

Ephraim K. Hanks

INTRODUCTION

An invitation was published on the obituary page of the Deseret News, dated May 25, 1996. The print invited members of the family and interested parties to a memorial service commemorating Eph's service with the Mormon Battalion. The gathering would also mark the anniversary of his death 100 years ago. This announcement caught the attention of Paul L. Young of Bloomington, Utah, who called Sherry Smith the same morning.

Brother Young said that he had a story about Ephraim K. Hanks that he felt his descendants needed to preserve. Sherry asked as to his relationship to the family, and Brother Young said that he was not a relative but considered the story to be very sacred. He suggested someone come to his home to tape record this story.

Soon after Ephraim Hanks' memorial service, Joy Pinckney flew to Orange County, California for David Pinckney's retirement celebration (Joy's husband). On their return trip from California to Utah, June 19, 1996, Dave and Joy stopped to meet with this interesting man.

Brother and Sister Young said that he made a trip to Hanksville previously and met a descendant of Ephraim. Brother Young related to this descendant the following remarkable incident. He hoped it would be preserved and his legacy of faith passed on. Having passed the story on to a family member he felt he had accomplished his "responsibility" to the Hanks family. But seeing the current newspaper print, Brother Young felt compelled to tell the story one more time.

Thank you, Paul L. Young!

Ephraim Knowlton Hanks, a Man of Faith

An account of his gift of healing
during the time of his residence in Caineville, Utah

As told by Paul L. Young
June 19, 1996

*This is the story that was told to me by Grandfather Ferra L. Young, who was a friend of Ephraim K. Hanks.

Sometime in May 1948, I drove from Helper, Utah to Huntington, Utah and picked up my father Alvin L. Young, and Granddad Ferra Young. We departed Huntington in a 1939 Pontiac, going south on Highway 10 to Salina, Utah. The I-70 freeway had not been built at this time.

As we approached Salina coming down the canyon going west, the road made a 90 degree turn to the north. I believe it is near the last street on the east part of Salina, perhaps 4th or 5th East. As we started into the curve, Granddad said, "Stop." I pulled off the road on the right-hand side. We all got out and Granddad said, "I'm going to tell you this story and don't ever forget it."

You see the house over there with the large barn? A man bred and raised beautiful Morgan horses there. He then turned and pointed and said, "You see that large house and corrals over there? That's where the sick lady lived."

Some years back these neighbors threatened to shoot each other over a fence dispute. Hard ill-bitter feelings existed between them. The wife became ill and the Elders were called to administer to her. She took a further turn for the worst and they called the stake presidency. The presidency also administered to her but the woman moved closer toward death's door. Word in the small community traveled fast and the neighbor was urged by his wife to go over and offer his help. This he did.

He rode into the yard on one of his very good-looking Morgan horses. He started to swing down off his horse when his neighbor came out with his rifle and ordered him off his property. "Wait a minute and listen to what I have to tell you. I understand that your wife is failing. If anyone can save her, it is Ephraim Hanks over at Caineville. If you will have your son (a boy about 12-years-old) over to my house about 5:00 a.m., I will put him on my best horse. I will also give notes of instructions on how to get to Eph's place to fetch him here."

The man agreed. When the boy arrived early that next morning his neighbor had the horse saddled. He gave the boy several notes, all numbered and pinned together in the order the boy would use them. The notes gave directions to the next ranch and words of instruction to the owner. "This boy is from Salina, whose mother is now dying. He is on his way to Caineville to fetch Ephraim Hanks to administer to his mother. Feed the boy and mount him on your best horse, and send him on his way when possible. Have two horses ready to travel when they arrive back to your place tomorrow."

My grandfather Ferra had a ranch on the eastern edge of Loa, Utah. Early the next morning Granddad rode out on the edge of the bluff where he could see if anyone was approaching. Off in the distance he saw the dust of two horses. He returned to the ranch house and called to my grandmother Nancy. "Nancy, they're on their way here now and will arrive in about an hour. Have your stove hot and ready."

