

Biography of Martha Telle Cannon

By Julie Cannon Markham, a great-granddaughter

Written October 2020



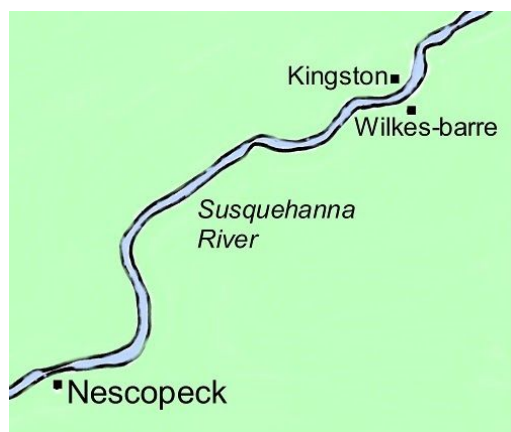
Martha Telle, in a photo taken in Salt Lake City in 1868 at the time of her marriage.

Chapter 1: Heritage of Martha Telle	Page 3
Martha's Father and Grandfather: Lewis and Ambrose Telle	Page 3
Martha's Grandfather, David White Rogers	Page 6
The First LDS Missionaries Arrive in New York City	Page 7
The Telle and Rogers Families are Baptized by Elder Parley P. Pratt	Page 8
The Rogers Family Leaves New York City	Page 10
David and Martha Rogers' Oldest Daughter Susanna is Baptized	Page 13
Lewis and Tabitha Telle Settle in Nauvoo Where Tabitha Dies	Page 14
Lewis Telle Marries Amelia Rogers	Page 15
Chapter 2: Martha Telle's Childhood as Martha Beebe	Page 18
Martha Telle is Born in St. Louis	Page 18
David and Martha Rogers Leave Nauvoo	Page 19
Amelia Rogers Telle Dies	Page 20
Lewis Telle Marries Rachael Chapman	Page 21
Martha and David Rogers are Reunited with Their Daughter Susanna	Page 22
David and Martha Rogers Travel to SLC, Settle in Provo	Page 23
Martha Telle and Her Adoptive Parents Remain Behind	Page 23
David Rogers Serves a Mission	Page 24
The Beebe Family Travels to Utah	Page 25
Chapter 3: Martha Telle Marries George Q. Cannon	Page 27
Chapter 4: The Farm	Page 35
Chapter 5: The Raid	Page 45
Chapter 6: Martha Researches Her Family	Page 48
Chapter 7: Changes in the Family	Page 55
Martha's Children Leave the Farm	Page 58
Chapter 8: Martha Leaves the Farm	Page 57
Chapter 9: The Death and Funeral of Martha Telle Cannon	Page 67

Chapter 1: Heritage of Martha Telle

Martha's Father, Lewis Telle

Between the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812, a baby named Lewis Telle joined the family of his parents and an older brother who lived in the small community of Nescopeck along the Susquehanna River in Pennsylvania.¹ His father, Ambrose Telle, had immigrated from Ronneburg, Germany in 1792 with the intention of making his fortune in the new country.²



Certainly before leaving Ronneburg, Ambrose assured his wife Frederike, pregnant with their third child, that he would send for her. Ambrose

departed Germany with an associate and the two men sailed across the Atlantic to the port of Philadelphia, home to many German immigrants. After several years in the City of Brotherly Love, Ambrose found opportunity in Wilkes-Barre, the county seat of Luzerne, a booming county which at the time comprised much of northern Pennsylvania.



Wilkes-Barre was home to many Revolutionary War veterans, including George Espy. George was the son of an immigrant³ whose ancestors had left Scotland during the Plantation wars under the tumultuous regnal years of James I, left. This occurred during the same period in which the American colonies were initially being settled by the British. King James, in an attempt to take control of Ireland, had offered Irish plantations to loyal, Protestant Scotchmen.

¹ "The Patriarchal Blessing of Lewis Tally Son of Ambrose & Anne Tally Born in Nescopeck Township, Luzerne County, state of Pennsylvania, the 3rd Day of May 1806."

² I spent decades searching for data for Ambrose Telle. In 2018, Thomas Burton Miller found a letter, kept in London for 200 years, which unlocked the door to Ambrosius Telle's past. Much of what is known about Ambrose today comes from this source, the details of which are Tom's to share.

³ Plum, Henry Blackman: History of Hanover Township, Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, 1885, Page 410.

When his son and successor King Charles II, right, attempted to force these Presbyterian families into the Church of England, two hundred thousand Protestants left the British Isles for the North American colonies between 1717 and 1775.



George Espy's wife, Mary Stewart, had also descended from these Scotch-Irish immigrants. Her grandfather Lazarus Stewart was among these Pennsylvania colonists who were angry and dissatisfied with the rule of British kings.⁴



Their descendants willingly joined with other American colonists as they fought for liberty against a distant successor, King George III, left.

