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The Garr Family Saga The Connecting Power of Oral Narrative

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THE GARR FAMILY SAGA
THE CONNECTING POWER OF ORAL NARRATIVE

By

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A Plan B submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree

of

Masters of Science

in

American Studies

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CONTENTS

Introduction	1 - 19
Crimson Stain on the Family Name	20 - 51
Appendix 1, John T. Garr Obituary	52
Appendix 2, Johnny Garr Obituary	53
Appendix 3, Proof of Mailing Notice	54 - 55
Appendix 4, Creditors Claim	56
Searching For Susie	57 - 81
Appendix 1, Correspondence from Cyril Garr to Lois	82 - 83
Appendix 2, Correspondence from Cyril Garr to Unknown	84
Appendix 3, "Susie the Indian" by Mae Parry	85 - 86
Illustrations	87 - 93
Works Cited	94 - 95

INTRODUCTION

When I was a child, my mother often told me a "true" story about a beautiful Shoshone maiden who married a handsome American cowboy. The setting was the 1850s in the fertile valley of Cache County, Utah. The man's name was John Turner Garr and the woman was called Susie. This young couple was my paternal great-great grandparents. Together they lived a life that defied their disparate cultures. I envisioned them, young, wild, and free; he, dressed in buckskin leggings, riding among the Shoshone men; she, in soft doeskin supporting a papoose on her back. The idyllic life of my fantasy could, at best, only be temporary for them. It became for me, however, a catalyst that helped to form my own identity, and the identity of my family generations later.

Families tell stories such as this one to their children as a means to connect them to family identity and culture. The family is a child's first culture. Families are the structures that give children their first perceptions of themselves. Through families, children are introduced to the narratives which confer upon them a sense of their place within the context of their environment. These narratives infuse in family members a collective understanding and a shared awareness of who they are and what they can become. From infancy on, cultural ideals and expectations are embedded in each family member through their family stories. "Family folklore may be said to be the first and basic dynamic traditional system encountered by most people the world over. . . . It is in this setting that we learn to participate in certain traditional roles."¹ These shared interpretations serve to bind the family as a cohesive unit. "There is no doubt that we

¹Barre Toelken. 1996. *The Dynamics of Folklore*. Logan: Utah State University Press, 101.

learn about the idea of family and how to be a member of a family from our families . . . family stories are one of the cornerstones of family culture; they throw what may be mute and habitual into sharp relief. By their presence, they say what issues -- from the most public and predictable to the most private and idiosyncratic -- *really* concern a given family."²

Folklorist Mody Boatright was one of the first to recognize and legitimize family stories as socially, culturally, and historically valuable. He coined the term "Family Saga" to identify these episodes of lore transmitted through generational family memory. He wrote, "I use the term [Family Saga] mainly to denote a lore that tends to cluster around families, or often the patriarch or matriarch of families, which is preserved and modified by oral transmission, and which is believed to be true."³

William A. Wilson described narratives with similar interrelated backgrounds and texts as a "Family Novel." When speaking about his own mother's stories he explained, "It is through this intertextuality that characters in the family oral novel emerge into full-blown, three-dimensional individuals, just as well-developed characters emerge gradually from the pages of a written novel. . . . It is through this intertextuality that events in a number of the stories interlink into coherent meaningful wholes. . . . Really to understand one of

²Elizabeth Stone. 1988. *Black Sheep and Kissing Cousins: How Our Family Stories Shape Us*. New York: Random House, Inc, 17.

³Mody Boatright, Robert B. Down and John T. Flanagan. 1958. *The Family Saga and Other Phases of American Folklore*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1.

these stories, then, one has to have heard them all and has to bring to the telling of a single story the countless associations formed from hearing all the stories."⁴

The two essays presented here are my attempt to bring together two family stories that are interrelated and intertextual. These two works taken together form chapters in my own family novel or saga. In these two papers, I have evaluated the uses of oral testimony and the subsequent truths it can yield to us. I have also searched for historical documentation to validate the stories in order to reconcile family memory with written records. Truth itself is subjective. History relies on perspective. Both are matters of someone's personal interpretation during any given moment in time. History is derived from the statements of witnesses to an event and documented to be displayed as an official accounting of that event, forever suspended in time. During my research, I found that history and memory do not always corroborate each other.

My first essay entitled, "Crimson Stain on the Family Name," was written two years before my subsequent paper. In this work, my primary focus was on the historical perspective of my family stories relative to my undergraduate training as a history major. I use oral family narratives in this paper to corroborate written records and to add details where historical documentation falls short. The first segment of the paper recounts the historical background and political climate of Cache County, Utah, during the latter part of the nineteenth century. It was during this time that my great-great

⁴William A. Wilson. 1991. "Juanita Brooks and Family Narratives." *Juanita Brooks Lecture Series*, February 19, 13-14. Also see William A. Wilson. April 1991. "Personal Narratives: The Family Novel" *Western Folklore*, v. 50, 127-149.

grandfather, John T. Garr [Figure 1], and his mixedblood Native American son, Johnny Garr [Figure 3], lived their lives. These circumstances shaped their experience and set the stage for events that resulted in the pruning of my family's branch from the rest of the family tree.

My second paper entitled, "Searching for Susie," concentrates on my attempt to locate my Native American great-great grandmother, Susie [Figure 2], among the Shoshone Indians. In it, I explore Susie's life as revealed through my family stories, juxtaposed with the oral narrative memories of Mae Timbimboo Parry of the Northwest Band of the Shoshone Nation. The authenticity of this ancestor is inconclusive because there are no historical records that can validate her existence as my progenitor. The significance of this paper lies not in its historical accuracy, but in the cultural legacy that has been passed down generationally through the use of oral narrative. According to Dunaway and Baum:

Oral history is a record of perceptions, rather than a re-creation of historical events. It can be employed as a factual source only if corroborated. The difficulty of cross-checking information does not detract, however, from its value for understanding perceptions and recovering levels of experiences which are not normally available to historians . . . but rather in their contribution to an understanding of human experiences and social conditions. As long as one understands this, rather than assumes, as some do, that oral history is the closest to unadulterated human memory, we can approach, it can be valued for what it is and utilized creatively.⁵

I originally began this project focusing on the historical significance and aspects of the cultural and social relationship that existed between a white Mormon settler, John

⁵David K. Dunaway and Willa K. Baum. 1984. *Oral History, An Interdisciplinary Anthology*. Nashville: The American Association for State and Local History, 255-256.

T. Garr, and Susie, a young Shoshone woman. This relationship produced an interracial child, Johnny. Mixedblood children were a consequence of many such relationships throughout the settlement of the West, but unique, as far as I know, during the settlement of Cache Valley. I wanted to record the cultural practices and conflicting viewpoints and traditions of both the Shoshone and Mormon societies that affected Johnny's and his children's lives. I planned to use oral narratives as a means of uncovering historical evidence. As I began my graduate work in American Studies, my focus shifted to the importance and validity of folklore, in and of itself, in determining a valid interpretation of culture. "Oral history is therefore a subjective process. It provides insight into how people think and about certain events and what they perceive their own role to have been in the historical process. . . Oral history is an expression of the personality of the interviewees which shaped their point of view. This is precisely its great value, rather than its limitation. . . Like autobiographies, oral histories are past experiences presented from the perspective of the present."⁶ Consequently, it has become less important to me to prove the historical accuracy of my family legends. I came to feel about my family stories as William A. Wilson did about his when he said, "While the stories were based on history and occasionally approximated history, they themselves were not history."⁷

Oral narrative has not always been sanctioned by historians as a valid source of conveying historical events. Historians seek to locate the absolute facts through a

⁶Dunaway, 254-255.

⁷Wilson, 10.

resource of tangible evidence and documentation. But such documentation is merely a recorded collection of memories. History is the accounting of events witnessed and communicated by people whose commentary is deemed authoritative. Historian Richard White, in his chronicle of his mother's family memories, *Remembering Ahanagan*, wrote, "History values what is forgotten, hidden, what was recorded at the time in stone or on parchment or paper or on the land itself. History is most interested in what makes no immediate sense because this is what most clearly distinguishes the past from the present. It values most what is least altered."⁸ But he also depicts his own ambiguity about the role of oral narratives in transmitting history when he says:

History is the enemy of memory. The two stalk each other across the fields of the past, claiming the same terrain. . . . But there are regions of the past that only memory knows. If historians wish to go into this dense and tangled terrain, they must accept memory as a guide. In this jungle of the past, only memory knows the trails. But memory, like history, is better thought of as plural rather than singular. Historians have to follow cautiously. When left alone with memories, historians treat them as detectives treat their sources: they compare them, interrogate them, and match them one against the other. Memory can mislead as well.⁹

Oral history, in contrast to written documentation, is not static, suspended in time, but is alive and imbued with meaning that is as relevant in the present as it was in the past. Otherwise these stories would not continue to be reiterated. Oral narratives bring to historical research the human connection and interaction not found in written documentation. "Oral history represents the feelings and values of the people accurately: what events are worth remembering and retelling? Historians trying to

⁸Richard White. 1998. *Remembering Ahanagan: Storytelling in a Family's Past*. New York: Hill and Wang, 49.

⁹White, 4.

reach the absolute facts about events under scrutiny will of course be forced to deal primarily with those figures about whom there is an abundance of reliable material in print, on stone, or in storage. But most historians know that history as seen only through the lives of great personages gives us only a partial view of the real course of time."¹⁰ Unlike history, which is and will always be staged in the past, oral narratives, even when told in relation to earlier events, are performed in the present and bring significance from the past into the present. "Oral traditions are documents of the present, because they are told in the present. Yet they also embody a message from the past, so they are expressions of the past at the same time. . . Traditions must always be understood as reflecting both past and present in a single breath."¹¹

While researching my family narratives, I took on what Steven Zeitlin called a "two-pronged"¹² theoretical approach, merging historical documentation with oral narratives to form a more a complete representation of my family legends. As I became more enmeshed in oral tradition, I became aware that, even if I was not able to corroborate all of the events with substantial evidence, the narrative itself was still a valuable source of information about my family and what my family represents and values.

¹⁰Toelken, 401.

¹¹Jan Vansina. 1985. *Oral Tradition as History*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, xii.

¹²Steven J. Zeitlin. 1980. "An Alchemy of Mind': The Family Courtship Story" *Western Folklore*, v. 39, 32.

Family stories place members of the family within the larger context of their culture and society. Through these stories, members of the family gain a sense of his or her own role and identity within the community and within the structure of the individual family unit. "When family members talk about the nature of their family identity, they will usually illustrate the truth of their assertions by telling one or another of these designated family stories. Family definition stories express a belief about the family. . . . Invariably, these family definitions whatever their content, are construed as positive by those that subscribe to them. They're meant to bolster the family's esteem and are therefore benign in purpose."¹³ Behavior that either validates or threatens the collective family identity is usually deemed as significant to be passed on as a meaningful family narrative. "As we listen to the stories, we are creating a meaningful, coherent sense of self, constructing our own lives in the process. If literary criticism has taught us anything in recent years, it has taught us that meaning lies as much in what we take to a text as in the text itself."¹⁴

The family story about my Shoshone great-great grandmother was a powerful constant in my life. The narrative was told from the perspective of an Anglo pioneer society settling on Native American lands. It was the only account that was remembered. The significance of Susie's life, like that of all Indigenous people, was doomed to be discarded by Anglo settler's determination to inhabit the land. She bore the white man a child, then exited from the generational memory that was passed on to

¹³Stone, 34.

¹⁴Wilson, 24.

the decedents of that child. I believe there are two reasons why most of Susie's story was repressed from our family's memory. The first reason is because of the turbulent times during which she lived. Her story takes place in the last half of the nineteenth century, a time when social and political relations between Native inhabitants and white settlers were violently unraveling across the nation. In 1863, many from Susie's own Shoshone tribe were massacred by United States soldiers during their winter encampment located just outside of Preston, Idaho. The second reason these stories were suppressed was because of a Probate Court hearing that took place in July of 1903.¹⁵ John T. Garr died without establishing an heir. His siblings stepped in to have the widow and children of his mixedblood son, Johnny, disinherited. They claimed that Johnny was not the biological son of John T. Garr. They wanted his widow, Elizabeth [Figure 4], to abandon the name of Garr because they felt her mixedblood children [Figure 5] dishonored this good name. While the court sided with John T.'s siblings, Elizabeth held fast to her claim to the Garr name. During her lifetime, it was necessary for her to establish her children as honorable white inhabitants of the community and as the descendants of a community leader, John T. Garr; descendants who proudly bore his last name. Mention of their Native American ancestry was discouraged during the next two generations until Elizabeth's death in 1947.

In the 1950s, my father, his siblings [Figure 10], and cousins discovered a pride in their Native American roots. They attempted to locate information about their great

¹⁵Probate Court Record of John T. Garr., County of Cache, Utah. July 6, 1903 - July 9, 1903. Vol. I & II. A copy of this document can be found in the Special Collections, Utah State University.

grandmother, Susie. This attempt proved futile and was eventually abandoned. But the fascinating enigma of Susie's obscure existence set in motion for me, years later, a desire to discover her identity and her story and to add it to the narratives that shaped my family's identity.

I began my search armed with my family stories and the 1903 Probate Court document that was meant to discredit our ancestral claim. Among this document's pages were testimonies substantiating Elizabeth's and her children's claims to be the biological descendants of John T. Garr, as well as statements disputing it. I also wanted to see if other members of my father's family had any additional details to add to the narratives that were told in my immediate family. I first attempted to collect stories from my father's siblings in order to discover any variations on the narratives that had been passed down to me. Each of my father's siblings directed me to my aunt Phyllis Kingsford. She was the one who, because of her interest in genealogy, had become the designated "family historian." I sat down one afternoon with Phyllis and asked her to tell me what she remembered about her grandparents, Johnny and Elizabeth Garr, as well as any stories she may have heard about John T. and his Shoshone wife. She brought out her "Book of Remembrance," thumbed through the pages, and read some of the "official" family stories to me. "You should already have copies of these," she told me.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormon) culture in which I was raised considers genealogical research and recording family histories a matter of extreme importance. Each family is encouraged to maintain a "Book of Remembrance" which contains lineage charts of antecedents, photographs, and written family histories.

Members of the LDS Church are encouraged to write their own personal life stories to add to the family "Book of Remembrance" to be preserved and reviewed by future generations. The adventures of pioneer and other ancestors who lived generations ago were often written by a designated descendant who selected narratives from a collection of oral family traditions to be recorded as the "official" life history of their precursor. These accounts usually consist of the distinguished accomplishments and admirable personal attributes of the ancestor. Codified and authorized, these stories leave the dynamic realm of oral narrative and enter the static sphere of family historical documentation. They are then duplicated and distributed to other members of the extended family to maintain in their own "Book of Remembrance." Variations from these "official" family stories are often difficult to find. An example of this is when I discovered a few years ago that one of my closest friends and I had distant ancestors in common. When I asked about stories her family possessed about these people, my friend showed me a copy of the same mimeographed essay that my own family circulated via the family "Book of Remembrance." Through this practice of establishing official family stories, many intriguing memoirs have been preserved throughout the generations, but countless wonderful anecdotes have also been lost because they were not deemed important or impressive enough to be considered "official" by the family members whose task it was to compile the written history.

I told my aunt Phyllis that I had copies of all the family histories. I hoped she would tell me stories that she remembered hearing during her own childhood; memories that weren't recorded in her "Book of Remembrance." But she had little to tell. The only stories in her mind were the ones that she had read from her book so many times.

Next, I went to my father's first cousin, Opal Naylor, to see if my grandfather's sister had passed different stories on to her children. My father, Cyril, and his siblings were the children of John Delore Garr, a son of Johnny and Elizabeth. My grandfather had three sisters. Opal Naylor is the daughter of my grandfather's oldest sister, Merle [Figure 9].

