

BETH SMITH HEDRICK

8 October 2007

I, Beth (Lucy Elizabeth) Smith Hedrick, in October, 2007 at the age of 90 will attempt to write an incident that happened to my maternal grandparents, Franklin and Sarah Elizabeth Holmes Weaver, sometime between 1865 and 1870.

My grandparents were living in Cache Valley, Utah. Grandfather had the responsibility to care for the Mormon Church cattle. One early summer evening, Grandmother told Grandpa they had only enough flour for one or two meals. Grandpa assured her he would go to the mill for flour the next morning. However, before he could go a band of between 300-500* hungry, angry Indians appeared at their door. The chief demanded Grandpa give them a beef. President Brigham Young had always counseled the Church members that it was “better to feed than fight” the Indians.

Grandpa had recently moved the cattle to the summer range up Blacksmith Fork Canyon. Leaving Grandma alone with their four (?) small children, he mounted a horse, and with an ardent prayer, he rode swiftly toward the canyon.

With a few dried apples, some milk, and the meager amount of flour, Grandma began baking biscuits, realizing there was only enough flour for two or three batches of biscuits. She kept praying fervently that the Lord would protect her family, and that she could feed and pacify as many Indians as possible until Grandpa returned with some beef. As each batch of biscuits was baking, she would go to the flour bin, and with her tin cup she pounded each side of the bin. Each time enough flour would fall from the cracks to make another batch.

Grandma needed wood to keep the oven hot. She sent four-year-old Johnny for the wood. As he was returning from one trip from the wood pile, one of the Indian braves tripped him. He ran screaming into the cabin with blood streaming from his nose. Grandma held him close to quiet him. After cleaning his face she marched outside and shook her finger in the face of the chief. She told him no more biscuits until his braves stopped frightening and hurting her children. Because of her strong faith, she was able to continue baking biscuits until almost all the Indians were fed.

It was dusk when Grandpa returned with a butchered and dressed-out beef, the largest he could find in the herd.

After the chief and his people left with the meat, Grandpa and Grandma re-entered the cabin. The whole family knelt around the table and thanked the Lord for His loving care. As Grandpa finished the prayer, Grandma collapsed and spent almost six weeks in bed due to the extreme stress she had experienced. For the rest of their lives, my grandparents faithfully served the Lord in whatever way they could. What an example of the power of prayer.

- Number of Indians probably more like 100; just seemed to them 300-500.

- I feel confident Mother said it was Uncle Johnny carrying the wood, but I am not positive. Also I wondered if there were four children present. The four oldest children were Franklin, born 1857, Mariette (Mettie) born 1860, Merinda (Rinnie), born 1864 and Jonathan (Johnny) born 1867.
- If it was Johnny and not Franklin this would have put the date about 1871 or 1872.

THE MORMON BATTALION

I, Beth Smith Hedrick, am a direct descendant of two members of the Mormon Battalion: Jonathan Harriman Holmes, my maternal great-grandfather and Franklin Weaver, my maternal grandfather. Franklin Weaver's brother, Miles Weaver, was also a member.

The Mormon Battalion was a company of five hundred volunteers. At the time, they made the longest march in military history, 1500 miles, according to my mother, Phebe May Weaver Smith.

My mother told me of one incident her mother had told her:

“Miles Weaver became very ill during one day’s march and was forced to fall by the wayside. When the company made bivouac that evening, my grandfather, Franklin Weaver, took a short rest, took a canteen of water, some hard tack (similar to hard bread crust, I think) and started back along that day’s route. It was midnight before Franklin found him. After giving Miles the hard tack and some water, and after about an hour’s rest, Franklin put Miles on his shoulders and started back. It was daylight when they reached their company preparing to continue the march.”

Franklin Weaver later became Jonathan Holmes’ son-in-law, after marrying Holmes’ oldest daughter, Sarah Elizabeth on May 9, 1856.

Note:

May 1, 2008

I am happy to send you this copy of our (my brother is Frank Smith of Salt Lake City) grandfather Franklin Weaver’s experience while serving in the Mormon Battalion. This is as near the way our mother told it to me (I will be 91 this fall but I feel this is quite accurate) as I recall. Mother also told me the soldiers had only raw wolf meat to eat at one time. Did you ever hear of an incident when Grandma Weaver suffered with “lockjaw” and Grandfather revived her? I do not remember too much [about that incident], but it was an interesting story. The book you had published about Grandfather is wonderful. I wish you much success in your revised (?) edition.

Sincerely,
Beth Smith Hedrick