

Jan. 1st, 1942

REMINISCENCES OF THE OLD CANNON FARM

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In discussing the program for this year's celebration it was suggested by the General Committee that it should by all means include some reminiscences of the old Cannon Farm where so many of us lived so happily for so long a time. The task was given to me.

My own recollections carry me back to a time before we lived at the Farm; inasmuch as these reminiscences are to be my own, they will naturally be more or less personal.

My mother moved to the farm with her family sometime about 1879. The family comprised then the twins, myself, Brig and Willard who was the baby, he having been born at St. George in '77. We first lived at the Farm House with Aunt Elizabeth. Then father built the School House, had it subdivided with temporary partitions into several rooms, and mother moved there until her own house was completed.

Aunt Sarah Jane lived at that time, as I recall it, in the old log house, just west of where the Portland cement plant now stands. I can't recall just when Aunt Eliza moved to the farm or where she lived at first.

Grace was born Jan. 1st, 1880, while we lived in the School House. The night she was born, (it was midwinter and very cold), they routed me out of bed and sent me over to Aunt Sarah Jane's to get me out of the way; they evidently thought that my presence there would be embarrassing, that I was too precocious and might learn too much about the "facts of life." At any rate, I had to get out in the middle of the bitter cold night; and when I got over to Aunt Sarah Jane's I found Will and Neph Hansen already there in bed with Hugh and Angus; and the only thing I could do was to get into the same bed with them, five of us together. That would seem to me today too much of a crowd.

Well, along about that time children of a school age were beginning to be fairly numerous down on the farm; so it fell to my mother's lot to carry on a school, she having been, previous to her marriage to my father, a school marm for a couple of years; my first school days, and possibly they were the first for a number of the other children, were those with my mother as teacher.

Most of the incidents connected with that experience have now faded from my memory, but I recall one that created a diversion: we were all engaged one afternoon reciting our lessons when Mamie, our oldest sister, noticed that the cat, which had been curled up on a chair nearby, was acting very strangely. Mamie continued to watch the cat and finally could not restrain herself; she burst out with, "I wonder what is the matter with that cat." I was sitting near and I spoke up immediately and impulsively saying, "Oh, nothing, she's just having kittens." I didn't realize at all what I was saying and I do not know what caused me to say it; but a few minutes investigation proved it to be true. The excitement was too much for us kids; it was impossible for us to get back to study, so mother Cannon dismissed school for the day.

After living a time in the old school house, mother's house was completed immediately to the South and we moved in. Thereafter the school house was converted back into a real school house and our cousin, George M. was installed as teacher, he having recently finished a teaching course at the University of Utah. I seem to recall, however, that between my mother's school and George M's, we did attend school for a short period at Aunt Sarah Jane's house with Frank as the teacher. The only definite recollection of that period that remains with me is the word "jocund," and Frank's drilling us in a poem which contained the line

"Jocund that the morn is nigh"

George M. was our teacher for, was it one or was it two years? I am not sure. One incident which concerns him and his period stands out more vividly in my mind than others. He was just at the age when girls interested him and we used to kid him about them and about getting married; one day, however, it got to the point where he offered to bet us, (there were four of us just then present, Angus, Hugh, David and myself) \$2 each (a large sum for those days and especially for us kids) that we would be married before he was. We took the bet but he did not embarrass us by insisting that we "put up or shut up." The bet was simply recorded in our memories and there were no stakes or stake holders. Actually it was not long until George did become engaged and then married to Addie Morris. We boys were happily surprised shortly thereafter, and tickled beyond measure, when he sent down \$8 to be distributed to us four, \$2 to each; that seemed a lot of money to us in those days.

George M. was succeeded as teacher of our school by Sondra Saunders, just out of the University; he taught two or three years, I am not sure which. He in turn was succeeded by an Englishwoman, Emily Batt, a cripple who walked with the aid of crutches. The most definite thing I can remember about her is the use of the word "dawdle"; it was new to us. She used to say to us, Brig particularly, "Don't dawdle."

It was about this time that father conceived the idea of making the school count for something more than an elementary one. The children were growing up. Some of them, Mamie and Angus particularly, had already started at the University which was then hardly more than a High School. Karl G. Maeser had lately arrived in Utah and his fame as a teacher was spreading abroad. Another German convert by the name of Frederick W. Schoenfeldt had also arrived in Salt Lake; he was employed in the shoe department of the ZCMI, but his German training and education fitted him for a more important role. Father set out to secure him as our school master, feeling that, although he would have to pay much more than he had been paying, it would be well worth it. Bro. Schoenfeldt debated the matter some time but finally shrank from the task and declined it. Who can tell what might have happened if he had accepted; we might have all been "Hitlerites" by this time.

The older members of the family will remember the three seated carriage or wagon, or bus, or whatever it might be properly called; we ourselves called it the "big carriage." It was, however, a well known conveyance wherever we went and was generally known as the "Cannon Hearse." It took us to school after we started to go to school in town; it took us to Sunday school clear over to the

so-called Farmer's Ward, over on State St. below 17th South. We were members in those days of that far-a-way Ward.

The incident I am about to relate had something to do with the old three-seater, the big carriage so-called. Father cautioned us boys many times not to hang on the back of this or other conveyances, a thing which boys were very prone to do in those horse-and-buggy days. On a certain Sunday in early December, 1882, Hugh and I were running behind and hanging on to the rear of the big carriage. Angus was driving and some of the family were with him, on their way to Sunday afternoon service in the Salt Lake Tabernacle.

