Old Pup could catch any animal he was bent on catching. He met with a few accidents, one or two with skunks and porcupines, but he finally got wise to these two and found a way to kill them despite their protective measures. He could never quite escape the skunk musk, but did not give up until he had a dead skunk; then he would dash into the creek and roll in the water, while slopping water and mud through his mouth. After a few “Scrapes” with porcupines, he could kill them without getting any quills at all in his body.

One late afternoon he chased a coyote around the brow of the mountain. We watched him through binoculars from the yard. He ran a long way and finally gained on the coyote and managed to catch and kill him. The coyote was bitten a great deal in the small of the back. I never saw him kill any other coyote, but he was always chasing them. Pup was also very gentle and a good stock dog. He used to go bring the cows out of the pasture for us as far as two or three miles distant.

We always had a dog around, but not one of them ever accomplished as much as this one without a name. A good share of our leisure time was used in climbing rocks. We could climb any rock in that whole country except the “Castles;” we were told to stay away from these on account of distance to and from them, and snakes. I often wonder how my Mother’s nerves ever
stood it, with us gone for hours exploring rocks.

The closest we ever came to an accident was the time we were all on top of “Cow Rock” and decided to find a new way down. Iona, my oldest sister, started down and slipped, leaving her hanging to some outcropping with her finger tips. We hurried down the old way and ran around the rock and tried to get her to let go and drop and we would try to catch her to break the fall. This she refused to do, so when her nose began to bleed, we ran back around, climbed the rock again, and began screaming to the top of our lungs. It happened that my father had been out chasing cattle on horseback down at the other ranch two miles away and was just riding into the yard. He heard our yells and saw us on top of the rock and came as fast as the horse could run. Iona was plenty upset by the time he arrived and rode under to pick her off the blood-splattered rock.

One day we went over on Green’s Hill to gather a wagon-load of pine nuts. We had our lunch, and gloves to try to keep as much pitch as possible off our hands. We worked until we had twenty sacks full to take home and store in the granary for winter eating. Bill, my brother, pretending that he was Tarzan, leaped from the top of one pinion into another. The branches broke and he fell to the ground, landing on a flat rock on his back. This nearly ended our fun as he was hurt.

Later, we heard the dog barking, went to investigate and thought it was a porcupine “treed” under a rocky ledge. Bill got down onto his chest and pushed himself up under the ledge and gave the beady eyed animal a jab with his pine-nut stick – only to discover it was a skunk. Bill nearly tore down the side of the mountain trying to get out in time.

We had a coyote “treed” in a hole in Lone Rock once too, and we poked at him with sticks until he began to come out, growling. We left in a hurry, and didn’t go back right away. (Red and yellow wild currants grew by this rock and we loved to play “house” and “store” while we were herding cows.)

As we used so many horses, we had many accidents with them. I cannot begin to tell all the runaways we had. One with a harrow and three head of horses. Iona was driving them and turned a corner too sharply. The harrow went into the air and came down on Old Pete’s hip, sinking one of the teeth into his hip. They ran all over the ranch before we could stop them. The men had to throw the horse and sew up the wound.

Another time we were moving to Springdale for the winter, so my Father could feed his cattle where he could find plenty of hay. Iona was going to enter the first grade there. We were all excited. My
grand-father was driving the wagon loaded with household things; among, them, bedding, bottled fruit, and a sewing machine. We seemed to be doing well until the single tree broke and struck one of the horses on the back of the leg. They were young and high spirited and my Grandfather could not hold them. So we had a wild ride until the wagon tipped over and the team jerked loose leaving us all in a jumbled mass of broke fruit jars, etc. The wagon bows broke and ran through my Mother’s hand, filling it with long splinters. Just before the tip-over, she wrapped Lois, the baby, in quilts and threw her out over the fence into the sage brush. When we picked her up later, she was not hurt. My Grandfather had tried to leap out when he saw that the wagon was tipping over, but he was thrown into the barbed wire fence and cut. Iona was cut with broken fruit jars. Bill was found with the sewing machine on his chest so he was badly hurt too.

We had a pet burro, named Jenny. She was old when we bought her for $50 from Charles Wake of Grape Creek, and we kept her for years until she grew so old and weak with rheumatism that my Father had to shoot her. She had a share in practically everything we did from the time I was about eight years old until long after I was married. She knew plenty of tricks for getting rid of her riders. She threw Aileen Durfee and I into a creek once. She ran with Bobby Davison (from Washington, D.C.) on her back out into the brush and stopped short, throwing him off and breaking his arm. She dodged sideways once and threw Bill off and broke his wrist, when a dog ran out at her. We always fed her well and took good care of her and loved to heard her bray. These kids from Washington, D.C. thought for a long time it was a cougar making all that racket over by the rocks. We received this burro as a great surprise. We were living at the upper ranch and one late afternoon our Dad came riding in leading old Jenny behind him.

When we lived here, the shadow of war fell upon us. I heard so many fearful tales of the Germans that I began to dream about them at night. I could see them leaning over me with their pointed steel helmets on their heads and bayonets in their hands. When I went
outdoors, I could imagine them lurking behind the brush and the trees on the mountain. I really knew what fear was like – to the extent of making my teeth chatter.

Dad rode a horse to Elba to enlist. Down the road two miles or so his horse was struck down by lightning. He made the trip another day, but was not accepted as he had a family to care for.

At this time we used flour sacks for making clothes. I have worn flour sack underwear, petticoats, and dresses, brightened with dye and made by my mother.

We had all the childhood diseases except whooping cough and mumps. I had mumps when I taught my first year of school. I can remember how yellow our eyeballs were and how weak we were with the yellow jaundice – we had no doctor attending us – only home care. I think we actually had hepatitis as we drank water from an open spring on the side of the mountain.

I have lived through two World Wars and see the shadow of another looming ahead. These experiences have strengthened me but they are not to be desired.

I attended the Almo Grade School for the usual eight years – 1917-1925. Miss Vanderwort being my Primary teacher; Ida Cahoon, Intermediate; and Henry Belnap, 6th, 7th, and 8th. I was Valedictorian, and had to give a speech. I went to Albion High School one year, then three to Rupert, graduated in May, 1929, and was second in a class of sixty-seven.

The summer after I graduated from the eighth grade, I was bitten by a wood tick (which I had been hundreds of times) but this time I had spotted fever. The fever was very severe, and I was ill most of the summer and not able to walk after it had left me. I went to Ogden to stay with my Grandparents (Bruesch) to be near a doctor. My leg finally had to be lanced to get rid of the poison. Then I had to learn how to walk again. (I sewed doll clothes all this time to amuse myself.)
The summer I had had spotted fever and had been in Ogden with my Grandparents left me to get back home in Almo with Aunt Anna Durfee and Aileen and Naomi in a white top buggy drawn by Grandpa Bruesch’s little gray team. The first day out led us to Blind Springs to spend the night in a company bed on top of a hayrack, where the owner helped us care for the horses and made us comfortable. The mosquitoes ate on us all night, and if there is anything I hate, it’s mosquitoes.

