

Telling the Tales and Telling the Truth: Writing the History of Widtsoe

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JOHNS VALLEY IS A HIGH MOUNTAIN VALLEY about 7,000 feet in elevation, thirty miles long, and twenty wide. You can drive it today, partly on paved road, partly on gravel, starting from Bryce Canyon and going north to Antimony. A few miles down the road on your right is the turnoff to the Pine Lake campground maintained by the U.S. Forest Service. Further on and to the right, not visible from the road, is a cemetery set in a stand of pinion pines, and at the junction of the road that turns east and goes up over the mountain to Escalante, you can still see the remnants of a few houses and outbuildings. Still further both on the left and the right are large stretches of sage and rabbit brush where fields and houses used to be. This is the site of the former town of Widtsoe.

The history of Widtsoe should be brief, as the town was brief. The first to come to Johns Valley were polygamous Mormon families seeking sanctuary, first, beyond the caring of the feds—the first survey of the valley in 1876 shows land held at Sweetwater Creek by Mrs. John D. Lee—and later beyond the ken of the Mormon church, as the church reversed field on the “principle.” Then cattlemen and sawmill owners came with their families, along with those looking for a new start on new land to be obtained by homesteading or by squatter’s rights.¹ They were variously of the churchd, the unchurchd, the barely-churchd, and the never-churchd. A branch of the LDS Tropic Ward was organized there in 1908. A town was platted in 1910 and called Winder after President John R. Winder of the

1. Mabel Woodward Nielsen and Audrie Cuyler Ford, eds., *Johns Valley, the Way We Saw It* (Spring City, UT: Art City Publishing Co., 1971), 2.

First Presidency. It was shortly renamed Houston after President James Houston of the Panguitch Stake (there were too many towns named Winder in Utah). And then in 1917 it was permanently renamed Widtsoe after John A. Widtsoe, president of the International Dry-Farming Congress. Several miles north of Widtsoe there used to be a town called Henderson until they hooked a team onto the post office and dragged it to Widtsoe, thus amalgamating the two towns.

For a time Widtsoe flourished and gave promise prosperity. The population grew to over 400. Then the climate changed, and a cycle of drought coincided with the Great Depression of the 1930s. In 1935 the federal Resettlement Administration, one of the agencies of the New Deal, moved in to purchase the citizens' holdings and return the area to public domain as potential grazing land, resettling the citizens in other more productive parts of the state. The citizens of the town held a mass meeting and voted to end the town. The post office was closed. The state road commission removed the town's name from the highway. The town should have died and become a ghost town, such as dot the West.

But the writing of the history of Widtsoe has to accommodate another fact. Every year since then the town has held a reunion. Three times as many people attended the fiftieth reunion in 1987 as left the town in 1937. The place was gone, the buildings were gone, but the community was still there. The most interesting aspect of the history of Widtsoe is in a question: What held the town together after so many other forces had pulled it apart?

The answer, I believe, is in the fact that the history of Widtsoe is at bottom the history of a speech community. La Rochefoucauld said that the accent of one's birthplace abides in the mind and heart as well as in the speech. And so it is with a speech community. The predicate is a marvelous thing, and the number of things it allows us to say is indefinitely large, but it is the speech community that puts in the fence lines and gates and generates the subtle unspoken rules and signs that show who is in and who is out, who is up and who is down, what can be spoken and what is unspeakable. It tells us who we are and who we should be by telling us what we have been. It holds things together. It tells us of our freedoms and our servitudes. It strengthens our hands and turns our faces to the fray. The markers of a speech community might be in the accents of the speech or in its code words, in its oratory or in its silences, in what it reverences or in what it profanes, but its soul is in its tales.

It was in fact the tales that made me a member of the town of Widtsoe. My family moved away before my sense of geography was oriented by the creeks running down the mountain, Horse Creek, Deer Creek, Cow Creek, Sweetwater. But when former Widtsoe people came to visit, I listened to them as they told their stories, some of which were told over and over,

sometimes with slight variations but often with the same intonation at the comical line. I came to know people I could not put a face to through stories about them. When the tellers got going on the government, I knew we had passed over the line into High Poetry.

Still I had not sentimental attachment to the town. I was a Salt Lake City kid, and I wanted to keep moving out and away not back. But in the early 1970s I began to wonder about Widtsoe. Those people from Widtsoe knew something that contemporary America didn't. I knew their tales, but I didn't know their history to which the tales pointed. Their history, I now realized, was my history, upon which all the other experiences of my life had been layered.

