

The following two articles, “The True Story of the Sailing Vessel Java” and “The Story of My Grandfather and Grandmother Whitney,” both came from the lips of Lovina Syphus Whitney, wife of George Burton Whitney. Since these articles are in her own words, I feel they deserve a place in the Perkins Posterity. They were among writings which Clara Logan, daughter of Ute Vorace Perkins, had and which were given to my brother, Eugene H. (Hafen) Perkins for him to read by Clara’s daughter Julia. Hafen in turn gave them to me to read and I have done so and also retyped them and placed brackets after statements which are not historically correct. For those of you familiar with the histories of Luke Syphus and George Burton Whitney it is easy to see that the bulk of these histories came from these original histories by Lovina Syphus Whitney.

Waldo C. Perkins

THE TRUE STORY OF THE SAILING VESSEL JAVA

By My Grandmother Lovina Syphus Whitney

The sailing vessel Java, left England early in the year of 1853 with my parents, your grandparents, on your father’s side, on board. Their names were Luke Syphus and Christina Long Syphus. There were altogether about five-hundred people on that vessel. This ship carried water and provisions for three months, but due to reverse winds they were six-months this particular trip. These reverse winds would drive them backwards sometimes for days at a time; so that the three months trip was drawn out to a six-month one.

They had been on this vessel three months when my oldest brother was born. This was the 3rd of March 1853 in Table Bay, Cape of Good Hope, Africa. My mother because of lack of food and care could not give the baby the proper attention and care; therefore he died on March 29, 1853. He was buried beneath the ocean waves.

All the people on board the vessel suffered terribly for want of food and water. Many died before they reached Australia, which was their destination. They were put on small rations amounting to two tablespoons of water a day and what was called sea biscuits. These were so hard they had to be chopped with an axe; not only were they hard but were full of big worms, but the people ate them because they were so hungry.

Not only were they troubled with reverse winds, but the vessel sprang a leak and it was thought for some time that they would have to abandon ship and take to lifeboats. The Captain ordered the boats lowered and all the women and children were told to get in. While the Captain was below deck getting the men to pump the water out and organizing a bucket brigade for bailing water out, my father took the Captain’s place and ordered all to stay on the ship and not get in the boats. He told them they would be all right as soon as the water was pumped out and the leak fixed. When the Captain came back on deck and learned what my father had done he was somewhat angry and told him that he could have him put in jail for what he had done.

It was at this time that so many rich gold mines had been discovered in Australia, causing a great demand for lumber and all kinds of building material; so my father decided to saw lumber as it was bringing a very good price.

I wish you could have seen how they sawed lumber at that time. First they had to dig a deep pit or cellar about six feet deep, sixteen feet long and four or five feet wide. The log they were going to saw into lumber they would mark with straight black lines where it was to be sawed; then one man would get down in the pit and the other stand on the log at the top. The man on the bottom would pull the great saw down and the one at the top would draw it up. In this way the lumber was sawed for the buildings. This happened before I was born, but I saw my father saw lumber this way many years later when we lived in Panaca, Nevada.

My parents were Latter-day Saints or Mormons commonly called; so after they went to Australia their home soon became headquarters for the Latter-day Saint Elders and Apostles [no apostles came to Australia between 1854-1856 when the Syphuses were in Australia] that were laboring in Australia at this time. In 1854, August 31st this grandmother of yours saw the light of day. August there comes in the cool part of the year.

THE STORY OF MY GRANDFATHER AND GRANDMOTHER WHITNEY

By My Grandmother Lovina Syphus Whitney

Your grandfather, George B. Whitney, was born March 9 1846 in Troy, New York; but he was a delicate child and the doctors told his parents they could not raise him in the city. So they took him up in the Green Mountains, Bennington County, Vermont, to his grandparents, his mother's people, the Barnards. He got well; they his parents the Whitney's, brought him home to the city. He grew weak and puny and they had to take him back to Vermont. They got him home again; but the third time his grandparents the Barnards, told his parents the Whitney's they would not take him back unless they promised to leave him with them for good.

So there he went to school with their youngest son, Burton Barnard, who was seven years older than your grandfather Whitney. He lived with them until he was seventeen-years-old. His grandfather Barnard died at that time. Then he went to Illinois with his grandmother Barnard to one of her daughters.

