

## THIRTEEN

### Surviving the Influenza of 1918-1919

Frank finally disposed of our holdings in Jackson and had sold most of the horses. Papa had sold the cow. In the fall of 1918, we packed up our few belongings and moved back to our homestead on Cottonwood.

We had no more than got settled when the Spanish flu struck with a vengeance. One day we were reading of the epidemic back East and the next day there was neighbors down with the dread disease. It seemed like the whole country would go down at once. My family and I were among the first to take to our beds, along with the Hereford family who were my brother's in-laws. Our nearest doctor was at Big Piney and he was in such demand closer to home that it was impossible to get him to come. He was either Dr. McDiell or Dr. Brian, I don't know which. It was early in November and we only had wood burning stoves. Frank and I were too sick to bother with fires. For a few days John, my brother, came from the Munn place to milk our cow and warm the house for us. The two little girls were too sick to leave their beds. I tried to keep them covered and warm. Soon John came down with the flu, also. Our dear neighbor boy Dan Budd\* came to see how we were, so I asked him to go for Mrs. Guthrie, an old friend of the family. Upon arriving at the Guthrie ranch he found she had four or five sick neighbors in her home caring for them. My dear

friend, Marie, Mrs. Guthrie's daughter, came with Dan to help us. I remember well when she came in, she said, "Hattie, I will stay until I come down with the flu, then I will have to go home to Mom. I know I would die if I didn't."

That is just what she did. She had a high fever when she left, but she had her dad's old horse hide coat along and bundled up well in the buggy. Dan took her back home, turned the calf out with the cow, then went to Big Piney to see how his family was.

Well the Dear Lord provides for we poor creatures it seems. About the next day my dad rode in from Hoback Basin. The strange thing about that certain flu bug, it seemed not to afflict the older people. In our community a great number of the older ones escaped.



Lot Haley on his horse Tim, in the Hoback Basin.

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\* Several Dan Budds lived in the Big Piney area at this time. Hattie may be referring to the son of Charles Phillip Budd. He was born in 1901, so would have been a teenager at the time. This Dan was the father of Dan Budd who lives on the ranch outside Big Piney today. Sources: Nancy Budd Espenscheid, Bill Budd.



Six members of the Hereford family who succumbed to the Spanish flu in 1918 are buried in the Cottonwood Cemetery.

I insisted that Papa didn't stay with us as we still had only part of our house finished and I was afraid he would catch the flu in such close quarters, but he came every day and built fires and tried to feed us. Vivian, our oldest, then three and a half years old, could drink a little milk. The rest of us were too sick for food for a few days after Papa came. Then we all began to mend. Frank was the sickest, but slowly recovered.

The Hereford family didn't fare so well. John's wife, Inez, and a sister Nellie and three brothers all lay dead at once, there at the Munn place.\*

Frank's sister, Elsie, took John and Inez's baby boy, Ermon, to care for, when his mother took sick. After we recovered somewhat, John brought Ermon to us to care for. He was just a year old, six months younger than our June. We had him until the following May when his Aunt Lizzie and Eudjere Hickey begged to have him as they had lost their little one. A baby girl, named Effie. †

These folks, victims of the Spanish Flu, are all buried in our Cottonwood Graveyard. Ermon's grandmother, Sara Hereford, who died later, is also buried there.

Jobs were scarce. The only employment

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\* From the *Big Piney Examiner* of November 7, 1918: "Reports are current to the effect that Mrs. John [Inez] Haley of Halfway passed away at her home yesterday of influenza. She is a daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Geo. Hereford of that place and besides her husband and one young child is survived by the parents and several brothers and sisters, one brother, Robert Hereford, being in France. A casket was sent up from here—but we are unable to get word from there as to when the funeral will take place. The bereaved husband and relatives have the sympathy of this community."

† From the *Big Piney Examiner* of March 11, 1915: "In Memoriam: Ethel, infant daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Engerald [sic] Hickey, passed away Monday morning, February 22. The baby had been suffering for some time with a bad cold, and then was taken seriously ill with pneumonia, and the end soon came. She was six weeks old. The funeral was held at the Frank Johnson home ..."