About this time I began to be in close contact with Aunt Mabel Nielsen—both of my parents had passed away. Mabel, sensing that she had few years left, had started along with Audrie Cuyler Ford to collect personal reminiscences from as many people as possible who had lived in the valley. They did spontaneously what ethnographers do. Without a notion of speech community, they collected its markers. They had the people tell their stories in their own terms and accents, using their own categories and giving their own meanings to the experiences. They titled the work *Johns Valley, the Way We Saw It*. This collection became my second source of tales.

When people told what stayed inside of them from the Johns Valley experience, what did they talk about? Almost all of them talked in some way about the struggle, or rather the Struggle, the heat and the cold, the drought and the blizzards.

Said Frederick Hermansen Clinch,

In 1920 we had one of the most terrible summers—no rain and a total failure of crops. . . . Waiting for rain day after day, we would see the wind sending great billowing clouds of loose soil into the air. . . . They waited and prayed but still no rain. The crops burned in the fields. Another season, when I was of an age when I noticed people and the expression on their faces, I saw the line of worry beneath the dust on my father's face. One day I heard him say to mother, "It's burning up. The crops can't hold out many more days." I remember how he made his hands into a fist and brought them down on the table and bowed his head over them as if he were in terrible pain. I can never forget mother's face, as standing by his chair, she placed her hand on his shoulder and said nothing. . . . Later that night I was awakened by the wind blowing. There were flashes of lightning and rumbles of thunder. It was just getting light when the rain started to fall. I ran outside, clapping my hands and singing. . . . [M]other stood in the doorway and watched, her long braids hanging down over her shoulders. . . . That year there was a good harvest and the grain bins were nearly filled to the

top of the cabin. There was just enough room for us to crawl between the grain and the roof. We slept on the grain, on straw ticks.²

The cold. Most of the accounts mention the winters, the deep snows, the blizzards, the preparations against the winter. Lillie Cuyler tells this story:

In 1909 a man crossing the East Fork out of Red Canyon on his way east to Tropic was lost in a blizzard. The storm was so bad he had to depend on his horse to find the way, but the horse turned north instead and gave out just south of father's place. The man started following father's south fence and finally got close enough to see the light in their south window. He continued toward the house, falling down and struggling to get up, finally falling against their door. Mother heard a noise and went to the door expecting to let the dog in for a minute, when the man fell in more dead than alive. Father and mother spent nearly all night trying to get him thawed out and into some of father's dry clothing, putting him to bed and getting hot liquids into him. They took care of him for some time, but pulled him through without any ill effects. I have told this as I remember my parents telling it several times. I believe it happened the same night that Henry Lossee from Tropic was frozen to death trying to cross the East Fork to Tropic with the mail. His pack horse fell into a snowdrift, couldn't get up, and also froze to death.³

They talked about the hard times, often with humor, and the drier the better. One of the great blessings of living in Johns Valley, they said, was that when the Depression hit the rest of the country, there you couldn't tell the difference. After a summer of drought and burnt fields, Randolph Frandsen's wife had a baby, which the neighbors came to see. "That's a fine baby, Randolph, but he's kind of little, ain't he?" "Yes, we didn't hardly get our seed back on that one." Humor is one of the potent arms of the spirit and in desperate situations grander than all sorts of hallelujahs.

So it is not strange that they told stories about their stories and about their storytellers. "I remember sleeping in wall-to-wall beds when our folks when to the dances," said Orlene Zabriskie Chestnut, "and telling 'happy ever after stories' until they got home, like the one Clellan Zabriskie told about a man and woman who had twelve kids and the wolves got after them and they would throw one child, and the wolves would stop and eat it; and finally, after all twelve kids had been fed to the wolves, they arrived home safe and lived happy ever after."⁴

2. *Ibid.*, 138

3. *Ibid.*, 282-83.

4. *Ibid.*, 89.

Randolph Frandsen was one of the most quoted men in the valley. He had a Model T and was trying to drive to California. When he stopped in Las Vegas for gas, the service station attendant asked if he should check the oil. "Well, yes, please," said Randolph, "and while you're at it, put in a quart of castor oil. It hasn't passed a thing all day."