We got going the next morning early, went through the hills over Rattle Snake Pass, and arrived at the Dille ranch just East of Snowville late on the next day. We were very glad to drink from their spring, some of the best drinking water in Utah. The Dilles were very kind and congenial, so we enjoyed our rest there.

We again left very early, with the not-too-pleasant thoughts of the long slow trek across the Snowville flats ahead of us. If you ever want to know what a head ache feels like, lie face down on the bottom of a buggy and look at the ground going in reverse as the buggy travels forward. We girls got so bored, we did this very thing for miles, and came up with splitting head aches that refused to go away. I imagine Aunt Anna’s nerves were plenty stirred up with our moaning and groaning.

We were so glad to arrive at the Cedar Creek Camp, find something to eat, take care of the team and bed down on the ground for the night. We didn’t sleep too well, so were up at
dawn to try to cover the rest of the distance to Strevell, to the E Y Ranch, through the Narrows, and on into Almo. As always, I worried about how the horses were faring. The closer we got the more my anticipation and excitement grew to see my folks there to meet me. However, they were busy, had not known when we would arrive so no one came to get me. I needed the practice, so I slowly dragged myself the three miles to the ranch. No one seemed to be home, but I found my Mother picking raspberries in the berry patch. She was happy and surprised to see me. I was so tired I went straight to bed, and that’s where I spent a lot of time for the rest of the summer. That had been four days of hard travel in a white top buggy from Ogden to Almo over dirt roads, summer of 1924.

**HOMESTEAD**

When we lived on my Dad’s homestead ranch that included mountain slopes on Graham Peak, hills and plenty of rocks, we had all kinds of fun mixed with a few despairing experiences. It was a little too far to walk to school. Although we always did, we traversed afar from boring route, seeing birds’ nests, wild animals, insects, wild flowers; and on the way home we could fun barefoot with no worry of injury to our feet. Our log cabin was cozy and fun and these special rocks kept us entertained. We played house, store, and school by Salt Rock. Once Mom and Aunt Alice decided to come and check up on us. They crept through the brush meowing like what we thought to be bob cats or cougars. We viciously threw rocks until Mom and Aunt Alice were forced to stand, and we all had a good laugh.

We played on and by Train Rock across the canyon stream until Dad discouraged us with cougar talk. Here is also Kaiser Bill, to us a helmeted German Soldier. On up the side of the mountain near the tree line is Camel Rock with the head of a camel its main feature. This is easy to climb, but if one fell, he could go a mighty long way.
My small brother, Bud, and I climbed
to Camel Rock one day, got on top and
tried to see the small hawks in a nest
down over the camel’s nose about five
feet. I lay down on my stomach, let
Bud down over the edge by holding on
to one of his hands, while he tried to
explore the nest. The old hawk was
giving us a bad time by flying at us and
beating her wings and using her claws.
Bud’s foot slipped and I nearly let go of
his hand. My hair stands on end every
ting I think of the narrow escape we
had.

Farm Rock had all kinds of plants and
trees growing on it and around it. It
was somewhat tricky to climb, but had plenty of ant lion funnels and ants nearby to drop in to
the depressions. We always loved to be there.

Our log cabin was very close to rocks.
There was Skunk Rock, Bath Rock,
Cow Rock, and numerous unnamed
ones, also a lot of pinion pine trees
from which we always got pine nuts
and chewed pine gum. (The
importance of these rocks in our lives
has already been stated.)

Lone Rock stood in the sage brush
bordering an eighty acre natural
meadow. Around its base grew black
and red wild currants and other wild
shrubs. This rock was our fortress
from any danger, our church, our
market, our school, our playground
while we were herding cows. (This is
the one where we “holed up” the
coyote.)

THRESHING WITH HORSES

Until I was about ten years old, I looked forward to the threshing of the grain. Men with
their teams of horses and bed rolls would gather at our ranch yard and set up ready in a circle
to start the thresher going. One man would mount the round grain stack and pitch bundles,
one at a time down into the thresher. The straw would be blown out to the side into a neat
pile, while the grain came out at the other side through a spout into burlap bags. When filled these were sewn at the top with a sacking needle, special twine, and set to one side, by one or two men.

The works lasted usually more than one day so the men had to use their bedding and sleep on the ground. All meals were furnished and cooked by the lady of the house, so the men fared well.

Now and then the men played tricks on each other. Uncle Dave Durfee, who owned the thresher, took the men’s pants and strung them up in the air on the end of the derrick pole. Then he called them all out of bed to eat breakfast and get to work. They were all so embarrassed as they were running about hunting clothes, not thinking to look up to the top of the derrick.

We used to go horseback by moonlight over into the wheat field behind Cow Rock and help Dad shock grain although this took several hours work. We didn’t feel the pain of hard work, as we had so much fun placing the bundles of grain into shocks. We also saw night prowlers: porcupines, weasels, badgers, and found that the night time held no danger for us.

INDIAN FRIENDS

My father and mother were always kind and generous to the Indians, so we became acquainted quite readily with Charley and Fannie Red, their daughter, Cora and her husband and their two cute black-haired youngsters.

These people came every fall to our ranch to gather pine nuts, and to hunt jack rabbits and rock chucks, which they tossed into their fire without cleaning. The hair would burn off and the insides would be cooked to be eaten or destroyed later. They used our guns as they had none. Charley, having had tuberculosis, had one leg shorter than the other and had to limp everywhere he went.

Fannie told my mother of many of their beliefs and customs. When the women menstruate, they are “unclean,” and must go away to the brush or trees for several days, so they won’t contaminate the rest of the family. When a pregnant squaw has her child, she isolates herself away from the others, digs a hole, lays a cloth in it, squats down over the hole and has her baby. She cuts the cord, wipes off the baby, lays it in a blanket, cares for herself and goes back to work. If she is too weak, she lies around in the brush, and goes back to work later.
My mother came in from the garden one morning with vegetables, to find Fannie rocking my baby brother, and singing an Indian lullaby to him. He was very contented and on the verge of going to sleep.

When he started walking he followed Fannie and Charley everywhere he could. He especially liked to watch them prepare a meal and to listen to their conversation in Indian dialect. My mother was always afraid he would be fed some rock chuck or jack rabbit, or go to sleep in their tent. To her relief, he was given only soda crackers. One day he jabbered along with Charley, supposedly in Indian language. He kept doing this for an hour or two much to Charley’s and Fannie’s amusement. They laughed and laughed and slapped their sides.

Fannie asked my mother to make her a dress, so Mother asked her for a pattern. She said, “Me no want pattern. Me want ----.” She then drew in the air an outline of said dress by using her two index fingers – thus: (Ada had a hand-drawn picture of a dress here). When my mother finished this garment out of Fannie’s bright material, Fannie was so overjoyed.

