

Levi Ward Hancock (Pioneer)

mentioned in D&C 52:29 & 124:138

The Posterity of Nathaniel Hancock

Nathaniel Hancock

Nathaniel Hancock	Thomas Hancock
John Hancock	John Hancock
John Hancock	Thomas Hancock
John Hancock	Thomas Hancock
(The signer)	Levi Ward Hancock (The pioneer)

Our immigrant ancestor, Nathaniel Hancock, was the second great-grandfather of John Hancock, President of the Continental Congress and the first Signer of the Declaration of Independence. Nathaniel was also the second great-grandfather of Thomas Hancock, third cousin of President John Thomas had two brothers killed in the War of Independence. He then tried to enlist as a youth, but the officers thought three sons taken from one family was too much.

A LOVER OF FREEDOM: Thomas Hancock had a son, Levi Ward Hancock. He was one of the Presidents of the First Council of Seventy, and a faithful Utah pioneer. He, too, was lover of freedom, and also suffered at the hands of the enemies. In the face of violence in Missouri, he wrote a patriotic song one Fourth of July, which his brother, Solomon Hancock, sang at the celebration. In it, there were appealing lines.

Then God armed our fathers with power,
 And Washington came to our aid,
 And in wisdom conducted the battle
 And soon made the Tories afraid.
 Hark, hear how the great battle rages,
 Behold him undauntedly stand.
 For the great cause of hereafter ages
 He pleads with his sword in his hand.

They told the brave tale to their children,
 And told them the same to hand down
 To their children's children forever,
 Until the great trumpet shall sound.
 Exalt then the standard of freedom,
 And ever let freedom remain;
 Be firm and determined forever
 Your freedom and rights to maintain.

These sentences are found in the biography of our ancestor, Levi W. Hancock: "He was chosen one of the First Seven Presidents of Seventies, which position he occupied with honor and faithfulness for 47 years, until the day of his death. In common with the rest of the Saints, he suffered persecutions and hardships and became an exile for conscience in 1846. He enlisted in the famous Mormon Battalion and marched with that military body to California, being the only man of the general authorities of the Church who thus enlisted. He acted as chaplain of the battalion, and did his best to influence the men to live as their religion taught under every circumstance. He was later one of the pioneer settlers of Manti, from whence he was sent thrice

as a representative to the Utah Legislature. He was a natural minute man.”

Levi Ward Hancock

The Church was 14 months old and the Lord, in Section 44 of the Doctrine and Covenants, instructed the Prophet Joseph Smith to convene a conference at Kirtland, Ohio.

More than 2,000 persons attended and for three days instructions were given and reports were heard from those who had been serving missions. The day following the conference, the Prophet received revelation (Section 52) calling for another conference, instruction for Sidney Rigdon and Joseph to go to Missouri, and appointing a number of elders to serve missions. Among those called was Levi Ward Hancock.

Levi had joined the church at Kirtland. He was baptized by Parley P. Pratt about seven months after the Church was organized, and was ordained an Elder by Oliver Cowdery.

Almost immediately, the new elder began serving as a missionary, a work that was to occupy much of the remainder of his life.

Levi Ward Hancock labored on the Kirtland Temple, was a member of Zion's Camp, suffered persecutions in Missouri and at Nauvoo, Illinois. In Nauvoo, he labored as a police officer. He also served brief missions in Vermont and Indiana.

In 1835, he was ordained a Seventy and in 1841, by revelation (D&C 124:138) he was called as one of the first seven presidents of the First Council of the Seventy.

At the call for the Mormon Battalion in 1846, Levi enlisted and was appointed Chaplain. He remained with the battalion - he was the only General Authority in the troop - until its discharge at San Diego, when he returned with the main body of soldiers to Great Salt Lake Valley. (He came to Utah in 1847 with Contingent Mormon Battalion Company E.)

The remaining years of his life were divided between colonizing and missionary work. He helped found Manti, from where he was elected three times to the Utah Legislature, and joined in settling communities of Payson, Harrisburg, Leeds and Washington in Utah.

