

## HISTORY OF BEAR LAKE PIONEERS

### GEORGE HENRY COOK AND ELIZABETH HANNAH NATE COOK

by Jennie Sparks Crane



Elizabeth Hannah was the fifth child of Samson and Mary Ann Cottrell Nate. She was born May 6, 1863 at Lehi, Utah. When she was one and a half years old, her parents moved from Utah to Bear Lake. These early pioneers lived in what they called a dugout the first year. This was a log cabin hastily constructed with no windows or floors and with a dirt roof. The first winter she and her four brothers and sisters, her father and his two wives occupied such a home. Also Elizabeth, Samson's second wife, had a baby born during the month of January. The baby died soon after. Bear Lakers experienced a cold winter that year and food was very scarce. The Nate family lived in Paris for the next ten years and then Samson was called to move to Peg Leg Island (Dingle).

His Dingle homes were near the center of town. "Lillian" was a very beautiful girl. She was graceful and slim and had a keen mind. She was deeply moved by religion and joined the first Relief Society organization while only sixteen years of age and still a single girl.



George Henry Cook was born in Cedar Fort, Utah, February 18, 1860, the son of Bishop and Mrs. Henry Cook. He came to Dingle as a young man of twenty. He and Lillian fell in love and were married in the Endowment House in Salt Lake, October 25, 1883. A few years after they were married they were called to go to Canada and make a settlement there. Aunt Lill became homesick for her family and didn't care to live in Canada and so they returned to Dingle.

They homesteaded a farm and built a lovely home upon it. Aunt Lill had been raised under meager conditions and was thrilled with the ability that her husband possessed for being a good provider. He always supplied an abundance of meat, flour, sugar and other staples ahead of their needs. She was encouraged to share freely of her food with others as well as providing the family with delicious nourishing meals. All the young folks loved to be invited to eat. Many remember the breakfasts of meat and hash brown potatoes or cooked cereal. Always she made her breakfast biscuits on her 8" by 16" cookie sheet.

She enjoyed seeing the family off to a good start. One of her husband's sayings was, "If we always use the best we'll always have the best left to use." Each one had their work to do and he helped her to see that these things were done properly

before the children were permitted to leave home. The young folks had a saying, "Her name is Cook and she IS a GOOD Cook." She and Henry were the parents of ten children; Henry, Ethel, Edwin, Myrtle, Golden, Sterling, Marie, Effie, Seldon and Ellen. The family grew up in Dingle.

Aunt Lill was sustained as President of the Relief Society in the Dingle Ward March 12, 1908. She replaced Jane Fowler Sparks who had been president since the birth of the organization for the past twenty-nine years. Aunt Jane had been a midwife and was deeply loved. The sisters presented her with a watch fob and chain in appreciation of her services.

"Hank" Cook, as everyone knew her husband, was jovial, kind-hearted and hospitable to all with whom he came in contact. He was one who never made any distinction between mankind and was at all times free to extend hospitality to those who came to his home, never turning a person from his door, and never asked anything for the kindness he bestowed upon them. He met with many reverses throughout life but in all and through all he was the same congenial person, never uttering a complaint in regard to his condition. He was energetic in everything he undertook and ever ready to do his share for the family, and the community in which he lived.

In May 1912 he had eaten a big chicken dinner and walked to the meetinghouse to church. There were some boys whispering in church and he leaned forward and said, "Boys, keep quiet and listen to what the speaker has to say." Suddenly he was stricken with apoplexy<sup>1</sup> and died within a few minutes without regaining consciousness.

Aunt Lill continued to live on the Dingle Ranch and found solace in her Relief Society duties and comfort from her family. Four years later she moved into part of Ethel's home so that it would be easier for the children to go to school during the winter. This fall Ethel's little Ruby contracted scarlet fever and Aunt Lill kept her children isolated and stayed in to care for Ruby. One day as she sat rocking the child she felt the presence of someone near. She glanced up and felt Ruby relax and go limp in her arms. She called to Ethel to come quick, but the little one had passed away before she arrived. Through these days of sorrow, she was alarmed to find her own Marie and Ellen ill with the dreaded disease. Marie recovered, but little Ellen died after three days illness, the heartache and loneliness once more was endured without the love and help of a companion. I witnessed her sorrow as she laid four of her children to rest and a small grandson.

From childhood, I remember how wonderful grandmother's sisters were, not realizing the tragedies of their past. Aunt Lill used to bring Afton and live with us during some of the winters. She was a good cook and could make things tastier and more attractive than I was used to. One of her best treats was sugar cookies and she was famous for her salt risen bread. She was always appreciative of any favors you

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<sup>1</sup> **Apoplexy** (ἀποπληξία) derives from the [Greek](#) word for 'seizure', in the sense of being struck down. It is an old-fashioned [medical](#) term, which can be used to mean 'neurological impairment' or '[hemorrhage](#)'.

rendered her. She was always interested in all the church activities and always attended the plays and Gold and Green Balls. She was an Aunt to be proud of. She was always perfectly groomed and had beautiful clothes. Her children seemed to delight in giving her pretty and stylish wearing apparel and she wore them with such charm. She encouraged me to have fun. She said, "Ride those horses every chance you get, one of these first days you'll be too old."

When I leave my housework now to do something, I sort of justify myself by her saying. One day as she was leaving to go home, my girl friend was there and she said, "I wish that I could ride a bicycle, it's such a long way home. "Get on Aunt Lill, and I'll pump you home," Ruth said. She beamed all over and I was half afraid but delighted that she was so daring. I helped her on the cross bar and off they went. Often after that Ruth took her home in this manner. She was around seventy-four years young at the time. She had a heart attack on December 12, 1943 and passed away December 18 at Montpelier, Idaho.