

HISTORY OF ELSIE HENRY ASHBY MORRILL

Elsie Henry was born January 15, 1909 in Naples Ward, Vernal, Uintah, Utah to Albert Monroe Henry and Abbie Viola Goodrich Henry. Elsie had dark hair and brown eyes when she was born. Her mother was very ill following her birth. She had what they called blood poisoning. Her fever was so high they would put her in ice water to bring it down.

While they were working to save Abbie's life, Elsie contracted pneumonia. She was about three weeks old. Because it was thought Elsie was dying, Abbie was told to think of a name so they could bless her immediately. The first name that came to Abbie's mind was that of her good friend, Elsie Knight. Bert's mother, Mary, took care of the baby until Abbie was well.

Grandmother Mary wrote the following poem for Elsie:

This is for baby Elsie,
And with it is a prayer
That she may grow to womanhood,
Her life be pure and fair.
May the star of hope shine ever
To brighten all the way,
Love, charity and virtue be the game
To guide her through each day.

Elsie had an older brother and younger sister. Loyd Goodrich Henry was born 9 August 1907. Melba Henry was born 12 January 1912. Elsie was baptized 4 August 1917.

When Elsie was a baby her parents took the children with them to town to shop. Upon returning home one day Bert took Elsie from Abbie, holding her with one arm while helping Abbie down from the wagon. Abbie slipped and Bert dropped the baby. She received a severe head injury and was unconscious for some time. There was a huge lump on the back of her head. For a long time it would swell, giving great pain and sickness.

The family moved to Roosevelt sometime after Melba was born. Elsie's mother Abbie was afraid of the Indians who would ride up to their house. There were blacks who were stationed at Fort Duchesne. One by the name of Charley Lyons was friendly with the Henrys and they liked him.

One day Loyd and Elsie were playing around a large gulch when Loyd fell in. He couldn't get out because of the high bank, so Elsie pulled him out. He always said that she saved his life.

The family dog would follow Loyd and Elsie everywhere they went. Abbie would periodically call the dog, and he would walk onto high ground where she could see him. This let her know where the children were.

The family moved back to Vernal, living on a ranch in Brush Creek, and then on a farm in Naples. The three children were delighted when their father took them with him to find the right kind of willows to make whistles and bows and arrows. He made such good whistles that they could make two or three different tones on some of them. The children carried the bows and arrows around every day and did a lot of target practicing.

Elsie loved the outdoors and followed her father everywhere he went when she could get away with it. One day when they went to the corral they saw two snakes, a rattlesnake and a blow snake or bull snake, sparring with each other. The blow snake won and swallowed the rattlesnake. The ranchers claimed that blow snakes were immune to the rattlers' venom.

There were no conveniences in the home that we know today. Water had to be carried from the irrigation ditch. The outhouse was a short walk from the house, but it seemed long and cold in the winter. Toilet paper was an old sales catalog.

Melba and Elsie, with Katie Lind and Lena Jacobson, neighbors, had many happy times together when they were younger. They made play houses in the large grove of trees behind the Henry house. With the hoe and shovel they formed lovely straight walls of dirt. They sprinkled them with water and patted them into wall shape. They leveled the floors and swept them with a broom. They used boxes and whatever they could find for furniture, and made mud pies for food.

When Elsie was about seven years old the children were riding home from the store one day with their mother in the buggy when some runaway horses came stampeding down the road behind them. The horses hit the side of the buggy, Elsie fell out, and the buggy wheel ran over her abdomen. After this injury she had attacks of pain for a long time.

Lloyd and Elsie would catch grasshoppers in the alfalfa field and hook them to match boxes with harnesses of thread. They did this carefully because the grasshoppers would spit juice at them and try to bite and scrape their hands with sharp spiked legs.

The Henry children had pet chickens that would jump or fly into their laps, sit there and talk to them. They had horses that would walk right up and stand to be bridled. They also played with non-poisonous snakes and with toads. Lambs without a mother were fed with a nipple and bottle. The lambs would run, jump and buck around the children, staying close to them.

