

MY PERSONAL HISTORY

Life & Times in Southeast Utah Verona Stocks

The farm in Blanding

When school was out a family friend took Aunt Pearl, Mary and me to Blanding. The night before we left, a well dressed elderly man stopped at Grandma's house, he ate supper with us, they asked him to stay the night. He said no, he was passing through Blanding and would be on his way. When we arrived in Blanding Dad and Mother were expecting us. They said a man had come to their house and had breakfast with them. He told them what time we would arrive. They described the man who ate supper with my Grand parents one evening and breakfast with Dad and Mother the next morning. It took us three days to drive there in a buggy, the man was walking when he came to the Murphy Ranch in Moab, and he arrived at Dad's farm five miles below Blanding the next morning for breakfast and he was walking. That was very puzzling to us all, still is to me.

I do remember my first look at our farm. We went down a long ridge to the bottom of what was called a "Swale." A wide place between two ridges. There was a big tent, surrounded by tall beautiful sage brush with patches of grass and flowers here and there. It was like the parks on the mountains, except there was not a tree in sight. The sage had a purple tint and was as tall as a man, and so much grass. There were lots of big white Segó Lilies.

Dad cleared and fenced ten acres, he planted corn, beans, and potatoes. It was over the ridge east of the house. One of Mary's and my chores was to keep the weeds out of the garden Mother had planted before we got there. We spent a lot of time digging Segó Lilies so we could eat the bulbs. Another chore was to go about a mile to get the mail. We had a little sorrel mare called Bird to ride, she was built something like a donkey and she thought a lot like them too. Full of all kinds of tricks. Mary could ride her but when she tried taking me with her, Bird would go so far then she would rear up. I would scream and Mary would have to bring me back. She either had to ride alone or make me walk with her. That didn't work out too good either.

One time we went after the mail and just before we reached the road some Indians showed up and as far as we could see down the road there was more Indians, most of them on horse back, they were headed toward Blanding. Mary said we should hide in a wash close by. But not me. I had to get up on the bank behind a little bush and watch those Indians go by and did not come our way. They saw me alright, pointed my way and laughed. Mary was furious and scared too.

Dad chewed tobacco and we had some goats. When Dad and Mother went after water and left Mary and me alone, Mary would get out a plug of tobacco and give each goat a chew, they liked it. She finally figured if the goats could chew tobacco and not spit she could too. She tried it, soon she turned green...

April 4, 1914, Mother, Mary and I were baptized. It was not supposed to be a cold day, it was, the water was very cold. The pond we were baptized in is now called Jackson Pond.

Joe Huff was visiting his folks in Moab and he baptized all three of us. I was afraid of water, after watching Mary and Mother get dunked all over. I thought if they could do it so could I. I was very proud to be baptized when my Mother was.

I can remember one friend who was baptized that day. It was Bessie (Shafer) Youvon.

Aunt Tim was anxious to see her daughter so we left for Blanding, her grandson Howard wanted to help Mary drive the milk cows. She did not need help

but he had nerve and stayed right with her.

Arthur Christenson, who lived at the foot of Peters Hill was on his way to Monticello, he helped drive the cows and showed off for Mary and Howard, She had her first crush. Howard felt hopeless about ever being a cowboy. He knew he never would be able to stand on a horse, let alone stand on his head, do somersaults, twerle a rope, rope a cow, or whistle like Arthur even though Arthur was riding a burro.

We stopped at the Carlisle ranch. The next morning we drove straight through Monticello. It was raining, the mud was deep the horses pull-hard.

I was very sick and Great Aunt Tim was a cute elderly little lady but not used to what she was going through on this trip.

Then it started raining harder, we were near Verdure and had to stop. I was sitting on the seat of the wagon Mother was driving. Aunt Tim and the younger kids were back in the covered wagon, warm and dry.

Dad drove in among some trees and set up the little tent. Mother told me to hurry and get into it. I tried but could not walk. Dad carried me to the tent and fixed a place for me to lie down. Aunt Tim came in and they got her as comfortable as possible. Dad, Mother and the other kids had to sleep in the covered wagons, except Mary, she slept with me. Dad stretched a canvas between two trees and built a camp fire so Mother could cook out of the rain. Then Mary and Howard came and she was mad, Dad asked what took them so long and she told him there was a bull back there and one of the cows had jumped the fence and they had a hard time getting her back on the road and she kept trying to go back.

Aunt Tim really gave Mary a lecture, she could not be a lady unless she watched her language, Mary said, "Well it was a bull." Aunt Tim said, "no it was a gentleman cow."

We stayed in that camp ten days before we could move on. The rain stopped but I was too sick. It was my appendix. Aunt Tim and Howard were glad to be united with their folks and to be in a house again, when we finally reached Blanding.

Bucking Burros & Chewing tobacco

Dad cleared land for other farmers close by and he cut posts and built fences. There was a lot of cattle and wild horses on the White Mesa, where we lived. Dad located our burro and brought her home, she had a cute little burro colt. Mary was going to ride our burro, she had the summer before but that

donkey had run wild for so long she had other ideas. Mary said I had to lead her, Mary got on, no way to hold the donkey's head up so she bucked, Mary flew high and came down head first in a pile of posts, nothing showing but her feet. Dad got her out, she was scratched up and mad. Dad told her to put a bridle on the burro and hold her head up so she couldn't buck, that worked.

Dad chewed tobacco and we had some goats. When Dad and Mother went after water and left Mary and me alone, Mary would get out a plug of tobacco and give each goat a chew, they liked it. She finally figured if the goats could chew tobacco and not spit she could too. She tried it, soon she turned green, maybe she was just a little pale, well whatever, she was just one sick kid. I sure was glad to see Mother and Dad show up. Dad stopped chewing tobacco and he



got rid of the goats. He never figured out for a long time just how those goats could find his tobacco, no matter where he hid it.