At the height of the Revolutionary War, George Espy was commissioned a second lieutenant. After the war, he served as an Elder in the First Presbyterian Church of Wilkes-Barre and supported his family as a stone mason. He also served as a Justice of the Peace.⁵ He and Mary had five children, the oldest being Ann, who was born during the Revolutionary War.

Frederieke Telle, desperate for her husband to return or send for her, wrote Ambrose in 1798, directing her letter to the care of Ambrose's traveling companion in Philadelphia. Her father-in-law penned a postscript urging Ambrose to provide for his family.

Frederike's letter was carried on the ship *Juno* with other mail from Germany. During the turbulent times in Europe after the Revolutionary War and leading up to the Napoleonic Wars, the British stopped ships in the Atlantic and pressed their crews and often their passengers into military service in their war against France. The *Juno* was a casualty of this effort. With its crew and passengers hijacked, the mail was taken to England and archived in London. Frederike's letter was found two hundred years later by German researchers; the letter never reached Philadelphia, and Ambrose did not learn of her desperation.

Ambrose procrastinated his return to Germany and ultimately married the striking and intelligent Ann Espy near the turn of the 19th century. The couple settled in Kingston Township outside Wilkes-Barre. There, Ann's first child was born, a son whom she named George after her father, but perhaps with a nod to honor the recently deceased general, George Washington.

By 1806, the family lived twenty miles west of Kingston, in Nescopeck Township where Ann's second child Lewis was born. Ann named this baby after her grandfather, Josiah, but the child

⁴ Kulp, George B, Families of the Wyoming Valley, Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, E. B. Yordy: 1885-1890, Vol. 3.

⁵ Espy, Florence Mercy, History and Genealogy of the Espy Family in America, Fort Madison, Iowa, 1905; Eagle, William Henry: Pennsylvania Genealogies: Baltimore, Genealogical Publishing Company, 1896.

was known throughout his life by his middle name, Lewis, likely in honor of Meriwether Lewis, who at that time was exploring the vast territory of the Louisiana Purchase with William Clark.

That same year Ambrose purchased two thousand dollars of whiskey in partnership with a business associate, Robert Patton. The transaction was notarized by the local justice of the peace, George Espy.⁶ This was a sizable amount of alcohol, profitable because it was easier to transport and trade than the corn from which it was made. In 2020, the value of the whiskey would be worth over \$40,000. Presumably, through transactions similar to this, Ambrose supported his family, which ultimately included four more sons.

Also that year, Ambrose served as a county commissioner, giving evidence that he was respected by his fellow Pennsylvania citizens.⁷ In 1814, near the end of the War of 1812, he purchased one hundred and fifty-nine acres which he called “Chance Situate.”⁸ This property was near Quakake Creek, a tributary of the Lehigh River thirty miles south of Wilkes-Barre. Ambrose and Ann lived there only four years.

Unfortunately, fifty-three year old Ambrose died in 1818, leaving his wife with six sons, none yet out of their teens. In 1820, forty-two year old Ann married a Connecticut widower and Revolutionary War veteran, Ephraim White, who had settled in Luzerne Township through a land grant given to retired soldiers.⁹

Pennsylvania law required guardians to be appointed for minor children of widows. That year, Ann’s brother John Espy took custody of George, her oldest son. Her brother-in-law Edward Inman, a retired colonel from the War of 1812, took custody of Lewis and his younger brother Edward, ages fourteen and eleven. Ann’s three youngest sons, nine-year-old Ambrose, named after his father, six-year-old Hamilton who was named after the famed Revolutionary War hero Alexander Hamilton, and Sidney, who was an infant at the time of his father’s death, remained in her care.¹⁰

It was under these conditions, possibly harsh, that Lewis left Pennsylvania, perhaps in 1824 when he turned eighteen, and headed for New York. He had no relatives there, but he had learned carpentry skills. Perhaps he found work on various canals in eastern Pennsylvania which took goods to the east coast. He stopped in Westchester County, just north of New York City.

⁶ Luzerne County, Pennsylvania Land Records, FHL Film #964832-3.

⁷ Luzerne County Federalist, 13 June 1806.

⁸ Luzerne County, Pennsylvania Land Records, FHL Film #964832-3.

⁹ Luzerne County Register of Wills 1839-1963, FHL Film #959120-959121. Ephraim White’s will was dated 25 September 1832. Ann White was mentioned. Her brother John Espy was named as an executor.

¹⁰ Orphan’s Court, Luzerne County, Pennsylvania, FHL Film #0959114: 5 August 1818, George E. Telle appeared before the court as a minor over the age of 14. His Uncle John Espy was appointed his guardian. 10 April 1820, “Col. Edward Inman was appointed Guardian of Lewis and his brother Edwin. This is the petition of Anne Telle (sic). Lewis is a minor under the age of 14.” 14 August 1826: Ambrose Telle, “late of Hanover, a minor over 14, made the choice of Ephraim White, who is his step-father, to be his guardian.”