Women are generally the central figures in the family unit. They are also the guardians of family traditions and culture. According to Stone, "Family stories - telling them and listening to them - belong more to the women's sphere. . . . [T]he woman [knows] more of her husband's family stories than he [does], usually because she'd heard them through her mother-in-law. . . . [T]he family is essentially a female institution; the lore of family and family culture itself - stories, rituals, traditions, icons, sayings - are preserved and promulgated primarily by women. . . . Women are necessary to represent us as people. If women are there, it means families are there."¹⁶ It was my mother who told me and my brothers [Figure 11] our family stories, not just the narratives from her own family, but also the accounts from my father's family as well. But my mother had heard my father's family stories through the male generational line. Opal's stories had been passed down directly through the family's female communication network. The accounts conveyed through these women added a richer, livelier, and more malevolent dynamic to my established family narratives.

The next phase of my search for evidence to corroborate my family narratives took me to the Northwest Band of the Shoshone Nation. Native American tradition

¹⁶Stone, 19-20.

relies heavily on the oral transmission of culture. I had hoped that tribal memory would reveal the voice of my ancestor that had long ago been silenced. Susie was remembered among the Shoshone tribe, but her connection to a white husband was not. There was no generational memory passed down through the Native American oral tradition of a white man living among the Shoshone. Yet Susie, through the voice of oral narrative, still had an engaging and important story to tell.

Scholars of family narrative have observed prominent themes that are featured throughout family stories.¹⁷ These motifs often mirror national cultural values and are used in these stories either to validate the family within this culture, or to excuse the family for the lack of a valued characteristic. "Families unconsciously mold their stories and memories in patterned narratives around recurring themes. The resulting coherence of the material makes it useful to consider family stories as a folklore genre. . . . Family lore not only mirrors the group's habits, motivations, and aspirations, but also acts as a cement that welds individual members of the group together in times as well as space."¹⁸

My family's narratives featuring John T. Garr's and Susie's relationship exhibit many of the motifs presented in Zeitlin's *A Celebration of American Family Folklore*¹⁹

¹⁷See Barbara Allen and William Lynwood Montell. 1981. *From Memory to History, Using Oral Sources in Local Historical Research*. Nashville: The American Association for State and Local History; Boatright, 1958; Dunaway, 1984; Stone, 1988; Wilson, 1999; and Steven J. Zeitlin, Amy J. Kotkin, and Holly Cutting Baker. 1982. *A Celebration of American Family Folklore*. Cambridge: Yellow Moon Press.

¹⁸Zeitlin 1982, 19.

¹⁹Ibid.

within the context of one saga. John T. was both a hero and a rogue. He and Susie were both survivors during difficult times. This narrative is an origin story, a migration story, a courtship story, an account of a family feud, and of a lost fortune. This story also contains an element of mystery as Susie diminished from family memory and the additional intrigue and drama associated with Johnny's untimely death. Zeitlin notes that, "Family stories are revealing in ways that genealogies can never be. Folklorists have long recognized them as a genre, part of the oral tradition, and have identified certain recurring themes."²⁰ Although many symbols are embedded in my family saga, it primarily functions for my immediate family as an origin myth.

For many families of immigrant ancestors, the generation who migrated, either to America or the West became the focus of origin for family members.

Families often tell a migration saga as the first real narrative in the history of a family. . . . Migrations also make ideal origin stories: they explain why the old world ended and how the new world began. The origin sagas have a foot in both worlds, and suggest the way in which an ancestor steps out of the amorphous flow of European or American history and into the oral history of a particular family. Family stories, of course, are not myths. The family is a social grouping but it is not a tribe. Family tales are peopled with ordinary men and women, not gods. The stories seldom go back more than a hundred years, and they do not begin "in the beginning. . . ." still there is often a migration saga which serves a mythological function for the family. It introduces a dramatic beginning, a dynamic sense of origins, and a patriarch or matriarch who brings future generation to a promised land.²¹

The Garr lineage can be traced back to the 1500s, yet, John T. Garr serves as our primary family patriarch. The descendants of John T.'s siblings commemorate his

²⁰Stone, 9.

²¹Zeitlin 1982, 68.

father, Fielding, the first pioneer and Mormon convert, as their founding father. They venerate him with a book entitled *Fielding Garr and His Family, Early Mormon Pioneers on Antelope Island*.²² While we acknowledged Fielding as an important ancestor, the descendants of Johnny and Elizabeth begin the account of our heritage with John T. because we were denounced by the rest of the Feilding Garr clan. While Fielding Garr migrated with his children to Utah, John T. migrated to Cache Valley and began his legacy here. His Native American wife, Susie, is our family matriarch. Though we know little of Susie and her life, she is our tie to the ancient generations of our Shoshone heritage. These stories, as origin myths, foster in my family a sense of shared identity. They set us apart from the rest of "the Garrs" as unique, bringing us together as a cohesive unit.

The loss of a substantial inheritance is another significant motif that surfaces in my family stories. This family feud took place in a court of law. The records of the court recount an unfavorable outcome for my ancestor, Elizabeth, yet two of my aunts claim the opposite is true. They claim that written somewhere in these historical documents is the declaration that Johnny and his children were indeed direct descendants of John T. Garr. When I commented on the lack of inheritance to prove the court's findings, my aunts say that they heard another suit had been filed and this court favored Elizabeth's claims. If this was true, I have found no record indicating that any subsequent court overturned the declaration of the Probate Court in Cache County.

²²See A. M. Cutler. 1991. *Fielding Garr and His Family, Early Mormon Pioneers on Antelope Island*, Salt Lake City, Publication of the Ralph Cutler Family Organization.

This family novel also serves to bind my family to a particular place -- the hills and valleys of Cache County, Utah. Our family narratives place our family as a premiere and permanent fixture in the area. We identify with Cache Valley, not only through the descent of one of the first Anglo men to make a permanent home here, but also through a deeper union, as descendants of the Native American people who have inhabited the landscape for hundreds of years. This connection to place is significant because my family lost their inheritance. The property we felt our ancestors were entitled to inherit was taken from them and sold by "outsiders" who had no connection with the land. To a lesser degree, but still implicit in family sentiment, is the loss of Shoshone lands to white settlement. This affiliation with the land has served to keep many members of my family living within this valley. Some members of my family, including myself, now own property that may have once been part of John T. Garr's holdings in what is now Millville and Providence, Utah.

John T.'s siblings had an agenda of their own when they took Elizabeth Garr to court. Of course, there was the issue of economic inheritance, but more was at stake for this family during the turn of the twentieth century. "Behavior that threatens family stability or continuity -- sexuality that gets out of hand or illegitimacy that brings an unknown bloodline into the family -- has to be censured. . . . because [such relationships] threaten the collective welfare of the family."²³ The purpose of the probate proceedings of John T. Garr in 1903 was as much a struggle to maintain the mores of family identity within the community as it was to obtain monetary means. Eliza

²³Stone, 50.

A. Garr, the widow of John T.'s brother Abel, testified that her motive to have Elizabeth and her children disavowed as heirs was to maintain the "virtue and honesty of the family."²⁴

At a Fielding Garr family reunion during the summer of 2001, I spoke with several descendants of John T.'s siblings. Most of the official genealogical accounts from those branches of the family tree maintain that John T. Garr never married and remained childless throughout his life. Enough time has passed, however, and cultural attitudes have changed so that these relatives are no longer concerned whether or not John T. Garr compromised his family by producing offspring with a Native American mother. "The idea of the Indian seems in our time to have been apotheosized into a powerful symbol."²⁵ Many had heard of the probate hearing and the claims made by Elizabeth and her children. Perhaps because there has been a more positive shift in the position and perception of Native Americans within the context of mainstream American culture, many of these descendants were willing to embrace this episode in a distant relative's past.

My family is a result of a complicated combination of historical consequences and racial attitudes, the union between desperate individuals who crossed social and cultural borders. As a consequence, their offspring were ostracized and marginalized by the community because of their mixed heritage. Their story, passed down through oral narratives, exemplifies the dynamic interchange between Native and Anglo

²⁴Probate Court Document, Eliza A. Garr testimony, 224.

²⁵Stone, 130.

societies. Mixedblood author Louis Owens wrote, "Cultures can and indeed cannot do otherwise than come together and deal with one another, not only within the transcultural regions of frontiers or borders but also within the hybridized individuals who internalized those frontier or border spaces. . . . [T]he mixedblood is not a cultural broker but a cultural breaker, break-dancing trickster-fashion through all signs, fracturing the self-reflexive mirror of the dominant center, deconstructing rigid borders, slipping between the seams, embodying contradictions, and contradancing across every boundary."²⁶ Family stories do this as well. They transcend boundaries, defy history, and bring people together to interpret, not only a family's history and identity, but also their collective human experience. "Memory and identity are too powerful to go unquestioned and too important to be discarded as simply inventions and fabrications. They are the stuff from which we fashion our lives."²⁷ And they are the stuff from which we construct our own truths about ourselves.

²⁶Louis Owens. 1998. *Mixedblood Messages*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 40-41.

²⁷White, 6.

A CRIMSON STAIN ON THE FAMILY NAME

I was born and reared in Cache Valley, Utah, surrounded by the security of its mountains, embraced by its legacy, nurtured by its culture. This is a culture that values family, community, and heritage first and foremost. I was taught to be proud of the lineage that was mine: a lineage that goes back to the early colonization of this valley, this nation, and beyond.

My great-great-great grandfather, Fielding Garr, became acquainted with the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormon) in 1840. He sold his Indiana farm and moved to Illinois to be with the "Saints" in Nauvoo. After the death of Joseph Smith in 1844 and the exile of the Mormons, Fielding and his family prepared to migrate west under the direction of Brigham Young. A cattle man, Fielding and his three oldest sons, John T. (20), William (16), and Abel (13), were given charge of the church tithing herds and assigned to transport them to Utah -- Zion, as it was known among the Mormons. After burying his wife, Paulina, in Nauvoo, Fielding and his family left for Winter Quarters, located on the banks of the Missouri River. In June of 1847, they continued their journey west with the third company of Saints, guiding the church cattle along the way. The family arrived in Salt Lake City on October 6, 1847, and spent that winter in an adobe home close to the fort. The following year, they took the livestock to Antelope Island in the Great Salt Lake and in 1849, Fielding and his sons moved there to take care of the cattle ranch.²⁸

Antelope Island was already occupied by an old mountain man named Post, who was affectionately known as "Daddy" Stump. Stump was a trapper who came to love

²⁸Cutler, 57-63.

the mountains so much that he wouldn't leave when the fur trade died in the 1840s. He became a rancher, possibly trading livestock to emigrants on the Overland Trail, before taking up residence on the Island. "In the fall of 1849 when Fielding Garr moved the Mormon church herd to Antelope Island for the winter, Stump was living there in a cabin made of upright juniper posts and covered with a dirt roof."²⁹ Stump left the island for greener pastures in 1852 or 1853. He went north to one of his favorite trapping haunts, the beautiful Willow Valley, so named by the French Canadian trapper, Michel Bourdon, as he viewed the bounty of willow growing along the stream banks. Because of the abundance of beaver, fox, and other small game in the valley, many trappers and traders utilized the area. It was frequently used as a gathering place by American and Canadian trappers, as well as local Native Americans, who exchanged goods with each other and celebrated together. The mountain men also cached surplus tools, equipment, and pelts through the winter season in the valley. Jim Beckwourth and Jedediah Smith are both credited for renaming the area Cache Valley for that reason.³⁰ The Shoshone Indians, who dwelt along its rivers, called this valley "Dza-na-puih" or Zonavoo, which means "Beautiful Place."³¹

The Shoshone hunter-gatherer society roamed the Cache Valley region for hundreds of years, following a seasonal migratory cycle of subsistence. They lived and

²⁹A. J. Simmonds. May 5, 1991. "Daddy Stump: Cache's Earliest Settler." *The Herald Journal*, 8.

³⁰Ross F. Peterson. 1997. *A History of Cache County*, Salt Lake City: Utah State Historical Society, 9-13.

³¹A. J. Simmonds. April 4, 1983. "Naming Cache Valley." *The Herald Journal*, 5.

traveled in small extended family units, meeting with other kinship groups to collaborate in communal animal drives and winter encampments. Cache Valley supplied an abundance of wild game, fish, berries, roots, and native grasses. The different Shoshone bands referred to themselves and each other by the type of food source they most commonly consumed. The local bands in Cache Valley were called "Pangwiduka," the fish eaters.³² While the valley's many streams and rivers offered an abundance of trout and other fish, the major food source the Shoshone harvested from the valley came from the many species of native grasses growing in the flourishing meadows. "They threshed and roasted the seeds, often grinding them into meal for winter use. The Shoshone often set fire to the grasses in Cache Valley after the seed harvest was complete in order to encourage new growth of grasses and to discourage infiltration of sage and other brush."³³ Pine nuts, their most important nourishment, sustained the Shoshone through the long winter months. A typical harvest brought in twelve hundred pounds of nuts. The nuts were shelled, roasted, and ground into a fine meal and mixed with water to make a nutritious soup. This supply of nuts, along with dried meat, berries, and ground meal, should last a family of four through a normal winter season.³⁴ The Shoshone also utilized the local flora for seasonal clothing and shelter. Women wore dresses fashioned from sage-bark and men wore breeches

³²A. J. Simmonds. "Seed Crops Helped Feed Cache Shoshone." *The Herald Journal*, 5.

³³Scott R. Christensen. 1999. *Sagwitch, Shoshone Chieftain, Mormon Elder, 1822-1887*, Logan: Utah State University Press, 4.

³⁴Christensen, 5.

woven from the tall grass stalks. Their houses consisted of willow and brush huts or lodges made of woven grass mats. The nickname, "Snake," for the people may have come from the misinterpretation of the serpentine-like symbol seen by white travelers on Shoshone lodges, basketry, and pottery in their encampments. In reality this symbol represented the in and out motion used by the people as they wove their shelters.³⁵ The lush valley provided a bounty of everything the Shoshone needed for a satisfying life.

For six years the church cattle on the Garr ranch grew fat grazing on the rich grasses of Antelope Island. During that time, John T. Garr served as a trapper and scout for the Mormon Church, traveling and living among the Shoshone Indians. A newspaper article reported some of his experiences:

Late in the summer of 1854, a young scout, John Garr, who had been adopted by the Indians and who had accompanied them on a fishing trip to Soda Springs, Idaho, reported his experiences to President Brigham Young. At the time of his adoption, the Indians had given him the name of "Nampa wanna" meaning, "blanket foot," due to the fact that he had six toes on his left foot. He said he had seen a fine place to graze cattle. Upon entering "Willow Valley" the Indians had gone straight to the fine springs where they had made their camp. The valley was covered with tall bunch grass and wheat grass up to a man's shoulders. There were many streams of water and cold springs were plentiful.³⁶

The summer of 1855 was a rough one for the ranchers on the island. The grazing lands of central Utah withered with drought and the island was likewise affected. The increase in Mormon emigrants and their expanding herds made it

³⁵Virginia Cole Trenholm and Maureen Carley. 1964. *The Shoshonis, Sentinels of the Rockies*, Oklahoma City: University of Oklahoma Press, 4.

³⁶*Logan Journal*, March 16, 1856.

necessary to search for other grazing lands. In June of that year, Fielding Garr died. Briant Stringham (who later took one of the Garr daughters as a polygamous wife) was assigned to manage the church cattle. The Garr's old friend, Daddy Stump, had moved to Cache Valley, settling near the present town of Avon. Through his affiliation with the Garrs on Antelope Island, and John T. Garr's inspiring reports to LDS Church leaders, it was decided to bring the herds north to the meadows and rivers of the valley.³⁷

In August of 1855, John C. Dowdle and the "Garr Boys," John T. (the initial 'T.' was used to distinguish him from many other Johns in the community), William, Abel, and Benjamin, drove over 2,000 head of stock, most belonging to the LDS Church, and others belonging to private individuals, into Cache Valley. A site in what is now Nibley was chosen for the church ranch. The men set to work building a large bunk house and enclosing 100 acres of corral in order to lodge both men and beasts. Above the gate they mounted a pair of elk antlers and dubbed the settlement "Elkhorn Ranch."³⁸ The local Shoshone were helpful to the ranchers and one pretty, young Shoshone woman was often seen in the company of the eldest Garr brother, John T. When John C. Dowdle was questioned by Attorney George Q. Rich during the 1903 probate court hearing, he testified:

- Q Well I thank you if you will say whether you knew his [Johnny Garr the son of the Shoshone woman and John T. Garr] mother in her life time?
A I did, yes.