About 10 years before his death, Levi Ward Hancock was ordained a patriarch and gave blessings to thousands of members of the Church. He died at his home in Washington, Washington County, on Saturday, June 10, 1882. He had been a seventy for 47 years, and a president of the First Council of Seventy for 41 years.

Taken from “Men in Modern Scripture”

Levi Ward Hancock was a native of Massachusetts, a convert to the Church in 1830, one of the

first Seven Presidents of Seventies, soldier in the Mormon Battalion, pioneer of Utah, resident of Washington County and a faithful and diligent member of the Church.

Levi Ward Hancock was born in Springfield, Massachusetts, on April 7, 1803. He was the son of Thomas and Amy Ward Hancock. In his youth he moved with his parents to Ohio. They located in the town of Chagrin and it was there, in 1830, that Levi heard the message of the gospel, brought to him by the Lamanite Missionaries, Parley P. Pratt and Oliver Cowdery. He was baptized by Parley P. Pratt at Kirtland on November 16, 1830, and soon thereafter was ordained an Elder by Oliver Cowdery.

Levi became a diligent missionary for the Church and, in June 1831, he was called by revelation to journey to Missouri, "peaching the word by the way." His companion on this journey was Zebedee Coltrin, a faithful and devout member of the Church.

After his return to Kirtland, Levi contributed liberally of his time and means toward the erection of the Kirtland Temple. In 1834 he became a member of Zion's Camp, and again made the long and difficult march to Missouri and return.

On February 28, 1835, Levi W. Hancock was ordained a seventy by the Prophet Joseph Smith and at the same time was chosen a member of the First Council of Seventy, which position he held during the balance of his life.

Levi moved to Missouri in 1835, and was among those who were driven eastward to Illinois in 1839. He settled at Nauvoo and served as a member of the police force until the exodus of the Saints to the west in 1846.

Arriving at the Missouri River, Levi enlisted, in July 1846, in the Mormon Battalion. He was the only member of the general authorities to accompany the Battalion. He was 43 years of age at the time, but he made the long and difficult march across the desert to Southern California. During the journey he acted as chaplain for the Battalion and held frequent meetings with the soldiers, encouraging them to live their religion. He played the fife and composed songs which commemorated events of the journey.

After being discharged from the army at Los Angeles in July 1847, Levi and a number of his companions made the journey eastward to Salt Lake Valley, where they were overjoyed to find a small colony of Latter-day Saints.

In 1849 he went with the first settlers to Manti, Subsequently he moved to Southern Utah and settled in Washington, Washington County.

In his position as one of the general authorities, he attended the general conferences in Salt Lake City, He frequently traveled to the stakes and spoke to the people. He was ordained to the office of patriarch in 1872.

Levi Ward Hancock died at Washington on June 10, 1882.. He was 79 years of age. At his funeral, held on June 12. "President John D. T. McAllister of the St George Stake, spoke of his humility and integrity to the cause of God. He had been tried severely by hardships and poverty but he stood firm to the end."

"Written by Preston Nibley
"Stalwarts of Mormonism"

HANCOCK, Levi Ward, born April 17 1803, in Massachusetts: baptized November 16, 1830: ordained a Seventy February 28, 1835, under the hands of Joseph Smith and others; soon afterwards chosen as one of the First Seven Presidents of Seventies; died June 10, 1882.

"Church Chronology,"
Compiled by Andrew Jenson, Asst. Church Historian

Levi Ward Hancock - Born April 7, 1803, at Springfield Massachusetts, to Thomas Hancock and Amy Ward. Ordained a seventy February 28, 1835, under the hands of Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon, and Fredrick G. Williams, set apart as one of the first seven presidents February 28, 1835, at age 31: released April 6, 1837, having supposedly previously been ordained a high priest; restored to his former place in the First Council September 3, 1837, because he had not been ordained a high priest; died June 10, 1882, at Washington, Utah.

Ensign, July 1976 "An Historical Perspective"
by Elder S. Dilworth Young

Levi Ward Hancock, delegate from Utah County to first Legislative Assembly in 1851.

"Pioneers & Prominent Men of Utah"
Frank Esshom

The Patriarchal Blessing of Levi Ward Hancock

son of Thomas and Amy Hancock. Born in the town of Springfield,
Massachusetts, the 7th day of April 1803.