Grandma Murphy and Otho come to Blanding for a visit. He was five years older than Mary but he always seemed younger. There was no water on our place. We hauled our culinary water from a spring of good water about a mile and a half from our place. Our cows and horses watered there, unless the Indians were on the move. Otho was with us one day when we went to the spring after our cows. That time of year we did not expect Indians but they were there and getting ready to eat. It was Chief Posey and some of his people. One of his women brought food to us. Otho and Mary kept poking me and saying "You eat and don't say a word." I ate. Otho kept saying, "It might be dog meat or rattle snake." He did not know but I did, it was goat meat and fresh, I saw the hide hanging there. He was a town boy.

One day Mother went with us to get some vegetables from the garden which was over a little ridge from the house. We got to the top of the ridge and could see the garden below us. Rover our dog kept trying to turn us back. He was



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growling and the hair on his neck and back was standing straight up. An animal howled down by the garden, Otho just turned and ran. Mary said come on, Gee, I was going as fast as I could. She came back, gave my arm a jerk, I beat her to the house.

Mother looked at Rover, his hair still standing on end, he was still watching that ridge. We were told to stay by the house and close the door. At times Dad carried the mail to Bluff for the regular mail man. When he returned he told us a crippled wolf had killed two Indian women in Bluff two nights before. We were not allowed to leave the yard until the men tracking the wolf let us know it was out of the area. It was killed in Colorado.

We moved back to Moab that fall. Mary, Annie and me walked the two and a half miles to school all winter.

A Loss to the Family

Mother was eight months pregnant when her second baby boy was still born. Mother was alone when the baby came and she was heart broken, they wanted a boy so bad. Us kids came from school, we knew Mother was not feeling good when we left that morning. Mary chased us out into the tent where I fed the kids while Mary was trying to do something for Mother. Uncle Heber stopped

in and saw the situation, got Aunt Nellie to help Mary. He built a little casket, Aunt Nellie fixed it up with silk cloth and lace, then they had a little service for the baby and Uncle Heber buried it.

Dad was out rounding up cows at the time. Mary stayed home from school until the folks realized just how sick Mother was. Uncle Heber and Uncle Felix kept a close watch on Mother. Uncle Heber saw that some of the women took food to her, Uncle Felix saw that there was plenty of wood and fresh water.

Us kids were chased off to school before Mother was up and around Mary and I always brought flowers home to her from Essie Shaffer's flower garden. After Mrs. Shaffer found out Mother was so sick she always had flowers ready, when school was out, for us to take home.

We had plenty to do when we got home. Mary would let me help her cook then she fed Mother, milked the cows, fed the chickens and pigs, I fed the little kids, did the dishes, put the little girls to bed, etc.

Before Mother was really able to travel we moved back to Blanding and down on the dry farm. We went the same old way Dad driving one team and Mother driving the other one. Mary drove the cows, I had the usual attack of appendicitis.

When we got settled in at the dry farm Dad plowed up the ten acre field that was fenced. Mary and I came along behind him and dropped the potatoes and then the corn in the rows he made. He harrowed over that. We planted the garden while Dad finished clearing the twenty acres he was going to plant on Grandma's land. Mother did walk up with the three little girls to see that we planted the garden right. She was still too weak to do much.

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There was a long rocky, tree covered high ridge bordering Grandma's land on the east. At the North end there was a spring, hard to get to but the Indians did not come to it so that is where we got our water part of the time. On the day we were going to plant Grandma's field Dad told Mother to fix a picnic and we would plant corn, get water and picnic at the spring.

Mary and I was busy planting the corn, Dad was making rows and barely staying ahead of us when Rover started growling. We looked up and there on that ridge was a herd of cattle, their leader was a big roan steer with the biggest horns I have ever seen, he wanted to use them too. Dad told us to get to the wagon as fast as we could, get in and lay down and be very still. Mother saw the cattle and had the little kids in the wagon laying down. The sideboards on that wagon was not near high enough. Dad unhooked the horses and got to the wagon just before the steer did, about a hundred head of cattle was right behind him. Dad put the horses on the opposite side of the wagon from the cattle, then he got a single tree off the wagon to hit that steer if he attacked the horses or tried to get the people in the wagon, he did not need it. Rover was a large dog, he grabbed that steer by the nose and hung on, it was a wicked fight. The steer finally got loose and took away from there as fast as he had come, his followers went with him. When he attacked a cowboy on a horse another cowboy who had a gun killed him.

We finished planting that week, it was hard because Dad got sick. He had typhoid fever. Grandma showed up. I do not know if Mother sent for her or who brought her. I do know she was needed, Dad had to have someone with him day and night. When he was able to get around all our mares were gone. The big red stallion had rounded them up. When he was able to work Dad had to have Queen, her and Baldy was the best work team.

I do not remember just when Dad built the cabin on the farm, but we liked it better than the tent; we did still use the tent however. Now I remember who came with Grandma and why. It was Aunt Pearl's father-in-law. Mr. Knight came to witch a water well for us. He would walk around with a peach limb and if it turned down, that's where you dug for water. We never got a well.

When Dad built that cabin he left some long poles sticking out on the corners, they were just right to catch Mary in the head when she made a dash in that direction. She did several times a day. He wondered when she would learn, because always she was knocked down and had knots on her head. I think he finally sawed them off. The poles I mean.

Getting the Better of Cousin Eph

Before Dad built the cabin the other man, Joe Huff's cousin Eph lived with

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