³⁷A. J. Simmonds. August 2, 1992. "Elkhorn Ranch Had a Rough Beginning." *The Herald Journal*, 8.

³⁸A. J. Simmonds. October 7, 1994. "Much of Herd Perished in Heavy Snow." *The Herald Journal*, 8.

Q And I will ask you if at that time when you met her upon this ranch John T. Garr was there also?

A Yes, sir.

Q At that time did you see John T. Garr and this Indian squaw in the society of each other?

A Yes, sir.

Q At that place?

A At that place, yes, sir

Q I will ask you whether or not they appeared to be very friendly with each other at that time?

A Well, their association at that time was rather more intimate than was commonly among men and the Indians at that time. I so consider it.³⁹

The winter of 1855-56 was even more difficult for the ranchers than the summer before. Cache Valley had a reputation of having cold yet benign winters with light snowfall on the valley floor. The lush grasses should be accessible for grazing all year long. However, the winter of 1855-56 was uncharacteristically brutal with early, heavy, snows and sub-zero temperatures. The cowboys at Elkhorn Ranch tried desperately to save their cattle. They were able to gather some of the livestock together and drive them through the canyon to Brigham City, but most were too weak to make the journey. Heber C. Kimball wrote to his son, William, February 29, 1856:

My cattle, sixty head of them, were put in Cache Valley with the Church cattle, and those of other individuals, numbering about two thousand five hundred head, with some forty or fifty horses, some six or eight of which were mine [I]t is supposed that one half of those two thousand are dead. . . . [T]he Garr boys have lost most all of their cattle, as they were in Cache Valley. Old Daddy Stump went there also and most of his died.

³⁹Probate Court Record of John T. Garr., County of Cache, Utah. July 6 1903 - July 9, 1903. Vol. I & II. (Here after cited as Court Document), John C. Dowdle testimony, 6-7. A copy of this document can be found in the Special Collections, Utah State University.

Brother Shurtleff had some ninety cows of brother Brigham's [Young] and he says that they are all dead except ten or a dozen.⁴⁰

Only 420 of the Elkhorn cattle survived the bitter, long winter.

The following summer of 1856 brought new settlers into the valley. Peter Maughan and others, escaping the drought in Tooele County, obtained permission from Brigham Young to migrate into Cache Valley. They established a fort at the base of Sardine Canyon called Maughan's Fort, later named Wellsville. In the fall of 1857 Brigham Young advised the settlers to evacuate the area because they were "so much exposed to the depredations of the Indians, mountaineers, and others . . . we consider it wisdom for you to come within our settlements."⁴¹ The following spring the valley was abandoned with the exception of John T. Garr and Daddy Stump. Perhaps it was their sense of duty to their ranches, or perhaps it was their close affiliation with the local Shoshone that compelled these two men to stay when all others vacated the valley. That autumn Brigham Young gave his permission for the settlers to return with this warning, "You are perfectly aware Brother Maughan that you at that place are perfectly cut off from any assistance from any of our settlements during the winter You must be very cautious about the hostile Indians from the north."⁴²

1860 brought a new surge of settlers as emigrants from central and southern Utah heard of the flourishing northern paradise. "In a ten month period towns were

⁴⁰A. J. Simmonds. October 7, 1994, 8.

⁴¹A. J. Simmonds. July 27, 1981. "The Move South' Residents of Maughan's Fort Followed Their Prophets Call." *The Herald Journal*, 3.

⁴²A. J. Simmonds. July 27, 1981, 3.

either established or re-established at Wellsville, Mendon, Logan, Providence, Richmond, Smithfield, Hyrum, Paradise, Millville, and Franklin."⁴³ This new influx of settlers had an unsettling effect on the once peaceful Shoshone of the valley. The lush grasses that they had once used for subsistence and shelter were now being depleted as fodder for cattle. The game and fish that had always been plentiful were now disappearing. Hungry Shoshone viewed the livestock that now occupied their territory as fair game. Pagunap, a Shoshone leader, was shot and killed close to Smithfield on suspicion of horse theft. The Indians retaliated by attacking a group of miners camped in Smithfield Canyon, killing two men and wounding two others. Nonviolent white-Indian relations quickly deteriorated and troublesome times began. Settlements were attacked and tormented by bands of Shoshone.⁴⁴ Daddy Stumps, who had lived peacefully with the Indians most of his life, was found murdered -- presumably by the Shoshone -- and his cabin burned to the ground.⁴⁵

At that time, the two main bands of Shoshone that inhabited Cache Valley year round were led by Bear Hunter and Sagwitch. North of Cache Valley, Northern and Western Shoshones threatened the western mail routes and attacked wagon trains traveling west along the California Trail. One such attack resulted in the kidnaping of a child, Reuben Van Orden, and the murder of his family. Several years later the child

⁴³A. J. Simmonds. October 14, 1994. "Settlement and Cache Valley Ranch." *The Herald Journal*, 8.

⁴⁴A. J. Simmonds. August 23, 1987. "A Time of Terror in Cache Valley." *The Herald Journal*, 5.

⁴⁵A. J. Simmonds, May 5, 1991, 8.

was thought to be seen with Bear Hunter and his band in the Cache Valley region. Zachias Van Orman, Reuben's uncle, convinced Colonel Patrick Edward Connor, senior officer of a regiment of California Volunteers located at Camp Douglas in Salt Lake City, to intervene in the recovery of the child. These and other events led to one of the bloodiest incidents in the history of the American West.

Colonel Connor, "indignant at being denied an opportunity of going to Virginia to shoot Confederate Rebels, became determined to seize other occasions to gain military glory in offenses against the Indians."⁴⁶ On January 29, 1863, several bands of Shoshone (around 75 lodges sheltering about 450 men, women and children) had just occupied one of their wintering spots along the Bear River in northern Cache Valley. Mae Timbimboo Parry, a granddaughter of Sagwitch related, "The land along the Bear River had a natural depression and thousands of willows and brush covered the area. This was also an ideal winter spot for the Northwestern Shoshones because of the natural hot springs that was around this area. They were sheltered from the winter blizzards by the willows and brush."⁴⁷ A bluff located to the east also protected them from the harsh winter winds. Connor felt that winter was the best time to attack the Indian village because the men were settled down and hampered by the presence of the women and children.

The Indians were not surprised to see the troops. They knew a military attachment was on its way. However, Sagwitch and Bear Hunter thought that the

⁴⁶Brigham D. Madsen. 1985. *The Shoshoni Frontier and the Bear River Massacre*, Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 175.

⁴⁷Ibid., 231, 232.

military would question them about recent raids and negotiate with them over the apprehension of the guilty parties, as they had always done in the past. Other Indians in camp were not so sure. Mae Parry reported, "On the night of January 27, 1863, one of the older men by the name of Tin dup, foresaw the calamity which was about to take place. In his dream he saw his people being killed by the pony soldiers. He told the Indians of his dream and told them to move out of the area. 'Do it now, tonight!' he said."⁴⁸ Some believed the old man and left camp. Most did not. As dawn approached, Sagwitch saw the steaming mist from the heat of the approaching army rising on the eastern bluffs and called to the sleeping Indians. He and Bear Hunter did not realize the intentions of the soldiers as they surrounded the encampment. Several rowdy, young, Shoshone men fired the first shots, and Connor's troops retaliated. Four hours later the butchery was over. Mae related, "The Indians were being slaughtered like wild rabbits. Indian men, women, children and babies were being slaughtered left and right."⁴⁹ "The *San Francisco Bulletin* reporter accompanying Connor's expedition described the scene on the battlefield: 'The carnage presented in the ravine was horrible, warrior piled on warrior, horses mangled and wounded in every conceivable form, with here and there a squaw and papoose, who had been accidentally killed.'⁵⁰ Connor lost 22 of his men. Indian casualties were estimated at around 250 men,

⁴⁸Madsen, 233.

⁴⁹Ibid., 233. Also see Forrest Cuch. 2000. *A History of Utah's American Indians*, Salt Lake City: Utah State Division of Indian Affairs/Utah State Division of History, 33-43. Chapter two, on the Northwestern Shoshone, was written by Mae Timbimboo Parry of the Northwestern Shoshone.

⁵⁰Ibid., 189.

women and children. Bear Hunter was caught by the soldiers and tortured to death. Sagwitch escaped by fording the frigid river. Colonel Patrick E. Connor was honored and promoted to Brigadier General. Dubbed "The Battle of Bear River" by its victors, this butchery is now known as the "Bear River Massacre." But because the Civil War was raging in the East, this action failed to receive its historical significance.

Following this carnage, the leaders of the nine bands of Northwestern Shoshone signed the treaty of Box Elder on July 30, 1863. The Fort Hall Indian Reservation was established in 1869, and most of the Shoshones resided there by 1875. A small group, headed by Sagwitch, joined the Mormon church and tried to establish farms in a community they named Washakie, after the great Northern Shoshone leader.⁵¹ The powerful Shoshone Nation had yielded to government supervision.

I grew up hearing the stories of my great-great grandfather John Turner Garr [Figure 1] and his significant role in the settlement of Cache Valley. I was also raised to be proud of my lineage from the Shoshone woman [Figure 2] who was his wife and who bore his children. It never occurred to me that there was any dispute about this relationship within the larger familial framework. While I knew it was unconventional to the Mormon pioneer way of life, I assumed the relationship had been accepted, or more likely, necessarily endured, by John T.'s family as they helped him raise his son. It wasn't until I was an adult and read a copy of John T. Garr's obituary that I realized that the remainder of his siblings at the time of his death in 1900, felt very differently. They

⁵¹For more information on the life of Sagwitch and the Washakie Shoshone, see Scott R. Christensen. 1999. *Sagwitch, Shoshone Chieftain, Mormon Elder, 1822-1887*, Logan: Utah State University Press.

did not acknowledge that he had any decedents. His obituary was short, honorable, and simply stated:

DEATH OF A PIONEER

John Garr, First White Settler in Cache Valley
(Special Correspondence)

Logan, Oct. 31—John Garr, one of Cache County's Pioneers and most noted old-timers, died at his home in Millville yesterday. Mr. Garr enjoyed the distinction of being the first white man to enter Cache Valley to live. He came here with a herd of cattle in the spring of 1855, and has resided here ever since. He was famous in the early days as a hunter and scout, and was the hero of many thrilling episodes connected with the founding of this commonwealth. He was between 60 and 70 years of age and had never been married.⁵²

My family's legends of John T. Garr painted him as a courageous and adventurous man. John T. was twenty-two years old when he first laid eyes on the Salt Lake Valley. An unconventional man, he delighted in bold and precarious behavior. This energy was not wasted, for the family stories say that he met exuberant mountain men at the fort in Salt Lake City and, fascinated by their anecdotes, he traveled with them into the native wilderness where he learned their trade and shared in their adventures. Perhaps this could have been his first acquaintance with Daddy Stump. There were rumors that he may even have traveled with Jim Bridger to uncharted territories. Other stories say he was a scout for Brigham Young, sent into the region

⁵²A copy of this obituary of John T. Garr is in my possession. I have not yet found the newspaper and edition in 1900 that ran this notice. However, another obituary ran in *The Journal*, Logan City, Utah, Tuesday, November 1, 1900. An addendum correcting John T. Garr's estimated age in the previous article was printed Thursday, November 3, 1900, Appendix 1.

with the mission to befriend the local Indians and prepare the way for further Mormon settlement. For whatever the reason, my family stories have John T. living with the Shoshone Indians by the early 1850s in the beautiful valley they called "Dza-na-puih." Here he was adopted into the tribe and given the name of "Nampawana," which, in Shoshone, means "blanket foot." In a conversation I had with Bruce Parry, Executive Director of the Northwestern Band of the Shoshone Nation, he indicated to me that the Indians gave names to white people with whom they were closely associated. This name was usually based on a distinct or unique physical characteristic, one that the Shoshone were familiar with. In this case, John T. had the anomalous feature of six toes on one of his feet. This feature would not have been known in the Shoshone village unless John T. had been very intimately associated with the people there. Even some of his closest friends had never seen his misshapen foot. James Hill recalled, "He [John T. Garr] had one foot strange [sic]. I never saw it when the shoe was off, but according to the shoe that he wore, it looked to be larger than the other one. I never saw it naked [sic]. And there must have been some difference in the one foot or the other or else the Indians wouldn't have got [sic] that name."⁵³ When questioned by George Q. Rich, during the Probate Court hearing of John Turner Garr in 1903, John C. Dowdle stated:

Q During the time of the residence of John T. Garr in 1855 and 56 upon this college farm, I will ask you if he had an Indian name?

A Yes, sir.

Q Do you know what that was?

A Nampawammack

Q Do you know why the name was given to him and who gave it to him?

⁵³Court Document, James H. Hill testimony, 52.

- A Yes, sir, the Indians gave it to him.
- Q Why did they give it to him . . . do you know what the words in the Indian tongue, those Indian words - - are they Indian words?
- A They are "blanket foot."
- Q What is the meaning of the words? Do you know why the words "blanket foot" in the Indian tongue was, applied to John T. Garr?
- A He had on his right foot, I think, he had six toes, one toe growing out near this joint here, and formed his foot rather short and wide. It had a kind of flat appearance.⁵⁴

According to my family legends, it was during the mid-1850s that John T. took a bride and married according to Shoshone custom. "Marriage among the Shoshonis [sic] took three forms: (1) the usual, when the man either stayed with the girl in her parent's lodge or took her with her consent to his camp; (2) inducement, whereby the girl's family selected a mate for their daughter and offered something in the way of gifts to procure him; and (3) abduction by capture or rape . . . Among the Shoshonis [sic], if a man stayed one night with a girl, in her lodge or his, the marriage was considered consummated."⁵⁵

This young woman's Indian name was lost to us. She was referred to as "Susan," "Susie," or "Aunt Susan" in the family stories. During the latter part of the 1850s, Susie bore John T. two children, a daughter and a son. John T.'s duties took him back to Antelope Island. When his father, Fielding, died on June 15, 1855, and when the range lands there became depleted, he remembered the lush meadows of Cache Valley and the Shoshone who had taken him in as family. He and his brothers brought the cattle north to the abundant grasslands of the Valley.

⁵⁴Court Document, John C. Dowdle testimony, 10, 11.

⁵⁵Trenholm, 12.

The relationship between John T. and his Shoshone wife is very vague. He eventually homesteaded property in Millville, Utah, while she remained with her tribal family. Family stories say she visited him when the Shoshone migrations brought her to the area, and he frequently traveled to Shoshone encampments to spend time with his Indian family. Susie's two children stayed with her until 1860, when her son, Johnny (also known as Jack) [Figure 3] came to live with his father. At this point in the account, my immediate family lost track of what became of Susie. Some of my relatives assumed that she must have been killed in the massacre at Bear River; however, my investigation has led me to believe that this was not the case. In 1883, twenty years after the massacre, Johnny spoke of causing his mother heartache whenever he visited her. Attorney Frank K. Nebeker questioned Fielding Garr, Jr., (son of Abel Garr, and a ranching companion of Johnny's) during the Probate Court hearing:

Q I'll ask you to state, Mr. Garr, if you ever had any conversation with Johnny Garr himself as to his parents?

A Yes, sir.

Q Do you recall the time and place?

A It was in Emigration canyon between here and Bear Lake.

Q And about what year?

A Some time in '83, I think.

Q And in that conversation, what did you say to him and what did he say to you?