Perhaps Lewis boarded with or worked for Nehemiah Oakley, a prosperous farmer in the beautiful Putnam Valley along the Hudson River in Westchester County. Nehemiah's wife, Sarah, had been adopted as a child from the Mohawk tribe on Long Island. Sarah and Nehemiah were the parents of fifteen children, one being their daughter Tabitha.

Lewis Telle and Tabitha Oakley married in Westchester County about 1827. With economic opportunities abundant in New York City, the couple moved there where their first child, Sarah Ann, who was named after Tabitha's mother, was born in 1829. Lewis improved his carpentry skills in the city, supporting his family by working as a builder.¹¹ Tabitha's younger brother William also lived in the city with his family.



Martha's Grandfather, David White Rogers

David White Rogers, also a carpenter, moved to New York City at this time. David was the son of Samuel Rogers of Massachusetts who had fought in the Revolutionary War alongside his father. In 1782, Samuel married Hannah Sinclair, whose father was also a Revolutionary War veteran.¹² The couple settled in Vermont where they raised ten children. Samuel chose David's name, honoring the deceased husband of his aunt Susanna Rogers White. David White had been a member of a well-respected family, but his premature death left his wife without a son to carry on David's name.

David married Martha Collins, who was the daughter and granddaughter of war veterans. Both David and Martha's ancestral lines went through early Massachusetts colonists in the 1630s who had immigrated to the New England colonies with the Winthrop Expedition. At that time, thousands of Puritans left England under the rule of the previously mentioned Charles I who was trying to force not only the Scotch-Irish Presbyterians back into the Church of England, but also the English Puritans. David and Martha's lines pass through those Puritans to the Reverend John Rogers, a Protestant minister who was burned at the stake by Queen Mary in 1555 when he

¹¹ 19 April 1880, Sarah Ann Telle King to Martha Telle, "Our father learned the carpenter's trade and went to New York where he established himself as a "builder."

¹²Autobiography of Ross Ransom Rogers: "I cannot write much of anything concerning my grandparents at this time. I will only state that they both took an active part in the war of the Revolution, when the colonies were struggling against Great Britain for their independence."

refused to convert to Catholicism. David and Martha knew their American and British heritage and taught it to their children.

At the time of their move to New York City, David and Martha had seven living children. They found a home near the battery, at the southern end of Manhattan Island, where two more children were born. However, the Asian/European cholera epidemic crossed the Atlantic in 1832, rapidly spreading throughout the city and even into Canada. Health officials did not understand that a waterborne bacteria caused the disease.

The Rogers family tried to quarantine their children. This was not only difficult, but ineffective.¹³ Martha fell ill, and although she survived, two of her younger children did not. The family left New York City for Westchester County until they felt the danger had passed.

Lewis and Tabitha Telle remained in New York City where their son George, named after Lewis's grandfather, was born in 1832. Their next son, who had been named after Lewis, died in 1837. Later that year, their daughter Tabitha was born in New York City, obviously named after her mother.

The Rogers family returned to New York City in early 1837 where David opened a cabinet shop in his home at 515 Greenwich Street. Perhaps it was at this time that Lewis Telle met David Rogers, and possibly they worked together. David was almost twenty years senior to Lewis Telle, and perhaps David chose to mentor the younger carpenter.

David's oldest daughter, Susanna, had married an Italian revolutionary who was involved with the Bonapart family in France. Susanna, her husband and young son lived in London. David still had three older children at home: Charles, age twenty-one, Amelia, age eighteen, and Ross, age sixteen. Perhaps they enjoyed the company and association of Lewis and Tabitha and their young family, as David and Martha had younger children, also. Hester Ann was twelve; Caroline was ten. Henry, the youngest, was just four.

The First LDS Missionaries Arrive in New York City

In June of 1837, missionaries from the Church of Jesus Christ arrived in New York City from Kirtland, Ohio, a year after the dedication of the Kirtland Temple. These missionaries had been called by Joseph Smith, the prophet of the newly organized church, to preach the Restored Gospel in England. They had traveled east along the Erie Canal and down the Hudson River to reach the Port of New York. The group of seven included three apostles, Heber C. Kimball, Orson Hyde and Willard Richards. With them were four others, one being Joseph Fielding.

¹³ Autobiography of Caroline Rogers Daniels Smoot, 14 June 1912. Much of the information about the Rogers family comes from Caroline's writings and is not footnoted.

Joseph Fielding had emigrated from England to Toronto at the height of the cholera pandemic. There, he and many fellow Methodists were chastened by their church hierarchy for awaiting a restoration which they believed was foretold in the New Testament.

In 1836, Joseph Smith had called Apostle Parley P. Pratt to preach in Canada. Enroute, Elder Pratt was given a letter of introduction by a fellow traveler which led him to John Taylor in Toronto. Mr. Taylor was one of the Methodist teachers studying with Joseph Fielding and who had also been censured. He arranged for Elder Pratt to meet with his study group. Elder Pratt's success in Toronto was tremendous, with many of the families selling their homes and relocating to Kirtland in the fall 1836. Two of the missionaries in New York City with Joseph Fielding, Isaac Russel and John Snider, were also from this Canadian group.

