

Autobiography of Hannah Adelia Bunker Crosby

I, Hannah A. Crosby, was born the 25th of April, 1853, at Ogden, Weber County, Utah, while my father was filling a mission in Europe, and was over four years old when he returned, so that I didn't know him, and at first refused to acknowledge him. I remember our farm, two and one-half miles from Ogden, on what is to this day called Bunker Creek, where I used to sit under a service berry bush to eat my bread and milk with berries. Also, I gathered clam shells on the sparkling brook, which was a thing of interest to me as a small girl. In 1861, father was called to Dixie. I remember the days of preparation we had before leaving. Mother and my sisters, Emily and Abigail, spent days making crackers. They mixed them and pounded them with a wooden mallet. They dried corn, squash, berries, and tomatoes. It was as if we were going into a wilderness expecting to starve. When it was time to go, a big double bedded government wagon was brought around to the front of the house. It had a bed in each end with a stove in the middle and a chair for Mother. It had a ladder down from the door in the center, and the kiddies climbed in and out while the wagon was going to walk a while, or climbed in to get crackers and then got out and walked a while. There were three yoke of oxen. All the relatives and friends mourned and carried on and expected never to see each other again, as though we were going into the wilderness never to return. At the time I was eight years old. Along with the wagon was a wagon drawn by horses, driven by girls and the hired boy. Father drove the government wagon. Brother Eddie, 14, took charge of the cattle and small herd of sheep. Grandmother Abbott, Mother's mother, accompanied us. Many interesting things transpired on the journey. When we reached Fillmore, and found the King and Warner family

with whom Father and Mother lived when they were married, we laid over three days to enjoy their hospitality, wash, bake and make preparations for continuing our journey.

After renewing our journey, we camped a few nights in deep snow where the men had to shovel snow for a camp ground and cut trees for a shelter. The next incident of note that I remember was the death of Hestor McQuarries's girl Agnes, who was found dead in the morning when we camped in Wild Oat Canyon, just before reaching Beaver, and a runner was sent on to Beaver to dig a grave and make preparations for funeral. She was buried at Beaver. We landed in Toquerville about the last of November, found a summer clime, cotton still in the pod on the bushes, Indians gathering beans, and seeds of all kinds. They wore coats made of rabbit skins when anything at all. There was quite a little settlement, some of the families I remember were: Bishop Willis, Stapley, Dodges, Flyters, Walkers, Halls, Smiths, Shakespears, Wadsworths, Nebekers, Steeles, Battys, Duffins, Ensigns, Mullins, etc.

Father and my brother Edward worked hard to dig and make a large cellar and built one adobe room during the winter. Father got the use of a small log room to put Mother in, where she was confined on the 12th of December, where sister Cynthia Celestia was born. In the spring Father put in a crop of corn, cotton, and sugar cane. I, with my older sister, assisted by planting and dropping the seed in hills made with a hoe. Many a day I walked by my Father and dropped three seeds in a hill, one seed each of corn, cotton, and sugar cane. When the plants were a few inches high, we had to go all over and pull up all but the thriftiest stocks of cotton, two of corn, three or four of sugar cane, and pull all the suckers off. In the meantime, we played Jack's Tamp over the hills, hunted bottle stoppers and wild pepper grass, picked flowers, and went swimming.

Summer soon went. Then for picking cotton and striping cane. Father put a box on two front wheels of a wagon with a tongue, put a yoke of oxen in and my brother Edward took all us girls into the field about three miles away to pick cotton. We took our lunch with us and we had to cross a deep wash on the way, and he would let us all get out at the bottom to walk up—too hard on the oxen to pull us, so we had to run to catch him. sister Mary did not enjoy the joke and walked home. The oxen had to pull us uphill as well as down after that. I remember picking many quarts of ground berries which we found growing wild, scattered through the fields, for preserves that fall. Mother made the preserves out of the cane juice when only partly done.

In the late fall, Father was called to Santa Clara to preside as Bishop. We continued to raise cotton and pick it. Sometimes the sun was very oppressive, and how we did sweat with our bonnets on. We soon made cotton gins that separated the seed from the cotton, but still continued to card and spin it until Eph Hanks bought cotton warp and traded to us for the lint put up in bales like hay. Still we continued to spin the wool rolls, dye and weave it. We would gather dock root to color it. We also raised madder to color red, colored blue with indigo and yellow with coperas, scharparelli, and peach leaves for green.

