

DAVID AND WILLIE STORY, IS IT TRUE?

Our efforts have been rewarded, It finally comes down to “ Is President Thomas S. Monson a Profit, Seer and Revelator and can you believe what he says? We are ask that question often.

As we have noted, last month the Church History Department wrote a letter to St. George Temple Visitor Center Director, Elder Swinton noting that the Missionaries could no longer tell the Story about Peter Neilson bring the \$600 to Great Grand Father David H. Cannon to pay for the transpiration of the Tabernacle Windows, The story about David H Cannon Jr that gave the first two cents to raise the \$800 and Willy giving the \$3.50 that she had saved to purchase a dress. And they no longer tell the Sego Lily store as told in the Death Valley Days video about Willy accepting the Sego Lily as a beautiful thing that gave her the will to remain in St. George and live with the hardships of the harsh pioneer living conditions.

The Temple visitors center researched the information and getting comments from the Cannon descendants. Those they contacted all referred them to Gaye and I. I have often complained that Gaye keep to much “stuff” around, but it was just about not enough to prove that the stories were true. She was able to come up with histories written by her Mother (daughter of David H. Cannon Jr) and other family members. She had a picture taken at the Premier showing of the Death Valley Days Video held at the Tabernacle. She had been chosen as the one that looked most like “Willie” of the family members that were at the Premier. This picture includes Gaye along with others who were involved in the authoring of the history for the Sego Lily story.

In this Picture was:

Her Aunt Effie Cameron - oldest daughter of David H. Cannon Jr.

Mabel Jarvis who wrote the poem, did the back ground story for the Video and wrote articles for the Salt Lake Tribune and we assume did the coordination with Death Valley Days.

Picture of Gaye holding flowers.

Eva Webb, David H. Cannon Jr’s Sister.



Gaye also had an original copy of a “The Cannon Chronicle” reviewing comments about the Sego Lily Video and what was true and what was not.

This material was assembled into a package by Elder Hansen and Elder Swinton and sent to the History Department at church headquarters.

At a Sons of Utah Pioneers Cotton Mill Chapter board meeting, former Temple Visitors Center Missionary Lynn Neiderhauser, remembered that this history was covered in an article by President Monson. Researching the Ensign articles on line, we found a the First Presidency Message titled “Tears, Trials and Testimony” by President Monson.

In President Monson message, (Ensign 1997 September) it read:

“Such a lesson was recounted on a radio and television program many remember with fondness. The program was entitled Death Valley Days. The narrator, known as the Old Ranger, seemed to come right into our living rooms as he would tell tales of the West.

On one program, the Old Ranger related how the glass was obtained for the windows of the St. George Tabernacle. The glass was manufactured in the East. Then it was placed on a ship in New York that sailed forth on the long and at times perilous journey around Cape Horn and up to the west coast of America. The precious glass, stored in cartons, was then transported to San Bernardino, California, to await the overland trek to St. George.

David Cannon and the brethren in St. George had the duty to go to San Bernardino with their teams and wagons to retrieve the glass, that the tabernacle of the Lord could be completed. One problem: They needed the then-astronomical sum of \$800.00 to pay for the glass. They had no money. David Cannon turned to his wife and to his son and asked, “Do you think that we can raise the money, that we might obtain the glass for the tabernacle?”

His tiny son, David Jr., said, “Daddy, I know we can!” He then produced two cents of his own money and gave it to his father. Wilhelmina Cannon, David’s wife, went through the secret hiding places that all women have in their houses. Her search produced \$3.50 in silver. The community was scoured for money, and at length the sum of \$200.00 was accumulated—\$600.00 short of the required amount.

David Cannon sighed the sigh of despair of one who had failed although he had tried his best. The little family was really too weary to sleep and too discouraged to eat, so they prayed. Morning dawned. The teamsters gathered with their wagons and teams, prepared to undertake the long journey to San Bernardino. But they had no \$600.00. Then there came a knock at the door, and Peter Neilson from the nearby community of Washington entered the house. He said to David Cannon, “Brother David, I have had a persistent dream that I

should bring the money I had saved to expand my house—bring it to you, that you would have a purpose for it.”

While all of the men gathered around the table, including little David Jr., Peter Neilson took out a red bandanna and dropped gold pieces, one by one, upon the table. When David Cannon counted the gold pieces, they totaled \$600.00—the exact amount needed to obtain the glass. Within an hour the men waved good-bye and, with their teams, set forth on their journey to San Bernardino to retrieve the glass for the St. George Tabernacle.

When that **true story was told over Death Valley Days, David Cannon Jr. was then 87 years of age. He listened to the story with rapt attention. I believe that in his mind he once again heard those gold pieces, one by one, dropping upon the table as astonished men saw with their very eyes the answer to their prayers.”**

Gaye notarize a statement that she had sat on her Grand Fathers lap and heard these stories.

Last night, we received a call from Elder Peter Hansen (assistant to elder Swinton) noting the appreciation for the work that Gaye and I did in research this information. The Missionaries will be able to continue telling the story of Gaye’s great grand parents, David and Willy Cannon, Peter Neilson and his \$600.

Russ & Gaye Bateman 6 May 2009