In 1992 I attended the Widtsoe reunion and saw Merthel Gleave, whom I hadn't seen for over fifty years. Within minutes he was telling a story about my dad George that I had heard from several other people with minor variations. George and Randolph were hunting deer with the numerous Gleave boys, who were driving the deer down the hollow, with George, and Randolph posted at the point to shoot the deer as they ran past. A buck ran down, George shot at it, and knocked it down with a clean shot to the head. When they went to look at it, George said, "I don't know what's happening to my shooting, Randolph, I just don't know. I was aiming for its eye, and I hit it right here at the butt of the ear." For once Randolph was taken in. "Oh, no, that's good shooting, George, that's good shooting."

The center of the town was the sawed log meeting house with its bell which called people to Sunday school and sacrament meetings on Sunday, to school during the week when the hall was used for school, or to a dance whenever there was a town dance. The religion was spirited, social, direct, enhanced by the feeling of neighborliness created by mutual struggle against the elements and the land. Churchiness was at a minimum, but I have picked up tales about a bishop's counselor I have never been able to match up with any actual counselor in a real bishopric. I call him Charlie. He appears in the tales as one wanting to leave the world a better place than he found it. An old sheepherder just off the range came down with pneumonia, and when Charlie went to visit him, he could see the old man was in a bad way. So he started consoling him and talking to him about the celestial kingdom. The sheepherder raised up out of bed and said, "Why, I'll outlive you, you oily sonofabitch!" And he did, so they say.

Yes, profanity was an important part of the speech community. There were some men who didn't swear. And there were some women who did, which came to me as a surprise and a marvel. But if we are telling the truth, the lives of most of the men were floating on a raft of goddamns through Sonofabitch Canyon—because the truth about the world is that there are some problems you can't solve until you just take hold of them and swear them through.

Some swearers were just coarse, but others swore with imagination. Fleet Merrill was plowing for the bishop (Quince Kimball at the time), using a nice team of horses and a mule hooked up to a three-horse sulky plow. Each time he came to the end of the piece he was plowing, the mule would stop, and the horses would almost have to pull him around the turn. People

would stop to listen just to see what Fleet would come out with next. As in: "G.D. a mule. They never was what God intended anyway. They are a man-made S.B., and no one but a bishop would own one."⁵

And then there was Pherron Heaps, who had a team of pulling horses that he took around to all the county fairs in the area and usually won. It was a rule that the driver was disqualified if he swore during the contest. Once Pherron's team was up against their stiffest competition, and they couldn't budge their next load. Pherron let it go, and the judge disqualified him. "I didn't swear," Pherron said, "that's them horses' names."

Randolph Frandsen was such a man. Before the valley got a steam-powered thresher, he was the one driving the horses which drove the gears delivering power to the thresher. It was not that he was a profane man, but he was an expert in mountain grammar with power to turn the air blue. And on one such morning Charlie said to him, "Randolph, you don't need to swear like that to make those horses go." Randolph replied, "Well, Charlie, I look at it this way, you pray a lot, and I swear a lot, but the Good Lord knows that neither one of us means anything by it."

The line between tragedy and laughter was thin. I know one story with several variants. One version is included in the book,⁶ and I have heard two others, but I'll tell the one I heard first and heard repeated most often. A certain man from Escalante had been committed to the state mental hospital in Provo, and after several years there he died. The hospital was to ship the body home for burial, but the train only ran as far as Marysvale, so the family asked Arzie Campbell, who had a dump truck, to meet the train and bring the body over the mountain to Escalante. Arzie asked George and Lorin to go with him. Before they left Widtsoe they had been drinking a little, and by the time they got to Marysvale, they had been drinking a little bit more. So when the train arrived after dark and seven hours late, they were free from the chains and hobbles that tie ordinary men to the earth. They loaded the casket in the back of the truck, and with Lorin riding back there with it so nothing would happen, they drove off through the dark. It was past midnight when they started up the Escalante mountain with Arzie and George arguing about whether Arzie's truck would make it up over Ford Stuck, which was the place on the mountain where, if you were going over it in a Model T, you would always get stuck and have to back up over the mountain in reverse. Arzie was sure that he would make it over because he had just put a new ruxtel gear in his truck. When they got to the place, he reached for the new lever but pulled the dump lever, sending Lorin and the coffin out into the night and down the

5. *Ibid.*, Vird Barney account, 64.

6. *Ibid.*, 88

mountainside. George and Arzie got out and started groping around, and after the longest time they found the coffin. It was empty. They groped around some more, found the body, put it in the coffin, and were just going to nail the lid down again when the corpse moaned and tried to sit up. It was Lorin. By now they were some sober. They groped around some more, found the real corpse, and when they got down off the mountain into Escalante, it was just getting light. They delivered the coffin to the family, who opened it to get ready for the viewing. The deceased was face down. The family just looked at it and then finally someone said, "Ain't it a shame how they treat them poor folks in Provo."