The cotton gin was made like a clothes wringer with rollers and about the size of 5" pipe 3" long, run with a horse. The seed was greenish color, all fuzzy and about the size of navy beans. Good feed for cows, though, and the cream made very white butter. Cotton was put up in bales like hay, 100 pounds to the bale.

I liked to spin wool yarn and had a stint—three ten knotted skeins. That done, the rest of the day I could visit, knit or crochet, as I liked. My preference was fancy work. When the first Relief Society was organized, we girls all joined and learned to make different kinds of braid and straw trimming which was very nice.

When i was but eleven years old, Mother boiled over 600 gallons of molasses. While she was doing that, I had to take charge of my baby brother, Silas, taking him to her only for his meals. While tending him, I carded and spun cotton and crocheted tidies out of yarn, also knitted stockings. We would play “Button, Button”, “Paint the Plow”, “Blind Man’s Bluff”, “Steal Sticks”, etc. We would serve molasses candy and popcorn we raised ourselves.

I spent my girlhood days at Santa Clara, Washington County, three miles from St. George, Utah. Going to conference, shopping, etc., in Saint George. This is where I met my husband. When nineteen years of age, I was married to Samuel Obed Crosby. We made the trip from Santa Clara to Salt Lake by team; taking one week and was married in the Endowment House June 10, 1872, by Daniel H. Wells. My husband’s mother chaperoned us. My husband and his brother, Jesse, had been at Panguitch and put up a log house on my husband’s lot. We went by way of Panguitch and left the things we later expected to use in our housekeeping. We made our home in Panguitch for seven years, where three of our children were born. In 1879, we went to Bunkerville to live in the United Order.

Panguitch was a new country, the seasons were short, our crops frosted year after year. The Indians had once broken the town up, but gave us very little trouble. It was a good sheep and cattle country, and through experience we learned better how to handle the climate, and we, with others, succeeded very well financially. Then we went to Bunkerville where we had some more hard pioneering life. We settled on the treacherous Virgin River that gave us no end of trouble, washing out our dams, filling up our ditches, and washing away the land. To cross it, the teams must rest before starting across, then by whipping across quickly to prevent going down in the quicksand. This treacherous stream we crossed 27 times in going twenty miles. The summers were exceedingly hot and our willow shanties gave very little protection against the heat. Later on, we built very comfortable adobe

homes. In spite of all the adversities, the people accomplished wonders in making farms and building homes, and were very successful financially while they worked in the United Order. As soon as the men got to raising grain, we women would take our babies and go out and glean barley, which we sold to travelers, and wheat which we stored for food. The Relief Society built an adobe granary in which we stored the wheat. My mother was president of the Relief society and I was her counselor. In nine years stay in Bunkerville, we had four children born to us, two of which we left buried there. In 1888, the United Order having been dissolved, we went back to Panguitch. We bought a large home and went into the mercantile business. In 1894, my husband went on a mission to Europe and left me with a family of six children, the oldest boy fourteen,¹ and all the business to take care of.

While my husband was away on his mission, I was very ill, and the doctor gave me up, but I never lost faith and requested my brother-in-law to see that no one sent for my husband. I felt that if he stuck to his post, the Lord would take care of me, which He did.

In 1903 my husband died, leaving me with hotel and store to look after. We worried along for four years. Then my eldest son, John, was called on a mission to the Southern States. the burden then fell so heavy on me, I broke down in health and was taken from the hotel to my sister's home,² where my life was again despaired of, but with her tender care and the blessings of the Lord, I was restored again to health. I again refused to have my son called from his labors until his work was done. Being broken down in health and weighted down with responsibility, I sold the hotel and moved onto a sagebrush farm. This is where the hardest part of

¹ This would have been John Silas Crosby.

² Emily

my married life began. We were ten years, the boys and I, clearing up the farm. I had a strong desire to give my children an education. there being no high school in Panguitch, and my son John married after he returned from his mission, I took the younger children and put them at school at Beaver, leaving John with the farm. We took in boarders, etc. to pay our way for three years. I went back to Panguitch in 1911.