From there he went to Kentucky; spent a term in school there, was conductor on a railroad; then he got the spirit of "go west young man." Next place he was in was San Diego, California. From there he went to Riverside, California, helped make the first canal there, had some good friends there that wanted him to stay, but no, this was at the time the mines were on the boom in 1870 or 1871 in Nevada; so he in company with several others reached Pioche the night of the big fire, when most of Pioche was burned down; so the next day he came to Bullionville, 13 miles from Pioche and one mile from Panaca.

At that time he was not a Mormon, and had read such terrible things about the LDS. He was most afraid to come to Panaca. But he did come over, and stayed with some people up by the Court Rock. He went out in the mills at Bullion that used cord wood to run the machinery. Your grandpa found he couldn't make much chopping so he decided to buy horses and a wagon and hire his wood chopped. So he got some men to chop while he hauled it in to Bullionville with his horses. In those days we did not have to pay down, got everything on credit and pay as you earned it. When spring came one

morning in April he went out after his horses, could not find them and never did see them or hear of anyone that did. Some horse rustlers had taken them right out of the country. So there he was a foot and alone; he decided he would work by the month until he got money enough to take him to Texas. Meanwhile he attended several Mormon meetings; he was very much impressed by a subject Erastus Snow spoke on while visiting Panaca. Erastus Snow was one of the Twelve Apostles in charge of the Dixie Mission.

Summer came on and the weeds began to grow. There were three men that needed help, my father being one of them. The man where your father lived, Sy Reynolds, told him Bishop [Syphus did not become a bishop until 1875] Syphus was the man to work for; so when my father went to see him he decided to try it out with the understanding that when either one of them got tired of their bargain he would quit.

So here he comes one afternoon to learn his next days job, as father was marketing his garden products in Pioche, 12 miles away and had to leave home at three or four o'clock A.M. in order to get his vegetables there in time for dinner. And would you believe it, mother went too; and a stranger coming to work; and just me to do the work and get dinner. I just knew it would do no good to ask one of the boys to bless the food so I did it myself. We would no more think of eating without the blessing than we would think of doing without our dinner. So the first day passed.

We girls did not invite him to go along when we went for a walk with our crowd after meeting. It was all so different to him. He talked to my mother about it and she explained to him that the LDS people did no approve of their daughters mingling with strangers. Why they were so strict in those days that they did not allow an outsider in their public dances, and everyone that did not belong to the Mormon Church was considered an outsider. But there was such a rough element came in when the mines were discovered they couldn't permit anyone to join in the dances unless they let them all in. Even your grandpa Whitney was invited to leave the dance hall; he did not know the rules. That was a long time before he came to our home.

Even while he was hauling wood he found out who I was. I suppose I looked attractive in my plaid black and red dress that I wore to school. Well I've strayed again on the side lines.

While at our place your grandpa commenced to study the church books; and he and my father would spend their evenings studying the principles of our gospel. He was finally convinced this was the only true church and was baptized in Panaca, first baptized 1872 in Lincoln County, Nevada.

By this time we were acquainted and thinking a lot of each other. The winter of 1872-1873 he taught school in Panaca. I took my first grammar lesson from him. When school was out in the spring he drove a four-mule team hauling lumber from Clover Valley to Pioche for Dave Thomson. When that job was finished he clerked in the Panaca Co-op store until we went to Salt Lake City to get wed which occurred on October 9, 1873.

Now I'll start on my life. My father and mother were born in England, embraced the gospel there, and were married on the 25th December 1851, and took sail for Australia the last of 1852 or the first of 1853 on board the ship *Java*. They were on the ocean six months. My oldest brother, Luke, was born on the ocean the 3rd of March 1853 and died the 29th of March 1853, buried in the ocean. They finally reached their destination, Australia, where my father sawed lumber, there being a great demand for same. I could

write a lot of things that happened there from hearing my parents relate them. It was August 31st 1854, when I first opened my eyes in Sydney, New South Wales, Australia. Before I was two-years-old my parents started for California on the ship Jeneveve [Jenny Ford]. She caught fire three times on her three months voyage on the Pacific Ocean. There was a large company, mostly LDS Saints. They landed at San Pedro beach [harbor]; most of the company went up to San Bernardino. Several friends stayed on the beach with my folks as mother was ill. Father gathered material from wrecked ships and built the first cabin on the beach; where my brother, Edward, was born on the 22nd August 1856. In two or three weeks we moved up to San Bernardino where my father made lumber and made them a three-room house, and got rails from the mountains and fenced in a 15-acre farm, and in 1857 raised abundant crops; but owing to the bad things that happened in Utah the LDS Saints in California were threatened with death and were called to Utah.

