

THE CARBUNCLE

Not many days later the opportunity presented itself for the young villain to get even for his thrashing. One evening as Clem was bringing the cows home along the lower road beyond the railroad tracks he saw his antagonist waiting for him as he approached the crossing. There was no way to avoid the impending confrontation so he feigned a bravado calculated to bluff his way through. It didn't work. As he drove the cows across the tracks, they were allowed to go on their way up the road, but the boy had no intention of letting Clem pass. The train was coming and he thought he'd have some sport with his victim by forcing him to go under the low trestle built over a large shallow ditch next to the crossing. Clem crouched on his stomach as the train passed over dropping hot ashes just at that moment. They burned through his trousers onto his hip and deep into the flesh of the upper part of his buttocks.

Over the next few weeks the sore got worse and worse until a carbuncle formed. The midwife was summoned from Brigham City to remove it surgically. Grandma Davis was no ordinary midwife. Coming from a medical family in Pennsylvania, she had learned surgical skills as well as regular nursing and attending practices from her father.

"They had no anesthetic in those days so my folks just held me down and tried to keep me from screaming while the doctor went at it. Grandfather Welch gave me a blessing before the operation and it comforted me all the time, helping me to put up with the pain. I soon got over that all right, but still have a deep scar after all these years."

When the family moved shortly after that to Brigham City, he left his adversary behind and the feud ended.