I became a member of the Relief Society in Santa Clara at the age of fifteen, and was actively engaged in this and other Church work wherever I made my home, having served as teacher, secretary, councilor, committee member, ward president, stake board member and stake board president, and also served at various times in other organizations. I was a subscriber of the Women's Exponent from its organization to the last and the Relief Society magazine from its publication in 1915, and feel every mother should read these magazines.

“Aunt Dee”

by George H. Crosby, Jr.

This piece is written hurriedly from Kemmerer, Wyoming the news of Aunt Dee's passing from this life to the better life to which she has gone, coming to hand at Cokeville, Wyoming when I got the papers for three days, after being kept at Afton ten days with snow blocked roads. This is written partly as a nephew, partly as the president of the Jesse Wentworth Crosby Family association and partly to fulfill a promise I made to my father, George H. Crosby, My Aunt Elida Crosby Snow and my Aunt Lena Mathis Crosby who asked me, with the acquiescence of Uncle Jesse W. Crosby, Jr. and Aunt Dee to take lead in family matters after the older generation was gone. I am not doing all that I should, and this is written in greater haste than should be.

Jesse Wentworth Crosby and his wife Hannah Baldwin Crosby came to Utah September, 1847, bringing with them as a babe in arms my father, George H. Crosby. They had seven children grow to maturity and all of them had families so that at the last family census there were 446 of the family. The seven children were George H., Jesse W. Jr., Samuel O., Aunt Dee's husband, Elida Crosby Snow, Amelia Crosby Frost (Aunt Meany), Joseph and Joshua. Uncle Sam went to St. George with the family when he was eleven and there met and married Hannah Adelia Bunker, who has passed into Crosby family history by the loved name of "Aunt Dee." They were married in 1872, the year I was born, and went right to Panguitch to make their home going to found Bunkerville in 1879, as I remember, and returning to Panguitch in 1888, which has been her home the rest of life (45 years). Of the sixty years since that wedding day, twenty-nine of them have been in a widowhood—thirty-one as a wife. It hardly seems possible that the married life was so short, and the widowhood so long, but figures do not lie.

One of the most interesting things in the life of Aunt Dee and of the family history is the coincidence that of the seven family marriages the husband died first—Uncle Joe in 1896, leaving Aunt Maude with an unraised family (and she lived in Panguitch for a while) and she is the only one that ever remarried; Uncle Erastus Snow in 1900 leaving Aunt Elida to 19 years of widowhood; Uncle Allen Frost in 1902 to be followed to the Great Unknown by his wife three years later; Uncle Sam the next year, 1903, leaving Aunt Dee to 29 years of life alone; Uncle Joshua six years after, 1909, leaving Aunt Lena with eleven unmarried children and to 23 years of life without her life's companion, and then in 1915 Uncle Jesse, leaving Aunt Frances to travel 17 years without his protecting arm and next year, in 1916 George H., my father leaving my mother to live these sixteen lonely years in the old Eager, Arizona home with the husband of her girlhood passed on before. Of the

five widows of the Crosby boys, Aunt Dee is the first to go; she having outlived the last of the husbands nearly sixteen years.

How well I remember her during Uncle Sam's mission to England in 1894, 1895 and 1896, with a growing family that often taxed her executive ability and ingenuity to keep them on the right road of life, a goodly-sized farm and a business all to look after. And how well she did it. Uncle's business was never in better shape than when he came home, tho it was right during the days of the "hungry nineties" and those hard times. How during those struggles I admired the splendid piece of Mormon womanhood, Hannah Adelia Bunker Crosby. Her body was frail, but her wonderful will power, her unshakeable faith in Mormonism and her far-seeing mind made up for it.

If I live fifty lives I shall never forget their meeting on his return. It was in my home at Richfield. I met Uncle at the train alone, and at my home I introduced my wife with "this is my wife, Uncle Sam" when Aunt Dee whom he supposed was in Panguitch, stepped to the door with "An this is your wife." Such happiness as I saw then, and the two days they did business and stayed at our home. The Crosby men had wonderful ability to select wonderful wives, but none of them beat Samuel O. when he chose, courted and won the dear one who has just left us.