They rode into the yard. Eph and the boy dismounted and Ephraim went over to the horse trough. Ephraim Hanks was a stout-built man. My granddad referred to him as pot-gutted. He also had long-flowing white hair that hung below his collar and a full-grown beard. He rode a 28" saddle, measured from the horn to the cantle. Eph plunged his head into the horse trough all the way down. When he came back up he shook it (as my granddad described it like a dog coming out of the ditch.) Eph went over to his saddle, took off a burlap sack, and dried his hair and beard. My granddad told Eph and the boy to go over to the house and tell

Nancy what they wanted for breakfast. Ephraim said to Grandmother, "Nancy, get your stove red-hot on the top and throw my steak on to it. Sear that side, then flip it over to sear the other side, and put it on my plate."

They arrived in Salina very late in the afternoon. As they rode into the yard of the dying woman, her husband came out to meet them. The husband said, "You're too late, she died a couple of hours ago. The Relief Society sisters are preparing the body now."

Eph asked, "Who gave them the order to commission her unto death?" He then repeated the water trough ritual and went into the house. Ephraim asked those sisters where the "dead wife lay." They pointed to her bedroom and he entered.

He then ordered those women to cover the body and leave the room. There were protests but his cold, calm look left no doubt in their minds that they were to depart. My granddad said it was about two hours later when Ephraim came out from the room looking very tired. Closing the door behind him, he quietly told her husband, "Your wife is sitting up in bed and would like to talk to you."

Ephraim left their home and returned the stud horse to the neighbor. My granddad said that he was an outspoken individual, but Eph never was one to stand in front of a miracle he performed seeking the praise of others. Whenever he performed these miracles he just drifted out of sight and returned to his home.

The husband went into the bedroom finding his wife sitting up in bed. On seeing him she exclaimed, "I dozed off and took a nap. Now how long have I slept?" Mr. Johnson replied, "You have been a very sick woman for ten days. We thought we were going to lose you."

Mr. Johnson's wife replied, "I had the most wonderful dream. I dreamed there was a man with long-flowing white hair and a full-flowing white beard sitting here beside my bed, holding my hand. He told me that I would bear and raise seven daughters. The man also said there would be a time in life when they would all stand together and be a great joy to me." My grandfather then said there was a time when each of the seven daughters was either ward or stake relief society presidents concurrently.

While standing beside the car looking at the two farms, my grandfather said that in the Mormon Church men who held the Melchizedek Priesthood were given special blessings. Ephraim Hanks had the blessing to heal the sick and raise the dead. My grandfather then bore his testimony that he knew this to be especially true of Ephraim Hanks.

Recorded and Transcribed by Joy Pinckney, Edited by Sherry Smith

Ephraim K. Hanks, the Lame Walk

Accounts of healing recorded
in
Scouting for the Mormons on the Great Frontier

Like Elijah of old, E. K. Hanks had the gift of healing to a remarkable degree, and pages could be written of the people who have been healed through his administration. Wherever he went, it did not take long for whole communities to know of his worth and to appreciate the power of the priesthood in relieving pain and suffering. There were no doctors in Wayne County in the early days, and the people had to rely on the blessings of the Lord for relief. Elder Hanks would go for miles to administer to the sick and give encouragement.

Isabel Dalton, a Church member and neighbor, had been very sick and under a doctor's care for months in a distant town. Instead of improving, she became weaker each day. The doctor was finally convinced that there was no medical skill which could help her. He told Brother Dalton to take her home so that she could be with her family when the end came.

Following the doctor's advice, the Daltons returned to their home in Mesa, a small settlement a few miles east of Caineville. Two days after they arrived, E. K. Hanks, hearing of this, felt impelled to call on them. In company with Mary Ellen Hanks, his daughter-in-law, he called to find the family and many of Isabel's relatives there, waiting for the end. The impression came to Elder Hanks that she could be healed. Turning to Brother Dalton, he asked if he were willing for the sisters to wash and anoint her body, so that he could seal the anointing. Brother Dalton was eager that this be done. It would take some preparation, so Elder Hanks promised to attend to this ordinance the next morning, on his and Mary Ellen's way back from Blue Valley.

