



To my Loving Husband

# FERN BERTHA WHITMER MUNN JONES



## AUTOBIOGRAPHY

My parents are Angus Van Meter Whitmer and Sarah Jane Judd Whitmer, known by all as 'Jennie.' The Whitmers came from Switzerland. The Judds immigrated from Canada. They lived in Connecticut in the early 1600s having immigrated from England.

### Meals and Home Life

My earliest memory of my mother was her canning all summer long with our help. Canned 100 quarts of peas, beans, corn, fruit, chili sauce, chow chow. Big dinners—also called lunch. Breakfasts consisted of wheat cereal, two large pans of biscuits, eggs, pork chops, steak, you name it. Supper was bread and milk and garden vegetables. I remember Mother sang as she worked and whistled tunes. I remember kneeling at her knee for my evening prayers. She was an excellent cook and was known for her chocolate cakes. Mother was a Number One mother and homemaker. She sewed for us and when she got behind dad would hire Sister Jepson to sew for her. Dad paid her with grain, potatoes, fruit and eggs. Mother baked nine loaves of bread every other day.

### The Day I was Born

The day I was born was somewhat unusual. The family had gone to Luna, New Mexico to get Sister Swapp, Aunt Virgie's mother, to deliver us. It was horse and buggy. Mother washed all day on a washboard. We were delivered at home. They thought Aunt Faye was the only baby. I think it was 30 minutes later that I was born. What a surprise!

### How I Got My Name

As for my name, the last set of twins born after us, were named Bertha and Blanche. I'm not really sure how Mother and Dad came up with Faye and Fern. My twin used to call me squirt because I was shorter than Faye, and I was sometimes called Chubby. When I was older, I wrote to the Arizona State Capitol and changed my name from Bertha Fern to Fern Bertha. Faye is still Blanche Faye.

### Poor Self-esteem

MIA — teacher, counselor, stake counselor  
Era magazine director  
Stake Sunday School — Jr. Sunday School

Coordinator for Ward and Stake, Sunday  
 School teacher  
 Mission to Missouri

Stay true to the principles of the Church.  
 Be a leader not a follower.  
 Teach others by example.

## First Job

My first full-time job was for Shaw's Drug in Silver City, New Mexico for 75 cents and hour. I have worked for drug and dime stores, a long distance operator, ship service for a hospital in Corona, cashier at grocery stores and a gift shop (Kammiers).

## Hobbies and Times That Made me Happy

Growing up some of my hobbies were horseback riding, dancing, singing and crafts. Crafts is what I enjoy now. I was hospitalized for my tonsils and hysterectomy. When I look back on my life there are some times I especially enjoyed. I enjoyed my time alone with Mother and Dad while we lived in Colorado. I remember our years in Bakersfield and Lompoc as happy years. I remember our mission for eighteen months when I was alone with Dad. He loved that he could have me all to himself. So many happy times working and serving together.

## My View and Feelings

### Some of my favorite sayings:

Like your friends for what they are and not you'd like them to be.

It's not where we serve but how we serve.

I most value honesty in a friend. In times of trouble my faith in Heavenly Father and prayer have pulled me through. World War II and earthquakes in Bakersfield affected me a lot.

### My best advice for my grandchildren:

## ABOUT MY CHILDREN

How I chose my children's names:

**Harold** — He carries his father's name because he was the oldest

**Cheryl Jane** — Named after Grandma Whitmer's name which was Sarah Jane

**Ethelyn Marie** — Named after Aunt Ethel and Marie is for Grandma Munn

**Gary Wayne** — Gary and Wayne were friends

# FERN BERTHA WHITMER MUNN



## LIFE HISTORY

Born July 7, 1923

Fern Bertha Whitmer was born in Alpine, Arizona, July 7, 1925. She was the fifteenth child, a twin, born to Angus and Jennie Whitmer. The twins were delivered by Sister Swapp, a midwife from Luna, New Mexico. Fern was baptized by her brother, Harold Whitmer. She lived in Alpine, Arizona until fourteen years of age when she moved to Silver City, New Mexico to live with her sister, Ethel. Fern worked at Shaw's Drug, after which she moved to Lamar, Trinidad and Pueblo where her father worked for the relocation of the Japanese. She was usually working in drug stores and Five & Dime stores.

When Fern was eighteen or nineteen, she moved to Parker, Arizona, where her father guarded warehouses for the government. She cashiered in grocery stores for two years. It was here she met Jim Munn and went with him as she felt he was the only nice boy in that area. He was two years younger than Fern. Jim had a brother, Melvin, in the Marines. He came home on leave from the hospital as he had been burned quite badly and had been in Navy hospitals for six months.

It was on a Sunday and one of the few times Fern had attended a Protestant church. Fern and her girlfriend were coming home from church and passed Melvin in his car. She made a \$5 bet with her friend that she could get a date with him. She said Fern couldn't do it because he was too popular. Fern honked her horn and he stopped. They made a date and were married three months later in Salome, Arizona by the Justice of the Peace.