Brother Levi, I place my hands upon your head in the name of Jesus, to bestow upon you a blessing which is to according to the Priesthood, even the fullness, and to which you are ordained, which fullness shall be made known unto you, the same that you shall receive in your day and generation, even all that is pertaining to the Salvation of Man relative to his Duty or calling wherewith he is called and also you shall be blessed in things pertaining to your lineage, wherein you have a claim upon the promises made by your Fathers which ye have entered into even into their Labours, for it was by their faith that the Spirit rested upon you when the Gospel was preached unto you and you believed, by the same you have received the Priesthood and a seat in the councils and presidency in the Kingdom of God, and a promise of a Celestial Glory, which I seal upon your head, all this by the faith of your Fathers back unto Abraham, for this

is your lineage, a descendant of Jacob of the tribe of Manassah, in which you are to have your inheritance and your posterity after you and your Father's House, but some shall be scourged but they shall be saved, and as to your Priesthood it shall pass down through lineage of your posterity from under your hands and their hearts shall be inspired, and speak honorable of your name shall perpetuate it to the latest generation and as to things temporal you shall have neither riches nor poverty like unto some, have embraced the Covenants, but you shall prosper until you are made comfortable all your days, and if you harken unto Council, you shall be rich in Faith, an heir to God and a joint heir with Jesus Christ, and your years shall be many. Glory and Honor shall crown your head in the morning of the resurrection. These are the things I seal upon you. Ever so. Amen. Given by Hyrum Smith at Nauvoo, Illinois, December 1st, 1841.

James Sloane, Clerk

In Memoriam

St. George, June 12, 1882

On the above date, at Washington, the last respects were paid to the venerable President LEVI W. HANCOCK, by his friends and relatives.

He died on Sunday morning the 10th last, after being confined to his bed for upwards of six months. He passed away quietly and peacefully, having suffered but little - a literal wearing out of the body, rendered only unfit as a habitation of the spirit by age, he being 79 years old last April.

For the last fifty years he has been an ardent laborer in the Kingdom of God, forty-seven years of which he has been a member of the Quorum of the First Presidency of the Seventies.

He was one of that valiant band who in 1836 went up to drive the alien from the inheritance of Israel, to redeem Zion; one of those who being led by the Prophet of God, had the courage to face the forces of a whole State, one who felt that he could "run through a troop and lean over a wall," one who felt that nothing could stay him short of the consummation of the Command that God had given.

In 1846 he responded to his country's call and marched with his comrades against Mexico. He was chaplain of the Battalion.

The funeral services were held in Washington meeting house. President J.D.T. McAllister and council, Presidents Henry Harriman and Jacob Gates and others being present on the stand.

President J.D.T. McAllister made some interesting remarks in relation to the life and labors of the deceased, spoke of his humility and integrity to the cause of God. Said that although he had been tried severely by hardships and poverty, he had stood firm to the end. He read a short account of the organization of the Seventies, and referred to the fact of Brother Levi being one of those who was called by the direct command of God.

President Henry Harriman stated that Brother Hancock was the last of those first chosen to fill the quorum of the First Presidency of the Seventies. His labors were known throughout Israel, and his works praised him. He thanked God that he knew that his body would come forth in the first resurrection.

Brother James Pace, a companion in arms in the Mexican War gave many reminiscences of his (Brother Hancock's) life while in the Battalion, related a circumstance that happened, showing the susceptibility of the man to the spirit of inspiration. A stranger, by the consent of the Battalion, joined the company and soon after requested baptism. Brother Hancock, in company with others of the brethren, took him down to the Missouri and performed the ceremony. On raising him from the watery grave, he said as if wrought upon by the spirit, "If I have baptized a murderer, it will do him no good." His words had such an effect upon the stranger that he soon made a confession that he was a murdered having killed his brother.

Brothers Edson Barney, D.D. McArthur, and Solon Foster made some very interesting remarks, speaking of the faithfulness of the deceases. They were certain that he had made his election sure.

