

JOSEPH ELWOOD HALL

My grandfather, Joseph Elwood Hall and grandmother, Grace Matley were divorced when my father, Joseph Franklin Hall was just four years old. My father was a grown man with four children before he ever saw his father again.

After daddy and his father got to know each other again I remember him coming to Payson a few times but I know it was hard for both him and my father because they had been apart for so many years. My father was a quiet shy man and I think grandpa was too. We moved to Pioche, Nevada and we did not see him again for a few years.

After we came back to Payson and later on when we moved to Salt lake we saw him more often but still not as often as I would have liked.

Grandpa Hall died four years before my father. My sisters and I had so few memories and really did not know him. I have always felt cheated, that I didn't know the grandfather that I was sure I could have loved.

One day I was talking to our cousin, Allan Hall, and told him how I felt. He knew grandpa well because his father was grandpa's younger brother. He told me he would write down some of the things he remembered. Allan got his brothers Clifton and Hilton and sisters Barbara and Phyllis to also write their memories. What a thrill it was for us to read

them even though it also made Janice and I sad as we did so.

Thank you Barbara, Clifton, Hilton, Phyllis and Allan you gave us a look at the grandfather we didn't know.

From Barbara:

The first thing I thought about Uncle Elwood was watch he got from the railroad. He was so proud that it always kept accurate time. I also remember he had a favorite kitchen chair. He rode a bicycle down to the church farm in the west fields where he did a lot of chores like feeding and taking care of animals and chickens, etc. I think he was there quite a few years.

I remember he used to take clay from our lot over to Ironton to seal the blast furnaces. I remember riding on the wagon with him while he drove the horses. We went on the dirt road along the mountain and then crossed the highway. I think out by the curve.

From Hilton:

Hilton's first memory of Uncle Elwood was when he fixed Hilton's stick horse. Hilton made a stick horse with a broom handle. The head was an old sock stuffed with rags and button eyes. The head dropped down. He was riding it one day at Aunt Elner's and Uncle Elwood told him to let him fix it, so when he put it back on the broomstick, the head no longer dropped.

1947 was the Centennial celebration of the pioneers arrival in Utah. July 24th, Pioneer Day,

Uncle Elwood took Hilton with him to Salt Lake. They went by bus. They stayed in a hotel, the first time Hilton stayed in one. Uncle Elwood left Hilton in the hotel room and told him not to leave the room. He had nothing to do while Uncle Elwood was gone except look out the window. I guess, to a thirteen year old it seemed like Uncle Elwood was gone for ages. Uncle Elwood took Hilton to eat a Chinese restaurant. When they went in the Chinese said, "Mr. Hall, Mr. Hall" and found them a good place to sit and gave them a free meal. They remembered Uncle Elwood from the time they worked with him at the Bingham mines. They ate soup first. Hilton was eating his slowly as it was hot and Uncle Elwood had finished his. He told Hilton that he would starve in a boarding house. He told Hilton to eat soup from edges where it's cooler. Uncle Elwood and Hilton went to the "Days of 47" rodeo. It was especially great rodeo because of the Centennial, Gene Autry was a guest star. After the rodeo, they slept at the hotel and went home by bus the next day.

Uncle Elwood was a level foreman at the Bingham Copper Mine. At one time Turkey and Greece were at war. There were a lot of Greeks and Turks working at the mine. They started their own war there. The Turks and Greeks were fighting and the Chinese hid Uncle Elwood with them so he wouldn't get hurt.

Elwood Hall

... Clifton Hall, nephew

I don't remember when Uncle Elwood did not live at home. Home was what my father and I called his mother's home in Springville. Uncle Elwood must have returned to live there in the early or middle 1930's. He returned after being crippled in a blasting accident and no longer able to work. I have no dates in mind but many recollections that I would like to share. All of the events were more than fifty years ago and have been colored by time and my life experiences.