The missionaries intended to sail to England on the ship *United States*. However, the berths filled before passage could be booked and they found themselves scrambling for a place to stay until the next ship departed. During this short period, they worked with Elijah Fordham, a faithful convert to the LDS Church who lived in New York City. His father allowed the missionaries to live in a warehouse he owned.

Utilizing the time they had, the missionaries printed hundreds of copies of a pamphlet written by Orson Hyde, "A Timely Warning to the People of England." The seven missionaries, with the help of Elijah Fordham, spread the tracts throughout the city. Also during this week, the missionaries met the Rogers family and discussed the truths of the Restored Gospel with them. Unbeknownst to either Joseph Fielding or David Rogers, a great-granddaughter of Joseph's, Ida May Burton, would marry a great-grandson of David Rogers, Collins Telle Cannon, in 1915.¹⁴

David's ten-year-old daughter Caroline would later record that her father wrote a letter to her sister Susanna, entrusting it with Heber C. Kimball who promised to deliver the letter to Susanna in London. At the end of the week, the ship *Garrick*, carrying the seven missionaries, was towed from the East River by a steamer and sailed on to England.

The Telle and Rogers Families Are Baptized by Elder Parley P. Pratt

Elijah Fordham remained in New York City and met Apostle Parley P. Pratt when he arrived in the city the following month. Elder Pratt lived and worked with Brother Fordham for almost a year, preaching the gospel.

¹⁴ Autobiography of Caroline Rogers Daniels Smoot, 14 June 1912. While several Rogers family records state that David and Martha were converted by Parley P. Pratt and Elijah Fordham, I found it amazing that Caroline remembered a visit from Heber C. Kimball, Orson Hyde and "Brother Russel." These three men were among the original seven missionaries to England, and their visit to NYC occurred before Elder Pratt arrived. Caroline remembered that her father gave Elder Kimball a letter he had written for Susanna. Caroline didn't pull this out of thin air, down to the unusual spelling of Isaac Russel's surname. There is no question in my mind that these missionaries visited with the Rogers family before Elder Pratt's arrival in NYC.

Elder Pratt later recorded that at first he and Elijah had little success in the city. They baptized six members and organized a branch which met on the second floor of a home on Goerck Street, across the island from the Rogers' home on Greenwich Street. This room was small and Elder Pratt desired a larger place for the converts he expected to find.

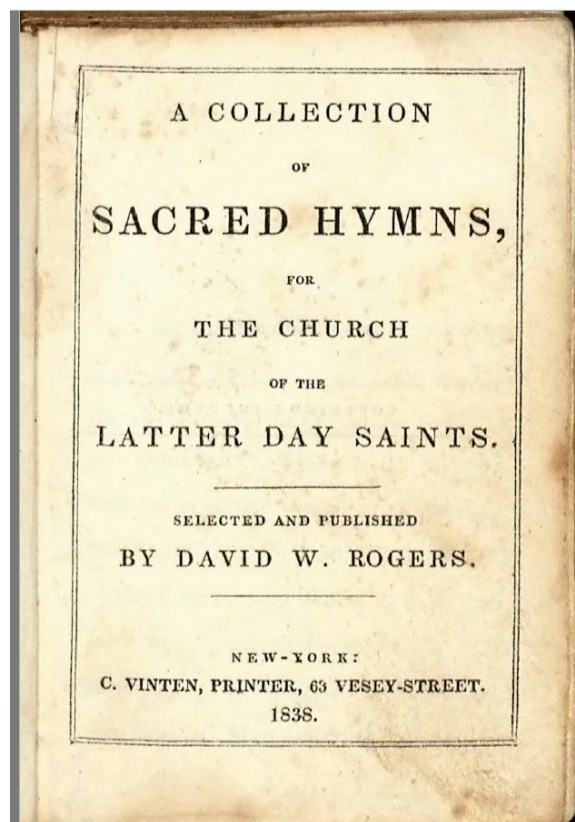


One Sunday, as Elder Pratt preached along a street, he asked his listeners if there “was not one person willing to open their house for me to preach in.” David Rogers, returning from Methodist services, offered his home, filling it with chairs from his shop. His daughter Caroline later wrote that her father fasted and prayed for four days and received a testimony of Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon.

Carolyn also wrote that two years before the missionaries came, her mother Martha had a dream wherein two men visited their home with a book which they said was of great

importance. When Martha saw Elder Pratt and Brother Fordham, she recognized them from her dream. Caroline also wrote that she and her sister Hester enjoyed hearing Elder Pratt speak of the restoration of apostles. Even as a child, she had been taught by her parents the truths from the New Testament and recognized that apostles had been part of the church when it was organized at the time of the Savior.

On December 19th, 1837, Elder Pratt baptized the four oldest Rogers children, Charles, Ross, Amelia and Hester, in the East River. Six days later, on Christmas Day, David and Martha were baptized. The couple had desired that their children be baptized of their own volition, not feeling any compulsion from their parents.¹⁵ During this winter, David compiled a hymnal for the branch members which included songs composed by Elder Pratt and Eliza R. Snow. It was later used in Nauvoo.



