

LIFE SKETCH OF LORENZO BALMFORTH

BY Dorothy Fielding

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My father was out this morning for a haircut. Whenever he has to get some fresh air, or a fresh point of view, then he needs a haircut and he usually comes to me. He lives on South Holmes in Shelley, Idaho, where he is a part time janitor for the Shelley Junior High. He is restless and miserable when he isn't busy. We live on the Sugar factory road (Baseline Road) three miles east of the factory, so he drives about four miles to our place.

His health is pretty good, much better when he is working than when he is out of a job. He does have to watch his diet because of blood pressure and a dropsy condition. He takes pressure pills, water shots when necessary, digitalis and watches his salt intake. But he doesn't worry much about himself, and he doesn't bore other people with his ailments.

He was born 5 May 1886 (by his account: some blessings say 1885) to Hannah Hepworth and Charles Balmforth. He was born in Salt Lake City, Utah, the youngest of 13 children.

I have a picture of Dad with his father and Aunt Mary in front of Grandfather's store on 264 West South Temple and 1st West. Grandfather's other store was on 263 West South. That doesn't sound right, but that's the way it's written on the back of the photograph. Also written on the back there is a notation that says there was a salt market on 2nd South between Main and State Street.

Grandfather Charles died 26 June 1904, which would make Dad about 18 years of age. Dad's mother, Hannah, helped in the store and took care of Grandfather, who had a bad dropsy condition. Dad remembered the Doctor coming and tapping Grandfather's lungs, and how much fluid would be removed. This happened several times. Grandfather was noted for his easiness and generosity with people. So many owed him for groceries that it was hard for grandmother to make ends meet.

Before Dad was 12, he was walking down the street one day and met one of the men in the ward, who asked Lorenzo why he wasn't coming to church. Lorenzo looked at his

shoes and said they were not fit for church. (They were in very poor condition.) The man said, "Let us go over to the store, (not grandfather's) and buy you a pair." Dad's ire arose immediately, and he said, "Nobody's going to buy me shoes." So he stopped going to church.

Lorenzo liked to tell about his father, Charles, singing in the first Tabernacle Choir. He sang bass, and he is (supposed to be) in the picture that hung in the baptistry in the Salt Lake Tabernacle.

My sister, Mary, was asking him questions one time when Dad told of helping to haul lumber up to the side of the mountain, northeast of Salt Lake where they were building the big U, that stands for the University of Utah. Before the Salt Lake Temple was finished, a train used to run up South Temple, and also he remembered two wheel carts hauling big stones, probably granite, around to the south entrance to help build the Temple. He remembered the big tithing yard in the back of the Hotel Utah, and that there was nothing on the east bench of Salt Lake City. He also told Mary that his father Charles, owned 80 acres in East Mill Creek and that he traded it for a team of mules. He also owned land in Eldorado, wherever that was. Dad also remembered that the Great Salt Lake was $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles farther in, than at the present time.

Dad had many jobs before he was married. He delivered coal all around Salt Lake with a team of horses. He drove a delivery wagon for the American Linen Supply. He worked for Keeley's delivering candy, and he would tell us about the delicious chocolates the girls on the candy line would save for him. He liked good candy.

My mother, Eva Whiting, was baptized in Nottingham, England, 19 January 1904, and confirmed the same day, along with her sister, Bess. They worked in Nottingham, doing cooking and housework. Their sister, Kate, had already joined the Church and come to Utah. Kate was sending a little money to Eva and Bess so they could come over too. Another sister, Frances, followed Kate, Eva and Bess. They were working in the Troy laundry when the Balmforth brothers knew them. My mother had three brothers, George, Robert, (Bob) and Sid, who also came over from England. Joseph, Jack and Lorenzo Hepworth had many good times with the Whitings.

My mother and father were married 31 October 1908 in Farmington, Utah, a little town 16 miles north of Salt Lake. Aunt Kate Whiting went with them. Shortly after their marriage, Uncle George and Uncle Bob made their home with them. Dad continued to work in the lumber yard. Dad did not have much opportunity for schooling but he was always good with figures. He was valuable in a lumber yard and learned much about wood. He learned to like the feel of wood and to work with it with his hands. He built me an oak bookcase with three drawers on the bottom, and two shelves on the top, out of a massive oak table with legs at least 10 inches across, that belonged to Arvel's mother and dad. It was damaged in the flood of 1962.

Dad stayed in Salt Lake City for about nine years. Dorothy, Sidney, Mary, and Evelyn were born in Salt Lake City. Then he moved his family to Idaho Falls, Idaho, where they lived in a little white house on 12th Street. Here they stayed for a year while Dad worked for the Anderson Lumber Company. Again they moved, this time to Clark Ward, about 4½ miles east of Rigby, Idaho, to a farm operated by his brother Charles. He worked hard, learning about farming, raising a big garden. It was mostly a good time in their lives.

When we lived in Clark Ward, there was a grove of cedars on the north edge of the farm. At Christmas time, he would bring in a shapely cedar and decorate it and put real candles on it. In the evening, he would light the candles, and we would watch in awe as they flickered and we could smell the warm wax. This same cedar grove supplied the wood that warmed the house and cooked the food.

In the years when we were small, before he got some false teeth, he could really whistle. He could whistle just like a meadowlark. When we were over to the neighbors and he thought it was time we should come home, he would give a shrill whistle. We knew we had better be home immediately.