A I finally asked him if he had seen his mother lately. He said, no, he hadn't and I asked him knowing from other people that he wouldn't talk, I asked him why he didn't talk to her. He says, "Because it always makes her cry and feel bad, and it makes me feel the same."⁵⁶

⁵⁶Court Document, Fielding Garr Jr. testimony, 110.

After Johnny came to live with John T. and his brothers, the bachelors decided that the child "who hadn't taken on pants"⁵⁷ was too much for them to handle. They sent him to Salt Lake City to live with their sisters to be properly trained and to attend school. Because of his Native American heritage, he may have suffered abuse at the hands of his aunts. Opal Naylor (Johnny Garr's granddaughter and John T.'s great granddaughter) recounted a story related to her by a relative. "He [Opal's relative] says, 'that boy was so ambitious, he did everything wrong. They locked him in the granary, and it's hot in the granary.' And he says that he [Johnny] 'took a sharp pocket knife out of his pocket and he cut up a brand new saddle'. . . They said he was a mean little bugger."⁵⁸ The aunts returned Johnny to John T.'s homestead in Millville, Utah, several years later, and he began his ranching career. His young life in Millville must have been filled with bigotry and racism. He was known to frequently engage in fights with other young men and denounced his association with the Indians in order to be accepted by his peers. Fielding Garr Jr. recalled, "Well, we was talking about him not liking being called an Indian. First started over a little fracas between him and a boy called Dancha in this town; called him an Indian. He said he wouldn't take that from nobody, although he was one."⁵⁹

Over the years, however, Johnny became celebrated as one of the best riders and ranchers around and acquired quite a large herd of his own livestock. Johnny

⁵⁷Court Document, 206.

⁵⁸Opal Naylor, March 18, 2000. Audio taped Interview in the possession of the author.

⁵⁹Court Document, Fielding Garr Jr. testimony, 110.

homesteaded a ranch in Blacksmith Fork Canyon [Figure 6], which was later purchased by C. L. Anderson and was the subject of a book written by his grandson, J. Leon Anderson called, *My Life on the C. L. Anderson Ranch*.

John T. and Johnny both kept their personal business to themselves. Few anecdotes remain of their lives. When Johnny was in his mid-30s he married 23-year-old Elizabeth Ann Hulse [Figure 4]. The couple lived on the Blacksmith Fork Canyon ranch in the summer and with John T. Garr in Millville during the winter. Their first child, Ellis Austin Garr, was born in 1891. In the summer of 1892, when he was a toddler, Ellis drowned in the river by the ranch. The following November, Lizzie (as Elizabeth was called) gave birth to a daughter, Merle. Another daughter, Mila, was born in December of 1894.

The story most frequently told in my family about Johnny Garr recounted his untimely and tragic death on June 5, 1896, at the age of 39. Johnny was known to be a hard drinker, and he was probably an alcoholic. The family had just settled into the ranch house in Blacksmith Fork Canyon for the summer, and Johnny had taken his horses and wagon into Logan for supplies. Later that evening, after he had too much to drink, his companions loaded him into the back of his wagon and sent his horses on their way. This must have happened frequently enough that it was nothing out of the ordinary. The horses knew their way home and they struck a fast pace toward food and shelter. But Johnny never made it home. Hans Frogner and his son found him the next morning lying in a canyon gully just a few miles from his ranch, his wagon overturned on

top of him, his neck broken, his horses roaming the hillside.⁶⁰ "From then on," J. Leon Anderson related in his book, "the place was called Garr Hollow."⁶¹ Once, when Elizabeth's granddaughter, Opal Naylor, asked her grandmother about her grandfather's death, she stated, "There's nothing to tell, he died with his boots on." When Opal asked her father later what her grandmother had meant by that remark, he responded, "Well, he died drunk."⁶² This story, as it was passed down by my immediate family, told of a tragic accident in the Garr family. But was it an accident? Some of my relatives believe that Johnny's death was not an accident at all, but a calculated murder by other members of the community who wanted to see him dead. The reason for this, they speculate, is because he represented something that the settlers despised and feared: he was an Indian. Johnny was always an outsider, a liminal individual in a community consumed by suspicion of the "other." Opal recalled, "They was killing all the Indians. That's why they killed my grandpa. See, he went up there alone that day, but somebody else knew that he was going up there alone . . . somebody else knew the ravine he had to cross . . . they know who did it but they don't want to [say]."⁶³

At the time of Johnny's death, Elizabeth was pregnant with twins. John Delore (my grandfather) and Deloris, his sister, were born in January of 1897. After Johnny's

⁶⁰Tuesday, June 9, 1896. "Death of Johnny Garr ." *The Journal*, Logan City, Utah, Appendix 2.

⁶¹J. Leon Anderson. 1977. *History of Blacksmith Fork Canyon and My Life on the C. L. Anderson Ranch*. Hyrum, Utah: Downs Printing Inc., 21.

⁶²Opal Naylor Interview.

⁶³Ibid.

death, Elizabeth sold the ranch in Blacksmith Fork Canyon and Johnny's cattle were absorbed into the herds owned by his father. Elizabeth moved back to Millville and lived with her father-in-law, John T. He built onto his home to accommodate the additional children [Figure 5]. John T. was now in his seventies. Elizabeth and Eliza A. Garr (widow of his brother, Abel) took turns caring for the kindly old man. In his last years, he delighted in his grandchildren, taking them on his knee and leading them in parades around the property. John Johnson remembered during the 1903 Probate Court hearing, "He [John T.] plowed up two rows of potatoes and then we set down, or he did on his plow beam, and there was a couple of those little children, those two smallest climbed up on him and put their arms around his neck and began kissing him and he kissed them. I says, 'If Johnny was alive now,' referring to young Johnny Garr, this lady's husband, 'he'd be fond of all those pretty little children, wouldn't he?' He says, 'I should think he would.' He says, 'their grandpa is proud of them.' and at that there was another one, I think this girl come running up and she says, 'I love grandpa too.' and he put his arms around her neck and he kissed her. That's about all the conversation we had in regard to the family. He says, 'I'm proud of my grandchildren.'"⁶⁴

John T. was a favorite person in his granddaughter Merle's life. "She remembers playing in his saddle which was thrown over the fence when he was not using it. Also she remembers his long hair and whiskers and how she and the other

⁶⁴Court Document, John Johnson testimony, 24.

children in the family would braid it while he sat on the bed."⁶⁵ John Turner Garr died on October 31, 1900. Merle remembered this day as one of the saddest in her life. "It happened while she was at school. Her mother told her that grandpa Garr had complained that he didn't feel good and would like some hot composition tea which was hot water, ginger, and sugar. This didn't help and he died of heart failure."⁶⁶ The death of John T. must have been disheartening for Elizabeth, but she never would have guessed the next course of events that she would have to endure.

Almost immediately after his death, the Garr relatives [Figure 7] invaded the home that Elizabeth had shared with John T., her father-in-law, all of her married life. Opal recollected, "When grandpa Garr died . . . after he died, a few days I guess, they, Caroline Garr [She is either referring here to Carolyn Garr Jones Jamison, a sister to John T. Garr, or to Carolyn Garr Campbell, a daughter to Abel and Eliza Garr and niece of John T., I'm not sure which.] and her family came . . . When Caroline Garr's family, the whole family came into Grandma Anderson's [Opal remembered Elizabeth by the last name of her second husband, John Peter Anderson, whom she married in 1905] home and searched for money because Grandpa had a lots of cattle . . . Caroline Garr's family searched the home and ripped up everything, even the attic . . . searching for money, and they never found a thing."⁶⁷

⁶⁵Linda L. Miller. 1966. *Life History of Merle Garr Jenson*, unpublished manuscript, 3.

⁶⁶Miller, 2.

⁶⁷Opal Naylor Interview.

John T. was a sizable property owner in Cache Valley.⁶⁸ As one of the original settlers, he owned property, livestock (including animals that had once been Johnny's), an interest in the sawmill, and a spring (called Garr Spring) that furnished the town of Millville with its water. If John T. left a will, it was never discovered. John T.'s five surviving siblings and their descendants (27 in all) filed a claim as the heirs of his estate.⁶⁹ Johnny's widow, Elizabeth, and her children were dissociated as beneficiaries. Elizabeth and her children were evicted from their home by John T.'s surviving siblings and their families, and the property went up for sale. "This left the small fatherless family with no means of support or even a roof over their heads."⁷⁰ I remember hearing that this property, when it was sold at the turn of the century, brought in at least one million dollars. But this was an exaggeration meant, I presume, to emphasize Elizabeth's and her children's great loss of fortune. I am guessing this rumor emerged from a statement in the probate hearing concerning the issue of the wealth involved in John T.'s estate. Eliza A. Garr (widow of Abel Garr) was one of the Garr relatives who contested Elizabeth's and her children's rights as heirs of his estate (and, as records from property sales indicate, ended up purchasing a large percentage of John T.'s holdings which she later sold for a profit).⁷¹ During the court testimony, Eliza was questioned by George Q. Rich:

⁶⁸Court Document, *The District Court, Probate Division, in and for Cache County, State of Utah, Inventory*, March 11, 1901.

⁶⁹*Ibid.*, *Proof of Mailing Notice*, March 1, 1901, Appendix 3.

⁷⁰Miller, 3-4.

⁷¹Court Document, *Order Confirming Sale of Real Estate*, May 16, 1901.

- Q You have an interest in seeing them prevail in this case, have you?
A In nothing but what is right.
Q That is, the money matter doesn't concern you?
A Not a bit.
Q Whether or not this estate consisted of the sum of seven or eight thousand dollars or the sum of a million would make no difference to you?
A Not a particle.
Q It is upon another matter that you resist the application of the cross petitioners, the children of Elizabeth Ann Garr to have this estate distributed to them. . .It's for another reason?
A Nothing but what's right.
Q . . . It's not on account of any money involved in this litigation that you appear to contest these babies?
A Not at all.
Q But it's on account of a principle
A Yes, sir.
Q State what that principle is?
A It's virtue and honesty of the family.
Q And of John T. Garr?
A And of John T. Garr.⁷²

Elizabeth, as Johnny's widow, appealed to the court to claim her children as John T.'s legitimate grandchildren and his rightful heirs.⁷³ The Garrs felt that John T.'s reputation (and therefore, their own) as an honorable citizen of Cache Valley was at stake. They denied that Johnny, as a "half-breed" Indian, was John T.'s biological son, because, in their opinion, no one considered honorable could possibly have fathered a child with an Indian woman. Johnny's and Elizabeth's children, therefore, had no inherent claim to his estate.

"The District Court of the First Judicial District, State of Utah in the County of Cache" was held on July 7, 1903 through July 9, 1903. Many of the original surviving

⁷²Court Document, Eliza A. Garr testimony, 223, 224.

⁷³Ibid., *Petition of Claim*, July 2, 1901.

settlers of the valley, now in their seventies and eighties testified, recalling to the best of their abilities, events of fifty years earlier. The issue: Did John Turner Garr ever openly admit that Johnny Garr was indeed his biological son, born to him by a Shoshone woman? Most of the old Elkhorn Ranch cowhands believed he was, but none really knew for sure. John C. Dowdle recalled a conversation with the Shoshone woman during his testimony:

Q When did you first see Johnny Garr, deceased, and where?

A The first time that I saw Johnny Garr, I met him and his mother between here and Brigham City, somewhere in Sardine canyon. They was going toward Brigham, in fact, they said they were going to Brigham and I was coming that way on horseback . . . that would be some time about this season of the year 1857. . . He was lashed on his board with the mother and hung to the pommel, horn of the saddle. That's how the child was when I met him.

Q After this time when you say you met Johnny Garr, deceased, and his mother, when he was a baby, I will ask you if you had a conversation immediately following that with John T. Garr?

A Yes, sir.

Q State what you said to him and what he said to you, in your own words?

A I said to him that, that Indian woman claimed the child she had was his. That's what I told him, and he answered me that, that was all right. If she wanted to lay it to him, that was all right enough, as near as I can remember now, exactly what John T. Garr said.⁷⁴

James Hill remembered, "'John.' says I, 'What about that Indian boy of yours?' says I, 'Did you marry that squaw?' or, says I, 'Is that your son?' says I. 'Well,' says he, 'That's my business,' but says he, 'That's my boy,' or 'my son,' something like that now. I won't be certain as to the answer he give me, but it was to signify it was his child any

⁷⁴Court Document, John C. Dowdle testimony, 9, 10.

how."⁷⁵ John T. kept to himself and felt his business was his own. John Riggs recalled this characteristic in him when testifying to Mr. Murphy at the court hearing:

Q . . .you had a respect for John T. Garr. He was a reserved man, wasn't he?

A I always respected him as such.

Q He wouldn't tell his business to any person scarcely?

A Very peculiar that way.⁷⁶

John T. did reveal to one person, however, that Johnny was indeed his biological son. Naomi Elizabeth Campbell had been engaged to be married to John T. in 1861. Four-year-old Johnny was living with him at the time in his log home. This revelation ended their engagement. She testified, "As we was talking one afternoon, I went from Frank Weaver's over there to grind some coffee and the young one was there half naked and he [John T.] was a bachelor, of course, and I says, 'Well, do you always calculate to be keeping this papoose?' He said duty compelled him to. I asked him why so. He says, 'A father is always supposed to take care of their own children.' I says, 'Papoose or not?' He says, 'Papoose.' I says, 'You acknowledge to be the father of that Indian boy,' and he says, 'I am.' I says, 'You think I'd ever marry a man that had a papoose? And we quit.'⁷⁷

Naomi also revealed the reason she believed the boy was with his father instead of his mother and the Shoshone tribe. When Mr. Rich asked her the reason John T. had the child she replied, "He said that the squaw brought the child there to him and

⁷⁵Court Document, James H. Hill testimony, 45.

⁷⁶Ibid., John Riggs testimony, 126.

⁷⁷Ibid., Naomi Elizabeth Campbell testimony, 37.

demanded him to take it and take care of it as the father of the child, as they [the Indians] would kill it. They wouldn't have it in camp."⁷⁸ Bruce Parry indicated to me that Shoshone women gave birth to a range of mixed-raced children fathered by men from many different origins. He laughingly described how they had a particular curiosity and fondness for the "Buffalo Soldiers" that occasionally journeyed through the area. All of these children were loved and accepted into the tribe without hostility. A more logical reason why the child of a white settler would be brought to him by his Indian mother in the early 1860s was because of the famished condition of the Cache Valley Shoshone bands that came with the loss of their traditional subsistence resources. If the child lived with his father in the white community, he would not starve.

The December 17, 1904 Probate Court, In the Matter of the Estate of John T. Garr, Deceased. Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law, states:

"That the said Merrill [Sic] Garr, Mila Garr, John D. Garr and Deloris Garr are the children of one Johnny Garr, deceased, but the evidence and proof herein are insufficient to establish the allegation in said answer and cross petition that the said Johnny Garr, deceased, was or is the illegitimate son of the said John T. Garr, deceased, or to establish that said John T. Garr, deceased ever at any time acknowledged himself to be the father of said Johnny Garr, deceased; or to establish that the cross petitioners are the grandchildren of the said John T. Garr, deceased, but on the contrary, from such evidence and proof, the court finds and decides that the said Johnny Garr, deceased is not the son, illegitimate or otherwise, of said John T. Garr, deceased, and that said cross petitioners are not the grandchildren of said John T. Garr, deceased."⁷⁹

Of course, the premise of the Probate Court case and the verdict rests with the allegation that Johnny Garr was not the biological son of John Turner Garr, but a "half-

⁷⁸Court Document, 263.

⁷⁹Ibid., 20.

breed" Indian child, bought by his brothers for the price of several blankets. Soloman Hale, an associate of the Garr brothers during their days at the Elkhorn Ranch, claimed to have been at the Garr home at the time of the exchange between one of the Garr brothers and the Shoshone woman. Mr. Nebeker questioned him at the hearing:

Q I'll ask you whether or not you were ever present at the house at the time of a transaction between the Garrs or any one of them and this Indian woman, the mother of Johnny Garr?

A Yes, Sir.