¹⁵ The Autobiography of Wandle Mace, found at [Autobiography of Wandle Mace \(1809-1890\)](#). Brother Mace explained why his children were baptized first, and I have assumed this to be the case with David and Martha.

Elder Pratt wrote about his efforts to help the small branch grow.¹⁶ At a prayer meeting which he believed would be his last in the city, the members prayed aloud, in turn. Elder Pratt wrote that each person was filled with the Holy Ghost, and it was confirmed to them that doors would open and their meeting rooms would be filled. As he wrote about this time, Elder Pratt mentioned a joiner, a carpenter, possibly Lewis Telle, in connection with Brother Rogers:

Now there was in this little meeting a man named David Rogers, whose heart was touched. He, being a chairmaker, fitted up a large room, and seated it with the chairs of his ware house, and invited us to preach in the same. This room was crowded. He then joined with one of our members, who was a joiner, and rented a small place, and seated it for a regular place of meeting; this was generally crowded.

Elder Pratt described the miracles which occurred and then wrote:

In short, it was not three weeks from the delivery of the prophecies in the upper room till we had fifteen preaching places in the city, all of which were filled to overflowing. We preached about eleven times a week, besides visiting from house to house. We soon commenced baptizing, and continued doing so almost daily during the winter and spring.

Over the next few months, Elder Pratt performed miracles, healed the sick and strengthened the members. He organized branches of the Church in New Jersey, Brooklyn, and Long Island. During his stay in New York, Elder Pratt, a widower, had courted Mary Ann Frost, a widow. They were married in the spring just before Elder Pratt left for Missouri to gather with the main body of the Saints. His brother, Elder Orson Pratt, arrived in New York City to take his place.

The Rogers Family Leaves New York City

David and Martha spent the summer of 1838 preparing to move to Missouri. Many of Elder Pratt's converts, although not traveling in one group, also left New York City at this time. Their intent was to join with the members of the Church who had been forced out of Ohio and were resettling with Saints who had been in Missouri for eight years.

The Rogers family traveled with the family of Wandle Mace, having sent their household goods ahead "by water," taking what they would need for their thousand-mile journey in a large covered wagon. Rogers descendants know of the family's two-month journey through the writings of Caroline, who was eleven when they left New York on September 11th, 1838.¹⁷

The two families stayed in hotels or camped at night, often buying hot meals instead of cooking over a campfire. Caroline wrote that the children in the two families enjoyed the trip very much, as it was very different than living in a big city, and they gathered nuts and berries along the way. They crossed mountainous terrain in New Jersey, and at Easton, Pennsylvania, they began

¹⁶ Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt, easily found online.

¹⁷ Caroline described details of the trip which were very consistent with Brother Mace's description.

traveling on the First National Highway built by the new United States government. Parts off the toll road were paved with macadam, a crushed rock; thousands of western pioneers used this highway. Six hundred miles long, the road led the two families through what is now West Virginia, Ohio and Indiana. As they crossed Indiana into Illinois, they traveled through beautiful prairies which they had never seen before.



In early November, they began hearing news of members of the Church in Missouri being driven from their homes after the Governor, Lilburn Boggs, signed an extermination order. These Church members did not have the option to head farther west, across the Missouri River into Native American lands, so the Saints fled east across Missouri back to the Mississippi River.

As the Rogers and Mace families reached Quincy on the east side of the Mississippi River, they met fleeing Saints who told of the death of Apostle David Patton at the Battle of Crooked River and of the capture and imprisonment of Parley P. Pratt, Joseph and Hyrum Smith, and other Church leaders.

Brother Rogers and Brother Mace rented a home in Quincy and took in as many people as they could. Their wives, Martha and Margaret, cared for them. Their goods were retrieved from Missouri, but Martha and Margaret sold most of it to provide for the desperate members of the Church.

Ice floes on the Mississippi stopped the ferries for a time and many refugees were stranded on the west side of the river. Working with the compassionate citizens of Quincy, food and other supplies were bravely carried across the river by one lone, strong man in a canoe who paddled through the ice floes amidst cheers and prayers from onlookers on both sides of the Mississippi, bringing relief to the LDS families until they could safely cross the river.¹⁸

In addition to being charged with the care of a commissary to help the poor, David Rogers was tasked by the local Church leaders to cross into Missouri and meet with their imprisoned leaders. Traveling back and forth several times, David carried messages and instructions to the leadership

¹⁸ Autobiography of Wandle Mace.

in Quincy from the prophet. David was also given power of attorney from many of the saints who had fled. Having not been a resident of Missouri, it appears David was relatively free to travel to the various former LDS communities and sell the properties of the Saints who had lived in four different counties and in some cases retrieving their belongings.¹⁹

However, on one occasion in Far West, he was stopped by a posse of forty men which arrested him and his companion, Charles Bird, a faithful convert who had just arrived from upstate New York. A crowd of three hundred Missourians gathered to watch. The two men were ordered to hand over any money they had collected, plus the deeds they had in their possession. They could then leave the state or be killed.