I attempted to climb in the carriage from the rear while it was speeding along; I put my foot on a rear step; it slipped off and directly into the wheel revolving nearby, throwing me across the rear axle. It is reported that I let off a loud scream coupled with the command, "Stop, brethren, stop." Apparently Angus heard the command and did stop. Hugh who was by me, disentangled me from the wheel, lifted me out and told me to stand until he could get a better hold in order to carry me to our house nearby. I had regained consciousness and when I attempted to stand I noticed that my right leg collapsed under me. It was broken.

Angus came around to the back while this was going on and, calling to mind Father's repeated warnings about the danger of hanging on behind, remarked, "It serves him well right." He little realized just then how serious was my injury. This accident happened about 1:30 in the afternoon. Our then teacher, Sondra Saunders, went to town for the Doctor but it was several hours before he succeeded in getting one; and it was dark before the Doctor had my leg bandaged in splints.

I was naturally in great pain; so the Doctor when he went back to town prescribed and sent down a pain killer. When it arrived, my mother and Bro. Saunders read the prescription which said "apply ten to twenty drops." They pondered the instruction very carefully; they were of the firm opinion that the medicine was for internal use; but because the instruction was so definite, "apply" and also because opium was a powerful drug, they were afraid to disregard the instruction. So they uncovered my bandaged leg and dropped from ten to twenty drops of the brownish medicine directly onto the new white bandage which was wound around the splints.

A short while afterward, they asked me how I felt; and I, who had witnessed all this and knew that the intended effect was a lessening of the pain, answered that I felt better. And I guess I really believed it at the time. The sequel of this particular event came the next morning when the Doctor arrived for his visit. He noticed the dark brown stain and asked, "how come?" When he got the answer he could hardly control himself for laughter; and he made some sarcastic remarks reflecting on the intelligence of the school teacher who had a guiding hand in the proceeding.

It is said that the Doctor at first was all for cutting off my leg, but that my mother stood firm against the idea. All praise to her. Even though the leg failed to keep pace with the other one in growth, it has served much better than a wooden one. Some years later when I consulted the celebrated Dr. Mixer

in Boston, to see if he could suggest anything to improve my situation, he replied, "Nothing, unless you want me to take an inch off the sound leg and add it to the injured one." I declined the offer, but did suggest to Sylvester later that he give me an inch from each of his legs, which he could easily do without noticing it. He also declined.

Before I close this incident it might be proper to add that some of the boys ascribed my accident to the fact that I had that very morning been smoking cedar bark out back of the barn; the accident was just punishment, they said, for the offense.

Another circumstance down on the farm comes to my mind; this one involved our early attempts at smoking. In this case, too, as in many others, William was our evil genius; what that boy didn't think up in those days, wasn't worth thinking up.

Hugh, William and I undertook, one summer, to keep the weeds out of a considerable patch of sugar beets over on what we called the "Island." We were to have \$2 each for the complete Summer's job; but it was bound to last nearly all Summer. The \$2 seemed to us a goodly sum and we planned very extensively what we would do with it when it came.

Well, as the Summer waxed hot our enthusiasm for our work waned; we soon found ourselves wandering away from the beet patch down to the banks of the Jordan where we could dig in the cool, wet sand; we liked to dig in it and to refresh ourselves with an occasional plunge in the water. One day William showed up at the river bank reporting that he had, while uptown that day, found a package of tobacco on the sidewalk; and subsequently, in an entirely different place, a package of cigarette paper also. Well, Hugh and I were not properly suspicious although what William reported was certainly a strange coincidence, strange enough to arouse suspicion and also questioning.

There seemed to us something providential in this lucky find; we decided not to report it but to make use of it in the only way we knew. So one of us, I am sure it was William again this time because he was the one most fruitful in ideas, so William produced some matches, (you see he hadn't overlooked anything of the makings) and soon we were trying out the new sensation of smoking.

Well, we kept up our smoking rather regularly for some time; and the more we did it the less we worked in the beet patch. In time some of the other boys, I recall Brig and Charley Davey particularly, also began to smoke on their own account. They were not in on our best weeding project but they probably learned about our smoking experiences from one of us; perhaps we had grown too bold about it.

Finally some one found out about it and reported it to father. I can see now in my memory the excitement that was caused when one of the girls announced to us boys that father knew all about our smoking. Charley Davey was at that very moment smoking a cigarette; and when Emily told us that father knew and that we were going to catch it good and plenty, Charley became panicky, threw his cigarette on the ground and stamped on it.

A few days later father invited us in to see him; we were filled with fear and forebodings; we did not know what might happen to us. Father started in very quietly; he said, "I understand that you boys have learned to smoke and that you have entered on a smoking career. You have all been at work pulling weeds under a project where I was to pay you at the rate of five cents per hundred for cockle burrs; I probably owe you all some back pay for work down to now; and I imagine that you will be needing this money to buy tobacco, now that you have started to smoke. So I am prepared to settle with you if you will let me know exactly what I owe."

"Another thing, I shall also want to arrange for you to get rooms and board elsewhere; I imagine you will want to be with others who smoke; you will feel more at home with them than with me because I don't like even the smell of tobacco. So I will be on the lookout for suitable quarters for you elsewhere unless you shall decide to give up smoking."

Well, we all decided there and then to give it up and stay on with him; the decision was our own, arrived at without any compulsion or duress. We were not driven to it and therefore felt no bitterness toward any one. Some of the boys, however, were not permanently converted, they have since gone back to smoking; they must have had their fingers crossed when they gave it up the first time.