**Ermon Haley, son of John Haley, lost his mother Inez Hereford Haley to the Spanish flu pandemic. He was later adopted by Eudjere and Lizzie Hickey, whose baby daughter had succumbed to pneumonia in 1915. Note the bison horn in the stack of antlers, just to Ermon's left.**



**Eudjere and Lizzie Hickey. Lizzie was Inez Hereford Haley's sister.**



**Ermon, John Haley and Ermon's wife Lois Haley in the late 1930s or early 1940s.**



Two Wyoming service men home after World War I: Jim Deloney (standing) with Clure Smith (seated), about 1919. In the early 1950s, Clure Smith would manage the Little Jenny Ranch in Hoback Basin.



June and Vivian, 1919.

was for the ranchers and then usually just in haying. People seemed to wander around seeking employment.

The boys were coming home from World War One with few prospects of steady jobs. Time went on, and on November 7, 1919 our youngest daughter, Frankie, was born in our little log cabin home, so humble yet so adequate for our needs.

Frank's kid brother Jack (John Newton) was trapping muskrats on our place at the time so when I became sick, my sister-in-law, Maud, sent Jack for a neighbor lady, Birdie Booker, and she in turn phoned to Big Piney for the doctor and sent Jack on to bring his sister, Elsie.

The doctor got lost and went to Dave Johnson's place down on the Green River and didn't arrive until the day after Frankie was born. Poor man, the roads were only wagon roads covered with snow and he finally got to a neighbor's place about a mile from our place but across about a quarter of a mile of bogs and springs. He walked to our place, or I should say, waded, only to find that everything was alright, myself and a tiny baby girl.

My dad was there. He had ridden in on his old claybank saddle horse named Clay. So Frank asked Papa if the doctor might ride Clay back to his car as my horse, Billy Bothersome, wasn't very dependable. The doctor started to

get on and threw his old black surgical bag over the horse's neck. Old Clay just simply leaped out from under him and really upended him. Well Frank got off his horse and held old Clay while the doctor mounted. Everyone in the house was watching and were simply hysterical, watching the show. Frank went with the doctor to bring Clay back and when they got partly through the bog the doctor pulled old Clay over right into a spring. The springs in our field were very deep, so there the doctor was, wet to his waist. Frank said the doctor looked at him and said in such a sad despondent voice, "Well what do you suppose he will do next?"

This poor man only charged us for a house call and mileage for his car. How different now when one cannot get a doctor to even make a house call.

The winter of 1919 and 1920 was long and hard. Toward spring Rob Hereford, Frank's brother-in-law, volunteered to take the six work horses and go freighting from Opal. He said he probably wouldn't make any money but would at least feed the horses. Frank and Rob had worked these horses hard all the early part of the winter, hauling coal to Daniel. It snowed and blowed almost incessantly. They each drove four head of horses, hitched to big bob-sleds. They had bells on the lead horses. This was mostly so if the sleigh behind should slip off the road the one in lead would know at once and stop to help. Also there were very few places on-coming teams could pass. They used the tie camp road part of the way and there was considerable traffic on it. The men came from the mine as far as our place in one day. Usually they were late getting in. Maud, Frank's sister, and I would go outside and listen for the bells. How far the sound carried. Often it would be clear and cold at home while up nearer the mountains it would be snowing and drifting. When it was clear and cold we could hear them coming for a mile or two. Rob had a Swiss bell that he



Cottonwood neighbors and Army recruits Harry Smith (standing) and John Haley (seated), about 1923. John joined the U. S. Army a few years after the end of World War I. He later said that the only medal he ever received was for sharpshooting; but that he never wound up in jail, either. Harry Smith and Clure Smith were brothers.



John Haley's "dog tag."



Hattie holding baby Frankie, with Vivian, June and Frank, 1920 on Cottonwood.

had gotten somewhere. It had a beautiful tone. He had high hames on his team and this bell hung on a strap between the hames. I wondered if he didn't get that outfit from his dad, George Hereford. Sounds like Mr. Hereford to me. I wonder why we didn't keep those bells. They would bring back sweet memories now.

We had a mean old milk cow named Suzie. Maud and I really had a circus trying to milk her. Of course we had no stanchion. She wore a halter and we would tie her to the manger, then try to tie her legs. She would kick the rope off one leg while we were trying to put it on

the other. I had never seen a cow hobble then. When we tried to milk Suzie without the rope on her legs she would wait until our bucket was almost full of milk, then kick it over.

The men would go from our place to Daniel one day, about seventeen miles, then back home the next day. So with one night at the coal mine and one in Daniel, Maud and I had a lot of trouble with Suzie. We finally decided that the only way we could get any milk was to hold the bucket in one hand and milk with the other one. We had no use for a milk stool, that's for sure.