David asked if he could address them. Several in the crowd urged the armed posse to let him speak. David briefly told of the history of the members of the Church in Jackson County since 1831, and how they had been driven from their homes in violation of the law. He then said:

...the God of Israel has ordered that the lands from which his servants were first driven shall be sold, and the means used in helping those helpless ones out of the state. And I am sent here to perform that business, and in the name of Israel's God, and by His power, I shall accomplish the work. And in no way can I be prevented only by committing wilful, cold-blooded murder.

After speaking, David unbuttoned his coat and vest, bared his chest and spoke again:

And if any one present is prepared for that, now is the best time you can ever have....

The posse and the crowd departed, leaving David standing alone.²⁰

Before leaving Missouri, David happened upon Brigham Young and his party, half of the group of apostles who were returning to Far West to lay the cornerstone of that temple before departing for a mission to England. This dangerous journey was in fulfillment of a prophecy given by Joseph Smith the previous year.²¹ Missourians and disaffected members of the Church worked in concert to prevent the fulfillment of that prophecy. They planned to meet at the temple site on the prophesied day, April 26th, 1839, to stop any apostles who might appear. President Young's group, and another group of apostles traveling by a different route, hoped to not attract attention. David, fresh from escaping his own trial, gave them twelve dollars from his proceeds and continued east to Quincy.²²

¹⁹ Every biography of David speaks of this. Information is also found in Wandle Mace's autobiography, and it's also covered in the History of the Church. David Rogers and Wandle Mace showed up at the right time and the right place to be of tremendous use and aid to the members of the Church in this desperate hour.

²⁰ Naida R. Williamson, "David White Rogers of New York," *BYU Studies*, Vol. 35, Issue 2, pages 78-79.

²¹ D&C 118:5.

²² Naida R. Williamson, "David White Rogers of New York," *BYU Studies*, Vol. 35, Issue 2, page 80. Charles Bird was the son of Benjamin Freeman Bird, whose great-great-granddaughter Beth Innes would marry Collins Burton Cannon, a grandson of Martha Telle Cannon and the great-great-grandson of David White Rogers.

Meanwhile, the two groups of apostles met at the temple lot just after midnight on the morning of the appointed day. They sang hymns, conducted some Church business, dedicated the temple site, and departed Missouri without any hindrance.

David had also been able to assist Mary Ann Frost Pratt, the wife of Elder Pratt, moving her out of Missouri. Martha invited Mary Ann to live with them.

David Rogers, Brother Mace and a few other men, authorized by Joseph Smith, worked with a land agent and secured thousands of acres of property twenty-five miles north in Commerce, where five years earlier the federal government had fought a war with the Sauk natives. Barracks which had housed American soldiers still stood in Montrose, across the Mississippi River from what would become Nauvoo. David Rogers and his family settled in Montrose not far from the homes of Elijah Fordham and other converts from New York.



Thousands of Saints began settling in Montrose and Nauvoo during the summer of 1839. Joseph and Hyrum Smith were secretly freed by their jailer who feared their lives were in danger. Elder Pratt escaped from prison and fled alone on foot across Missouri. When he reached Quincy, he was so bedraggled after his trials that his own friends did not recognize him.

Undaunted, Elder Pratt wanted to join with the apostles who had already departed for England. Before Elder Pratt's departure in August of 1839, only a few months after his daring escape, David Rogers wrote a second letter to his daughter Susanna, recommending the missionaries to her. After his arrival at the mission office in Manchester the following spring, Elder Pratt gave the letter to Heber C. Kimball who was soon to depart for London.

David and Martha Rogers' Oldest Daughter Susanna is Baptized

In the fall of 1840, Elder Kimball preached with two other apostles, Wilford Woodruff and George A. Smith, at an outdoor venue in London known as Tabernacle Square. Susanna happened across this scene and recognized the men from a dream she'd had a few months earlier. In this dream, Elder Kimball had promised her that, "A key would be left in her possession and she was to use it for a journey she needed to make." Susanna introduced herself, and when Elder Kimball realized who she was, he informed her that he had letters for her from her father. Until this moment, Susanna did not know that her family had joined the LDS Church and had left New York City.

Susanna had a young son, Guglielmo, but her marriage was difficult. Although her husband, Benedetto Sangiovanni, was friendly with the missionaries and joined with them at meals in his home, he refused to allow his wife to be baptized. In February of 1841, Susanna slipped away from her home and was secretly baptized. She wrote her family, telling them of this step she had taken, and Elder Kimball carried the letter to Nauvoo with him in April when he departed England.²³

Lewis and Tabitha Telle Settle in Nauvoo Where Tabitha Dies

Lewis, shown at right, Tabitha and their four children, Sarah Ann, George, Tabitha and a new little son named Lewis, left New York City about 1839, perhaps a year following the departure of the Rogers family. The Telle family likely headed west to Salem, Indiana, where three of Lewis's brothers had settled after leaving Pennsylvania. Perhaps Lewis spent time there before moving on to join with the Saints.



