

Orangeville, Utah  
March 18, 1915

My Dear Young Friend,

You ask me to give you a biography of my life; Now, if you only thought how hard a task you have laid out for me, I do not think that you would have done it, for it is a long story to start in from childhood and I will just give you some of the facts

I was left an orphan when I was a small child and was raised amongst strangers ever since I can remember. The people that raised me lived in Hamburg, Erie County, New York, and when I got large enough to be of any help, I was transferred between three families of the Longs, some of the time I was with John Long at Williamsville, Erie County, New York, and some of the time I was with another branch of the family in Canada, by the name of Dr. John Hershey. Whenever they got through with me in the fall of the year, they would send me back to the old home and then I stayed there until I was about eighteen years old, and started out on my own hook.

In the first place, another young boy and myself started out to go to be sailors and we went to New York together to get a job on a whaling ship, but the first two days we had no luck, so we gave up the idea of going whale fishing. We only had about three dollars left to get back with, so the other boy stayed about one hundred miles from New York, and I came on back towards home.

When I got to Cattaraugus County, New York, I got a job at seven dollars per month, and I worked for four months for that and then fall set in and I worked through the winter for my board, and in the spring I got another job at eight dollars per month and stayed with it all summer. When late fall the work gave out again, I went to Buffalo and got odd jobs to do, and then times got so hard that I could not get any work, even for my board, so I went to the Recruiting Station in Buffalo and enlisted on October 5, 1857.

They sent a bunch of us recruits to Governor's Island and drilled us there for about six weeks and then sent us to Texas to join our regiment at Eagle Pass, Texas. When we were there a short time, we had payday. I think it was about three months' pay coming, and that was more money than we ever had, so some of us started out to have a good time, and some stayed around the fort and got full of whiskey, but anyway, there was a good banjo player and myself started out to have a good time. We crossed the Rio Grande River into a town called Padros Snagros and about eleven o'clock we started out to serenade the Mexicans. I must tell you the banjo player liked his whiskey, so he got pretty full, so he said to me, "Fail, let us serenade some of the young ladies". I said "allright", so we started out to sing "Six Potatoes in a Pan, Good Enough for Any Man, Walk in and I will be your Friend", and the banjo player said, "My God, I can't play to any such singing" so that ended the serenade. Then we crossed the river home again and as we got on our way to the quarters, the guard nabbed us and took us to the Guard House. When we got our orders to move to Fort Clark, Texas; we stayed there a short time, and then got orders to go to Camp Cooper, Texas, to guard a lot of Indians. When we got to Camp Cooper, Major Robert E. Lee was in command. When the Civil War broke out, he was Commanding General of the Southern Army.

Well, from Camp Cooper, we went to Waco, Texas to escort a lot of Indians to the Indian Territory, and while we were on the line of march, there was a band of Indians started out after a hostile band, and they had a fight with a hostile band. They brought in one scalp, and they had a grand war dance that night. We had a hot old time to keep them together until we got to the Indian Territory, but we got them there at last, then it was only a short time after we got there the Civil War broke out, so we just left everything--only took enough to take us across the wild country until we got to Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. We stayed there a few days to rest up and then we were ordered to Missouri. We traveled that state in all directions. That is the state we had our first battle in. I forgot the date, but it was fought at Wilson's Creek--that was

where General Lyons was killed. The Confederate General's name was Price. Well, we got the worst of that battle. We retreated to Rollow, Missouri, and from there we went to St. Louis and got new clothes and a pass to go to St. Louis for a week. Now maybe you think we did not have a good time, but there is where you are off, for when we got there, we just took the city in and there are a lot of Germans living there. They just gave us a grand old time. They would say "You fight with Sigle" and we would tell them that we did and they just took hold of us and pulled us into the saloon; "Have a glass of beer with me", and we had all the beer we could drink, and it didn't cost us anything.

Finally, they got us together and we had to go back to Wilson's Creek, to rebury our dead. I must tell you that General Fremont was in command then, and on our way back to Wilson's Creek, we made our camp at Jefferson City, and it was about nine o'clock when we got into camp. It was raining to beat time, and no wood to make a fire with. Fremont was camped in a field with a good rail fence around it. We just started to take the rail fence for firewood when Fremont sent his orderly to tell us we could not take the fence, but we took it anyway and soon had a roaring fire. We were not put in the Guard House either.

Well, after we got through reburying the dead, we took through the state to chase Quantrail and his band; he always managed to keep a day ahead of us or else he would be behind us. I suppose that a good many of you have read about Quantrail, so there is no use saying anything more about him. We kept up our march until we came to the Mississippi River. We got into camp about ten o'clock and we had to start in at once to throw up breastwork and place our artillery as there was a Rebel Ford on the river bank at New Madrid. Well, just as soon as day began to peep, we opened fire on them and about two hours we had won the day, they left everything and went on board the steamer, and went down the river, and there I saw the prettiest cannon I ever saw during the war I was in.