Elwood left home to work when he was quite young. My father, born in 1898, did not remember him being at home. By middle age he had become a black powder expert. This was the explosive of choice in the days that he worked construction. When a difficult job was to be done, Elwood Hall was the first choice to do it. He was caught in two explosions and the last one finished his career.

Blasting with black powder was risky. First holes were bored into the rock to receive the powder. The holes were filled with powder and then fuses were run from the holes to the point where they would be lit. This was far enough away to be a safe vantage point. Quite often the fuse was lit and no explosion followed. The fuse might not burn all the way to the powder hole or the powder might not ignite or the powder might smolder awhile before it blew. Regardless of the cause, the one who set the charges had to go and investigate.

His last blast was set to blow down the side of a mountain. It didn't blow. After a prudent amount of time, Elwood started up the mountain. He looked up at the mountain and a line was drawn across where he planned for the mountain to blow. A voice said to him, "do not go up the mountain". He stopped and waited awhile and then felt that he could wait no longer. As he climbed the mountain he heard the powder go off. He looked up and the mountain was splitting off exactly where the line had been shown to him. The rock caught him and filled his eyes with splinters, broke his right leg in five places and I know not what else.

The accident occurred in Southern Utah and he had to be carried by wagon to Price. There he was put on the train for Salt Lake City. He was in the hospital for a year and forever after walked with a limp. His eyesight was never again perfect but he could read. For some years he would go back to Dr. Eyerley to have splinters removed as they worked their way to the surface.

When Elwood left the hospital he was offered a choice of a pension or a lump sum payment. He chose the lump sum, gave it to his wife and went home to live.

Elwood was like no one that I ever knew. The Hall's were a hard and tough bunch. Many of that generation were hardened by the rough physical labor required to wrest a living from the desert. Elwood had driven a team of horses as a contractor in mining and road building. He knew how to talk to the horses to get their attention and could talk to a man the same way if needed. No man would stand up to Elwood Hall although he was only average size physically.

Like many tough hard men he gave respect to every woman. He used the best of language in front of women and was most polite. There were a few exceptions. His sister Elner was a most difficult person to live with and was a world class miser. I only heard him complain of Elner just once. He told me that he had bought the two best steaks in the Safeway and the damned woman had boiled them in a pot of water.

My first memories of my uncle were not fond ones. He was a bitter and an angry man. Now as I look back I can see some of his reasons to be angry. He was a man without means and not capable of holding a job of the type that he spent his life on. His brothers Cliff and Theron gave him what few jobs they could that paid wages. He worked on the farm to pay for his keep. He drove the team to plow, plant and harvest hay and grain. His presence was a boon to Uncle Cliff as he was suffering from progressively worse heart disease. He died in 1945.

The first fond memory came from an event when I was probably about eight years old. When the willows started growing in the spring we would cut them to ride and pretend that they were horses. Uncle Elwood saw me riding up to the house and admired my horse. He said that ears would really make it better. A pair of old socks, a wire frame that he made and my horse was transformed from a nag to a real steed. That was the beginning of a friendship.

The Hall uncles did not attend church. As a child I never questioned why Elwood, Owen and Cliff were not active. I assumed that they had never been baptized. My father was baptized when he was 29. After Uncle Cliff died I started paying more attention. Uncle Elwood played solitaire in the kitchen every Sunday morning. That was his activity when his eyes were tired from reading. I decided to do something about Uncle Elwood's inactivity.

I stopped at home on Sunday morning and asked Uncle Elwood to go to Priesthood meeting with me. He had on his overalls and said a polite "no". The next Sunday I stopped again and the result was the same. The third Sunday I stopped again and he sat at the table playing solitaire in a suit with a white shirt and a tie on. He went with me and was active the rest of his life. To my great surprise he was an Elder and before too long was ordained a High Priest.