President Jacob Gates had been acquainted with Brother Hancock for nearly half a century and for the last twenty years of that time had been co-laborer with him in the quorum of the First Presidency of the Seventies. Brother Levi, like many others, had desired to live and to see the yoke of bondage broken from the necks of the Saints but his hopes had not been realized. He knew, however, that he was a man of God, and would inherit the blessings in store for the faithful.

Brother Funk made a few closing remarks after which the remains were exhibited to those present.

Thus ends the earthly career of another valiant man, who has spent his all for the spread and maintenance of the Gospel. May he rest in peace.

Church Leader Joins Mormon Battalion

Arnold Irvine

"Mother, must I die?" asked four-year-old Levi Hancock. "Yes." "I wish I hadn't been born." "Why?" "Because I'm afraid I won't be saved."

This was the cloud that hung over the young life of this backwoods farm lad. His home was a religious one, but the horrors of hellfire were the dominant theme. When one of the children died unbaptized, the minister gave the heartbroken Mrs. Hancock little hope for the spirit's future.

As Levi grew older, the terrors of the hereafter were pushed into the background by the joys of the present. The family had moved from New England to New York when he was only two years old. He wholeheartedly plunged into the rough and tumble of frontier life.

When war came in 1812, he heard the booming of cannons as the British and Americans battled on Lake Ontario. He watched his father march off with the militia, playing his fife.

After the war, the Hancocks pushed westward to Ohio. Here in November, 1830, Levi heard of the Book of Mormon. His brother, Alvah, brought the news of the four young men who were preaching about the new book that was a record of the ancient inhabitants of America. Levi was curious, deciding to ride over to Mayfield with the rest of the family to hear the missionaries.

The message was like cool, sweet water to the spiritually parched Hancocks. When Parley P. Pratt stood up at the end of the meeting and invited those who wished to be baptized to come forward, Levi's father and sister Clarissa were ready.

Levi, a bit more cautious, decided to wait. The next morning, his mind was made up. He would go to Mayfield immediately and ask for baptism. When he arrived, alas, the elders were gone. Still determined, he followed them to Kirtland, where he found Elder Pratt conveniently at the river performing baptisms. Within a few moments, Levi was a Mormon.

He was soon ordained an Elder and, in the summer of 1831, went on a mission to Missouri. He traveled to Missouri again as a member of Zion's Camp. On his return to Kirtland, he was ordained to the office of Seventy. A short time later, he was chosen to serve in the First Council of Seventy.

In 1838, President Hancock joined the migration to Missouri, but scarcely had time to pitch a tent in Far West before he was forced to retreat to Illinois. In Nauvoo, he served as a police officer between missions to the East.

After he, along with the rest of the Saints, was forced to leave Nauvoo, he was one of the men and boys who enlisted in the U.S. Army to fight in the Mexican War. At 43, he was one of the older men of the Mormon Battalion.

The rest of the soldiers looked to him for guidance because of his position as a general authority. He held meetings regularly and gave the brethren wise counsel in spiritual matters.

Rejoining the body of the Church in Utah, after his discharge from the army, he pioneered in Sanpete County, and served three terms in the territorial legislature as the area's representative. He moved to southern Utah in the mid-sixties where he continued to assist in presiding over the quorums of Seventy and in addition, was ordained a Patriarch. He died June 10, 1881, at the age of 79.

Song by: Levi W. Hancock, Company E, Mormon Battalion

Thought be to written in October or November, 1846

The Mormon Battalion in its march from Santa Fe to San Diego, had rations reduced until the

meat issued to the troops was the flesh of such animals as were unable to proceed further;

While here beneath a sultry sky,
Our famished mules and cattle die;
Scarce ought but skin and bones remain,
To feed poor soldiers on the plain.

Are less than quarter rations fed;
And soon expect, for all of meat,
Naught else than broke-down mules to
eat.

How hard to starve and wear us out
Upon this sandy desert route.

Now half-starved oxen, over-drilled,
Too weak to draw, for beef are killed;
And knowing hunger prompting men,
To eat small entrails and the skin.

We sometimes now for lack of bread,

Mormon Battalion Participates in Battle with a Heard of Wild Bulls

By Preston Nibley.