On the morrow, when they arrived, everything was in readiness. Mary Ellen and Sister Foy washed and anointed Sister Dalton's body. Elder Hanks laid his hands upon her head and in sealing the anointing promised her that she would be healed and live many years, enjoying good health, that she would enjoy her family and home, and accomplish a great deal of good in the Church. She was immediately healed and, as her strength returned, was able to perform her household duties, as well as being president of the ward relief society for several years. She had two more children and lived for many years afterwards, a faithful Latter-day Saint.

Shortly after this healing took place, Elder Hanks was told of the sad condition of the two-year-old child of John and Olive Curfew of Caineville. The child was afflicted with sores all over her little body, which caused acute suffering and prevented normal growth. Again Elder Hanks felt inspired that the child should live, and taking Mary Ellen, his son Walter's wife, with him, he visited the Curfew family.

Mary Ellen was asked to anoint the child. The little body was so sore that it was necessary to anoint it with a feather. When Elder Hanks laid his hands upon the head of the child, the pain and irritation ceased, and before he was finished the blessing, the child was deep in the first refreshing sleep she had had for days. She was promised health and strength and a long and useful life, that she would be a mother in Israel and rear sons and daughters to honor her name. The child was healed and the promises have been fulfilled. She is still alive and faithful.

There was a tough cowman named Nuck who lived about six miles from Floral Ranch. He was a leader among the reckless men who lived in that vicinity, and he made no bones about telling everyone that he did not believe in any of the Mormons or in their religion. With strong profanity he would ridicule anyone who believed in prayer, pointing his remarks toward Father Hanks in particular. He said a number of times that if he ever got sick, he would never call "old man Hanks," for he did not think he had as much authority and power with the Lord as his pack mule had.

Nuck had a fine little wife who was as devoted to Nuck as he was to her. She had been born of Mormon parents, but had lived so long on the lonely ranch that she had been influenced by her husband's scorn of religion. She had been heard to say that religion and

prayer were nothing but a matter of hypocrisy and deception.

The day came when, in spite of the assistance of the only available midwife, she had lost her new-born babe and was lying unconscious. The midwife had told Nuck there was no hope for her. Ephraim K. Hanks happened to be riding along the road when Nuck ran out and stopped him. According to Dr. Lucy Woolman, Nuck stopped Elder Hanks and said, "If there is anything in earth or heaven you can do to save my wife, come in." Nuck was sobbing as only a strong man can. At last he was face to face with a problem which he could not solve.

As they entered the house and looked at the dying woman, Nuck was heard to cry unto God-not in profanity as was his usual custom, but in the humblest supplication, saying over and over again, "None but God can save her now."

Elder Hanks turned to the cowman and said, "Will you give God the honor and glory if your wife's life is spared?" Unhesitatingly Nuck declared he would. Elder Hanks took the consecrated oil from his pocket, anointed her, and asked the Lord to heal her that it might be a testimony to all who saw. Elder Hanks then went on his way.

Calling the next day, he found Nuck's wife on the sure road to recovery. No one seems to know whether Nuck ever joined the Church, but he was never heard to poke fun at the Church authorities, and he always gave the Lord the credit for the healing. He became a warm friend of Ephraim K. Hanks.

Under date of February 8, 1930, comes a letter written to Sidney Alvarus Hanks by George W. Carrell, who then living in San Fernando, California. Mr. Carrell writes:

"In regards to your father's charitable work, I don't know of one thing which he did but what was an act of charity or full of charity. I always believed him to be a man who lived in charity and knew him to be a man of God full of the spirit of the Lord. He performed many instant healings. I will relate one that has always been a great testimony to me. It was in June, 1894. My wife was very sick and had been for several days. It seemed that her days upon this earth were numbered. She asked to have Brother Hanks, your father, administer to her but he was supposed to be in Hanksville, fifteen miles away. We were preparing to send for him when, about eleven o'clock the door opened and he walked in, immediately going over to the bed of my sick wife and saying, 'You are sick, aren't you? Just I thought. Where is your oil?'