Q Go right ahead and state everything that you observed there at that time?

A There was about six or eight middle-aged, young –we would call them young bucks and squaws rode up to the gate, about 100 yards, maybe, or maybe 75, between 75 and 100 yards of the door of the house. . . The door was open, warm weather, and me and Billy Garr (William, John T.'s younger brother) was the only ones in that house and she came there and–

Q By "she" you mean whom?

A The squaw that we supposed was the mother of the child, because she always had the child with it and mothered the child and was called the mother of the child. Johnny's mother brought the child there and traded her to Billy Garr for a pair of blue blankets and a paper of paint, and he took the boy.

Q Now, did you ever at that time hear William Garr make any statement as to why he traded for him?

A He said after, he says, "I wanted to give a good price for the boy so that I would have a title to him, so that I could trade for him so that I could show that he belonged to me. So if any of the relatives or any of the Indians wouldn't take him away, that's why," he says, "I give so much."⁸⁰

Willis Booth remembers a conversation with William Garr in which he disclosed the name of the man who he claimed was Johnny's biological father. He testified, "I had a conversation with William [Garr] about the child. . . I asked him if he knew whose it was and he said a man's from Brigham City by the name of Jones . . . Yes, John

⁸⁰Court Document, Soloman Hale testimony, 135, 136.

Jones. And he told me what Jones it was in particular so that I knew, and he was dead. Jones was dead. He had been hung. He told me that on the Humboldt, I told him I knew that. I'd heard it."⁸¹ It was easy for John T.'s siblings to name a man who was deceased, an executed criminal. Such a man, in their opinion, was the kind to fraternize with Indian women.

Elizabeth was awarded \$1,200.00 from John T.'s estate for her services as his housekeeper for the time she had taken care of him in his declining years.⁸² I was told that she used this money to purchase the house where she had lived with John T. from the Garr relatives. However, Elizabeth's daughter Merle, related in her memories, "Also Grandma Hulse, Ann Smith Hulse, [Elizabeth's mother] had passed away on 12 December 1900 and her estate was divided among her children. There was 2½ acre[s] of property which was divided between George, Elizabeth Ann, and Francis [siblings]. George and Francis gave their share to Elizabeth Ann which included the old homestead of the Hulse family. This gave Elizabeth Ann and her family a house in which to live [Figure 8]."⁸³

The money that Elizabeth received from John T.'s estate for her housekeeping labors was used to pay her lawyers. She ended up without a penny. Elizabeth lived in the same log home for the rest of her life surrounded by her children and grandchildren. She died on June 14, 1947, at the age of eighty.

⁸¹Court Document, Willis Booth testimony, 93.

⁸²Ibid., *Creditors Claim*, May 11, 1901, Appendix 4.

⁸³Miller, 4.

Fear of the "other" continued though the next generation [Figure 9]. I was amazed to find that Merle herself did not openly disclose her Shoshone ancestry, even to her own children. When Opal was a child, her mother (Merle) cautioned her about the Shoshone who occasionally camped on their property in Millville. She recalled, "Mother says, 'As long as those Indians are up there don't you ever walk up that way, you come this other direction'. . . My mother wouldn't go walk up that way, we had to walk the other way when the Indians were there. When the Indians were gone we could go up that way."⁸⁴ The first inkling that Opal had of her mother's Shoshone heritage came when she was about ten years old. She remembered, "One time I said, 'Those dumb Indians up there.' . . . Then did she get mad at me . . . she took my head right off. She says, 'Don't you ever say that again,' I says, 'Why?'

'Because I'm part Indian.'⁸⁵

This was in the 1920s and the Shoshone way of life had changed dramatically. Most had relocated to the reservation in Fort Hall, Idaho. Sagwitch's band remained in Utah at their Washakie community. It was this group of Shoshone that still held fast to some of their traditional migratory practices. Bruce Parry related to me that the Shoshone occasionally camped on property which belonged to residents who had some connection with the tribe. It was then necessary for them to supplement their subsistence by begging from the communities who lived on the land they had once called home and which had once provided for all of their needs. Opal remembered,

⁸⁴Opal Naylor Interview.

⁸⁵Ibid.

"Mother'd always give 'em a can of sardines or a can of something, and I don't know how they ever opened 'em. A loaf of bread and a can of sardines. Whatever she had. She always gave 'em a loaf of bread."⁸⁶

Apparently Opal's great grandmother "Susie" was among these Indians. In the mid-1920s she would have been 85-90 years old. One day Opal was quilting with her mother and her aunt Leone, [my grandmother] when an old Shoshone woman came to the door. Opal recalled, "This Indian lady was so frail and fragile, they would walk clear from, I don't know where, to get here. . . . I remember the last time she came she, 'da da da da da da da da da.' [Opal Imitated the old woman's Shoshone language, which she couldn't understand.] Pointing to me and Monroe and Rea. [Her brother and sister] And her 'da da da da da da da da da,' and black hair and white hair. [The old woman was pointing to the children's dark hair and then her own white hair.] Aunt Leone says, 'Well that was your grandmother's mother-in-law.' . . . This lady was old and wrinkled. I don't know anything else about it. I wish I knew."⁸⁷ Opal related in another conversation that she felt that the old woman was trying to tell her something significant, something that she desperately wanted Opal and her siblings to understand.

The history of my great-grandfather, and, therefore, my own, is the result of a union between disparate individuals. It tells of the interaction between two separate worlds and cultures that merged into a very human and tragic drama, a drama recorded through the memories and testimonies of generational storytelling.

⁸⁶Opal Naylor Interview.

⁸⁷Ibid.

Memories are fragile entities, existing in the recesses of the mind, shaping and reshaping themselves through the whims of imagination. A person's memory is subjective and fallible. My family history is imbued with memories evoked from various diverse personalities. These recollections reveal the unconventional relationship which existed between a Mormon pioneer John T. Garr and a Shoshone woman called Susie. They tell of their mixedblood son, Johnny, and his experience with the cultural practices of intolerance, bigotry, and hostility that took its toll on his life, and may have contributed to his death. These stories illustrate how Johnny's wife, Elizabeth, yearned to validate her children's heritage during the midst of the social controversy following John T.'s death. They relate the special relationship that existed between John T. Garr, his daughter-in-law Elizabeth, and her children, and of Elizabeth's attempts to remain connected to the Garr family despite their cruel renunciation.

The *1903 Probate Court Record of John T. Garr*, also relied solely on the inconsistent memories of divergent individuals. The testimonies given reveal examples of the structure and dynamics of the power relations that existed during the settlement of Cache Valley. The rhetoric used during the depositions demonstrate Anglo Mormon disdain and prejudice toward the Shoshone inhabitants of Cache Valley during the mid to late 19th and early 20th century. Nowhere in the document is the Shoshone woman, Susie, mentioned by name. During the entire arbitration, she was referred to as "Johnny's mother" or "the squaw." This document substantiates the Garr family's efforts to protect the family name from the disgrace of what they and the community viewed as an offensive association.

This journey began for me as an effort to piece together the authenticity of my ancestry through the use of family oral narrative and historical documentation. I still have no indisputable evidence to validate this claim. However, despite the ruling of a one-hundred-year-old Probate Court hearing, I have no doubt in my own mind that John Turner Garr was indeed the biological father of my great grandfather, Johnny Garr. While I will continue in my attempt to uncover authoritative records, I need no historical documentation to validate what I intuitively know to be true. I am not as certain, however, that my search has revealed the undisputed identity of Susie, his Shoshone wife. The narrative accounts of her life do not corroborate with each other. The intricacies of her story are yet to be fully revealed.

DEATH OF A PIONEER.

John Garr, First White Settler In
Cache Valley.

(Special Correspondence.)

Logan, Oct. 31.—John Garr, one of Cache county's pioneers and most noted old-timers, died at his home in Millville yesterday. Mr. Garr enjoyed the distinction of being the first white man to enter Cache valley to live. He came here with a herd of cattle in the spring of 1855, and has resided here ever since. He was famous in the early days as a hunter and scout, and was the hero of many thrilling episodes connected with the founding of this commonwealth. He was between 60 and 70 years of age and had never been married.

*The Journal, Logan City, Utah,
Tuesday, November 1, 1900.*

*The Journal, Logan City, Utah,
Thursday, November 3, 1900.*

A PIONEER DEAD.

**John Garr of Millville Passes to His
Final Audit.**

John Garr, one of Cache County's pioneers, and best known characters, died yesterday morning at his home in Millville. The cause of his death could not be learned yesterday.

Mr. Garr claimed the proud distinction of being the first white settler to enter this valley. He came here in 1855. He was a typical pioneer and scout, and despite the fact that he was very well-to-do, had always lived the rough outdoor life of the frontiersman. He was known to a host of people, all of whom entertained the greatest respect for him on account of the admirable qualities he possessed. He was between 60 and 70 years of age and had never been married.

Millville Mites.

EDITOR JOURNAL:—The funeral of Mr. John T. Garr will be held tomorrow morning, November 3rd, at 10 o'clock. I see there is an error in regard to his age as contained in your issue of Nov. 1st. It states that his age was between 60 and 70, his only surviving brother informs us that Mr. John T. Garr was born in July 1825, making him over 70

No clew yet to the post-office burglary. More later on after the funeral.

J. K.

Millville, Nov. 2—1900.

Logan, June 7th, 1896.

DEATH OF JOHNNY GARR.

Found With a Broken Neck in
Blacksmith-fork Canyon Saturday
Morning.

EDITOR JOHNNY:—It becomes
my duty to inform you of a sad and
fatal occurrence on the night of the
5th or on the morning of the 6th.

One of our citizens Johnny Garr,
left town on the evening about
sundown with team and wagon to
go to his ranch up Blacksmith-fork
canyon. He passed through the
toll gate just about dark all right.
The next thing seen of him was
Saturday morning about 9 o'clock.

A man by the name of Hans
Frogner and his son near "the
meadow" discovered a team stand-
ing in the road and as they went
nearer they saw a man lying
upside down. Arriving at the scene
of accident they discovered a man's
feet projecting from underneath.
They went to work as quickly as
possible to remove the wagon to find
out whether the man was living or
dead. They found that the man
had fallen upon his head and
broken his neck. They sent up
the canyon for help but
had not proceeded far before
a Mr. Allen was met coming down;
he proceeded at once to Millville
to notify the Garr family, as he
had recognized the dead man to be
Johnny Garr. Mr. Frogner re-
mained as guard over the body.

The Justice of the Peace was no-
tified; he empannelled a jury and
proceeded at once to the scene of
the accident, arriving there be-
tween five and six o'clock Satur-
day evening. After holding an

inquest he brought the body to
town and delivered it over to the
Garr Bros., who had been making
preparations for the funeral.

The funeral services took place
in the meeting house Sunday when
the remains were taken away in a
very respectable manner.

Some 21 vehicles loaded with
sympathizers accompanied the re-
mains to the cemetery. The de-
ceased leaves a wife and two small
children. From appearances his
last thoughts, or wishes, were
for their welfare, as he had many
little things in the wagon with
him for their use.

J. J. Millville.

Following is the juror's ver-
dict:

An inquisition holden at Black-
smith Fork Canyon, in Millville
Precinct, Cache County, on the 6th
day of June, A. D. 1896, before the
Justice of the Peace at Millville
Precinct, in said County, upon the
body of Johnny Garr, here lying
dead, by the jurors whose names
are hereto subscribed. The said
jurors upon their oaths say that
the said Johnny Garr came to his
death by his neck being broken
through the capzine of a wagon
in which he was riding to his
ranch up said Blacksmith Fork
canyon, on the night of the fifth
day of June, at about 11 o'clock
p. m.

In testimony whereof the said
jurors have hereunto set their
hands, the day and year aforesaid.

JOHN KING,

JOHN RIDGES,

MARTIN SHAWNER,

JURORS.

JOSEPH K. SHARPER,

Justice of the Peace.

In the District Court, Probate Division,

IN AND FOR

CACHE COUNTY, STATE OF UTAH.

In the Matter of the Estate of

John T. Gass
DECEASED.

Proof Mailing Notice.

I, *G. J. Lorensen* being first duly sworn on oath say, that I am a citizen of the United States, over twenty-one years of age; that on the 1st day of March 1901 I mailed _____ full, true and correct copies of the annexed notice, by depositing the same in the U. S. Postoffice, at Logan City, Utah, postage prepaid, to the following named persons and addresses, to-wit:

- Eliza J. Davidson*, Richmond, Wayne Co., Indiana.
- Sarah A. Boston*, 106 S. 2nd West St., Salt Lake City, Utah.
- B. F. Gass*, 801 Washington Ave., Ogden, Utah.
- Caroline M. Jamison*, Whitney, Owyhee Co., Idaho.
- Rodney C. Badger*, Salt Lake City, Utah.
- Wm. M. Badger*, Heedon, Millard Co., Utah.
- George W. Badger*, " " " "
- Charlotte L. Badger*, " " " "
- Sarah J. Stephenson*, " " " "
- Mary E. Stevens*, " " " "
- John T. Gass*, Millville, Cache Co., Utah.
- Eliza M. Gass*, " " " "
- William Gass*, " " " "
- Nazel Gass*, " " " "
- Thomas F. Gass*, Prater, Idaho.
- Caroline Campbell*, Providence, Cache Co., Utah.
- George W. Ashley*, St. George, Washington Co., Utah.
- Bryant B. Ashley*, " " " "
- Robert T. Ashley*, " " " "
- John A. Snow*, " " " "
- Louisa A. Harrison*, Lund, Blaine Co., Nevada.

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 1st day of March 1901.

G. J. Lorensen
County Clerk, Cache County, Utah.

Clerk of the District Court of the First Judicial District of the State of Utah, County of Cache.

In the District Court, Probate Division,
IN AND FOR
CACHE COUNTY, STATE OF UTAH.

In the Matter of the Estate of

John T. Gair
DECEASED.

Proof Mailing Notice.

I, *G. J. Susensen* being first duly sworn on oath say, that I am a citizen of the United States, over twenty-one years of age; that on the 1st day of March 1901 I mailed full, true and correct copies of the annexed notice, by depositing the same in the U. S. Postoffice, at Logan City, Utah, postage prepaid, to the following named persons and addresses, to-wit:

- Charlotte M. Frisha, St. George, Washington Co., Utah*
- Benjamin F. Ashby, " " " " " "*
- Nathaniel A. McDonald, Brigham City, Utah*
- Mary Elizabeth McDonald, R.R., North Temple St. & S. City, Utah*
- Grace McDonald, " " " " " "*
- Vera McDonald, " " " " " "*

G. J. Susensen
Subscribed and sworn to before me this 1st day of March 1901.

[Signature]
County Clerk, Cache County, Utah

Clerk of the District Court of the First Judicial District, in and for the County of Cache, Utah.