There were other stories about death, in other accents. Many people talked about the 1918 flu. Said one: "I look back with sadness on the influenza epidemic of 1918-1919. We lost many young people at that time; nearly the whole town was down with it. Our family and Orrel Zabriskie's family did not get it. . . . George and Orrel wore face masks and went to the homes, where they chopped wood and carried it. They also brought water to the doors."⁷

Lillie Cuyler remembered: "During the flu epidemic in World War I, mother, Bert Halladay, and William Rose were [among the only] ones who were able to go from home to home doing chores, chopping and carrying wood, and taking hot food to the sick, keeping fires going, with big kettles of soup or pans of bread baking to help feed the sick. Mother helped nurse several who had it, and one I remember who died in her arms was a Stoddard boy."⁸

Verd Barney said:

The winter of 1918 brought more heartbreak and sorrow than fun. The flu raged wild, and fresh graves were dug each day. It was hard to dig them fast enough. My older brother, Van, helped to dig graves. There was another fine able-bodied young man (Richard Frederick Robinson while digging Gertrude Young Bullock's grave) who remarked one day as they worked at the task, "one of these days you'll be digging my grave." His words were sadly prophetic. Three days later he was dead.⁹

The same tale teller continued: "Van recalls some sobering moments, too; Glen Thornton being struck by lightning; the Desmond boy who was dragged to his death by a runaway horse; Rob Lay's boy, Lionel, who was run over with a wagon and killed."¹⁰

7. *Ibid.*, Adella Zabriskie account, 275.

8. *Ibid.*, Lillie Cuyler account, 282.

9. *Ibid.*, Vird Barney account, 64.

10. *Ibid.*

The people in the valley buried their own dead. The men would make a coffin from lumber from the mill and would dig a grave in the cemetery set among the pines. In the home of the Relief Society president, there was always a bolt of satin for lining the coffin, and overnight someone would have to stay with the body to change the formaldehyde packs to keep the body from discoloring before the funeral. Mabel Nielsen tells how she and her sister Ruby, who were thirteen and fifteen, volunteered to sit a shift with an older couple from midnight until morning. When they got to the house, the older couple had already been there for several hours. The girls with bravado assured the couple that they could do the job themselves, and so the couple showed them how to change the packs. The girls felt the enormity of what they had done as the older couple left. In the light of the coal oil lamp, they watched the hands of the clock go around to one. "Well, if you have never touched a corpse before, now is the time." They went into the other room, jostled the body when they changed the packs, screamed when the body made a noise, and then realized it was just gas escaping. They wondered if they too might see a man in a blue suit the way a certain sister sitting alone with her husband who had been killed by lightning had. But there was no visitant. Four more times they watched the hands of the clock go around. Then they heard a milk bucket clanging in the distance and saw the light come back to the sky. Others came to relieve them, and they went home to breakfast. This story was told again and again.

Thus far we have come dangerously close to committing literature, which is the human thing and which will, if followed to its furthest reaches, end up with the Gargantuan laugh or the cry of Job. And although some might cavil this notion, it is precisely the tales, the literature, that gather in the meaning of history and give it life. They provide the metaphors with which we think. In the case of *Widtsoe*, they show the stuff of a community with bonds and identities which has survived for fifty-three years even without a place to abide. They reveal a kind of experience not unique to *Widtsoe* but common in many aspects to the colonized West and part of the core of a certain kind of Mormonism.

And it is the tales that allow us to see others as they saw themselves. Consider the account of Mahonri Moriancumer Steele, Jr.:

I was born when the colonization of the Rocky Mountain Empire was still young. The great directing genius of the colonization, Brigham Young, was still alive and his dream of a mighty civilization stretching from Canada in the north to Mexico in the south and extending to the Pacific Ocean was being pushed through as rapidly as possible. To this end some people were continually kept on the frontier. No sooner than they had laid out a settlement and made it secure, than the hardiest men and women left the nucleus, leaving to those who followed after the task of continued

growth and consolidation. . . . In all the history of the world I don't suppose that there is a parallel in colonization equal to this. Each new settlement experienced all the heart-breaking toil, privations, and indomitable courage that was experienced in the first settlement in the territory. Brigham Young was, of course, the guiding spirit, but he could not have accomplished all this unless he had been supported by thousands who were just as hardy and imbued with the same vision. It was my fortune to be born and raised on what was practically the last of the frontier.¹¹

