

Priddy Meeks: Pioneer Doctor

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In our area we celebrate Pioneer Day on the 24th of July. This holiday was set aside to honor those courageous souls who risked their very lives to establish our present day communities. It is like celebrating the fourth of July twice in the same month. This said I want to focus on Dr. Priddy Meeks who arrived with the second wagon train arriving in the Salt Lake valley on October 1st 1847.

Before coming west Priddy Meeks was a successful farmer whose daughter Huldah came down with the whooping cough. Against his better judgment he was encouraged to employ the services of a regular doctor. Priddy Meeks described his methods as, "I am convinced that his medicine killed her."

I know that if we could go back and investigate his daughter's death and the deaths of so many Americans of that era we could verify Priddy Meeks declaration that it was the doctor's medicine that killed his daughter. The most popular medicine of that era was calomel which was dispensed with careless abandon like candy to crying children.

Later autopsies would reveal the destruction of bowels, lungs, the liver and other organs caused by this crude mercury based drug. Even after discovering the ill effects of the mercury in calomel the pharmaceutical industry continues putting mercury in many products from vaccines to saline solutions.

After Meeks' daughter died at the hands of the regular doctor, he took it upon himself to help neighbors and friends using common sense and the few herbs and roots he was familiar with. He was able to relieve many of their illnesses. Seeing his success, the community insisted that he should quit work and go to doctoring. Meeks responded, "I know nothing about doctoring." The community replied, "You beat the doctors."

Meeks purchased the Thompsonian medical course over the objections of his critically ill and dying wife who thought his money would be better spent caring for their children after her death. His studies led him to search for medicines in the wild which he harvested and applied to his dying wife, saving her from her maladies and the prognosis of death.

Dr. Priddy Meeks moved west and ,after establishing a medical practice in the Salt Lake Valley, was asked to support the pioneers who were living south in Parowan. There he was a blessing to the populous. My favorite case of Dr. Meeks was with a teamster, James McCann, who was walking back to the eastern United States from California. He made it as far as Parowan Utah, but both feet were frozen up to the ankles. He was taken to Dr. Meeks for amputation to save his life. Meeks was inspired to have him take cayenne pepper orally which was administered frequently. The patient immediately felt pain in his numb feet, which was a good sign. To the doctor's surprise the dead flesh started, "dropping off while steadily being replaced with new flesh." Needless to say he saved his feet from being amputated.

Recently one of our teachers at the School of Natural Healing worked with a local chiropractor who got frostbite after getting stranded in a snow storm while hiking in the Alps. Even in the present day the medical remedy was amputation. She went against medical doctor's orders and massaged the feet with cayenne ointment. She did not "damage" his feet, as the doctors warned but saved him from amputation.



The herbs work today as they did then and will still be valuable hundreds of years from now. We should all learn of the herbs and their healing qualities so we can relieve suffering and save lives.

David Christopher is a Master Herbalist and the director of *The School of Natural Healing*. He also co-hosts the popular radio show "A Healthier You" and is a popular international teacher and lecturer.