

JUSTUS EDMUND HANCEY
1880-1943

Born: 4 April 1880 in Hyde Park, Utah
Parents: James Hancey and Louisa Purser (Hancey)
Christened: 6 May 1880 by Robert Daines
Baptized: 5 April 1888 by George Seamons
Confirmed: 5 April 1888 by L. Christensen
Married: Elizabeth C. Munk, 27 July 1910 Died: June 1912
Married: Jessie Murray, 25 June 1913, Salt Lake LDS Temple
Died: 27 July 1960, Logan, Utah
Children: Two daughters: Ruth Amanda Murray Hancey Anderson
Laah Murray Hancey Whiting
Died: 2 August 1943, Logan, Utah

Justus Edmund Hancey was the 3rd son and last child born to Louisa Purser Hancey and James Hancey. His brothers were Frederick P. And Moses Moroni. His 3 surviving sisters were Lottie H. Broadbent, Lettie Bell H. Rich, and Lulo H. Erlandson. 3 sisters died in infancy.

Lottie stated her mother allowed her to name the last child in the family and she chose Justus Edmund. However, J. Ed used Edward rather than Edmund throughout his adult life. Family and friends knew him always as Ed.

Moses and Ed spent their early years in the Snake River Valley of southern Idaho with their Mother after they left their home in Hyde Park. Her son, Frederick and his sister reminisced about his young life with brother, Ed, during family visits to Fred's home in Kemmerer, Wyoming, in the summer time. Louisa and her 2 sons built their ranch in the Valley 15 miles south of Blackfoot, pioneering a new area which grew into small towns in 18 years they lived there. Here Ed developed his love of nature, and his skills of fishing and hunting which were to become his life-loing recreational pursuits after he settled in Logan, Utah.

Ed developed great ability, like his father, James, in the use of tools, working with wood, and his co-workers had said few could surpass him in knowledge of and ability in electrical tasks. He began his career as an electrician with Telluride Power Company in southern Utah, laying out early service lines by horseback. He drove some of the first service trucks used when he worked with Mountain Bell Telephone Company. As a master technician he assumed head supervision of the lines and service division of Utah-Power Light Co. In Logan, Utah and remained in their employ for 36 years. He was responsible for electrical power services used in all the sub-stations and factory-industrial plants and street lighting throughout Cache Valley. When Utah Power moved headquarters into Idaho, becoming Idaho Power, Ed transferred his service into Preston, Idaho for a brief period, until his accident.

Ed married Elizabeth Munk, a Cache Valley resident, who died with 2 years from foot poisoning. He met Jessie Murray of Wellsville, Utah, when she was a telephone operator for Mountain Bell. They were married in the Salt Lake LDS Temple in June of 1913. She was the oldest child of William Murray's second family. He was well-known land holder and stock man in the Valley. He served as County Commissioner and filled 2 LDS Church missions. Ed and Jessie established a home in Logan, Utah, where they both lived until their deaths. Their 2 daughters were born there: Ruth Amanda in April 1914 and Leah Murray in August 1917.

Ed's interest in gardening was a part of his home life: in season, he would come home from the office and begin several hours of hoeing, irrigating and, with his daughters, weeding in his vegetable and flower gardens. When the girls would accompany him during summer vacation, on his service calls throughout the Valley, introduced them to wild watercress, asparagus and flowers in season. They also remember a variety of poets they acquired together, ranging from a prairie dog to pigeons. They was some of his high-risk responsibilities, climbing servicing high-voltage transformer stations. In fishing season, Ed would rush home, load the family into the car and drove to the wonderful streams where he waded in, fishing with his colorful flies and rod until dark. Fresh trout cooked by Ed was a frequent treat for breakfast. His skill as a hunter was equally outstanding. In season, he rose before dawn to travel to the swamp areas into a duck blind, get his limit and go onto work. Roast duck and elk were favorite Hancey dishes.

It was probably Ed's wonderful sense of humor, his ability to get out an anecdote, or, act out a bit of humor that acquaintances, fellow workers, and certainly family remember most. He was able to make up poetry or little ditties he sang to his daughters when they were riding together through the countryside. Both his sisters, wrote poetry, as did daughter Laah. The girls would go with Ed when he visited his Mother who maintained her own home in the Northern part of Logan until her death. She loved to fish into her advanced years and maintained her independent spirit to the end.

Ed's children were born after Grandfather James death and never knew him. Louisa maintained close ties with her Purser relatives living in Logan, and had frequent visits with daughter Lettie and her family, as well as to Ed's home to the end of her life.

Moses worked as an electrician for a time. He was on a power pole when his watch fob contacted a high-voltage wire but survived the electric shock. Ed had to rush to Preston, Idaho, where Moses lived, to give permission for doctors to amputate parts of both arms and hands as a result of the accident. He coped with his handicap remarkably well and held the job of city coroner for a number of years, surviving Ed.

It was an accident Ed suffered when servicing street lights in Preston which brought about limited use of one arm. His apprentice helper didn't disconnect the power. Ed returned to live in Logan, working part time, but resigned from Utah Power & Light Co. So he could enter war work as an electrician at Hill Field, a large Government installation. Wife, Jessie, had been active in LDS Ward activities over the year; meetings and Relief Society. Her Church contributions were a great comfort to her when she was faced with life's problems. She served as House Mother for a Utah Aggie fraternity, and at the outbreak of World War II, Jessie felt a patriotic urge to do her part, along with Ed. She was hired by the Signal Corps, at the Utah Quartermaster Depot in Ogden, where she worked for almost 5 years, receiving a special commendation from the commanding Officer for her fine service. Again, she contributed her services after Ed's death to become the head cook for the lunch program at Logan Junior High School until her retirement.

Ed's oldest daughter, Ruth, married in 1935 following her graduation from High School. She and her husband George R. Anderson lived for a time in Los Angeles but returned to Logan to begin his own business as a tile contractor. Ed's granddaughter, Marilyn, was born in 1940. Ruth's husband died in the 1960's, but Ruth continues to reside in California, and Marilyn and her family live in San Diego as well.

Laah, Ed's other daughter graduated from Utah State Agricultural College and left her

teaching to enter War Service at the Quartermaster Depot, so the family of 3 were all serving together, traveling to Ogden each day. Ed rode in a car pool of other war workers, and a tire blew enroute to Logan in Sardine Canyon. He was the most seriously hurt with broken ribs, contusions. However, a punctured lung was not detected and he died from complications 2 August 1943, in Logan Hospital.

Laah returned from Los Angeles and her personnel position with Air Depot there, to be with Jessie. She married Charles Whiting in 1945 in Hawaii, living there while an analyst with Central Pacific Base Command, and again, when designing sportswear for Kamehameha Garment and Romilee companies. Laah returned to California and graduate study at UCLA, USC so as to resume her teaching career. She retired in 1982 after more than 30 years as professor in several California colleges and universities to reside in northern California.

Relatives remember Ed for his infectious humor they enjoyed. His labors were well known—like his parents, he was a ‘do-er’. But like mother Louisa, he remained apart, an introvert of sorts, as result of living away from all of his family in his young life. His legacy speaks for itself.

Information from book JAMES HANCEY FAMILY Publ. 1988

Typed into the computer Kathleen Jardine Woolf Oct. 2002 Idaho Falls, Idaho