While the inhabitants of Winter Quarters were experiencing their unusual sorrows and privations, on the banks of the Missouri River, here fared the men of the Mormon Battalion, as they continued their long march to the Pacific? We have already followed them to Santa Fe, where they arrived during the second week of October 1846, footsore and weary, after a long journey of 860 miles from Ft. Leavenworth.

It was here that the Battalion was given a new commander, Col Philip St. George Cooke; It was here that eighty-six of the men who were judged unfit for the difficult march to the coast, were sent together with all except five of the women of the camp, to Fort Pueblo for the winter. Then, on Monday, October 19th, the march to the coast was continued. At first the Battalion followed a southerly course along the Rio Grande, but after traveling about four weeks, when in the neighborhood of the present town of Hatch, New Mexico, Colonel Cooke suddenly abandoned this route, and struck off on a westerly course, through the mountains and deserts, towards San Diego. One hundred years ago this week, the brethren of the Battalion were making their way laboriously, through what is now southeastern Arizona, traveling in the direction of the Mexican village of Tucson. It was in this primitive country, on the 11th of December, 1846, that the "battle with the wild bulls" was fought - fortunately the only battle in which the Mormon Battalion engaged during the entire Mexican War. This episode is so unique and interesting that I desire to relate it here. Fortunately, we have the account of an eye-witness, Brother Daniel Tyler, who later on became the author of the book, "The Mormon Battalion."

"Continuing our journey down the San Pedro, "Writes Brother Tyler, "We encamped on the nights of the 11th of December in a canyon. A kind of cane grass grew in this region, from four to six feet high, being very profuse and luxuriant in the bottom of the stream. The soldiers who went out in advance of the command passed along the bluffs on each side of the stream and came upon hundreds of wild cattle, which, startled at their approach, rushed down into the bottom for shelter. The animals, which congregated on the line of our route, on hearing the

rumblings of our approaching wagons, were startled, and some ran off in a fright. Others, however, (the bulls of the herd) to gratify their curiosity perhaps, marched toward us as if bent upon finding out who dared to intrude upon their quiet retreat. Their terribly beautiful forms and majestic appearance were quite impressive.

“Contrary to the orders of the Colonel, as previously noticed, every man had his musket loaded, and a battle followed. In the open ground where the cattle could see us from a distance, they would run away, but when near us, whether wounded or not, they were the assaulting party. Hence the road of musketry was heard from one end of the line to the others. One small lead mule in the team was thrown over its mate, on the near side, and the near mule now on the off side, was gored until he had to be left with entrails hanging a foot below his body. One or two pack mules were also killed. The end gates of one or two wagons were “stove in” and the sick who were riding in them were of course frightened.

“Some of the men climbed upon the wheels of the wagons and poured a deadly fire into the enemy’s ranks. Some threw themselves down and allowed the beast to run over them, others fired and dodged behind mesquite brush to reload their guns, while the battle kept them dodging out of the way. Others climbed up in small trees, there being now and then one available.

“Brother Amos Cox was thrown about ten feet into the air, while a gore from three to four inches in length and about two to three inches in depth, was cut in the inside of the thigh near its junction with the body. Dr. Sanderson sewed up the wound. Cox was a invalid for a long time..... I sw him in Pottawatomic County about a year afterwards and he still felt the effect of his injury.

“Albert Smith, quartermaster sergeant of Company B. was run over by a wounded bull and, I understand, had three of his ribs partially severed from the back bone. He suffered severely for severely weeks but declined going on sick report to avoid Dr. Sanderson’s cure-all, calomel and arsenic.

“Major Clowd, our paymaster, had one of his pack mules killed. Dr. William Spencer, assistant surgeon’s steward shot six balls into one bull and was pursued by him, the beast rising and falling at intervals, until the last and fatal shot was fired, which took effect in the curl of the palate. The wounds were as follows: two bullets through the lights, two through the heart and two through the palate. The doctor carried the heart two or three days, exhibiting to all who desired to see it and relating the particulars of his remarkable adventure.

Another story showing the courage of the men was related by the commander of the battalion; Colonel Cooke said, “I was standing very near Corporal Lafayette N. Frost when an immense coal black bull came charging upon us a hundred yards distant. Frost aimed his musket, a flint lock very deliberately, and only fired when the beast was within six paces. It fell headlong almost at our feet.”