Cora’s two little boys were untrusting and cautious of white people. My little brother had to work hard to gain their confidence. He showed them everything he could think of – pictures, blocks, BB gun, cap gun and caps, which he shot a few times to impress them. This scared them all the more. When he took outside the center, hard paste-board roll that came in the new linoleum rug we had just laid, he caught their attention. They played with this, looking at each other through the ends and yelling in each other’s ears. They also liked the red wagon and took turns pulling each other, after Bud showed them how. This proved undesirable as the older of the two went running as fast as he could, hit a small, deep, hidden-in-grass irrigation ditch, threw the smaller boy into the air and let him come down upside down on his head. There was squalling. It took all of us to comfort him.

One summer day after I had returned from the University of Idaho at Moscow for vacation, I heard someone out at the side of the house yelling in such a strange voice, “Oh, Jake! Oh, Jake!” I left my cleaning and ran around the corner of the house to stop short and stare at old Charley astride his poor, boney horse. He just stared back. The shock wore off for both of us and I finally asked him how I could help him. He said Jake (my father) told him he could use the “.22” to hunt rabbits. I then went to the garden to check this request with Mother who was gathering vegetables for dinner. I returned, got the rifle and a box of bullets and handed them to Charley – still on his horse. He hunted until late afternoon, when he returned with no game. By this time the men were back again from riding for cattle. Dad gave Charley a flour sack full of apples on one side of the horse, and one full of corn on the cob for the other side and some pieces of beef. I think the smile on Charley’s face was the only thing that carried him and that poor old horse back to Yost, twelve miles away.

DOLLY, THE HORSE

I have no idea why we named this black mare Dolly. She was a very tame and hard-working animal. She could be trusted with the smallest children up to that point in her life when she started to kick everyone who came near.
We have driven her on the one-horse buggy, have ridden her to school to be tied to a hitching post all day in sun, rain, or snow, while we indulged in the learning activity. We have used her as a derrick horse for years. On this job she alone has pulled up thousands of tons of hay to be dropped and loaded onto the stack. We have pulled logs down the side of the mountain. We have gotten out our winter’s fire wood with her. She has been overworked and this was her reason for biting, as well as kicking.

My sister, Iona, riding Star, was chasing horses from a pasture into the corral to be caught for the day’s work. Dolly whirled and kicked with both hind feet, striking Iona on the right leg below the knee and breaking it.

One time my two smaller sisters had saddled Dolly and gone to the upper ranch to bring home the milk cows. They rounded them up and had them coming on the trail, old Dolly pacing along behind. Suddenly the saddle turned, throwing Mary off and breaking her left arm just below the elbow. Dolly stopped short and stood there until those girls set the saddle back in place, cinched it up and got on. She was completely safe and dependable, bringing the girls and the cows home. (Mary suffered for days and her arm healed crookedly, which showed up later as Mary lay dying with sarcoma.)

Lois was out in the corral which had the mountain stream running through it and a few trees for animal shade. Old Dolly ran toward her, whirled and kicked her, throwing her into a tree where one of her feet caught in the crotch of some large branches. Dad ran there just in time to save Lois from being kicked in the head by those two terrible feet.

Another time Dolly managed to get on top of a half-used hay stack. Dad went out to chase her off. She whirled and let him have the full force of those two hind feet right in the stomach. He fell in a heap and just lay there. We all ran out and tried to revive him. We thought for certain he was dead or would die, as we all had witnessed the vicious way that she struck him. We finally helped him to the house where he suffered for several days. We still kept Old Dolly, as she was a valuable horse. But every time we went to catch her she would chase us with her mouth open, and when she got close enough she would use the whirling and kicking act. Dad, not daring to trust her, in desperation finally sold her, and she was hauled away to be used for pet food – a sad end to a great horse.
I’ll never forget that truck going down the lane with Old Dolly. She knew what was going to happen to her. I hid in the raspberry bushes and cried.

**RANCH RAMBLINGS**

Between two orchards and flanked by a canyon stream, under the foot of Smoky Mountain stands our old log house. Its native timber was logged, hewn, and set together in 1904 from the canyon walls on the neighboring mountains. My father and “old man” Peterson did all the log work. They chinked the cracks with wedge-shaped boards and finished them off with clay. The result was strong, neat, dependable, and attractive.

This great house has been lived in through all these years and is still occupied by my brother and his wife, although it now is remodeled and covered with aluminum siding.

**COW TALES**

My father was one of those men who always managed to get his own way. Every morning at five o’clock he would call upstairs to us kids, “Come on, let’s go!” We would come sharply awake, dress fast, and hurry downstairs and out to begin the morning chores which mostly for us had to do with milking the cows. This was a by-hand job and was great for developing a strong grip and general strength in the arms.

We were included in the breaking of range cows to milk. We began by chasing a few wild Herefords into the corral, roping each, and snubbing her to a post. Then with a bucket in one hand and using the other for alternate patting, petting, stroking, and fending off lungees, kicks, jerks, and bucking, we eventually taught the cow to stand still until we had the milk in the bucket. These cows were never any too calm. We could not depend entirely on how they would behave. One time my older sister and I had one of these animals roped and snubbed (we thought) but she began bucking and lunging and fell in such a manner that we thought she was choking to death. So I ran to the house for a knife; we cut Dad’s best lasso & let her loose. Then she chased us out the barn door which we slammed in her face just in time.
These “red and whites” furnished us with milk and excitement until we were able to buy a few Holsteins which were really the milk cows. We had from five to ten cows to milk from this time until I was out of the eighth grade.

We had these bossies so well trained we could milk them anywhere – right out in the pasture, up by the rocks, loose in the corral. During the summer we always put the ten gallon cans, buckets, strainers, milk stools in the back of the wagon, and later the pick-up truck, and drove to wherever the cows were. They never gave us any special trouble, seemed to be glad to be milked in order to be relieved of that heavy load of miserable milk that is so useless to cows and so important to us humans.

These poor cows go through a grinding day of hard work with their heads down all day long cropping grass, and finding drinking water. They must find time also to rest and do that all important cud chewing. Then by evening their insides have manufactured their own body food, manure, and milk. They head willingly for the place they are to be milked. They want to get rid of that heavy burden called milk. (By the way, through their body processes a fraction of the manure always goes into the milk stream.)

Our cows always had names: Heart, Tiny, Stub, Wildey, Bess, Roany, Hardy, Red, and Josephine. And let me tell you these cows all had different temperaments and personalities. Josephine, for instance, had more gentleness, more patience, perseverance and stick-to-it-iveness than most people I know. She always liked to be milked first. If she saw one of us coming she would march right up and stand squarely in front of the person. If she did not get any attention she would follow around bellowing. She was missed one evening when we had some unexpected out-of-town visitors and her bellowing got us out of bed in the middle of the night to milk her.

OLD ROANY

One bright sunny day we kids all went up on the side of the mountain to find choke cherries, service berries, check on pine nuts, climb rocks, pick wild flowers, and just ramble around for something to do. The Richard boys, Stuart and J.C., were up from the neighboring ranch to play with us. So we were doing all of the above activities to impress and entertain them.