How did they look to those outside? The Farm Security Administration, created in April 1935 to address the plight of the rural poor, commissioned a documentary study of rural America with the polemical purpose of publicizing and justifying agency programs. Two of the FSA's best photographers, Dorothea Lange and Russell Lee, devoted several months to studying rural Utah. After photographing the coal mining town of Consumers, Lange traveled to Widtsoe to take photos which were to be used in justifying resettlement of the town's residents. Historian Brian Cannon describes the photos:

Revealing forbidding images such as stark wire fences, weather-beaten buildings, boarded up windows, snow, and ice, the photos suggest a town unfit for habitation. Although over one hundred people lived in Widtsoe at the time, Lange photographed only three women and one child. By avoiding direct confrontation on film with large numbers of the town's denizens, Lange minimized the potentially explosive human element of settlement: its denigration of the fabric of community—ties to people and place.

In appearance, many Utah towns settled since 1900 resembled Widtsoe. Rudely constructed homes, weathered outbuildings, rickety public buildings, treeless and unpaved streets, and weed-strewn lots were common. In a decade of deprivation that enhanced the allure of material success, it was easy to disparage such communities as unproductive commodities with little intrinsic worth.¹²

From the inside it looked to some, to those born before 1890 or so, like a great adventure, participation in one of the great undertakings of history. From the outside it looked like poverty from which people needed to be rescued by the government. Others saw them as people who didn't have \$500 a year. They saw themselves as hard-working and honest people who had never had a master.

11. *Ibid.*, 299.

12. Brian Cannon, "Introduction," *Life and Land, The Farm Security Administration Photographers in Utah, 1936-41* (Logan: Utah State University Press, 1988), 3-5.

And how did the Resettlement look to those who were resettled? After initial hope followed disillusionment and cynicism. The government men came to be seen as those who liked to ride around in big cars and tell people what to do. For some time after the resettlement, for example, people could not spend their own money—their checks had to be counter-signed by someone in the Resettlement Office before they could be cashed. And the government men were slow. Weeks dragged into months and months into years while the people just waited. It was one thing to deal with blizzards and droughts and another to deal with a tedious and sometimes officious bureaucracy. At one of the last gatherings of the town, this song was sung to the tune of “The Man on the Flying Trapeze” (words penned by Ida Steed):

Once Widtsoe was happy but now we're forlorn,
Just like an old coat that is tattered and torn.
We're left in this valley to cry and to mourn
And wait for the government men.
They said in two weeks we will move you all out,
Two weeks is a lingering spell—
And we are still wondering what it's about,
But the government men will not tell—oh—

Chorus

Farewell to this valley, farewell one and all,
We've been happy in Widtsoe in springtime and fall,
Every family is leaving but none knows when,
Not even the government men.

Rex Taylor is leaving, but no one knows when,
Except Mr. Wright and the government men,
A few months of waiting will do him no harm,
And so he must not say word.
Clarence Sandberg, Del Twitchell, and poor Milton Steed,
Not persuaded this valley to leave
They will stay with the prairie dogs, rabbits, and birds
Unbelievable, simply absurd—oh—

Chorus

The account given by Reed Beebe weaves together the principle strands of others who talked about beginnings in the valley, its high points, and its resettling:

In August 1924 Garfield Stake Quarterly conference was held in Widtsoe. Widtsoe had two stores and Henderson one; several sawmills were operating and doing a good business; a new hotel had been built by Robert W. Pinney; William F. Holt was interested in promoting growth in the valley unthought of before; Pine Lake—our recreation area since the valley was first settled—was being enlarged with an earthen dam to supply water for better irrigation of the Widtsoe lots and for a large ranch Mr. Holt had purchased; so for the first time in its history the valley was to have a payroll, and the people rejoiced. This was also the year of the greatest crop production in the history of the valley; more grain was produced than in all of the rest of the county, Piute County, and Kane County combined. Brother D. W. Woodard was heard to remark, "After much tribulation cometh reward."

At this conference, which was attended by Elder Melvin J. Ballard of the Council of Twelve, great things were expected of the valley. . . . In his remarks during conference, Elder Ballard enlarged on the possibilities for the valley—what a wonderful area it was. Comparing it to the Garden of Eden, he said, "Johns Valley will remain thus, so long as you keep out of debt, and keep the commandments of God; but, if you fail to keep His commandments, it will be cursed, and will be taken from you." . . . When I returned [from a California mission] in February 1928—less than four years from the time he made the prediction—over half of the people had moved out; the Holt enterprise was failing; the drought had returned, and another depression—one of the worst depressions ever to hit this nation—was in the offing and soon to strike.