The Telle family arrived in Illinois before June of 1840, in time to be enumerated on the first census of Nauvoo. However, within a few months, Tabitha contracted malaria. Emma Smith, the wife of the prophet Joseph Smith, cared for Tabitha and the infant Lewis in her home, but to no avail. Tabitha and her young son both died.

Lewis returned to New York with his three children. He gave his youngest child Tabitha to her mother's older sister Jane, who had been married and living in Westchester County for almost twenty years without having children. Jane and her husband Collette Roake adopted little Tabitha and raised her as their own. Tabitha lived in Westchester County for the rest of her life. Decades later, Tabitha and her daughter Annie would correspond and share valuable genealogy information with Martha Telle.

Lewis discussed placing his eleven-year-old daughter Sarah Ann in the home of Tabitha's younger brother William, who still lived in New York City, but Sarah Ann returned to Nauvoo with her father and brother George.²⁴ Tabitha's three children, Sarah Ann, George and Tabitha were each named in the 1851 will of her mother, Sarah Bashford Oakley,²⁵ indicating they were known and loved by their Oakley relatives.

²³ Information about Susanna throughout this biography is from the magnificent story of Susanna's life, titled, "In Search of Living Waters," by Jane Rae Fuller Topham, easily available online, and well worth the time to find.

²⁴ 19 April 1880, Sarah Ann Telle King to Martha Telle Cannon, "Late in the fall, my father with his three remaining children (I was one of them and was 11 years old) more dead than alive, returned to New York, where he disposed of his children among their mother's relatives." This was Sarah Ann's memory forty years later. However, an 1843 letter from Amelia to Susanna makes it clear that Sarah Ann and George were in Nauvoo. It appears George remained with his father, as he was named as being in Nauvoo and St. Louis in 1843 and 1846.

²⁵ New York Wills and Probate Records, Putnam, Old Estates and Wills, Volume A-B, 1812-1868 #1062

Lewis Telle Marries Amelia Ann Rogers

After returning to Nauvoo, Lewis asked twenty-three-year-old Amelia Ann Rogers to marry him. She accepted, surely with the blessing of her parents. Their marriage occurred late in the summer of 1841. Two months later, Lewis asked for and was given a Patriarchal blessing by Hyrum Smith. Lewis's uncommon afflictions were acknowledged, but he was told that he would "yet shine as the Diamond that is polished" as he remained faithful.²⁶

By this time, Nauvoo was a growing city. British immigrants who had been converted through the efforts of the missionaries arrived in the city with a variety of skills. LDS communities sprang up throughout the area and along the Mississippi. David Rogers opened a cabinet and joiners shop, possibly in business with his new son-in-law.



David was a self-taught artist. Several of his paintings from Nauvoo still exist. One portrait is of Joseph Smith, the prophet, shown at left.

In the fall of 1843, Amelia had her first child, a son named Edwin after Lewis's younger brother. With the family now in communication with Susanna, Amelia wrote, sending her letter with Rueben Hedlock, a departing missionary who also carried letters from other members of the family. In Amelia's letter, dated 11 June 1843, she said:

My Beloved sister, I gladly improve a few moments in writing you that you may know that I remember you. My health & that of the rest of my family is good. My family numbers five. I have 2 of Mr. Telle's children, a girl 13 & a boy 11 & a little son of my own about 7 months old. He is a smart active little fellow & looks like me.

This place is building up very fast. People are coming from all parts of the United States and other places. The temple is building & slowly the walls are 12 or 14 feet high. Times are hard here as well as in other places but provisions are plentiful. We expect to send this by brother Hedlock & he will tell you how the work is getting on in this place.

I have seen Sister P. Pratt. She thot of you & says you look like me. She said to see you in a distant land seemed like being right back to our house. She is well & has a young daughter 2 or 3 years old.

²⁶ "The Patriarchal Blessing of Lewis Tally Son of Ambrose & Anne Tally."

Father's [family] still lives in Montrose. Father is making brick this summer & expects to build a big house on this side of the river this fall & move over. They keep cows, horses & hens to live very comfortable. If you could be with us once in awhile I fear we would almost be too happy. Mother often speaks of you & says o dear, shall we ever see Susanna again?

The present you sent by Elder Hyde was much played with. We should like to send you some token of remembrance but have nothing nice to send to London.

I have not room to say more. Kiss your little boy. Tell him his auntie wants him to come & see her. Give my love to Mr. S. Mother wishes to be remembered in a very particular manner to your husband.

Mr. Telle joins with me in sending his love and best wishes to you and yours. Do not fail to write often.

From your sister, Amelia Telle



Martha Telle's four older siblings are shown from left above. George Telle remained in Illinois, where he married. Sarah Ann Telle King and Tabitha Telle Sykes were ultimately cared for by their mother's family in New York where they married and raised families. Martha's full brother, Edwin, is pictured above right. He practiced dentistry in Louisiana, where he married and raised a family.