Our cows were grazing along the fence marking the boundary between our ranch and the forest range. As we passed through the herd on our way home we decided to pay special
attention to old Roany who
was noted for her gentleness,
and watch her chew her cud.
We picked off a bunch of
wood ticks and petted her a
lot. As a sort of game, Lois
and Mary, the youngest of
our group, spent all their time
creeping back and forth
under her belly as she stood
there in the brush and sun
flowers. Some ticks left the
cow and got into their hair,
so you know what my mother
went through later on.

Then we got to running down hill jumping rocks and brush in a race. It all ended in tragedy
when “Stu” leaped over high brush and landed on his seat in the middle of a bed of cactus.
As he lay bawling on the ground we picked out the worst offenders from his hands, arms,
legs, and back. He painfully half-walked and half-hopped to the house where Mom tried to
get him to put down his pants so she could help him, but he flatly refused and had to hobble
another mile or so to his own home for help. That was the worst case of “stickers” any of us
ever experienced except for our dogs with porcupine quills.

ALL BULL

Being a cattleman, my Dad always had two to four bulls around the place. These Herefords
were a sight to see – huge, sleek, in prime condition, the best color – monarchs of the whole
ranch. I always admired them mostly from a distance. I did not feel that they were
especially dangerous and yet I
had seen them doing small,
unique, conspicuous things like
raking a groove in a board with
those sharp, stout horns, or a red,
separating, moistening gash in a
horse’s flank, or in each other.

In spite of all these risky actions,
I was always fascinated by these
animals, especially if one
challenged the other in a face-to-
face battle. There is nothing to
equal a genuine bull fight. They
put into it all the temper, gusto,
meanness, trickery, strategy, and
force that they can muster and too bad for anything that gets in their way.

I have seen many short-lived bull fights but the one that really sticks in my memory lasted all afternoon. The cattle were all up on the side of the mountain to the south of the horse corrals grazing in a clearing which a few years before had been planted into grain and now was half grown back into brush, etcetera. Great Britain (we always left off the Great) was slowly milling around among the herd. He always seemed to be slow moving. He had to be in order to control his 2,000 pounds. Then from over in the edge of the canyon came some of that long distance bellowing, and shortly Bunco and Duke and a few cattle appeared to join the group.

However, Duke, with straight-out horns, and Bunco, with curved ones, decided that Britain had no business being in the center of all those cows. They ganged up on him and tried every way they could to sort him out, shift him to the edge and put him on the run away from there. They were in for a surprise (something like the Arabs and Israelites). He not only stood his ground but he gave them both some punishing treatment. They would rest awhile then try it again. Finally the cows – sick of being bumped, knocked, and pushed around, started moving away. Duke saw his chance to get out of this humiliating mess, persuaded a few cows to go with him, and headed for the canyon.

Bunco and Britain fought for about three hours with some sulky and sullen rests. Bunco was smaller and more agile and just wouldn’t give up. They both circled, pawed dirt, lunged, raked, pushed, gouged, and repeated these actions until both were so tired, their heads were hanging low, with tongues dragging on the ground. They could hardly move. There they stood facing each other, as if completely paralyzed. Finally Bunco turned and dragged himself off in the direction of the canyon, head still low and tongue out. Britain just stood there the same way to recuperate. He presented a lonely, beat-up figure.

That whole area was a torn up sight, big bunches of brush uprooted, pits in the dirt made by pawing, and everything in general disarray – sure evidence of the terrible battle.

MORE BULL

This big, muly Holstein brute had been giving us trouble all morning. He began pawing dirt and chasing the cows around the minute we opened the corral gate and began turning out the milk cows. He kept up a constant run-around and head-off parley even after my sister mounted the horse and got out the quirt and called the dog.

She had this same trouble all the way to the upper ranch in the mouth of the canyon. When she got off the horse to open the gate the bull charged her. She managed to roll under the fence just as our little dog grabbed the bull by the nose. Disturbed by all the commotion, the horse, dragging the reins, whirled and ran. When we saw the horse coming we were filled with dread.
My father jumped on her and headed for the canyon as fast as the horse could run. He came upon the bull with its head down, the dog still pulling on its nose and Lois still behind the protection of the fence.

4-H BULL

This Hereford bull was a handsome specimen of 4-H Club effort that had been given him since calf-hood by steady, firm, loving hands. He was petted, loved, scrubbed, curried and combed with daily ritual. He always commanded rapt attention at the various shows and fairs. He was a prize winner!

However, somewhere along his protected life, probably at the termination of adolescence, he made a detrimental decision. This all happened at the time he was sold to a new owner. He was trucked out onto a ranch bordering on the foot of the Park Valley, Utah mountains.

From this moment on he became a thoroughly dangerous animal. He developed the habit of roaring down off the side of the mountain, at a full run, through the trees and all the meadow pastures, leaping any fence that seemed to bar his way. His resentment and revenge built up as he charged forward toward the slightest sound of a human voice.

On this momentous day I heard him coming and then saw him heading straight for the tree under which my small son sat playing in the sand. Sensing I knew not what, I ran out, grabbed my son and his teddy bear, and ran into the house.

All of a sudden, here was this demon raging around on our open L-shaped porch. He proceeded to tramp back and forth around the corner, pausing long enough to ponder his baffling reflection in the big window. Inside we were terrified and we kept quiet, as he became angry at the slightest noise and raked his horns on the side of the house. I fully expected him to break the windows, and crash into the house. The window seemed to fill him with awe.

His threatening behavior went on for about an hour. My neighbor girl, Barbara Burton, who needed to go home but didn’t dare try it, and I held a whispered conference. I took a good grip on the broom, and when he came around by the kitchen, I dashed out and beat him over the back. Startled, he ran a short distance, whirled and charged me, just as I managed to slam the door in his face.

The two children began to cry, at which the bull was more angry than ever. We took the children and tiptoed to the back bedroom, where we put them into bed and covered them with
Life Story of Ada Belle Bruesch Whitaker

blankets. After about another hour the children fell asleep, much to our relief. We could still hear the bull doing his porch routine, and were beginning to think we would be pinned in the bedroom perhaps until my husband came home from work in the evening.

We heard a car coming up our lane and saw that it was a completely new automobile driven by a strange man, my husband seated beside him. He was a salesman and had come clear out to Park Valley from Brigham City to sell this car to us, as it had been ordered for four or five months. He had found my husband working in the neighbor’s hay field where men were putting up hay in a stack yard.

I threw the window up, put my head out and yelled at my husband as he stepped out of the car, explaining about the mad bull. He told the man to remain in the car, but the salesman ignored the warning. My husband then opened the yard gate, secured a pitch fork and a long corral pole and ran around the house. The bull came on a high run past the bedroom, through the gate, whirled and took after the salesman who hurled himself around the car and slammed the car door behind him just in the nick of time.

Since the bull was afraid of my husband with his weapons, he leaped the fence and ran off up into the trees in the pasture.

