

EXPERIENCE OF ZEKE JOHNSON, son of Joel Hills Johnson, born in 1869.
(Recorded in the JOHNSON BULLEITN, September 1973)

“I have been requested to relate an experience I had in 1908-9 in San Juan Co. I was just making a home in Blanding and the whole country there was covered with trees and sagebrush. I was working hard to clear the ground to plant a few acres of corn. We had five acres cleared and started to plant corn. My little boy, Roy, about 7 or 8 years old was there to help me plant the corn. I'd plow around the place, then he would plant the furrow with corn, then I'd cover it and plow again. While I was plowing on that piece of ground, I discovered there were ancient houses there, that is the remains of them.

As I was plowing around I noticed that my plow had turned out the skeleton of a small child, the skull and backbone, but most of the bones of course were decayed and gone. Part of the skeleton was there, so I stopped immediately as my plow had passes it a little. I turned and looked back against the bar of the plow between the needles. As I was looking at that little skeleton that I had plowed out and wondering, all of a sudden, to my surprise, I saw the bones begin to wiggle and they began to change position and to take different color and within a minute there lay a beautiful little skeleton. It was a perfect little skeleton.

Then I saw the inner parts of the natural body coming in the entrails, etc. I saw the flesh coming on, and I saw the skin come on the body when the inner parts of the body were complete. A beautiful head of hair adorned the top of the head, and in about a half minute after the hair was on the head, it had a beautiful crystal decoration in the hair. It was combed beautifully and parted on one side. In about half a minute after the hair was on the head, the child raised up on her feet. She was lying a little on her left side with her back toward me. Because of this I wasn't able to discern the sex of the child, but as she raised, a beautiful robe came down over her left shoulder and I saw it must be a girl.

She looked at me and I looked at her, and for a quarter of a minute we just looked at each other smiling. Then in my ambition to get hold of her, I said, 'Oh you beautiful child.' I reached out as if I would embrace her and she disappeared. That was all I saw, and I just stood there and wondered and thought for a few minutes... Now, I couldn't tell that story to anyone, because it was so mysterious to me and such. Why should I have such a miraculous experience? I couldn't feature a human being in such a condition as to accidentally plow that little body out and see it come alive. A body of a child about 5 to 7 years old, I'd say. I just couldn't tell that story to anyone until finally, one day I met a dear friend of mine, Stake Patriarch, Wayne II. Redd of Blanding. He stopped me on the street, and said, 'Zeke, you have had an experience on this mesa you won't tell, and I want you to tell me.' Well, I told it to him. Then he had me tell it to other friends and since then I've told it in 4 temples in the United States, and many meeting houses, many socials, Fast meetings, and at Conference time.

I wondered and worried about it for years as to why I was allowed to see it, a common man like me – uneducated as I was. Why was I, just a common man, allowed to see such a marvelous manifestation of God's powers? One day as I was walking along with my hoe on my shoulder, going to hoe some corn, something said, 'Stop under the shade of the tree for a few minutes and rest.' This just came to me and I thought I would, so I stopped there and this was given to me:

It was an answer to my prayers. I prayed incessantly for an answer as to why I was privileged to see that resurrection. Then I was told why. When the child was buried there, it was either in time of war with the different tribes, or it was wintertime when the ground was frozen, and they had no tools to dig deep graves. If it were during time of war they couldn't possibly take time to dig a deep grave. They just planted the little body as they could under the circumstances. Then it was done, the sorrowing Mother knew that it was such a little shallow grave that in her sorrow she cried out to the little group present, 'That little shallow grave, the first beast that comes along will smell her body, and will dig her up and scatter her to the four winds. Her bones will be scattered all over these flats.'

There just happened to be a man present holding the Priesthood. (A Nephite or a Jaredite, I don't know which, because they both had been in this country.) This man said, 'Sister, calm your sorrows. Whenever that little body is disturbed or uncovered, the Lord will call her up and she will live.' Since that time I have taken great comfort, great cheer, consolation, and satisfaction with praise in my heart and soul, until I haven't the words to express it, that it was I that uncovered that little body.

Thank you for listening to me. I just can't tell this without crying."

Zeke Johnson, son of Joel Hills Johnson