BLAZERS IN THE DESERT

"BLAZERS IN THE DESERT," by Lamond W. Huntsman, which will follow in this paper, is a history of this region covering the period from 1826 to 1947. (All copyrights reserved.)

The Enterprise Well Started

Note the dark pool of clear water below the dam formed there when the ten feet of masonry (story below) washed away. A small spring forms this pool. Ice and snow obscure the masonry. O. W. Huntsman at the right top of ledge indicated where the height of the masonry will reach.

It was about this time that a Mr. X ran an ad in the paper thus: "O. W. Huntsman wants to hire two hundred men and teams to scrape snow into his reservoir." The air was filled with derision and sarcasm.

It is believed that this is the first dam constructed to impound flood waters for irrigation.

A man, who had watched the ebb and flow or rise and fall of livestock and all other industries, had also seen the depletion of the range, and the erosion of the steep lands. He had often noted with interest the rivers of water that dumped themselves into the Big Desert during flood season, making rapid changes in the looks and values of the country. As he grew to maturity, he began to realize the value of the Big Desert's fertile soil. If only the land and water could be brought together under the control of a master hand, what fine, prosperous farm homes could be made for the poor saints and sinners. While with his father investigating the timber for milling back in 1866, he had seen a spot where the bulk of this run-off came from. Here a dam could be placed on bed rock between two high cliffs forming a basin that would become a sizeable lake of water. A ditch could carry this water to the mouth and on to the good land. For some years this mental vision remained locked behind those observing eyes. He felt depressed and, in modern language, "like a heel" when he gathered his horses and cows, loaded his family and effects into his wagon and left this "unsavory dump" for, as he supposed, the last time.

He soon began to prosper both financially and religiously. While he seemed to be doing very well, he was never quite satisfied. His oldest son, now a grown man, like the wild horses he had romped with as he grew up on Shoal Creek, developed a terrific yen for the home range. Orson W. Huntsman held a secret he could not divulge, nor could he forget or discard it. Although he realized he was better off away from Shoal Creek, that inward subconscious urge kept crowding up within him until he often found himself attenpting to figure out how he, a poor man, could consumate the one all consuming idea: "To plug those narrows at the head of Shoal Creek and impound the water to farm that beautiful valley of the choicest of soils." The storage of the flood waters became an obsession from which he could not escape. But how to finance it? How had the poor people done things and made some quite remarkable accomplishments such as the building of their great temples and cities? There was only one answer—"Organization and cooperation". This was the answer, coupled with much labor and not a little sacrifice.

As yet no one had shared or even heard of the idea, or anything like it. He couldn't wait to get back and solicit the aid of the Hebron Ward, the St. George stake authorities, and all the homeless people—especially those poor ones on Shoal Creek. Such confidence had he in his scheme taking quick root back south that he sold out and loaded the covered wagons. This man who said that "two moves were equal to a burn out" was on the move again. What a disheartening disillusionment he drove into later!

Starting south looking for a home, Orson Welcome Huntsman passed up three very fine chances. One, on the Sevier river, he wanted badly and his wife begged him to take it, but his diary says he "felt impressed to move on". He came to Terry's ranch, or Shoal Creek, in May 1892. When he looked at Hebron he wanted to retreat, but he spoke of his idea to his brother-in-law, Perry Winsor, and George Burgess. They gave great encouragement. This was the first time he had mentioned the secret held in his head so long.

(To Be Continued)