You could see all kinds of fighting implements, old navy cutlasses and great long knives that they called "Arkansas Toothe Picks" and the night after the fight, the Gunboat, Drontoled, ran the blockage at Island Number Ten, that was strongly fortified. The night was very dark and raining to beat time. Just as the gunboat was very near past, they fired on her, but they did not hit her, and then the next morning, they surrendered the Island to us. Amongst the prisoners, we got three that deserted from us when we left the Indian territory. I had an old Navy pistol that I took from one of the prisoners and I gave it to my son George when he was born.

From New Madrid, we started for Fort Pillow, down the river. Before we got there, we got orders to come back to go to Pittsburg Landing, or the Battle of Shiloe on the Tennessee River, for I suppose that you have all read of that battle. That is where Stonewall Jackson commanded the Southern Troop. I must tell you that the Rebels had the best of the fight until we reinforced the Union Army, and then Stonewall Jackson retreated to Corinth, Mississippi. There we had our hardest time to build Corduroy Road, from the Tennessee River to Corinth, Mississippi. Then we laid siege to Corinth; there were about 200,000 men acout Corinth. We had more or less skirmishing until the Rebels evacuated the place. We stayed there until General Price gave battle to us and we got our revenge out of him for getting the best of us at Wilson's Creek, Missouri. We gave it to him good and hard.

Oh, I must tell you, while we were at Corinth, General Grant was in command. Those days they used to come in to camp, peddle milk, and you could get milk or whiskey out of the can. It would come out of the same spout. Well, one day, after payday, we were very flush with money and we came across a milk peddler. We got a bottle of whiskey, so we just went in the woods to sample our bottle, and as I tipped up the bottle to take a drink somebody behind me said, "Hold on there". I looked around to see who it was and there stood General Grant. He asked me what I had there. I said "A bottle of whiskey, General". He asked me where I got it, and I told him that I bought it, then he

wanted to know who from. I told him from a fellow up here. I thought I was a candidate for the Guard House, but he tipped up the bottle to taste it, and then he handed it back with the remark that it was "damn poor whiskey", but I told him it was the best we could do, as we could not get any for the commissary. Anyway, we got our bottle back, and that was the last time I saw General Grant.

It was not long after the Battle of Corinth was fought, my time was up and I was discharged at Corinth, Mississippi on the 5th of October 1862.

Well, I went back home to Hamburg and stayed a few months, and then went to Buffalo and got a job as turnkey in the Erie County Jail at \$15.00 per month and what I could make on the side from the prisoners. Some months I made as high as \$10.00 extra, so I did pretty well at that, but it cost me more to live there than it did when I lived in the country. Well, I stayed at the jail until March 1st, 1864, then the gold fever broke out in Montana and I started for Montana about the middle of May from St. Joe, Missouri, and landed in Virginia City about the latter part of June.

I must tell you before I forget that while we were on our journey, we got into a fight with the Indians on Powder River and we lost two men, one was killed while he went back for a cow that gave out the day before, and the other started out to prospect. They got him, then they made a break for the wagon train, but we beat them off so they tried to burn us out, but they could not do that, so they left us and there was some of our men started out before we got ready to hunt and when they saw we were not coming, they came back to camp, and they never knew the Indians bothered us. We learned afterward that we had killed some of the Indians and wounded some and that was the only trouble we had on the whole journey.

When I first got to Montana, I thought that it was the roughest lot of men I ever saw until the vigilantes took hold of them. They hung quite a few of them, amongst them was the notorious Bill Slats and his gang, and they soon cleaned out the outlaws. Well, I stayed in Montana until about the first of June 1868, and then came down to Wyoming from there. I worked my way to Salt Lake and got there in 1869 and made that my home until I got married March 27th, 1870, and then my wife and I went to Corrine and lived there for about two and one-half years. That is where my daughter Katie and my son William was born. I must tell you that I started to work for George A. Lowe. When Lowe moved to Salt Lake, he had us go with him to Salt Lake, and I worked for him for twenty-one and one-half years, and then left him and came to Emery County. You all know our history since we lived here amongst you for the last twenty-five years.

Now, my young friend, I hope that you will not put up another such job on an old man.

I remain your old friend.

/s/ FRED W. FAIL

P.S. There was a Mannonite family by the name of Abraham Long, Pennsylvania Dutch, that took me when I was a child and were my foster parents and I lived with them until I enlisted as mentioned above.