We continued to struggle, working with the Utah State Land Office in building a canal from Rocky Ford, south and west of Widtsoe, down to and covering most of the land in the Henderson area.

Then in the spring of 1934, the government sponsored Rural Rehabilitation, upon request of some of the last residents, came in and surveyed the valley with the idea in mind of purchasing the land and moving the people into other more developed sections of the state.

My last night on the ranch in Johns Valley, 31 December, 1935, was one that I will long remember. I didn't sleep much, thinking back over the past twenty-five years—the joys we had experienced, some of the sorrows we had endured—and now what? Where? and why? How had we failed to keep God's commandments? I am sure that most of us loved our neighbor as ourselves, the great flu epidemic of 1918 had proven this. We had better than average attendance at Sunday School and sacrament meetings; we had good leaders who were interested in the people they presided over. Wherein had we failed? But we had.

Those administering the rural rehabilitation program—the Resettlement Administration—were slow to act. The expenses of administration of the program more than doubled the money paid out for the land, and they kept putting settlement off for months and years. In the case of my father, he died of a broken heart November 1937; mother died three years earlier. Finally, on 7 December 1937, over a month after father's death, the Reset-

tlement Administration came to make settlement with our family. Expense of interest on mortgages and delinquent taxes ate all the equity we had in our 3,000 plus acres of land. Vera was relocated on a run-down fruit farm in Orem. I was given the choice of buying the farm of a cousin of the attorney for the government—or nothing. So ended our sojourn in Johns Valley, a place I still love, because most of my memories there were good.¹³

Are tales history? Yes, in that they are a means, perhaps the best means, of seeing things from the inside out. Whether or not they are factual concerning the events and the personae is of secondary consideration. They are factual perceptions that people had of the events. They are part of the ethnography without which history falls short of the truth about the core of the thing. Once Heber C. Kimball was preaching in the tabernacle and said, "I wish I had some stones. I'd like to pelt your damned heads, for you lie like hell." He was the one who complained that when people printed his sermons, they took all the music out of them. I haven't been able to relocate that passage in the *Journal of Discourses*, and so I cannot give its context, but I give it as my opinion that he was referring to those who were trying to write history without the benefit of ethnography.

But beyond the truth of the tales and the self perceptions are two other dimensions of the truth of history. First, events cannot easily be interpreted if at all by those who are still inside of them. And the people in the valley were also being moved by events and forces from far out of sight in New York, in Asia, in Europe. They were caught up by currents that carried them variously to farms in Payson, Orem, Salina, to counties north, to the steel mills at Geneva, to the drunk tank in Salt Lake City, to Bastogne and Iwo Jima, to Stanford, IBM, and the Lord knows where. Like crabs on the seashore, we cannot see where we are until we get on top of something else. History to be true has to get up high in order to show things as they fit together. But here I find another metaphor in one of the pastimes that people talked about. They would get on their horses and ride up above Pine Lake to the Barney Top, a vista from which they could see for a hundred miles or more, as far as Grand Canyon, as far back as the beginning of the world. Doing history, getting at the truth of history, depends on reaching for eminences from which to view things in a larger context, whether a life, a town, a church, a people, a nation, or a world.

Still in the telling of the story, the self-perceptions and the seeing things as they fit together are not enough. The enterprise of history is driven also by the need to see what is below the surface or behind the appearance of things, things as they are at bedrock. To show the type and the qualities of the historian, I go back to another of the tales of Widtsoe, the one of the

13. Nielsen and Ford, *The Way We Saw It*, 70.

town Christmas parties and dances held, of course, in the sawed log meeting house. As the evening progressed, announcements were made as to the whereabouts of Santa Claus. We have just received word that Santa Claus is in Marysvale, now in Circleville, now in Antimony. And then Santa Claus, played by John R. Campbell, burst into the hall with his red suit and his cotton whiskers, ringing his bells and making the rounds of the children with his ho-ho-ho, asking them if they had been good or bad. All the children were concerned with making the proper response, except five-year-old Larvin Campbell, son of John R. He had the qualities of an historian and kept following Santa Claus around the room, looking and listening. Then he looked up at his Sunday school teacher and said, "You know, I'd swear to hell that was my dad."