There were so many thing happened on this trip, enough to make a book. One thing that happened at the head of the Muddy the Indians had me nearly pulled out of the back of the wagon. My father heard a noise, jumped out of the front of the wagon, run around and there was Mr. Indian with me half out of the wagon, except he was pulling me out to find what he could eat, for all along the trail the Indians were nearly naked and starved.

I don't know how many days it took them to get to Beaver Dams; but there the whole band of Indians came out and were going to kill them; but owing to a young man amongst them that my father had befriended in San Bernardino; he pled with the chief to spare their lives. So by giving them most of their provisions they let them go in peace.

They finally got to Cedar City the last of the year or the beginning of the year 1858. I do not know just how long we were in Cedar; just about a year I think, for my sister Ellen was born in Toquerville, Utah, on March 6th 1859. From there we went to Santa Clara, was there when the big flood came along the first of January 1862. My parents lost everything; their home, pigs, chickens, all the years crops: corn, wheat, just our bedding and a few things father moved when he saw the flood was going to take the farm, home, and all, he didn't have time to move went down with the flood. The rain had lasted over a month and everything was soaked deep down. The flood cut the channel so deep the land began to cave, whole acres would cave off at a time; even enough for a large tree to sail down as far as we could see, still standing upright. Father's farm commenced to cave off before dark, and in the morning when we looked from the hilltop there was just the rock chimney standing on the bank; that made two homes and farms my parents lost in about five years.

There had to be a new start made; so father moved us around the point where the Clara settlement now is. A company of Swiss people had moved there from the north in 1861; so father made us a temporary shelter by digging into the sides of the hill just below where the Boomer building stands; then he went to work and made adobes and built us a home near the bottom of the street as you leave Clara for St. George; my father did not get a farm at the present Clara; he went to building. He built that Boomer place for Jacob Hamblin, also the [Marius] Ensign home and several others. That spring the whooping cough and the scarlet fever broke out. My Uncle Mathew Syphus had gone to California and left his family for our folks to care for. Aunt Mary Ann was a noble woman, we just loved her; but she did have trouble; buried her two oldest daughters that

spring; they both died in mother's bed; as we children had the same complaints, my parent could not go to her home to help her so father moved them up to our house. For some reason my father sold the home and we moved up to the top of the street just across from the Jacob Hamblin place, where my brother, George, was born. That's where I stood on a stool to reach the table and mixed my first batch of bread. It must have been agonizing for my mother to lie in bed and watch me get out of that dough.

Well I've got the cart before the horse, meant to have told you Aunt Mary Ann went with us to this new home; during the summer her baby Clara died, her children were ill all summer; many is the time I've seen her out under those big cottonwood trees crying. Uncle Mathew came back that fall and they went back to their own home.

December of that year my brother George was born on December 23rd 1868. About that time Apostle Snow called my father to settle with others in Clover Valley and preside as bishop [he was actually called as the presiding elder to Clover Valley in 1864]. That was the time of the Indian raids. They got so bad the settlers had to build a fort and move into it; also built a big round public corral, where everyone drove their cattle, cows, calves; then guarded it every night. The men would go out at dark, stay until twelve o'clock. The guard saw a man in the bull fence and shot. Mr. Indian fell forward dead, and then another ran, he wounded him in the back. Everyone in the fort was up and dressed; the next morning part of the men started to follow before daylight. They stopped at a watering place to get breakfast; my father's horse got loose and came back to the fort.

Talk about excitement! The women were crying, one particular friend even swore if they had killed "our Luke" she had punishment in store for them.

[Lovina Syphus Whitney's history ends abruptly at this point.] Waldo C. Perkins