Elsie started to school in the fall of 1916, when she was almost eight years old. Being an outdoor girl she thought being closed in a schoolroom was like being in prison. Her first teacher was pretty but strict. Elsie was frightened in this new situation.

One time while the three children were helping their dad with the hay, a load was tripped in midair and the whole slipload was dumped on top of Elsie. Her father quickly started pitching the hay aside while assuring her that everything would be all right. He had her call out until she was found. She was unharmed.

Elsie's mother Abbie had heart problems. In the night she would call out with pain and Elsie

was afraid her mother was dying. One time Abbie told Elsie that when she was having terrible pain she realized she was floating just under the high ceiling looking down upon her body. She said that hearing Elsie call her name was what brought her back.

Not long after Bert purchased the Goodrich ranch in Naples Ward he became very ill with some kind of inflammatory rheumatism. His body swelled badly and he suffered acute pain. After a long time he overcame the illness and was never bothered with the same kind of rheumatism again.

There was no electricity on the farm. Kerosene lamps and lanterns were used. Later the Coleman mantle lantern was used, which had a white light which made working and learning easier.

Elsie had many nose bleeds from the time she was a young girl until after her last child, Kenny, was born. Her father helped to stop them, but they always lasted a long time.

During World War I Elsie's mother knit socks, gloves, sweaters and mufflers to give to the soldiers. Bandages were made out of old sheets, pillow cases etc. School children made handkerchiefs and cut old rags in small pieces for filling pillows.

One winter when all three children were in high school they stayed in their Aunt Priscilla's house on the corner of Fifth West and Second South. Elsie and Melba batched there one or two winters after that. Quite a few times they ran out of food and fuel. They would go down town after school and stay in the warm stores until they closed, then go home and go to bed, shaking all night with cold.

While in high school Elsie especially enjoyed business classes from Electa Johnson Caldwell. She wanted to be a secretary. She also liked speech classes from Stella Harris Oaks.

Elsie married Rulon Wells Ashby on 25 May 1929 in Vernal, Uintah, Utah. It is not known how they met. Both loved adventure and fun. Lila was born 27 June 1930 at Rulon's parents' home in Maeser Ward, Vernal, Uintah, Utah. She had dark hair and eyes. Her hair later changed to white and then gradually darkened again. Her eyes became hazel.

Three years later on 26 July 1933 Gary H. Ashby was born. He was an adorable little boy, and he and Lila had many enjoyable times together. When he was seven and Lila was ten the family moved from Naples to Maeser. A neighbor, Charlie Palmer, took Gary and his own son to the field to plow. Gary fell off, the plow cut and mangled his foot, a wheel ran over his stomach and his shoulder was broken. It was uncertain whether his foot could be saved, but it finally healed. The pain was so bad that Gary's parents and Lila took turns reading to him all night every night.

ELSIE HENRY ASHBY MORRILL OBITUARY

Elsie Henry Ashby Morrill, 93, passed away March 31, 2002 in Orem. She was born Jan. 15, 1909, in Vernal, a daughter of Albert Monroe Henry and Abbie Viola Goodrich Henry.

Elsie was raised in Naples and lived most of her life in the Vernal area. She was married to the late Rulon Ashby of Vernal and later to the late Ellis Morrill of Fort Duchesne. She loved the outdoors and hunting and fishing. Her love for animals was well known and shared with her grandchildren.

She is survived by her three children, Lila (Ted) Thacker, Gary H. (Mildred) Ashby and Ken (Anita) Ashby; 16 grandchildren and numerous great-grandchildren.

Graveside services will be held at the Vernal Cemetery at 2 p.m. Saturday, April 6. Sundberg Olpin Mortuary is providing the services, and should be contacted for more information (801)225-1530.

-Misc. Uintah Co., Utah Obituaries (Most likely Vernal Express, April 2002)