Tyler continues: “The number of bulls killed is not known, but it was probably not less than twenty. Henry Standage and Sanford Porter, who fell behind on account of trying to catch some

salmon trout, which, it is said abounded in the river, on entering our trail saw nine lying in one place. After stopping and roasting what choice cuts they wanted, they followed, and overtook the command. Probably twice as many more were fatally wounded, thus making history.

Levi Ward Hancock, a member of the battalion and a musician in Company E, witnessed this battle with the wild bulls and wrote a poem about it. Good Brother Hancock, forty-three years old at the time; a member of the Church since 1830 and one of the First Council of Seventies, was a light-hearted pleasant fellow who had gone along with the battalion as a sort of chaplain and spiritual father. In addition, he played the flute as his company marched in the dust and heat, and occasionally he wrote a poem, or song, as he termed it, which he would chant to some plaintive tune, to the amusement of his brethren. Following is his poem entitled, "Bull Fight on the San Pedro. Under command of Colonel Cooke.

There as we gained ascending ground,
Out from the grass, with fearful bound,
A wild, ferocious bull appeared,
And challenged fight, with horns upreared.

"Stop! Stop! Said one, "Just see that brute!"
"Hold!" was responded, "let me shoot."
He flashed, but failed to fire the gun.
Both stood their ground and wound not run.

The man exclaimed, "I want some meat.
I think that bull will do to eat."
And saying thus, again the shot,
And felled the creature on the spot.

It soon arose to run away
And then the guns began to play;
All hands at work amid the roar,
The bull was dropped to rise no more.

But lo, it did not end the fight -
A furious herd rushed into sight.
And then the bulls and men around
Seemed all resolved to stand their ground.

In nature's pasture, all unfenced,
A dreadful battle was commenced,
We knew ourselves we must defend,
And must to others aid extend.

The bulls with maddened fury raged,
The men with skillful warfare waged,
Through some from danger had to flee,
And had to clamber up a tree.

A bull at one man made a pass,
Who hid himself amid the grass,
And breathless lay until the brute
Passed him and took another shoot.
The bulls rushed on like unicorns,
And gored the mules with piercing horns,
As if the battle ground to gain
When men and mules should all be slain.

With brutal strength and iron will,
Poised on his horns with master's skill,
A bull, one mule o'er mule did throw
Then mad the latter's entrails flow,
One bull was shot and when he fell,
A butcher ran his blood to spill,
The bull threw up his horns and caught
The butcher's cap, upon the spot.

"Give up my cap," explained the man,
And chased the bull as on he ran;
The butcher beat, and with his knife,
Cut the bull's throat and closed his life.
O, Cox from one bull's horn was thrown,
Ten feet in air; when he came down,
A gasping flesh would meet his eyes
The vicious bull had gored his thigh.

The colonel and his staff were there,
Mounted and witnessing the war;
A bull one hundred yards away
Eyed Colonel Cook as easy prey.
But Corp'ral Frost stood bravely by,
And watched the bull with steady eye;
The brute approached near, and more
near,
But Frost betrayed no sigh of fear.

The Colonel ordered him to run,
Unmoved he stood with loaded gun;
The bull came up with daring tread,
When near his feet, Frost shot him dead.

Whatever cause, we do not know,
But something prompted them to go;
When all at once in frantic fright
The bulls ran bellowing out of sight.

And when the fearful fight was o'er,
And sound of muskets heard no more,
At least a score of bulls were found
And two mules dead upon the ground.
On the road to California
On our hard and tedious journey,
Far along the Rocky Mountains
By San Pedro's crystal fountains.

The Blind Horse

(This story is retold from an incident related by James A. Little,
in his book, "From Kirtland to Salt Lake City")

In the fall of 1838, Levi Hancock, his wife and three small children, were living on forty acres of prairie land located on Plumb Creek near Far West, Missouri. Levi had been on the land only a few months, but he had been diligent in his work. He had built a one-room log cabin, with a dirt roof; he had filled the cracks between the logs with wet clay; he had made his little pioneer home comfortable for his wife and children. He was sure they could go through the winter without suffering from the cold. Some day, he hoped, when his farm began to produce, he would be able to build a better home.