After this escapade, my husband told the owner of the bull that he would not keep the animal around any longer. He also suggested that the owner sell the animal before someone destroyed him. The animal was transported to a pasture about fifteen miles away, which included an abandoned C C C camp. This camp was being guarded at the time by a young man and his pregnant wife. They had constant worry with this bull, to the extent that the man kept a loaded 22 rifle in his kitchen. He was helping his wife prepare dinner and she had gone out into the garden to get some lettuce. Hearing a commotion, he quickly glanced out the window, saw his wife running with the bull right behind her – grabbed the gun and fired through the open window. The bull fell and did not get up.

When the men skinned him they found the bullet imbedded only a short distance in the neck!

DAD

Dad was a handsome man. These are not my words, though I have often thought so. They are the words of strangers. He was six feet tall, well built, healthy and strong, always had a quality of youngness about

Ada's Father about 1908, Age 20
(1888-1974)
him, smiled a lot, and made people welcome. He kept his business to himself and required his children to obey without question.

In spite of these traits, he was usually jolly and good natured. He believed in working when it was time for work and in playing when the work was finished. He made work fun. He had good ideas, high ideals, initiative, and desired to excel. As a result his ranch was neat and well-run. He knew every inch of his property and he knew his livestock as individuals.

He taught us all to take care of animals. We always milked and fed cows and calves. This was our summer job, which he took over when winter set in and we had to go to school.

He always harnessed old Dollie to the buggy, or saddled her for us, and had Jenny, our pet donkey ready – she needed only the bridle. We took turns with the horse and donkey as a means to get to and from school – a distance of three miles each way. I always hated to ride these to school as I didn’t want to see them standing tied to a hitching post all day in all kinds of punishing weather. I liked riding in the rig with a place to stash my lunch and books.

Dad was always great on stick-to-it-iveness. If one of us begged to start doing something, he would let us, but he would never let us chicken out of the job. We had to work at it until it was completed in the neat and proper manner. For instance, if we said that we would pick a certain tree of apples, we couldn’t leave it and go to another until all the apples were in baskets in the cellar.

We had two orchards with a big variety of fruits in each. We pruned and sprayed these trees three or four times a year. These projects were always family affairs. We were taught that doing work well was joyful and we had fun on every job we every did – even to the drudging task of scraping hogs.

My father, mother and all of us were self-sufficient most of our lives, especially during the days of the great depression of the ‘20’s. We made or raised everything we used, except for a very few items – salt, sugar, spices, trousers, shoes, coats. We have all worn flour sack “unders” and the same kind of material dyed and trimmed with lace, ric-rac, or buttons for dresses. One of my proudest 4th of July dresses was made of flour sacks trimmed with lace and ribbons. It even brought a lot of compliments. When I think of my father’s one suit, and my mother’s one coat and dress hanging in the closet I wonder how my parents kept smiling.

To this day I cannot tell how my father and mother always managed to get us to mind what we were asked to do but they always trusted us with the car, with guns, with horses, and with
ourselves away from home, or anywhere, and we always came through with the proper behavior. I sometimes wonder how we escaped having a fire, as we carried coat-oil lamps around from room to room until we were around fifteen.

My parents’ habit of retiring early and rising early, allowed us to finish the day’s work with time to spare for family amusement. We played baseball a lot together out in our big yard, or in a freshly cut hay field. It seemed to be so much more fun with my dad and mother out there cavorting around with us.
We always loved to play run, sheep, run after dark, or on a moonlit night. Also hide and seek is a good one for night prowling. These outdoor games helped us to appreciate the howls of the coyote up on the side of the mountain. Through these activities I was able to get rid of outside-at-night fears. I found that darkness on a ranch by the mountains contains nothing to cause worry, though it still remained romantic and mysterious.

We played cards night after night during the winter time and ate homemade candy and popcorn, which we grew in our garden. If we ran out of motives for the game, we used the one “to see who would have to get up in the cold house in the morning to build the fires” in the kitchen stove and in the living room heater. The reality of the result of this act always gives me a chill.

My father saw to it that we always had skis (homemade ones), toboggans, and sleds for our snow amusement. We had more fun and probably rid ourselves of more frustrations sliding down the side of that mountain.

My parents were right with us a good share of the time. Once those of us on the sled went through a barb-wire fence – in the moonlight, and had our coat backs ripped. My sister and cousin shot over a ledge on the sled, and came out bawling with bruises and bloody face, after one of them regained consciousness.

When we took to the toboggan we always seated six on it, with my brother or cousin in front, as none of us girls dared be first. We went through more cedar trees, service berry bushes, and what not, and very nearly turned upside down once when skimming over a big snow covered rock. We always came out yelling and laughing. The next day came the discovery of sore hands, arms, heads and legs. We loved heavy winters for a lot of good snow fun.

One year the snow was so deep we had to keep shovels in the house to shovel out steps in the snow drifted against the door in order to get outside. We had more fun that year walking over the snow covered bunk house, all other snow bound buildings, and sleigh riding over the tops of fences and bushes.

Dad had a bob sleigh mounted with a wagon box always straw-covered for us to go visiting, to the store, to dances and parties, and believe me, we made good use of it. We had hot rocks and quilts and a tarp for keeping warm. The horses with their Swiss sleigh bells fastened to the harness would make anyone feel merry. We heard these bells all winter as they were never removed from the harness. Dad even fed cattle in the middle of blizzards with these
bells jingling. (I regret to say that these bells, priceless to us, were loaned to a church organization and were never returned.)

He got lost with a big load of hay on the bob sleigh – in a blizzard, went around and around in circles and couldn’t find the cattle. All of them suffered greatly. He finally found his way home, after tipping over and spilling the hay, with hands and feet frost bitten and icicles hanging on his clothes.

HUNTING AND WHAT NOT

On the sage brush areas of the ranch, we hunted rabbits and squirrels. We could use the guns anytime we wanted, unless we had visitors. We had a grey tiger-striped tom cat which tagged us around like a dog. He helped us capture more squirrels. He has leaped out of my arms many times and grabbed unsuspecting squirrels. We received five cents bounty for each squirrel tail, as these little pests were overrunning the land and eating the grain crops and gardens.

We also took gallon buckets of poisoned grain around and placed a spoonful of bait by each mound hole. In a day or so we went around and retrieved the tails. I made quite a lot of spending money by this method.

We had great enjoyment building play houses out in the safe brush. We grubbed and tore out brush where we had no use for it. We filled it in to make walls where needed. We made streets and walkways. We left openings for doors and windows. Along the canyon stream we found a clinging vine that we could use for making play clothing, beads, head gear, etcetera. We used raw peas and carrots out of the garden, apples and berries. We even furnished our country store from miscellaneous groceries we scrounged out of the garden, cellars, and orchards.
ACCIDENTS

My father has had so many experiences and accidents in his life time. As a youngster he was known as the burro king in his area. Anytime a cowboy found a wild burro that was worth anything, he would rope it and bring it in for my dad to keep. As a result he had quite a herd.