While Melvin was undergoing more plastic surgery, Fern moved to Phoenix, Arizona, and worked as a long distance operator. Later, she moved to Corona, California, to be near Melvin where he was in the hospital for plastic surgery. Here Fern worked in "Ship Service" at the hospital.

Melvin and Fern moved around for the next couple of years. After he was discharged from the Marines, they settled in Morenci, Arizona, where he worked for Phelps Dodge. They went on strike and after two years, the couple moved to Arvin, California, where Melvin worked packing grapes and fruit at DeGiorgio Farms. At the same time he went to school through the government to be a mechanic. He got a job in Bakersfield with an auto company. This is where their first child, Melvin Harold, was born.



Their next move took them to Bakersfield, California where Dad was recuperating from his burn. This is where they bought their first home. Melvin joined The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints just as they moved from Arvin. The missionaries taught him in Arvin. He became very active in the Church and so did Fern. Life was good to them and they were happier than they had ever been. Cheryl Jane, Ethelyn Marie and Gary Wayne were born in this home.

Church activity was the highlight of their lives. Melvin served as Elder's Quorum President, Seventies President, Counselor in the Bishopric twice once for eight years, High Council, counselor to the Mission President, and Stake Mission President. He served as High Priest Group leader until two months before his death. His great love was missionary work and he often received rewards for the most referrals and baptisms. Fern served as teacher for Old and New Testament, Primary teacher, Counselor in the Primary, Counselor to Stake Primary President, Stake Primary President of the Santa Maria Stake, MIA, and Sunday School Coordinator and again as a teacher in the Sunday School.

Dear friends of theirs, the Christensens, moved to Pismo Beach, and said he knew Melvin could get work as a mechanic at Vandenberg A.F.B. for Civil Service near Lompoc. This was an exciting time as they sold their home in Bakersfield and the family moved to Lompoc. There they bought a new home and lived in it for 24 years.

In 1971, Mel had a massive heart attack that destroyed vital muscles in his heart. He was given six months to one year to live. By this time Fern had gone back to work in a drug store to support Harold on a mission and the children in college. Her boss, Karl Braun, gave her a trip to Hawaii for eleven days on three islands following Melvin's heart attack. When he was sufficiently recovered, they left for the dream trip of a lifetime to see all the islands. They had a wonderful time seeing many sights.

In 1980 Melvin and Fern were called to serve an eighteen month mission to the St. Louis Mission. This proved to be a choice experience with lasting memories. Melvin was instrumental in acquiring land for the branch building to be built on. Many members were activated and eleven souls were baptized into the Church. Fern still corresponds with friends made during this time.

Eight months after their return to Lompoc, Melvin was called on another mission, a more permanent one. He died on April 19, 1982. Ten days before this, he told Fern he was going to have to leave soon as he had genealogy and missionary work to do. This was a very sad time for the family as they lost a choice husband and father who had always been kind and loving to all.

Fern went to work immediately in the Los Angeles Temple as an ordinance worker. She would drive the three hours alone to Los Angeles and served the third week of every month. She continued in this calling for two years staying in the temple apartments during the week she worked there. Fern loved serving Heavenly Father in this calling.

The children worried about their mother living so far away from them and insisted she sell her home and move to Utah to be near them. In October 1984, she made the move to West Jordan, Utah, close to the Jordan River Temple. She transferred her temple calling to the Jordan River Temple and didn't need the Stake President or Bishop to okay the call. She loved her work in the temple and made many friends. She was privileged to work with Sister Kimball and Sister Benson in the temple.

By this time Fern had been called to work with the Stake Single Adults and enjoyed this very much. When she had served in the temple for two and a half years, her life took on new meaning. In January of 1987, she met Robert "Bob" F. Jones, while they were getting their cars serviced at Sears. His wife had died two years before and Melvin had been gone for five years.

This chance meeting resulted in their marriage in the Jordan River Temple for “time” on March 3, 1987. The Lord truly blessed Fern. “I, the Lord, am bound when ye do what I say.” (D&c 82:10) She was able to sell her home even though the market was very depressed. She and Bob have been married for ten years and are very happy as they enjoy many of the same things.

Commander Jones, as Bob is known in the Navy, was born in Kamas, Utah. He has two sons. He served on the U.S.S. Mississippi and the USS. Nevada in World War II. His naval career took him to many exciting ports. Other ships he served on included: the U.S.S. Coral Sea, the U.S.S. North Hampton, and finally the U.S.S. Enterprise, the nuclear powered carrier, as weapons officer.

Fern’s life and happiness has been serving in the Church for the Lord. “I have a testimony of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. I know God lives. That Jesus is the Christ. That Joseph Smith was a prophet and did restore the true Gospel once again to the earth. That we have a living prophet today to lead and give us revelation. My joy has been the church and raising my family. Harold and Teresa have eight children, Cheryl Tom Quinn and together they have eleven children, six of which are Cheryl’s, Ethelyn has four children, and Gary has one child. Truly, the Lord has blessed me.”