Levi was handicapped somewhat by having only a horse and a cow to help him do his farm work. He had to hitch them together to do plowing. The horse was a good, willing animal; gentle, faithful and kind. Levi had owned him a number of years, but during the long journey from Kirtland, some kind of infection had developed in his eyes, and he became totally blind. In all the work on the farm, he had to be led.

One day while Levi was chopping his winter wood, a man on horseback rode into his farm, and told him some disquieting news. He said that the Missourians had determined to drive the Mormons out of the state, and that Governor Boggs had issued an order to the militia, stating that the Mormons must be driven out or exterminated. Levi went to Far West and talked with some of the leading brethren and found out that the news was true. A mob had already taken the Prophet Joseph and some of the Church leaders to Independence for trial.

One afternoon a few days later, while his cow was grazing peacefully in the pasture of the farm, three Missourians rode by on their horses. One of them raised his rifle and shot the cow through the heart. Then they rode away with a wild, exulting yell. Levi now had only his blind horse to

assist him and his family in fleeing out of the state. He had traded his wagon for provisions when he first came to Caldwell County. What could he do for some kind of vehicle to transport his family and his meager belongings? As a true pioneer, he went to work and constructed a crude cart. Over the cart he placed bows he attached to a large quilt to keep his children out of the stormy weather.

It was a cold day, with several inches of snow on the ground, when Levi and his family left their little home on Plumb Creek and began their weary trek towards Illinois. The three children, all of them under five years of age were placed in the cart. Levi's wife walked beside the cart, while he led the blind horse. It was a strange sight to see them plodding along the road, expelled from their home for no other reason than they were members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Levi had a fairly good pair of boots, but his wife's shoes were so badly worn that the cold muddy water oozed through them in a dozen places. Finally, Mrs. Hancock broke down in tears and declared she could go no farther. Her husband, always trusting in a kind of providence predicted that a pair of shoes would be provided for her in some miraculous manner.

That night they camped by the side of the road. Levi gathered brush and branches from dead trees and soon had a warm fire burning. The good wife and mother removed her wet shoe and stockings and placed them near the fire to dry. She and her children slept in the cart, while Levi wrapped himself in a quilt and laid down near the fire. Other travelers passed them during the night and in the morning when Levi and his wife awoke, they were astonished to see a new pair of shoes near the old ones, which Mrs. Hancock had left to dry. Who had placed them there? They never did learn the name or the whereabouts of the kind friend who had left the shoes for the suffering woman.

Day after day, the faithful, blind horse pulled the cart, with Levi guiding him through the snow and mud. In three weeks they reached the Mississippi River. It was completely frozen over and they crossed on the ice to the Illinois side. Here they were among friends, and far away from their Missouri persecutors.

In the town of Quincy, Levi found shelter for his homeless family. But all the land was covered with deep snow, and he could not find any pasture for his poor blind horse. Hay and corn could be purchased for money. Levi had long since spent his last dollar. Neighbors suggested that he should turn the horse loose on the prairie, but he knew that it could not take care of itself without its eyesight and that it would only perish in the cold. Levi pondered for a long time on what he could do with the faithful animal, which had rescued his family from their cruel persecutors.

One day, after the ice on the Mississippi River had to break, the neighbors saw Levi leading his blind horse towards the bank of the great stream. Arriving at the edge of the ice, he left the horse and went in search of dry grass that lay beneath the snow along the bank. He pulled and gathered the dry grass until he had an arm full; then he went back to the horse and led the

trembling animal onto the ice. He led him out several hundred feet from the shore where great blocks of ice were breaking away and floating down the stream.

He put the hay down on the ice, and the blind animal began to eat. Then Levi took his axe, which he had brought with him, and cut away the block of ice on which the horse stood, contentedly eating. The block of ice floated down the stream with the horse on it. Levi stood and watched the floating animal until he disappeared from sight, around a great bend in the river.

Retyped by Marilyn Lefevre Foy with minor changes made by Tammy Rae Cox Thomson a tenth great granddaughter of Nathaniel Hancock and a fifth great grandniece of Levi Ward Hancock.