One time he and his brother and cousin were up in the San Christo Mountains playing around in the cedars, having ridden horses and donkeys to get there. Some cowboys came riding out of the trees, swinging their lariats, intending to rope the boys, who ran and threw themselves up into trees. My dad jumped on old Ikey and took off on a run. None of the cowboys ever caught up with him and they were all on well-trained horses. The cowboys teased the others awhile, then left.

On leaving Central, New Mexico, heading for Oregon, my father along with the rest of his family of nine children and parents had no idea of where they were going as there were no roads at that time. They used a map their mother had secured from Washington, D.C. to guide them. They traveled in two covered wagons, and riding horses and chasing livestock, had no notion of what this journey would be like. Dad spent his entire time chasing his seven choice burros which he determined to bring along with him. They went straight through the petrified forest. The first night out Dad’s father and his older cousin during the night, opened the enclosure and let the burros go back. My dad was dreadfully disappointed. In fact, this was one of the greatest depressions of his life.

My father was thrown off a wild horse – head first into a pile of rocks. He was seriously injured, had a concussion, had sixteen stitches taken in a horse-shoe shaped gash, the scar of which he bore the rest of his life.

At the age of thirteen on his way North from New Mexico, he drove a team and buggy for a month over unknown territory for a lady and her three children, while her husband went prospecting. In an arroyo, the buggy wheel broke, and he had to ride one of the horses for miles to Johnson for help and hay for the horses. (This lady was Clara Belle Lee. The man who owned the famous Lee’s Ferry was her father-in-law.) A man took hay and equipment, went back with Dad and fixed the wheel. Finally the travelers arrived at their destination of Hatchtown, Utah where my dad’s folks all joined them about thirty days after their first separation.

LOST HANDS

In 1929 in Idaho above the ranch in the mountains, my father was shot by a Utah deer hunter. His right hand was shot off and the left above the wrist had
all cords shot out. Strangely enough he was the calmest person of all present. He had to tell everyone what to do. Having ridden around eight miles by horseback on old Sheik, an Arabian white horse, off the mountain after being shot, he was now fighting nausea and fainting from loss of blood. Then it was another hour before the country doctor, Dr. Sater of Malta, having been summoned by hand-cranked telephone, arrived with his bag of meager supplies. He doped the wounds with numbing and blood clotting medicines the best he could, and sent my father via car over graveled roads into Ogden to competent help. By the time my cousin drove the 150 miles into Ogden, where a cop immediately accosted them, my poor father was ready to collapse from loss of blood.

He held up the bloody mass of sheets, so the policeman wheeled to the front and with siren open led them to the hospital. The doctor immediately went to giving transfusions. My father became unconscious as soon as he was on the table. He received many pints of plasma, and lay in the hospital for over a month before his hands were healed enough for him to come home. The loss of his hands was a great blow to him and all the family. He aged ten years in one month. It was another two years before he could grasp the use of the hook that he acquired from the artificial limb company. He finally learned how to eat again, to write, to put on and fasten his clothes, lace and tie his shoes, saddle and bridle horses, and to drive a car. He continued to do all kinds of hard work and to drive a car until he was eighty-five years of age when his sight failed him and he did not try to renew his driving license.
OUR HORSES

Since we used horse drawn machinery and vehicles, we had many mishaps with horses running away. My father always trained his own horses. They seemed to be touchy with any excessive or unusual noise. With crippled hands my father had to wrap the reins around them to keep a firm grasp. One day while he was riding the buck rake and getting in the meadow hay, the horses began backing around in circles. This threw my father off and he was dragged around and around under the machinery. This luckily didn’t break any bones but made some nasty bruises.

The hook on my dad’s arm was really a danger to him as well as a help. He was cinching the saddle on old Sheik when the hook slipped and accidentally punched the horse in the belly. The horse leaped, jerking the hook under the cinch strap, and began whirling around in a circle. My father’s arm was trapped against the horse and he could not get loose. The snorting horse pranced and whirled with my father swinging at arm’s length straight out until the hook shoulder strap broke and hurled my father head first into the wagon wheel. He was seriously hurt and could not wear the hook for several days.

THE RUNAWAY

In the depression winter of 1914, as we had no hay to feed our cattle we were going to drive them fifty miles to Burley for hay and pasture, and move our barest necessities there by covered wagon in time to enter my oldest sister in the first grade. After being gone from home about three miles, a single tree sprang loose striking one of the horses on the back of the leg. The horses, being spooked, began to run and no amount of see-sawing on the reins would restrain them. They finally ran out into the brush. The this time we were plenty scared.

My mother, sensing impending disaster, wrapped Lois, the six months old baby, in a bunch of quilts and threw her over the fence into the sage brush. Then she grabbed the wagon bow with both hands, just as the charging horses ran over a big boulder and tipped over the wagon throwing my grandfather, the driver, straddle of the barbed-wire fence and cutting his legs. My brother, Bill, landed flat on his back with the old fashioned sewing machine upside down
on his chest, jam and jelly and broken bottles oozing down over his face. My mother’s hands were full of tooth-pick size splinters, and it took weeks to heal her hands. We other two girls were bruised and gooey with fruit, but not seriously injured. When we picked up the baby, she was crying but not really hurt.

Someone rode by on horseback and we sent to the ranch for help. We nursed our wounds, made new preparations and arrived in Burley about a month late. Here we lived with my Uncle Will, who was a bachelor, and my dad fed cattle all winter on the Burley “flat.”

WALKING

My father was in Twin Falls one time without a way to get home. So he went to the railroad station and asked the engineer about riding a freight car to Burley. This request was granted. After arriving in Burley, he began walking. He had traversed the distance to the top of the Albion Grade when along came a freight wagon. The driver offered him a ride the rest of the way to Almo.

Another time during a rather severe winter, my father and uncle George walked from Clear Creek to Almo in snow up to their knees. They had been in this canyon cutting and hewing logs for buildings, and decided to take a short rest to go home and see how the folks at home were doing. When they walked in at the home ranch they found the family ill with the measles. The walkers were very tired from wallowing through the deep snow for twenty miles or more.

CLIMBING ROCKS

Since our ranch is right in the middle of the City of Rocks country, we children always climbed rocks all day long, almost every day. This hobby kept us busy, taught us many things, and brought us close to numerous wild animals. We were always pestering pack rats which had cactus nests in the cracks in rocks. More than anything else we were curious to see what they had stored in these nests.

We didn’t do much to rock chucks except chase them around, and now and then shoot one. We would get a skunk holed up in a crevice and then smoke him out with a brush fire. We usually respected skunks and always kept a safe distance away. One time while we were building a log cabin, a hen made a nest under it and laid several eggs. During the night we could hear a skunk eating the eggs. We searched until we had located the skunk. Then he was smoked out and shot with the 22 rifle.

The reason for so many animals was that our cabin was right among the rocks. Our chicken coop was against a big rock. Our corral had one whole side a huge rock as big as a warehouse. Our pig pen had three sides of rock. So Cow Rock really lent itself for our convenience. We used it daily as a fence, as a shelter, and for recreational purposes. We climbed on top of it and played house, store, post office, and church. This rock is rather a
treasure to us. It has plants growing on its fairly flat top, has only one way up, which we found out from experimental climbing.