State of Utah,
County of Cache.

ss. Elizabeth Ann Garr

whose foregoing claim is herewith presented to the Administrator

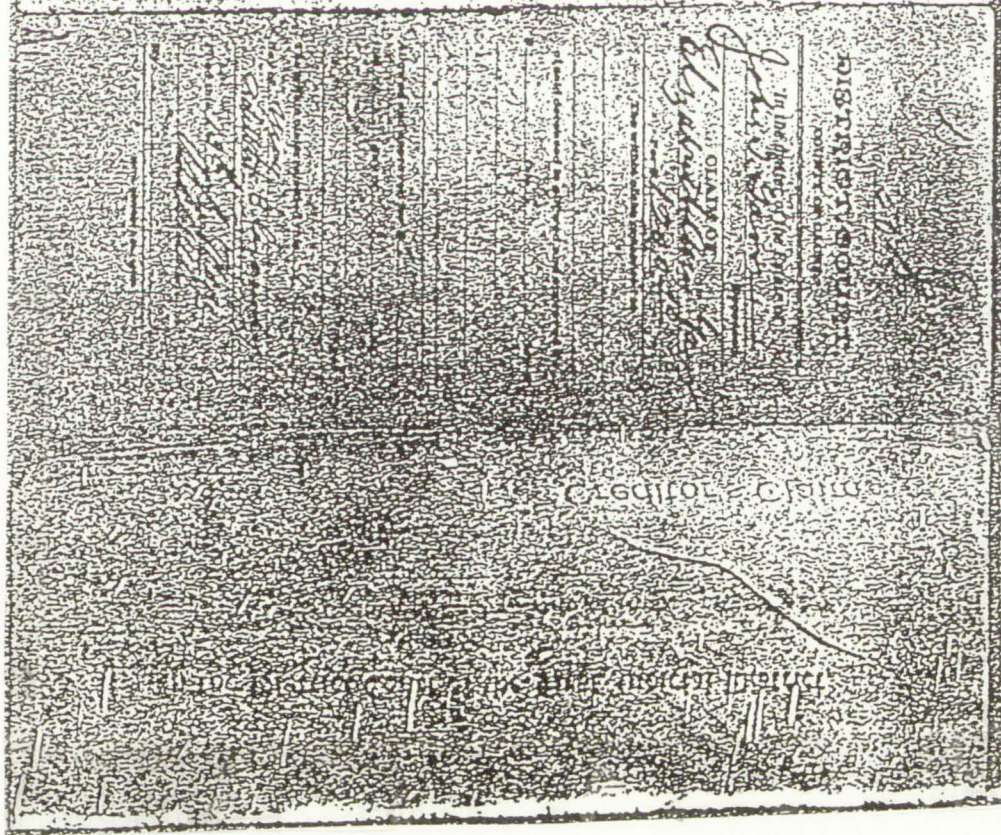
of said deceased, being duly sworn, says that the amount thereof, to-wit, the sum of \$1200.00

is justly due to said claimant — ; That no payments have been made thereon which are not credited and that there are no offsets to the same, to the knowledge of said Elizabeth Ann Garr.

I, Elizabeth Ann Garr subscribed and sworn to before me this 11th day of May 1901.

Joseph C. Knowles

My Commission Expires,
January 12th 1902.



SEARCHING FOR SUSIE

On a hot, sultry day in July of 1860, a small assembly of Shoshone Indians rode quietly through the dusty lowland of Cache Valley in the Utah Territory. A young Shoshone woman called Susie was among them, cradling her three-year-old son on her pony. They approached a small collection of newly constructed cabins clustered around the sawmill on the banks of the Blacksmith Fork River. Several such communities inhabited by white settlers dotted the valley that had once been Shoshone domain. Now the farms and livestock of these intruders threatened the very existence of the Shoshone people. The season was shifting, and soon Susie and her people would leave this valley and travel south to hunt rabbit and antelope, then migrate west to gather pine nuts before settling into their winter camp. Before she left, the heartbroken mother had decided to take her son to live with his father, a white man by the name of John Turner Garr, who lived in one of these cabins. Her son, Johnny, named after his father, would be raised with the white men and perhaps even schooled in their ways. He would not suffer whatever fate awaited the Shoshone people. He would always have enough food to eat and grow to be strong. As difficult as this was for her, Susie knew this was the best way for her son to live.

The door to the cabin John T. shared with his brothers William and Abel, was open, hoping to catch any breeze that might alleviate the sweltering afternoon heat. John T. was not at home. His brother, William and another man, Soloman Hale, shaded themselves from the afternoon sun. Susie's companions sat and talked among themselves while she delivered her child into William's care. William, as was the custom, offered the Indians food and blankets to take with them on their journey. As she turned to go, the realization came upon Johnny that his mother was about to leave

him. He ran towards her, sobbing and clinging to her dress as she tried to pry him loose. William grabbed the wailing child and dragged him inside the cabin, shutting the door on the weeping woman outside.⁸⁸

Susie [Figure 2] was young when she met my great-great grandfather, John Turner Garr [Figure 1]. He must have been different from any man she had ever encountered before. John T. was tall, fair, and bearded when he first ventured into the beautiful valley the Shoshone called "Dza-na-puih" or Zonavoo, which means "Beautiful Place" in their native tongue.⁸⁹ It was the early 1850s. My family legends say he became acquainted with trappers in the flourishing frontier town of Salt Lake City, Utah. Always the independent individualist, John T. left his Mormon pioneer family in search of adventure. His escapades took him north into Shoshone country. My family stories say he lived with, and was adopted by, the Shoshone people. They called him Nampawana, which means "blanket foot" in their language. The source of this name came from the anomalous feature of six toes that he had on his foot, which caused it to spread like a blanket when he walked. John T. lived with the Shoshone, learned to speak their tongue, and frequently accompanied them on hunting and fishing expeditions. He and Susie were regularly seen together, and soon they were married

⁸⁸This scenario is based on from the Probate Court Record of John T. Garr, County of Cache, Utah, July 6 1903 - July 9, 1903, Solomon Hale testimony, 134 -137. The interpretation is my own. A copy of this document can be found in the Special Collections, Utah State University.

⁸⁹A. J. Simmonds, April 4, 1983. "Naming Cache Valley." *The Herald Journal*, 5.

according to Shoshone tradition and custom.⁹⁰ My family accounts relate that they had two children, a son they called Johnny, after his father, and a daughter, whose name and fate is unknown to our family.

Duty frequently called John T. back to his father and siblings, who were now operating a ranch on Antelope Island in the Great Salt Lake. In 1855, John T. returned permanently to the Cache Valley region with several men and a large herd of cattle from Antelope Island, many belonging to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS).⁹¹ These men became the first permanent white settlers in Cache Valley. The March 16, 1856 issue of the *Logan Journal* relates why the cattle were relocated to Cache Valley:

Late in the summer of 1854, a young scout, John Garr, who had been adopted by the Indians and who had accompanied them on a fishing trip to Soda Springs, Idaho, reported his experiences to President Brigham Young. At the time of his adoption, the Indians had given him the name of "Nampa wanna" meaning, "blanket foot," due to the fact that he had six toes on his left foot. He said he had seen a fine place to graze cattle. Upon entering "Willow Valley" the Indians had gone straight to the fine springs where they had made their camp. The valley was covered with tall bunch grass and wheat grass up to a man's shoulders. There were many streams of water and cold springs were plentiful.⁹²

Not only was this a fine place to graze cattle, but the Mormon leaders also thought this was an excellent place to establish the "Saints."

⁹⁰For more information of Shoshone marriage customs, see Forrest S. Cuch, 2000. *A History of Utah's American Indians*, 31-32.

⁹¹Peterson, 26-27.

⁹²*Logan Journal*, March 16, 1856.

John T. and Susie did not remain together. It could have been the circumstances of Mormon settlement in the later 1850s, cultural differences, or lover's quarrels that separated them. John T. homesteaded property in what is now Millville, Utah. Susie's traditional lifestyle kept her and her children with the Shoshone band. My family stories say that John T. and Susie still kept in touch. Susie visited John T. when the band, following their annual subsistence migration, journeyed into the valley, and John T. still rode with his Shoshone family on hunting and fishing excursions.

The late 1850s brought hoards of Mormon settlers into the area, now called Cache Valley. The subsistence resources consumed by the Native population had dwindled dramatically. In 1860, Susie brought her son, Johnny, to Millville and relinquished him to his father's care. She kept her daughter with her and returned to her Shoshone community. What became of them, my family stories did not say. Some family members felt that she surely perished in the Bear River Massacre that occurred on a frigid January day in 1863 at the Shoshone winter encampment.⁹³ Others insisted that she had indeed lived to a ripe old age. They claimed she had knocked on the doors of the homes of her grandchildren who were still living in Millville during the 1920s. Her great-grandchildren remember the Shoshone campsites on the outskirts of their property. They feared those Indians, not realizing then that their relatives were among them. The truth of this connection was hidden from them out of shame. The "dirty little secret" of their identity was swept under the rug and forgotten. Whatever

⁹³See Brigham D. Madsen, *The Shoshoni Frontier and the Bear River Massacre*.

became of Susie, and the details of her life, was not passed down to her progeny. Her fate remained a mystery to those of us who felt her blood flow through our veins.

One of Susie's great-grand children was my father, Cyril Garr [Figure 10]. He remembers the Indians who camped on his father's Millville property and knocked on his mother's kitchen door. His mother told her children to stay away from them. Through the eyes of a child, he had witnessed his father's kindness towards them, as well as his mother's scorn. He had heard it whispered around the town that "the Garrs were related to those Indians," and his father's considerate actions told him it was true. As an adult, he decided to search for information about his great-grandmother, Susie. That search took him first to the small Shoshone settlement in northern Utah called Washakie and then to the Fort Hall Reservation near Pocatello, Idaho. He was told he should speak with a man named Timbimboo, a tribal elder and historian.⁹⁴ My father doesn't offer any explanation as to why he never talked with Mr. Timbimboo. He only states that he should have tried harder to locate him. But, because he never did, the door to Susie's life remained closed for another fifty years. His interest in Susie at that time, like that of many Mormons searching for their ancestors, was to procure information for the family genealogical records. Mormon theology teaches of the importance of searching out ancestors so that necessary soul-saving temple work can be done for all who have passed on. My father's and his sibling's main interest in locating Susie was to discover her "real" name, her Indian name, so that this work could

⁹⁴Mae Timbimboo Parry, interview by author, transcribed tape recording, 16. (Hereafter cited as Mae Parry Interview). A copy of this interview is in the Fife Folklore Archives, Utah State University.

be accomplished. In a correspondence from my father, written in 1956 to his cousin, Lois, he wrote, "Although I have talked with a considerable number of people who knew Grandfather Johnny Garr [Susie's son], and some who knew his Indian mother, I have not found anyone who knew her Indian name; nor have I found it written in any record I have read to date."⁹⁵ It is disheartening to realize that he had such a wealth of opportunity to learn both Susie's and her son Johnny's life stories from people who knew them both, yet his only interest was in obtaining an unknown name, a name that was less important than the life that it represented.

In a different correspondence to an unknown recipient, he revealed another source of information which he never did pursue. He wrote, "Additional insight might be gained if we knew more about the visits of a Shoshone from the Washakie reservation by the name of Kip Norgan, accompanied by a light-skinned Shoshone woman called Susan to Charles Olsen of Tremonton to inquire after the 'Garrs of Millville' with whom he claimed to be related."⁹⁶ In his correspondence to Lois, he related, "John T. Garr and his wife also must have had a daughter who was raised as an Indian. When she grew up she married a man by the name of Kip Norgan. It seems she was named Susan after her mother's 'white man's' name. Susan and her husband, Kip Norgan, are now both deceased and apparently had no children."⁹⁷

⁹⁵Correspondence from Cyril Garr to Lois, Appendix 1.

⁹⁶Correspondence from Cyril Garr to Unknown, Appendix 2.

⁹⁷Correspondence from Cyril Garr to Lois, Appendix 1.

While I have always hoped to be able to uncover the identity of my great-great grandmother, Susie, and tell her story, it wasn't until the summer of 2000, while working on an internship at the American West Heritage Center [AWHC], in Wellsville, Utah, that I was able to begin. The AWHC and the Northwest Band of the Shoshone Nation are working together to recreate the lifestyle of the nineteenth-century band of Cache Valley Shoshone Indians. They are constructing a living history Native American village and working to build a Native American Museum and Cultural Interpretive Center. It was through this association that I became acquainted with Bruce Parry, Executive Director of the Northwest Band, and the grandson of Maroni Timbimboo. Bruce's grandfather was the same Mr. Timbimboo that my father failed to contact fifty years earlier. After relating the story of my ancestry to Bruce, he agreed to help me locate Susie among the records of his people. One morning I received a telephone call from Reece Summers, who was the Manager and Curator of the AWHC at the time. "Good news!" he exclaimed, "Bruce has found your great-great grandmother." A few days later, Bruce and I went to lunch. He told me that when his mother, Mae, was a child, she had known a woman named Susie Hio Wigegee,⁹⁸ who he believed was my great-great grandmother. He also said that his father, Grant, at the age of ten, had been sent through the window of her locked home and found her deceased in her bed. Bruce gave me a biography that his mother, Mae, had written relating some of the incidents

⁹⁸Resources that I have found referencing Susie differ on the spelling of her last name. These records refer to her as Susie Highyou, Highyo, Hiowidguitch, Hiwagagea, Hi wa ga gee, Waghee, Widgiguitch, and Wigegee. For my purposes, I have used the spelling engraved on her father's headstone, which reads "Hio Wigegee."

she remembered hearing about Susie's life.⁹⁹ I wanted to have the opportunity to speak with Mae herself about her memories of Susie, and to see if she recalled hearing any details of the relationship between Susie and a white man, my great-great grandfather. We met in the Brigham City, Utah, offices of the Northwestern Band of the Shoshone Nation. Her sister-in-law, Helen Timbimboo, joined us while Mae reminisced about the eccentric old women she had known as a child in the small Shoshone town of Washakie, Utah.

"We have a very, very good history, our tribe has," Mae reflected. "Some are really, really, sad, and some are so comical you just can't believe the stories that came out of that little town. . . There was no bitterness in the town, everybody got along together. They all had a good time. They worked . . . put everything in the store house, they all shared alike. It was a nice place to live. . . We had a good time, especially with Susie carrying on."¹⁰⁰

"Somebody could just write a book on Susie."¹⁰¹ Mae Parry remarked, recalling the woman who may have been my great-great grandmother. I hoped our conversation would reveal pieces of my own family legends among Mae's memories. Susie Hio Wigegee, it seems, led four distinct lives that took her into the realms of the Native American's four sacred directions. Susie spent her early childhood in Nevada, the west, with her father and a white step-mother. Sometime during her adolescent years,

⁹⁹*Susie the Indian*, Appendix 3.

¹⁰⁰Mae Parry Interview, 12.

¹⁰¹*Ibid.*, 38.

she and her father traveled eastward into the beautiful Willow Valley, now known as Cache Valley, Utah. Here they lived among the band of Shoshone known as Pangwiduka, or the Fish Eaters,¹⁰² whose decedents are now among the Northwestern Band of Shoshone. Susie met and married a white man whom the people called Nampawana, and became the mother of two children. After that relationship ended, she left the Shoshone and traveled south with a cruel Ute husband, where she suffered from his abuse. Finally, she returned north again, back to her father and the Shoshone inhabitants of the newly established town of Washakie, Utah. There she became a faithful member of the LDS Church (Mormon) and cared for her aging father until his death. She remained in Washakie, living alone and working as a domestic for white families until her death in 1929.

Susie Hio Wigegee was born in Ruby Valley, Nevada, among the Western Shoshone Indians.¹⁰³ The date of her birth is unknown, but my family legends say she would have been born between 1835 and 1840. Susie never remembered her Indian mother. She may have died in child birth or in one of the many small-pox epidemics that devastated Native American populations. When Susie was a young child, she traveled with her father Hio Wigegee and a small band of Shoshone hunters and warriors throughout the area that is now eastern Nevada and southwestern Idaho. On one excursion, they encountered an expedition of white travelers. This group of migrants could have been miners, as Mae recounted, scavenging after the natural

¹⁰²A. J. Simmonds, November 8, 1987. "Seed Crops Helped Feed Cache Shoshone." *The Herald Journal*.

¹⁰³Mae Parry Interview, 2.

resources of the region,¹⁰⁴ or immigrants commuting westward along the Oregon trail heading towards a new homeland. Hio Wigegee seemed to be a leader among the warriors as they plotted their attack on the unsuspecting travelers. "Susie's father told the rest of the Indians to leave one white girl. He said, 'I want her to be my wife.'"¹⁰⁵ The fearsome warriors attacked the wary travelers, slaying them and confiscating their provisions. Only one white girl remained alive.