"She told him where it was, and he walked over and picked up the oil himself. Then he laid his hands upon her head and administered to her. He said, 'Sister Carrell, now you are made well by the power of God. I am very weak and hungry. Please get up and get me something to eat.'

"She arose from her bed and did as he bid her. This was a miraculous healing for it was done instantly. We all knew it was through the inspiration that he was guided to the house and through the spirit of the Lord that she had been healed.

"On another occasion he came after me to go with him as he was called to administer to a little crippled boy. The cords in the boy's legs were drawn backward, making him a total cripple. I anointed him. Your father, sealing the anointing, promised the boy he should get up and walk, also run and jump like a roe. The boy was healed almost immediately and he did run and jump and play. There are many other cases I have seen healed under his hands. I could talk to you all day on this subject and the many other wonderful things your father did."

The following is related by Sidney A. Hanks:

"Georgenia, my sister, was very ill. Word was sent to Father at Grover, fifteen miles away, and he started back immediately through the sleet and snow, riding a small, weak, straw-fed pony. He was barely on his way when the horse became sick and could go no farther. Father bowed his head and invoked the blessings of God on the horse, which soon revived and was able to carry him safely home, where he administered to Georgenia, who became worse. Father called a fast of all the neighbors. Each repented of his sins and promised God to do better. Georgenia was healed and lived many years, afterwards becoming the mother of three more children.

"After Father was made patriarch, it seemed his power of healing was increased. One time Sister Sweet in Caineville was taken very ill. She wanted Johnny Carrell to ride several miles to the Hanks ranch and get Father. John wanted to send his son, but Mrs. Sweet said

she would die if Johnny did not go. John did not belong to the Church at that time and he said to himself, 'It's no use. She'll die anyway.' When Johnny reached the ranch, he found Father's buggy broken and Father was not feeling well. As Carrel was the only blacksmith in Caineville, he took the buggy into Father's shop and mended it. He drove up to the porch in the buggy and Father made the fifteen-mile trip with him. He blessed the good sister and she was healed."

E. K. Hanks was a firm believer in the power of prayer in everyday life, as shown in these incidents from the pen of Sidney Alvarus Hanks:

"It was about the year 1881 when my brother Walter, Father, and I went planting a crop on our new ranch near Pleasant Creek. The three of us had been working on the ranch for about a month when we ran out of meat. One evening Walter, who was about seventeen, took our only gun and the few cartridges we had left into the nearby foothills to get a deer. About sundown Father sent me from the field to the cabin to build a good fire for, as he suggested, 'Walter will soon bring home some meat and we'll have a fine supper.' I had hardly started the fire when three or four shots rang out. Father came into the cabin and filled the kettle full of water, hanging it on the crane. It was soon boiling at a good rate. All we needed was the meat to drop in the kettle, and soon we would be eating.

"About dark, Walter came back to the cabin empty handed. As we all watched the empty kettle, he told of how he had crippled a deer the first shot, after which he was unable to get his nerves settled, and the other shots had been as wild as the deer he was trying to shoot.

"Father's gray-blue eyes snapped as he turned to Walter and said, 'I'm surprised at your throwing away all that ammunition. You surely must have had a strong attack of buck fever.' Then more calmly he went on, 'Did you think to pray before you went after that deer?' Walter spoke the truth when he said he had not. The lesson was well driven and Walter remembered it the rest of his life, as he turned out to be the Nimrod of the family. It seemed that in whichever direction he went hunting, he would always bring back game.

"A few years later, Father and I went up on the mountain hunting deer. We sighted a small herd quite a distance away. I stayed with the horses while father slipped from his saddle and noiselessly worked his way toward the game. He was quite a distance from me when I noticed that he dropped to his knees for a moment. I too bowed my head. Then he arose and, taking aim, brought down the largest buck that I have ever seen in my life. It was necessary for us to throw our burro and tie him securely down while we loaded the deer on top of him. When it was tied on, both of us had to help the burro up with the heavy load."