When we were searching for a new way down, we met with trouble. My older sister tried first and found herself hanging in mid air with no footing and a slight crevice that only her finger tips could catch. There she hung moaning and crying. We hurried down our old way, ran around the rock and tried to get her to let go and fall into our arms, which she refused to do. When her nose began to bleed and run down the rock, we became desperate, dashed back up on the rock and began screaming at the top of our lungs. Luckily, our father was just riding horseback into the yard of the lower ranch three miles away where he had been checking cattle. He saw us on top of the rock jumping up and down and waving our arms.

Sensing something amiss, my father whirled the horse and came on a dead run. It seemed ages before he rounded the hill over in Graham canyon and came into view and then still ages before he charged up to us. He quickly rode under my sister and picked her off the rock. She was in a state of shock and could not get settled down for the rest of the day and her hands were sore for a week. This experience made us more cautious on ways up and down rocks. We never again tried to find a new way although this did not slow us down any from climbing.

I often wonder how my mother ever tolerated our being gone for hours climbing rocks. We stayed clear of the Cove, as it was infested with rattle snakes, and cougars hung out in the rocks. Several colts had been killed by cougars and one of our mares bore claw marks on her shoulder where a cougar had leaped. So my dad said, “No!” to the Cove.

CITY OF ROCKS

Just over Smokey Mountain from our ranch lies the main portion of the famous City of Rocks. We have spent days climbing these granite monsters. We gave our own names to a lot of them: Camp Rock, Treasure Rock, Annie’s Nipple, Rainbow Rock, Register Rock,
Bath Rock, Finger Rock, Sliced Cake, The Woman, Twin Sisters. Wearing high heeled shoes, I have climbed Bath Rock with a group of Friends who carried lunch, a Kodak, and a watermelon up to the highest part, where we sat and ate the food. We had an eagle flying overhead all the time.

There used to be an Izing glass hill close to the entrance of the rocks, but it has long since been stripped of every spec of visible mica. Also there was a big lode of mica over in a field, and that shiny stuff has been completely carried away. Why is it that the minute anything becomes public, it is soon destroyed?

SPRINGS

On the West end of the City of Rocks at the head of Emery Canyon is located a safe-drinking cold spring and water trough built by my father years ago for the forest department. Cattle and people both drink from this spring.

This area is also where the entrance is to the Indian Grove. However, it leads through private property where there is no admittance. The Indian Grove at one time was the rendezvous for Indians who raided and massacred white settlers and emigrants trying to get over Emigrant Pass on their way to California in the early days of the gold rush.
My brother made a beautiful and substantial picnic table, set and left it by the cold spring in the Indian Grove. The next week the table set was completely missing. We have cut marked timber here and dead timber for wood. We have spent the 4th of July celebration here a couple of times. Here we grazed our cattle on the range. We’ve climbed rocks and inspected beaver dams. My father and brother have also built watering troughs at this cold spring.

My father, while working on a fence near here took off his glasses and laid them on a big flat rock to keep the perspiration from running into his eyes. About two hours later, when he went to get the glasses they were gone. He searched around but could not find them and had to come home without them.

Then two weeks later he was again working on the same fence, kept seeing something glinting in his eye and went to investigate. There he found his glasses under a piece of brush. He surmised that a rat, chipmunk, or crow had carried them away and discarded them by the brush. They were not in any way damaged.

**SCHOOL YEARS**

My High School days were marred by two depressing things. My sister, Mary, suffered with a sarcoma on the side of her head. She endured untold misery with constant headache, finally convulsions, then coma, then death at the age of nine. Then my Grandma Bruesch began to be seriously ill with cancer and she too, passed away.

I found college interesting and exciting with lots of work at Southern Branch, University of Idaho, Pocatello, Idaho, where I boarded with my sister, Iona, and her husband. Here, too, I received bad news. My father had been shot in both arms. He rode down off the mountain with his right hand dangling and left arm shot badly. Dr. Water tried to stop the bleeding, then told him to hurry to Ogden. A cop stopped them in Ogden, but when he saw the bloody sheet, he led them to the Dee Hospital, where Dad remained a month after amputation of his right hand and serious loss of blood.

After my first two years of college, I spent the summer going by bus to the World’s Fair in Chicago, where we suffered 115° temperature until the rain came; then to Lansing, Michigan, where John bought a new car for us to travel in the rest of our trip; then to Niagara Falls where we heard the Canadian side break off with a
deafening roar and cut off all electricity. (People were yelling, thinking it was an earthquake.) Then we went to New York and Washington, D.C. where we visited my Great Aunt, Abby Davison. She accompanied us to all the sights in that vicinity. Here we had to cut short our visit and hurry for Salt Lake City as we received a telegram saying John’s (Mills) children were seriously ill with whooping cough. (I made this entire trip for $85.)

After two years of college I taught the first and second grades in Almo, then resigned a third year contract to attend U. of I. in Moscow. I graduated in June 1936 with a contract to teach Spanish and English in Mackay High School. I enjoyed very much teaching high school students. They were polite, industrious, cooperative. I had on the average 125 students a day, taught all Spanish and English classes, was Senior advisor, managed the school newspaper, and was the school Librarian. I had practically no discipline problems. My contract was signed and in effect for the third year, 1938, but was automatically canceled as I was married on June 3, 1938. (Idaho school law declared at this time, “No teaching contract will be in force with a married woman.”) I really resented this rule.

MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

To found a family there must be those who fall in love.

I had known my husband several years before we were married. He was very industrious, thrifty, sensitive, and full of initiative and most faithful and kind to me. We were married on 3 June 1938 in the Salt Lake Temple by George F. Richards Jr.

Our first home was rented for $15 per month. There were five rooms – two bedrooms, living rooms, kitchen and utility and an outdoor toilet and garage. This was of frame wooden construction, painted white, well-kept, and was cozy and comfortable. This was located in Salmon, Lemhi, Idaho. From here we went to Park Valley, Utah, in the spring of 1939 to
help Mirl’s mother, as her husband had passed away, and she needed assistance. We lived in a house furnished by Laurence Carter, as he owned a store and Mirl worked for him, trucking store goods and supplies out of Ogden, Utah for the C.C.C. camp located just south and east of the village of Park Valley.

Here we lived when three of our children were born. Morris Duane, April 4, 1940, in Pocatello, Idaho; Deanna Belle, July 7, 1941, in Pocatello, Idaho; Clarice Faye, May 19, 1943, in Brigham City, Utah. (We had to go out of Park Valley for doctors and hospitals.)

Here these three children had the measles. Morris was more sick with a fever of 104° which at first we couldn’t break. Dr. Rasmussen flew a plane out from Brigham and landed in an alfalfa field to bring medicine to break the fever. This all worked and so his life was spared.