The victims' wagons contained provisions that were not familiar to the Indians. "They got into the wagons, and they opened up the sacks of flour. . . They had never seen flour. They said, 'Oh, this is their face powder. This is what they [white people] put on their faces when they celebrate.'"¹⁰⁶ The victorious Shoshone warriors covered themselves, their faces, arms, and hair with the white man's powder in triumphant celebration. Then they plunged into the nearby river. When they looked around they "laughed and laughed at each other."¹⁰⁷ The flour mixed with water had turned sticky. "Their hair was standing up . . . with that flour rubbed in it. They looked like a bunch of ghosts. And they had a good time laughing at each other."¹⁰⁸ Their young hostage told them later that the white powder was a substance that she could mix with other ingredients to make food. The Shoshone also found bacon, pots, pans, and blankets

¹⁰⁴Mae Parry Interview, 2.

¹⁰⁵Ibid., 3.

¹⁰⁶Ibid., 3.

¹⁰⁷Ibid., 11.

¹⁰⁸Ibid., 11.

packed inside the wagons. Tucked among these wonders they found sacks of useless, glittering gold disks. "They said, 'Oh, this is what they gamble with.' So they threw the sacks of money into the river."¹⁰⁹ Food and cooking items were much more valuable to the resourceful Shoshone.

"And so, they took this girl. This one white girl and moved on."¹¹⁰ The white girl lived for a time with Hio Wigegee and the Western Shoshone. She "adapted to the Indian ways. . . She would go out and pick berries with them and she would dig roots with them and pick pine nuts and she cooked meat just the way the Indian's did."¹¹¹ She also taught the Shoshone how to prepare the mysterious white powder they had foolishly used to paint their faces. Susie's white stepmother showed her how to knead the flour with water to make a soft white bread. "She stayed with them for quite a while and Susie learned. . . She [the white girl] was going to make bread, she said, 'I didn't have any where to knead the bread.' . . . So she lifted up her skirt and kneaded her bread on her leg. And then she would cook it in the ashes like the Indians did."¹¹² It was Susie's white stepmother who first began to call her by the name, Susie. She taught the young Shoshone girl how to speak English and to dance the white dances.

¹⁰⁹Mae Parry Interview., 3.

¹¹⁰Ibid., 3.

¹¹¹Ibid., 3.

¹¹²Ibid., 3

Susie had fond memories of her stepmother, but no one knows her identity. Mae remarked, "She never did mention her name. All she ever said is 'my stepmother.'"¹¹³

When Susie was a teenager, she and her father left Nevada and traveled eastward to live among the Northwestern Shoshone residing in Cache Valley. Why they left this home is not remembered. The different bands of Shoshone who inhabited the vast Great Basin area were all interrelated. If a warrior fell out of favor with one band, he was usually welcome with kinsmen in a neighboring clan. Later in her life, Susie frequently traveled back to Nevada to visit relatives there, but her father, Hio, never returned. The white girl was no longer living with them. "I guess she died after a while."¹¹⁴ Or perhaps she was reunited with her own relatives. It was during this time of Susie's life that she may have become acquainted with and married a white man by the name of John Turner Garr. Having been raised by a white woman, and able to speak the English language, the Shoshone may have used her as a translator and mediator between themselves and Anglo trappers, explorers, and scouts like John T. If this had been part of her life, however, Mae had never heard Susie speak of it. "I've heard Susie tell a lot of stories when I was a young girl. I have never heard her say she was married to a white man. Never. I know she said she was married to the Ute."¹¹⁵ My hope of finding some connection with the cowboys of Elkhorn Ranch among Mae's memories was not to come to pass.

¹¹³Mae Parry Interview, 3.

¹¹⁴Ibid., 4.

¹¹⁵Ibid., 11.

As a young woman, Susie left Cache Valley to journey to the homeland of the Utes in the southeastern part of the Utah Territory. There she married a Ute warrior and tried to adapt to his ways. Shoshone relationships with the Ute bands were ambiguous. Their languages and mythology were interrelated and people from their prospective tribes sometimes intermarried. Yet, they competed for some of the same subsistence resources which periodically generated violent disputes among them.¹¹⁶ Susie's relationship with her Ute husband seemed to render the same ambivalence. "She got into fights with her Ute husband. They got into terrible fights. One of the fights her Ute husband went and chopped a finger off. One of her fingers was missing."¹¹⁷ Susie decided she would not stay with this brutal man. She would return to her father and the Northwestern Shoshone. Her Ute husband possessed a fine herd of horses. Susie "knew a lot about horses and how to take care of them. And she could ride horses very well . . . She rounded up the horses and started to drive them out of the Indian camp, Ute country. And then she came to that great big river [Colorado River?]. And she thought, 'Well, how am I going to get these horses across.' So she swam the horses across the river. . . . By the time she got to the other side of the river she saw her husband and the Ute men coming after her. And she always carried a gun with her. A pistol. She was a real good marksman. So she got her gun and she started shooting. She was shooting the horses and killing them and then, there were no

¹¹⁶Cuch, 17.

¹¹⁷Mae Parry Interview, 4.

more horses left. . . The Utes went back because there were no more horses for them to take back."¹¹⁸

I don't know if Susie returned to Cache Valley before or after the Shoshone town of Washakie had been established. After the loss of their land to the encroaching white population, and a decade of near starvation, the suffering Shoshone and their leader, Sagwitch, asked Mormon church leader Brigham Young for assistance. In 1874, Brigham Young sent George W. Hill to organize the Indians and establish a settlement where they could acquire the abilities necessary to produce their own crops. Several sites for a Shoshone settlement were considered and abandoned because of the hostility of nearby white settlers, some who called on the protection of the military stationed at nearby Fort Douglas. In 1876, the LDS Church called Isaac Zundel on a mission to convert the Indians and teach them farming skills. The Shoshone were finally established on a parcel of land located about four miles south of the present town of Portage, Utah, and twelve miles north of Tremonton, Utah. By 1880, the Shoshone had built a storage granary and a home for church missionary, Isaac Zundel. The Indians called the settlement Washakie, after their respected Shoshone leader. Most of the Native American residents of Washakie were converted and baptized into the LDS (Mormon) Church, where they were faithful members for the remainder of their lives. They built a canal to carry irrigation water from Samaria, Idaho, to quench their thirsty crops. They also erected two sawmills and a brick kiln to aid them in the

¹¹⁸Mae Parry Interview, 4.

construction of their new community. In 1882 a day school was established to educate the Washakie resident's children.¹¹⁹

Susie resided with her father at the eastern edge of the town of Washakie. They continued to live in a tepee rather than move into one of the newly constructed cabins on the site. Susie often relocated during the summer months, taking her tepee with her, to work as a domestic for white families in Malad, Idaho; Huntsville, and Brigham City, Utah. She was known in her small community for her cleanliness and her hard work ethic. "That white girl taught her a lot of things, how to clean things. She could do housework. She went to Malad and pitched her tepee out west of the town . . . for several years she did that. And then she'd come back to Washakie. She'd do it in the summer. . . . In the fall when deer hunting season opened, then the people in Huntsville would bring her their deer hides. . . She could scrape the hides and tan the hides. . . She'd load up her scraped hides and take them back to Washakie so she could tan them all winter if she had to."¹²⁰

The people whom she worked for gave her the nickname of "Indian Susie." Susie thought that white people and their houses possessed an unpleasant odor. "She said, 'The white people's houses I used to go clean, they always have that dirty smell in their houses.' And she'd scrub their houses up and then they'd smell good. She said, 'Especially the ladies. They never kept their milk separator [clean] . . . That's what

¹¹⁹Christensen, 77-188; Cuch, p. 44-55; Matthew E. Kreitzer, 2000. *The Washakie Letters of Willie Ottogary, Northwestern Shoshone Journalist and Leader 1906 - 1929*, Logan: Utah State University Press., 2-5.

¹²⁰Mae Parry Interview, 6.

made their house smell, that sour milk smell.' And she couldn't stand it . . . She was a very clean lady. Very clean, and if she didn't think you were clean enough, she'd tell you."¹²¹ On the eastern edge of Washakie, near where Susie and her father pitched their tepee, flowed a small spring. This spring was the home of mythical creatures called water babies. These water sprites looked and sounded much like human children, but to approach them could be treacherous. "They'll grab you and eat you up if you go over there. They cry and cry. That's the way they get people to come. Somebody thinks, 'Oh, a baby's in distress, a baby need to be looked after.' They go over there and those water babies just grab them. Just eat them up."¹²² Water babies also play mischievous tricks and deliver tragic omens. Helen Timbimboo remembered, "Well, you know each time my little brother and sister was going to die, those water babies would come and leave their droppings over at our wood pile. And then, when they'd do that, one child would die. Then comes another one. . . We had three children . . . two brothers and one sister die. And each time they [the water babies] came and left a mess at our wood pile."¹²³ Susie frightened the children with legends about the water babies who haunted the spring near her home. She told the children that she frequently visited them and listened to their cries. "Susie would say, 'There's water

¹²¹Mae Parry Interview., 30.

¹²²Ibid., 24.

¹²³Ibid., 27.

babies in that pond. You can hear them at night crying.' . . . And she said that those water babies looked just like Grace [Mae's baby sister]."¹²⁴

The water babies must have been active during the spring of 1904. One morning Susie went to visit her neighbors, the Pabawenas. She noticed blistering sores covering the bodies of the Pabawena children. Smallpox had broken out in the small Shoshone village. Angered, she approached the community's Mormon bishop George M. Ward. "Why haven't you told the Indians the Pabawena's have smallpox?' she said, 'My father's going to catch it, and I'm going to catch it, and we're going to die.'" Susie did not catch the dreadful disease, though she nursed many who did. Her elderly father, Hio Wigegee, however, soon succumbed to the illness and died on March 14, 1904 at the age of 90.¹²⁵ Susie used the hard-earned money she had accumulated cleaning houses and scraping hides to erect a monumental gravestone to commemorate her beloved father. At the time, it was the only carved headstone in the Washakie cemetery, and is still the most prominent. Most Shoshone graves were then marked with a simple rock placed at the head of the burial mound. Susie's own grave is marked this way. Yet, Hio Wigegee's headstone can still be seen, towering above all of the rest, a monument to one of the last Shoshone warriors [Figure 12]. For Susie to have erected such a memorial to her father must have taken her whole life savings.

After her father's death, Susie moved from the tepee at the site she had occupied with him, and into a cabin located in town [Figure 13]. She kept her cabin

¹²⁴Mae Parry Interview, 27.

¹²⁵Ibid., 5.

very clean. "She'd have sheets . . . white sheets and white pillow cases . . . She always had a little stove . . . She'd polish her stove and her stove was shiny and clean all the time."¹²⁶ Outside of her cabin she built a greenhouse or shade house. A greenhouse is a three sided structure formed of upright and horizontal posts arranged to create a frame. Leafy branches of willow or aspen, along with reeds or wheat grass cover the frame, providing a shady retreat during the hot summer months.¹²⁷ In her greenhouse, Susie worked drying meats and berries for winter storage and scraping and tanning hides for white hunters. She also claimed to have buried all of her money and valuables under her greenhouse [Figure 14].

Susie still carried her gun and liked to use it indiscriminately, sometimes to the dismay of her neighbors in the town. "Johnny Annapooey or Johnny Fly [his English name] had a dog, and I guess the dog kept coming over to Susie's house. So she went and shot the dog, killed Johnny's dog . . . she didn't like the dog . . . and he came over and wanted to know, 'Why did you kill my dog?'. . . So she whipped out her pistol and was pointing at the man. And he stiffed up to her and took the gun out of her hand . . . And he walked over to the rock and just whacked that gun to pieces. And she [Susie] said, 'That's the last time I had a gun.'"¹²⁸ But losing her gun didn't stop the eccentric old woman from shooting at things. "Some of the stories she told were fantastic. . . She said, 'I have a magic finger. . . If I wanted to have a duck . . . all I've gotta do is just

¹²⁶Mae Parry Interview, 6.

¹²⁷Cuch, 27.

¹²⁸Mae Parry Interview, 9-10.

point my finger and say bang, bang, bang, and the duck would just fall down, and I'd just go get it. . . I have a very powerful finger."¹²⁹

Susie loved to dance. The Shoshone residents of Washakie still occasionally participated in their traditional dances honoring the changing seasons and commemorating the hunt. These dances were usually performed clandestinely while visiting friends and relatives, away from the vigilant eyes of their Mormon leaders. Dances held an important cultural significance to the Shoshone. Aside from the ritual significance associated with the traditional dance, the occasion marked a time of reunion and the exchange of news. It was also a beneficial method for young people to meet suitable marriage partners outside of their kinship boundaries. The LDS Church began holding social dances in the hopes of replacing traditional Native American rituals with "more civilized" practices. "[When] our people first moved to Washakie, they believed in some of the old beliefs like [the] Sun dance and [the] Ghost dance, some of those Indian dances. And then the LDS Church said, . . . 'You're not worshiping God, you're worshiping the Devil by doing [the] Sun dance. So you've got to give that up.' So they started to teach them how to do different kinds of dances. And they almost had dances every Friday night. They learned to do square dance. They did the waltz, fox trot, and jitterbug. That sort of thing."¹³⁰ Native Americans from the reservations and other areas within traveling distance were invited to Washakie to the Friday night dances. This became one of Susie's favorite activities. Her white step-

¹²⁹Mae Parry Interview, 9.

¹³⁰Ibid., 10.

mother had taught her Anglo dances in her youth, and Susie felt she was a particularly talented dancer. She, and Mae's great-uncle, Soquitch Timbimboo, put on a show as they "danced up a storm. . . They kicked and swing [sic] and swayed every which way they could. And the more the people clapped and hollered for them the worse they got."¹³¹

The members of the Washakie community liked to show themselves at other public celebrations. In May of 1919, Susie and several other Washakie men, women, and children took part in the Ogden City Decoration Day Parade and Celebration.¹³² On such occasions some of the Shoshone dressed in their traditional clothing. They rode on their ponies and uttered terrifying war cries to the delight of the reveling spectators.

Like most of the Shoshone living in Washakie, Susie had become a devout Mormon. Like other devout Mormons, a pilgrimage to Salt Lake City to participate in the LDS Church's semi-annual General Conference was both a privilege and a spiritual experience. These sojourns allowed the faithful to hear their prophet and other leaders of the church speak directly to them and offer words of guidance. In April of 1924, Susie and a friend, Mrs. Neamon, attended general conference in Salt Lake City. They subsequently remained there for several weeks in order to care for Mrs. Neamon's elderly mother who had broken her leg.¹³³ Susie went to Salt Lake City again the

¹³¹Mae Parry Interview, 11.

¹³²Kreitzer, 90.

¹³³Ibid., 145.

following year, 1925, to attend conference, this time with Mrs. Tomock.¹³⁴ Susie's dedication to her church and its leaders went beyond visits to general conference. She was particularly devoted to Brigham Young, the man who was responsible for bringing the gospel to the Shoshone people. To show her loyalty to this deceased prophet, and to the theology that he represented, each Sunday before church when she dressed in her finest clothing, she carefully tucked a postcard photo of him into her belt. "Every single Sunday she would dress up and put a belt on and put this picture of Brigham Young in her belt and go to church. It never failed. I should have asked, 'Did they bury her with it?'"¹³⁵

Susie continued to labor hard cleaning homes and tanning hides for white families until she was elderly. Her custom was to return to Washakie in the early autumn, transporting her work back with her, but sometimes her duties kept her away longer than she anticipated. Traveling back and forth to Washakie with the changing seasons may have become more difficult for her as she aged. She alarmed her friends in Washakie when, in November of 1928, she was still in Brigham City after a three month stay.¹³⁶ The next year, in 1929, she once again worried her friends. "One time she stayed away just a little too long, that's when the telephone rang. And Joseph Parry was the bishop at Washakie at that time. They [the people calling on the telephone] said 'One of your people is very ill. Would somebody come pick her up and

¹³⁴Kreitzer, 161.

¹³⁵Mae Parry Interview, 11. [Figure 2, the post card can be seen tucked inside of Susie's belt.]