Few nephews by marriage are so well acquainted with Aunts as George H. Jr. and Aunt Dee. Six years she read my newspapers; she got my belongings ready and sent me off to college, making much of my clothing; in four matters I have been her attorney; she tended me often in my babyhood; for ten days in 1895 I took care of her store and implement business, and she was there and voted for me when I was made president of the Jesse Wentworth Crosby Family association; tho somewhat desultory we have corresponded with each other for twenty-nine years. With this life finished, let me say this—It has been a wonderful life. In this world of ours the Mormon mother who sends her husband and sons on missions, who

usually has from one to four church positions, with her husband filling half a dozen others, to fill, who struggles to help pay the family tithing, who lives this life fully believing—almost knowing—that her life companion is hers in the hereafter, and that her children will be known to her and belong to her in another sphere; the pioneer mother who builds the towns and shapes the new community life that others are to share and enjoy when she is with them no more; the widow who alone trods the floors of the old home where those who have gone to found other houses and those who sleep in silent graves—children, husband, father, friends, loved ones—all once trod, and through stays sweet and loving and helpful and hopeful; the pioneer neighbor who never found the weather so cold, the mud so deep, the wind so strong, the snow so drifted nor the distance so great but what she was there to alleviate suffering, to care for the new born and to close the eyes of the departed in death—what people they were and are. They belong to the Old West of the Mormons and to them only. Such a woman was Aunt Dee, Hannah Adelia Bunker Crosby.³

It is knowledge with me, for reasons I shall not stop to give, that those who have gone before care for and meet the dear ones who come after, and I know that my Uncle Samuel O. Crosby, his son, Obed, that cousin I so loved, dear little Kennie and Rowell, who was taken away in the prime of his robust and splendid manhood have awaited her on the other side, with her splendid and faithful father and mother, brothers and sisters all. Let that happy reunion over there alleviate the sorrow of this passing.

³ Here the original typescript reads: Hannah Elida Crosby Bunker. I have corrected the text.

Hannah Adelia Bunker Crosby: Patriarchal Blessing⁴

A blessing by Daniel Tyler, Patriarch, upon the head of Hannah Adelia Crosby, Daughter of Edward and Emily Abbott Bunker, born Ogden, Weber County, Utah Territory, April 21st 1853.

Sister Hannah Adelia, I lay my hands upon thy head and in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, seal upon thee a father's blessing. Thou art of the blood of Ephrim, and if faithful shalt receive all the blessings of the house of Joseph. Thou shalt see Zion redeemed and her waste places built up never more to be thrown down. Thou shalt see the Zion of Enoch restored from whence it was taken. Thou shalt be comforted with dreams and visions, and have every righteous desire of thy heart. Thy posterity shall be as innumerable as the stars of heaven; not one of them shall be lost. Thou shalt be crowned a queen and a priestess and in connection with thy companion be a ruler in the house of Joseph forever. Thou shalt live until thou art satisfied with life, and thy sleep in the earth shall be but short. Thy children and thy children's children shall rise up and call thee blessed. Thou shalt do a great work in the redemption of thy fathers house, and have all the keys, powers, and blessings that were ever confirmed upon thy sex. Thy humility and wisdom shall be a proverb in Israel. Thy days shall be many upon the earth and it shall be thy delight to do good in the house hold of faith. It shall be they gift to comfort those who mourn. Thou shalt have the gift of healing in thy family and among thy

⁴ Photocopy of original. Historical Department, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Original spelling has been retained, but the blessing has been punctuated for clarity.

sisters. Thou shalt have an abundance of the good things of this world and the good will of Him that was in the burning bush. Nothing that will be for thy good shall be withheld from thee. Thou shalt enter into thy exaltation to be crowned with glory, immortality, and eternal lives. All of thy former blessings shall be in full force from henceforth. If thou wilt seek it with all thine heart thou shalt be changed and not sleep in the dust. I seal thou up unto eternal live in the name of Jesus. Amen.

written by John S. Smith

Alice M. T. Tanner
Scribe