Previous to the return of Uncle Elwood to church I had talked to the manager of our stake farm about a job for Uncle Elwood. Before long Uncle Elwood had a job. It paid a small amount of cash and also provided food, clothing and other needs of his and his sister Elner. The church farm was a haven for him. He was given a room in one of the buildings and installed a cot to lie on and a radio. He was an avid baseball fan and he would rest and listen to the ball games. The radio at home could only be turned on for the 7:00 AM and the 7:00 PM news. During these years there was a minimum amount that must be paid for electricity annually. Aunt Elner complained bitterly at having to pay five dollars a year when she used less. She did not allow lights to be on after a certain hour and you had to sit in the dark or go to bed.

Uncle Elwood was a very independent man and did not want to depend on someone to take him to work. He asked me to find a ladies bike that could be fixed up for a reasonable price. I found one and overhauled and painted it. He needed a ladies bike as his leg was too stiff to mount a mans bike. For some years he rode the bike to and from the stake farm.

Why did I make the moves to bring Uncle Elwood back to the church? I was too young to have thought it out so it had to be the working of the Spirit. There is no doubt in my heart that he finished his life in harmony with his God.

For some years when I was a teenager I cut Uncle Elwood's hair. When Aunt Elner was on a mission I shaved him once a week. He was quite particular about how he looked. He had trouble seeing well enough to shave. It never occurred to us that he could wear his glasses to shave. Later on he had trouble holding the razor. The tendons in his hands parted from the fingers so that he could not move all of the fingers. He had the doctor attach all of the fingers to the one tendon that held. The fingers all opened and closed together.

As my family reads this I am sure that they will offer a few corrections to this paper. I have written it to the best of my memory. I trust that that you see some of the essence of the man even if some details are hazy. He was a man that loved his family although he could not articulate it. A hard man that became tender as he returned to the church and made his peace with God. The first man that I ever saw weep as he was touched by the spirit.

From Phyllis:

I don't know when Uncle Elwood came to live with Aunt Elner. I don't really have many memories of him. When we went to Aunt Elner's, he was there. I don't remember him talking to us. I remember him scraping the clay into the wagon and then taking it to Ironton. I also remember riding the empty wagon over the hill to the barn. I think as a child, I was a little afraid of him. After I graduated from BYU I was away most of the time. I was in Samoa when he died.

From Allan:

I have such fond memories of him. He was so much older than my father, that in a way, he was more like a grandfather to me. While going to the Y, I would stop after classes and visit with him. I did this for a number of years. I learned to love him and I'm looking forward to seeing him again. I spent many nights with him before he died.

After Clifton encouraged him to go to church, he stayed active and faithful the rest of his life. He often went to the Temple. We were in the Manti District and so he would go through 2-3 sessions. The high priests supported him and would help with travel and meal expenses. I still have some of his temple clothes. For several years I went ward teaching with him. I enjoyed it, except I gave the lessons, as they were older families and after the lesson, they would talk alot about early days in Springville.

He loved sports. He had a cot at the welfare farm and he would rest each afternoon and listen to the Mutual Game of the Day. He got me interested in baseball and I'd listen at home. I

remember he went to Salt Lake to watch the M-Men basketball Tourment. This was when it was Church wide. He really enjoyed going and talked about it for sometime.

He was a hard worker all his life. Aunt Elnor had a coal stove and he would saw wood up by hand for the fire. I have his buck saw that he used.

He grew up in pioneer times and it was fun to hear him talk about early Springville. He could remember as a little boy, his grandfather, Edward Hall.

He was always thin. He could eat and eat and never put on weight. He had arthritis in his back and his leg bothered him (and his eyes) from the explosion when he was hurt.

The only time I can remember him getting really angry (except at the animals) was one time at Christmas. Aunt Ethel Hall Houtz and her son had given him a pair of argyle socks. He wanted to give them to me but Aunt Elnor had put them away. He asked her several times and she wouldn't do it. He finally said "Sister, get those socks or I'll go in your room and tear it apart until I find them." She marched right in and got them.

I remember riding in the wagon and team taking clay to the Ironton plant. We often rode after he got back but this time he took me the whole way.