¹³⁶Kreitzer, 232-233.

take her back to Washakie.”¹³⁷ Susie had taken ill while working for an employer in Huntsville, Utah. Three people from Washakie -- Mae's father Maroni Timbimboo, Warren Wongan, and Rachel Perdash -- traveled to Huntsville to retrieve Susie. But Susie did not come willingly. “She said, ‘No, I'm not going to go back home.’. . .And, she couldn't walk, she was so ill. But she could crawl around real fast on the ground. And every time they'd get near her, she'd escape another way. So they decided, ‘Well, let's throw a blanket on the floor, and when she crawls on the floor we'll each get in a corner and grab her.’ So that's what they did. They grabbed Susie and brought her back home.”¹³⁸

After Susie settled back into her cabin, three neighborhood ladies -- Mae's mother, Amy Timbimboo, Lucy Elk, and Jessie Perdash -- took turns caring for the old woman. They brought Susie food and watched over her during her illness. One evening Bishop Parry sent the ladies home for a much needed rest. Susie's cabin was located near the Parry's home, so he offered to check on her while they took a break. The next morning when he went to check on her he found her door locked. This, in and of itself, was very unusual. His knock received no reply. Bishop Parry asked his ten year old son, Grant, [who later married Mae] to crawl through Susie's window, unlock the door, and let him in. “My husband had to open the window, crawl into her house over to where she was. She was dead. . . . He said, ‘I remember opening the window

¹³⁷Mae Parry Interview, 6.

¹³⁸Ibid., 7.

and crawling over Susie's body and opening the door from the inside."¹³⁹ Grant also helped to bury her. He told Mae, "We were the ones that went up to the cemetery and dug the hole where we buried Susie."¹⁴⁰ She was buried next her father's splendid headstone. Her grave is marked by a simple gray rock, similar to countless other stones commemorating the nameless inhabitants that sleep in the Washakie cemetery.

After Susie's death the people of Washakie went in search of her legendary buried treasure. "She had always told them, 'I have a lot of money saved in my yard. A lot of my money is in my greenhouse. There in cans.' And so there they were, those three ladies and my husband. He said, 'We were digging and digging all over her yard and in her greenhouse . . . We never did find any money, not even a cent.'"¹⁴¹

Even after her death, Susie kept her friends and neighbors guessing. And seventy-four years later, I am still speculating about the mystery that was Susie's life. There was a Shoshone woman called Susie who was my great-great grandmother, but I am still unsure that the Susie Hio Wigigee of Mae Parry's memory is that woman. For the past two years I have believed that she was. But, as always seems to happen when attempting to solve an enigma, I have uncovered more questions than I have found answers. As I travel on this journey, I may never come to my destination of uncovering with certainty the identity of my ancestor and the story of her life. This end may always be elusive to me. But the journey has been enlightening. I have met

¹³⁹Mae Parry Interview, 8.

¹⁴⁰Ibid., 8.

¹⁴¹Ibid., 8.

wonderful people, heard interesting tales, and become involved in a fascinating history of a remarkable people. The story of Susie Hio Wigegee's life, whether she is my great-great grandmother or not, is the saga of a remarkable woman coping with the pressures of the end of a way of life and the adventures of a new beginning.

Appendix 1

Cyril D. Garr
480 West 4th North
Logan, Utah
March 12, 1956

Dear Lois, Greetings,

In a conversation with Donna Scott, I have the impression that I have some geneological information of our common grandparents which you are interested in. Accordingly, I am mailing the enclosed data to you. I certainly hope you will find this information interesting and beneficial as I did. When you have finished with it, I would appreciate your mailing it back to me.

You will note that a very important question concerning the geneology of our Indian ancestors has not been discovered. To date I have been rather unsuccessful on this line. Although I have talked with a considerable number of people who knew Grandfather Johnny Garr, and some who knew his Indian mother, I have not found anyone who knew her Indian name; nor have I found it written in any record I have read to date.

Nevertheless, I will give you the story of our grandparents as nearly as I have been able to determine it (much of which I cannot prove by historical records.)

John Turner Garr, together with his brothers and other men, arrived in Cache Valley on August 1, 1855, bringing with them cattle belonging to the Church as well as their own. One of the Indian women they met here was unusually attractive and was always seen with a small baby boy, which she later gave into the care of the Garr Boys to raise.

When the mother was asked who the baby's father was, she stated that it was the son of "Nappawanah", which was John Turner Garr's Indian name. When John T. was told that she was claiming he was the father of the child, his reply was, "That's all right". When he was asked if he was married to her, his reply was, "That's my business". However, because the Garr Boys didn't arrive in Cache Valley until 1855, at which time the boy had already been born, most people felt that it was a biological impossibility that the mother's claim could be true and no one pressed for details, nor did John T. Garr keep a written record.

It seems, however, that John T. Garr was in Cache Valley prior to 1855. He rode with the Indians, dressed as they did, talked their language, knew their customs and traditions and had been adopted into their tribe. In 1854 he went with them on a fishing trip to Twin Falls, after which they returned and made camp in Cache Valley (called Willow Valley by the Indians). As a result of his report to Brigham Young, an exploring party was sent here the next year, followed by The Garr Boys and others. It is reasonable to feel that if John T. Garr was adopted into the tribe, he must have been married by Indian law and custom, and if the Indians had kept a written record of their vital statistics, we would find that information recorded, but they had no written language for record keeping.

Another bit of information not generally known is that in addition to young Johnny, who was raised by the Garr Boys, John T. Garr and his wife also must have had a daughter who was raised as an Indian. When she grew up she married a man by the name of Kip Norgan. It seems she was named Susan after her mother's "white man's" name. Susan and her husband, Kip Norgan, are now both deceased and apparently had no children.

As to why John T. Garr and his wife did not live together as man and wife, we can only surmise. Undoubtedly it was because of the general hostility common between the white men and the Indians. My own guess is as follows; possibly at one time John T. left home to make a life of his own. Having been a frontiersman all of his life, and being acquainted with Indians and their habits and language, he found no difficulty in being accepted by the Shoshone tribe, and for a time he lived with them and was married. After some time and perhaps after some disagreement or homesickness, the death of his father or something, he decided he should

return to his home and brothers and sisters. His wife, on the other hand, not knowing the white man's language or customs, and having a father and a brother for whom she must tend camp, would not go with him, but remained with her people. Still later, when the Indians realized that the whites intended to settle in Cache Valley and push them out, they became hostile and gave the young mother the alternative of death to the outcast baby or give him to the father to raise. This seems logical to me because as the white men moved in, the Indians found it increasingly more difficult to obtain sufficient food from their methods of procurement.

Although John T. Garr and his Indian wife visited back and forth for many years, they did not live together, and in none of the Garr geneologies that have been published, do we find that John T. Garr is credited with having a wife and family. This unfortunate fact, together with a lack of any written statement or will from our great-grandfather, has made our geneology more difficult to prove. Of course, as a result of the increasing hostility on the part of the Indians to the whites and the increased hatred of the whites for the Indians, as time passed, it became increasingly more and more difficult for John T. to admit the truth of his family without jeopardizing his prominent position in the community. Besides, he was a quite reserved man who did not confide his personal thoughts or problems to anyone. However, I have every confidence that more information will be brought to light from time to time.

If there is any information you can add from your own recollection of stories you have heard, or from records your parents might have been in possession of, I would appreciate that information.

It is my desire to obtain the geneological data for all of the descendants of Johnny Garr and Elizabeth Ann Hulse. For that purpose I would like you to fill out as completely as you can the enclosed family sheets for your father and mother and their family, you and your husband and family, and Kay and his wife and family. In this history, I wish to include pictures of each family group that I can. I would appreciate it if you would enclose any such pictures you have which I can have copied. I'll return the originals back to you.

To close with a personal touch, I might mention that I and my wife Lila and our three sons are all well and happy. We are living in Logan and are kept enjoyably busy with various church activities in the ward. After having returned from the service and graduated from the U. S. A. C., I was employed as office manager of The Herald Journal and continue so at the present time. I hope you are all well and happy.

I am looking forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely yours,

Cyril D. Garr

Appendix 2

That the parents of Johnny Garr were not married by any white man's ceremony is certain --- but to many who know the Garr family well, including Hiram Hulse, the brother of Johnny's wife Elizabeth, there was no question of Johnny's parentage.

He stated that in the summer of 1857, during the time John T. Garr lived with the Shoshones and was adopted into the tribe as "Napawanna", he was also given one of the most beautiful of the maidens as a wife by Indian ceremony.

Why the couple did not remain together, we do not know; we do know their customs, habits, beliefs and upbringing were very different, and that after the Elkhorn ranch was established, the boy Johnny was brought to John T. to raise.

Additional insight might be gained if we knew more about the visits of a Shoshone from the Washakie reservation by the name of Kip Norgan, accompanied by a light-skinned Shoshone woman called Susan to Charles Olsen of Tremonton to inquire after the "Garr's of Milville" with whom he claimed to be related.

When I inquired as to how to locate Charles Olsen of Tremonton, I was told he had been dead for at least a couple of years. The time frame seems to indicate that it was my father rather than my grandfather whom Kip Norgan was inquiring about.

Appendix 3

Susie The Indian

Susie Hi wa ga gee was born in Ruby Valley, Nevada. As a young girl she came to Washakie, Utah, with her father.

Susie married a Ute Indian and lived on the Ute reservation for a short time. Susie and her husband could not get along and had terrible fights. During one of these fights Susie's husband cut one of her finger off. It was then and there that Susie decided to leave him and went back to Washakie.

Her Ute husband had a large herd of horses. She rounded up most of these horses and headed north with them. She reached a large river and swam the horses across. When she got on the other side she saw her husband and other Utes coming her way. She turned upon the horses and killed them all. She always carried a gun. She escaped and returned to Washakie. At Washakie she made her home east of the village. She loved horses and had her own herd.

One day Susie killed a dog belonging to Jessie Perdash's father. He came over to Susie and demanded an explanation for his dog's death. Susie whipped out her gun and pointed at Johnny. He stepped up to her and took the gun out of her hand and bent the gun to pieces. "That's where I lost my gun" she said. "Never bought another one."

When Susie moved into the main village in Washakie, she lived in a little frame house but nearby she built a grass hut to store her things in. She was a very clean lady. She always slept between white sheets and had beautiful pillow cases. Her little black stove was always shined and kept clean.

The name "Susie the Indian" was given to her by white people in Malad, Idaho. She served as a domestic in many homes there. Susie spoke English very well but could not write.

Susie also had many friends in Huntsville, Utah. For many years she spent every fall there. Her white friends brought her deer hides which she scraped and tanned while staying in Huntsville. When she finished her task she always returned home to Washakie.

One fall day in 1929 a telephone call came to Bishop Joseph Parry. He was told an Indian lady from Washakie was very ill in Huntsville. Bishop Parry asked Moroni Timbimboo, Warren Wongan and Rachael Perdash to drive over to Huntsville and pick up Susie. When they got there Susie did not want to go back home. She crawled around on the floor so fast they could not catch her. Finally, they spread a blanket on the floor and waited for Susie to crawl upon it. When she did, they grabbed the corners and trapped her. They loaded her into the back seat of the car and drove her home.

When she came home she was unable to care for herself. Her relatives, Amy Timbimboo, Lucy Alex, and Jessie Perdash stayed with her and attended to her needs. One evening Bishop Parry told the ladies to go home for a good rest and he would look after her. Susie died during the night. Susie had one daughter who died years before her.

Susie told the most unbelievable stories. It was like "Believe It or Not." She told of having great magic powers in one finger. She told of shooting ducks down by pointing her finger at them and saying "bang, bang." She told of killing horses in the same manner. She told of hiding money in cans all over her yard and in her grass shed. After she died Amy, Lucy and Jessie, as well as others, dug everywhere looking for Susie's buried treasures. None was ever found.

Susie erected the first and biggest headstone upon her father's grave at the Washakie cemetery.

She had a post card with President Brigham Young's picture on it. Every Sunday she wore a belt to church and tucked in front was her post card. When her picture was going to be taken, she made sure her post card was taken too. Every fast meeting Susie was seen standing up bearing her testimony. She always talked about the Book of Mormon.

ILLUSTRATIONS



[Figure 1] John Turner Garr in the 1890s



[Figure 2] Amy Timbimboo [Mae Parry's mother] (left), Susie Hio Wigegee (center) and an unidentified friend (right), in the 1920s.



[Figure 3] Johnny [Jack] Garr in the early 1890s.



[Figure 4] Elizabeth Ann Hulse Garr, Johnny's wife in the early 1890s.



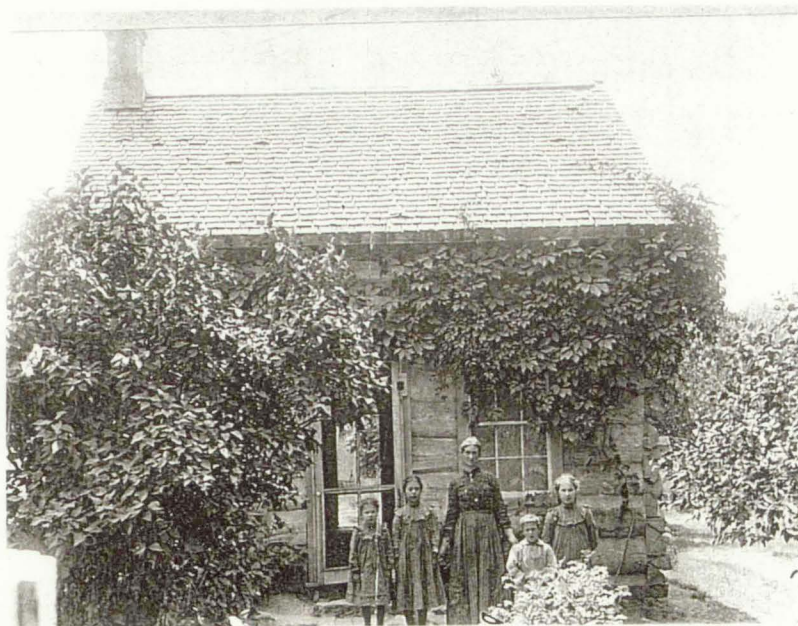
[Figure 5] Johnny and Elizabeth Garr's children in 1903.
(Left to right) Delores, Mila, Merle, John Delore [my grandfather].



[Figure 6] Johnny and Elizabeth's home in Blacksmith Fork Canyon in the 1950s. Johnny's son, John Delore Garr [my grandfather] is on the far right in overalls. His wife Leone Whitney Garr is on his left. The home was destroyed in the 1960s.



[Figure 7] Four of John T. Garr's siblings in 1893. (Left to right) Caroline Martin Garr Jones Jamison, Abel Weaver Garr, Sarah Anna Garr Burton, Nancy Garr Badger Stringham



[Figure 8] Elizabeth Garr and her four children in front of their home in 1903.



[Figure 9] Elizabeth, her children and some of her grandchildren in the early 1930s (Back row: left to right) Rea Jenson, Mila Garr Hulse, John Delore Garr, Deloris Garr Hopkins, Merle Garr Jenson (Front row: left to right) Kay (child), Elizabeth Ann Hulse Garr (Anderson), Lois (child) Opal Jenson (Naylor) about age 12.



[Figure 10] My father's family, Christmas 1958.
(Back row: left to right) Dennis Garr, Lawana Garr Smith
Gwenda Garr Wilson, Phyllis Garr Kingsford, Cyril Delore Garr.
(Front row: left to right) Leone Garr, Farrell Garr, John Delore Garr.



[Figure 11] My family, 1980, (Back row: left to right) Marshall C. Garr, Margaret Garr Jaggi, Graylyn L. Garr, Stephen L. Garr, (Front row: left to right) Lila Leatham Garr, Cyril Delore Garr.



[Figure 12] Hio Wigegee's headstone at the Washakie cemetery. The inscription reads: "Hio Wigegee, Died, Mar 14, 1904, Aged 90 Years." The smaller stone on the far right is believed to mark his daughter, Susie Hio Wigegee's grave.



[Figure 13] One of these homes in Washakie, Utah, belonged to Susie Hio Wigegee.



[Figure 14] Susie's greenhouse where her treasures were said to be buried.

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