While in Clark, at one time Dad went into Rigby in the one horse buggy and bought his wife, Eva, a black pluch coat with a big fur collar. He was so proud that he was able to buy it for her. It cost \$22.00 and that was really something for that day. We children were conscious of the good feeling between our parents. We were poor, but we didn't know it.

George, the last living child in our family was born in the log house in Clark Ward in Rigby. There was a baby boy born in Salt Lake before Dorothy, but he did not live. There were also two children born after George who did not live, so Mother and Dad had eight children.

Evelyn was about 6 months old when the family moved to Idaho Falls and she was walking pretty well when we moved to Rigby. I was to watch the smaller children as Dad was irrigating and the ditches were full of water. Evelyn got away from me. We were on the edge of the ditch, throwing clods in the water when Evelyn tumbled in. I can still see her floating around on top of the water, like an X, in her little blue coveralls. We screamed and Dad came running and fished her out and took her in to get her dry. Then he came looking for me. I'll never forget the licking. I'm sure it helped my sense of responsibility.

After six years, Dad again moved his family, this time to Woodville, just northwest of Shelley, on his brother Joe's farm. He worked for Joe for a year, then moved to a farm on Jameston Road when he farmed for himself for six years. It was during this time that Eva's health began to fail and the pattern of our lives changed.

We moved back to Woodville, then to Idaho Falls after a farm sale, then back to a farm just south of Shelley, then to a farm below Firth in the Kimball Ward. My mother died 8 June 1937.

After about a year, Lorenzo married Laura Smith Winson, and they moved to Blackfoot where Dad worked for the Anderson Lumber Company. After 10 years, Laura died, and in a short time he married Madge Bianton Smith, a sister-in-law of Laura's. After several short small moves, they bought a little white house at 355 South Holmes in Shelley. It was very much in need of everything; paint, soap and water and a lot of fixing. After many hours and days of working together, the house and yard had a new look. Dad and Madge lived in this little house a little over 10 years.

Their health was failing slowly but they kept busy, Dad building things for his house, for each of us. He liked to work with cedar and sometimes would drive out on the lava beds west of Shelley and gather large pieces with which to build. He made end tables and a cedar chest which his granddaughter, Helen Fielding Ashcraft has in her home. I have a little porch swing, built for a 10 inch doll. I also have a replica of the wagon he used to drive before he was married. It is about 12 inches long with high wheels and a high seat and a horse with a harness in front. He helped me with many of my primary projects. He made the doors for some cupboards I put in my kitchen. He took so much pride in his yard and garden. He thoroughly enjoyed working in the soil.

Dad has always worked hard and he has demanded good honest hard work from us. When I look at some today, I know how rich this part of our heritage is. We are not afraid of work, of making things do, of finding a way to accomplish that which we should. Although he was not a church going man, he left us rich in the knowledge that are able to contribute our share of responsibility wherever we are. Because he taught us to work long, we have been protected from many evils. There just was not time to indulge. If we stayed out too late, he made sure we got up extra early the next morning.

Dad taught us the value of work and the necessity of it. It was at Rigby that Sid and I learned to pick potatoes and pile hay. We were eight and ten years old at the time. For a special treat on a Sunday afternoon, he would borrow Uncle Charles's white top buggy and a team and take us for a ride. He has taken us over the ferry which used to be the only way of crossing the Snake River at Heise. One time he brought us in the same white top to his sister Amy's place in Lincoln.

We thought all of Dad's family was pretty special. His brothers and sisters were all so good looking and warm and gracious. We loved each one of them. Aunt Mary was special, so was Aunt Hannah, and Aunt Libby,

and Aunt Mattie. We loved to go to Uncle Jack's and we loved Aunt Nellie.

Because his sister Hannah was just older than he, he felt close to her. We often went to see Aunt Hannah and continued to go until she died and we loved being in her presence..

Dad loved his family, especially his grandchildren. His services were not felt too much outside his home and family. The last few years he took care of Madge, doing the cooking and the housework when she was not able.

Dad liked to fish although he didn't get a chance very often. Sometimes Sid would be able to take him fishing. He also liked to go with Seymour Balmforth, his nephew. He enjoyed camping and being out in the mountains. Mary's husband, Jim, was a special favorite with Dad.

I find Dad also liked to play baseball. I was glad to find that out. I had wondered what he did for fun!

About ten years before he died, Dad quit drinking. (which had blossomed into quite a habit.) He was at once spiritually sweeter, more charitable, more understanding, so much nicer to be around. He also quit smoking and I've heard him ask on more than one occasion why he wasted so much health, time and money.

Because I lived closer to him than the other children, I was rewarded with his friendship and his concern. I felt it was a very special relationship and special privilege to garden with him, exchange ideas, go places with him and Madge.

He had a little red Plymouth car the last 10 years of his life that he just loved. He felt better in that car than anywhere else. He could feel bad, and a ride in that car relaxed him. It was still sitting in his garage the day he died. I was with him and he asked me about the car. He thought he might get a chance to drive it again.

He passed away on the 20 October 1969, in the Blackfoot Bingham Memorial Hospital, very quietly, after a stay there of nine days. We thought at first that he was getting better, but it was not to be. At the time of his death, he had 31 grandchildren and 35 great grandchildren. He is buried beside his first wife, Eva, in the Hillcrest Cemetary in Shelley, Idaho.