Then we moved to Tremonton to work for a widow lady for $100 a month plus a house to use. This was a nice place except for that sticky, heavy Tremonton mud when the rain and storms came. Here four year old Morris became lost and the first department came and pumped out an open well with water level on the top ground. Since Morris’ tracks and hat were by the edge of the well, I ran one-half mile to get to a phone knowing that help would be too late. He finally was found in the middle of town, heading for a school ground full of play equipment, where he intended to have fun. In his pocket were a few pennies he intended to spend on the way home.

One fall during the deer hunting season, Mirl went with relatives out to Park Valley to get a deer. I did the chores, milked cows, etc., while he was gone. I also had the scarlet fever and had to drag myself around in the rain and mud to chase in the cows, feed the pigs, and pick up the chickens that were actually stuck in the mud and couldn’t get to the coop. I was very sick when Mirl left for the hunt but I didn’t let him know it. I stayed in bed as much as I could, had a high fever, that red rash, the skin peeled off both my hands, and I finally got well, after Mirl had been home for a couple of weeks. (By the way, he did shoot a deer.)

While we were in Brigham City for Peach Day celebration, Clarice at two years of age became lost. The kids had all been out on the street and had come back up the stairs to
Mirl’s mother’s apartment above the J.C. Penney store, shutting the outside door so quickly that Clarice could not find the entrance. She wandered around the streets, crying. The lady clerk of a store saw this soldier going up the street with Clarice by the hand and she was crying so hard, the lady went out and took Clarice into her store, sat her down in a child’s rocking chair, filled her lap full of toys including a doll, and tried to comfort her, to no avail. Meantime we had broadcast through the police station that she was lost. After about two hours we found her sitting in the store and still crying. What a relief to find a lost child safe and sound.

Ronald Mirl was born in Tremonton, Box Elder, Utah on 10 October 1944. He weighed seven pounds, four ounces, was plump and healthy. Little did we know that he would grow up to be working for the U.S. government as a Special Agent for the Bureau of Immigration and then the Justice Department, having graduated from Border Patrol College, knowing all phases of law, and speaking fluent Spanish. He has an exciting, but dangerous life.

From Tremonton we moved to east Rupert where we bought a modest eighty acre farm situated with a mile river front bordering the Snake River. We left Tremonton, March 30, 1946 and arrived in Rupert late at night in the midst of a snow storm with kids sick with measles. We unloaded as much as we could and sat around in the middle of the mess for several days, holding sick kids.

We really suffered for the first few months, as we had spent all our money on buying the place and on the moving. We had $5.00 in cash to do us all this time. We had a $15.00 check (owed to us by a Utah man) but the bank would not cash it, nor would the grocery store, and we could not get credit anywhere.

We went to the Rupert 1st Ward several times where we received nothing but cold stares and untrusting looks. So we finally began staying home – we felt so out of place. Finally Dale May and Mary Povey came to our house and welcomed us to the church and to the community. They were such pleasant, accommodating ladies that we again went to church and kept going regardless of how we felt or how we were treated.

SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCES

Mary’s Spirit

Mary had been seriously ill with a sarcoma on the right side of her head, on the jaw bone in front of her ear, for over a year and a half. Mom and Dad and neighbors had been sitting by her bedside all this time to help her and comfort her and administer drugs. She had not been
eating anything for over two weeks and was in a deep coma. In the middle of the night Dad
called us out of bed and had us gather around her bedside. She was in the midst of dying and
was experiencing the death rattle. This was hard on all of us. But she had suffered agonies
for so long that her passing seemed to soothe and comfort us. Also we all knew that it was a
big relief to her. She died when she was nine years old.

Two mortuary workers came from Payne’s in Burley and did the law-required embalming.
The casket was home-made, with shirred and quilted white satin lining and pillows. We sat
with her body day and night until the funeral. I can remember only one thing about the
funeral – the song God be With You. The funeral was managed by the Priesthood and Relief
Society and was done completely here in Almo – no outside help beyond the embalming.

Let me add two ideas: A home sponsored funeral is far above anything that a mortuary can
produce. Always, if possible, attend the death of a loved one. Do not shrink from this, and
you will never regret it. I will always thank Dad for calling us out of bed that night.

Dad’s Spirit

I was teaching in the Pershing school, Rupert, Idaho, the morning Dad passed away on
November 2. Elvin called and told me. So I arranged for a substitute, went home, collected
a few belongs, and headed for Almo.

As I was going up the long stretch of road on the Albion ridge, I saw the ambulance coming
at a high rate of speed, and I knew it was senseless for the driver to be going too fast. As he
passed me, my Father’s spirit embraced me with such vehemence that the force jarred my
body and seemed to cling to me. The spirit seemed to go straight through me. I could see it
as well as feel it. I found myself wishing that the driver had been traveling much slower, and
I wanted to turn around and follow him, but I felt I couldn’t catch up with him.

Mom’s Spirit

I sent word to Onie and Lois that Mom was ill and it seemed to be serious, so they both
came. We had Dr. Dalley of Rupert come and examine her. She was calm and quiet and did
not seem to be in any immediate danger. Onie went back home in Pocatello to do a few
necessary things before she came back again. That night at 2:00 a.m. Mom passed away in a
very calm manner. She said, “I don’t want to go, but I know I have to.” She did not even
seem to be breathing as she said this. We called Payne’s in Burley and two well-dressed
young men came in the ambulance and got her.

Mirl’s Spirit

When Mirl passed away on the morning of June 13, 1963 about 11:00 o’clock, Dad and I
were standing by his bedside. He was in a coma and could not speak. He did not want to
leave and his spirit had to literally tear itself away from his body with great force. I could
both see and feel the action of this separation of body and spirit. And I know Dad could too,
by the way he acted.
My Baptism

At the time this happened I was in Mackay, Idaho, teaching Spanish and English in high school. I had decided that I was going to be married in the Salt Lake Temple. In order to do this I intended to become a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.

On the day I was going to be baptized, Saturday, the 30 April, 1938, the weather was sort of changeable. Everyone was busy with the usual Saturday afternoon work. No one wanted to be bothered long enough to go with me. So I started walking alone, with my head bowed to the wind.

About half the distance to the church house a strange whirlwind cloud came straight toward me. I almost turned and ran, but felt this wouldn’t help me. As the wind and weeds struck me a man’s hands on my shoulders together with the storm hurled me to the ground against the wire fence. I turned my head to see who was holding me down, and still felt the weight of the hands.

Finally a calm, peaceful feeling came over me. I looked around again, but saw no one. So I arose, brushed myself off, rubbed my bruised legs, and then went quickly on to the church house.

Bishop Andrew C. Jensen, and his counselor David W. Lemmon were there. They spoke to me and told me the meaning and importance of baptism. I was then baptized by Bishop Jensen, and confirmed thereafter by David W. Lemmon.
A month later, 3 June, 1938, I was married in the Salt Lake Temple, after we went that very morning and secured a Utah marriage license. Mirl had gotten one in Idaho, which was not valid in Utah.