The next year, in 1844, another son joined the Telle family, and Lewis again gave a son his name. This little Lewis was born during a difficult time in Nauvoo.

The members of the Church tended to vote as a block. They were against slavery. These same issues had been a factor in their expulsion from Missouri. Tensions were high and only became higher when in the summer of 1844, Joseph and Hyrum Smith were murdered while in the protective custody of Governor Thomas Ford of Illinois.

After their deaths, the governor, who remained under suspicion by Church members, worked with Brigham Young and other Church leaders to move thousands of Church members from Illinois. Governor Ford promised to keep the mobs at bay until Church members could depart in the summer of 1845, when milder weather conditions and spring grass would allow their cattle to feed as they moved west.

It was likely at this time that Sarah Ann returned to New York to live with William Oakley in New York City. That fall, Amelia's younger sisters became engaged. Hester Rogers married George Washington Beebe and Caroline Rogers married Aaron Daniels. Both grooms were faithful New England converts whose parents had also joined the LDS Church.

Also that year, Susanna was able to escape from the cruelty of her husband. Benedetto had planned a short trip to Brighton and Susanna was relieved when he left. The narrative continued:

Susanna was full of apprehension. Relieved that her husband had left on one of his trips, she sat down to read the Book of Mormon with Guglielmo. They were interrupted by the unexpected sounds of Benedetto's carriage returning. Quickly she slipped the precious book back into its hiding place, and by the time Benedetto had climbed the stairs, she was sitting calmly embroidering. He set his keys on the table and began hurriedly rummaging through his papers. Finding the ones he had forgotten, he hastily retraced his steps and left in the carriage, the keys still sat on the table. Could these be the keys that Elder Kimball had spoken of in her dream several years before?

She stared at them a moment and then out the window at the dust of the vanishing carriage. With breathless haste she took them, went downstairs and through the hall to a door her husband and companions often entered but she was not allowed to. Trying several keys, and finally finding one to fit the lock, she found herself at the head of a stairway. Halfway down was a shelf on which stood a chest of dark wood, unlocked. She opened it and found a veritable treasure revealed in the dim light. There were moneybags, bundles of papers and a heap of golden coins, several of which Susanna placed in her apron pocket.

Hastily she closed the chest and returned to her room upstairs. She had just emptied the coins into a drawer, replaced the keys, and was sitting innocently in her chair when Sangiovanni returned in a livid rage. "Have you taken my keys?" he said, glaring at her. "What keys, Benedetto?" she asked, calmly meeting his gaze. Recovering his keys from the table where he had dropped them, he turned to scowl at her again before leaving in the waiting carriage. She looked at the coins, her passport to freedom. There was no way of knowing how long he would be gone. It could be hours or days. There was no time to waste. Quickly she packed the few belongings they would be able to take, and walked with her son to [Mary Ann] Mitchell's home. Mary Ann agreed to take care of the luggage until [Susanna] could arrange passage to America.

Church leaders in Nauvoo worked through many trials during 1844 and 1845 to complete the temple. Both immigrant and American converts continued to arrive in the city, who were then immediately thrust into the effort to depart west. Shops became an industry to the enterprise, grinding flour and making storage containers, clothing and other essential items necessary for transportation. Amelia's brother Ross arrived from New York with his family at this time, and he worked with his father to make wheels, wagons and yokes.²⁷

With the temple only partially completed, Church leaders began performing ordinances. On January 5th, 1846, David and Martha received their endowment in the temple and were then sealed to each other.



The next month mobs attacked the city and demanded that the citizens leave. For one week, the Mississippi River froze solid and allowed hundreds to depart without the need to wait for ferries to take them across. During this period, President Joseph Young of the Seventy set David apart as one of seven presidents of the Thirty-fourth Quorum of the Seventy. Shown at right, he served in this capacity for the rest of his life.²⁸

After the river thawed, Church members continued to head west amid great difficulty.

Chapter 2: Martha Telle's Childhood as Martha Beebe

Martha Telle is Born in St. Louis

As members of the Church were fleeing Nauvoo, Lewis took his family one hundred and eighty miles down the Mississippi River to St. Louis where a large contingent of Church members lived. There he found work and a home for his family. In May of 1846, Amelia gave birth to her last child, a daughter. Amelia named her Martha after her mother.

That fall, Lewis received a letter from his daughter Sarah Ann, now seventeen, in New York. Her plans with her uncle's family had not turned out the way she had hoped. Amelia replied to Sarah Ann, telling her of the good conditions they had found in St. Louis and invited her to return and join them. Amelia also told Sarah Ann about her siblings:



²⁷ Naida R. Williamson, "David White Rogers of New York," *BYU Studies*, Vol. 35, Issue 2, page 82. The History of Ross Ransom also discusses this.

²⁸ Naida R. Williamson, "David White Rogers of New York," *BYU Studies*, Vol. 35, Issue 2, page 81.

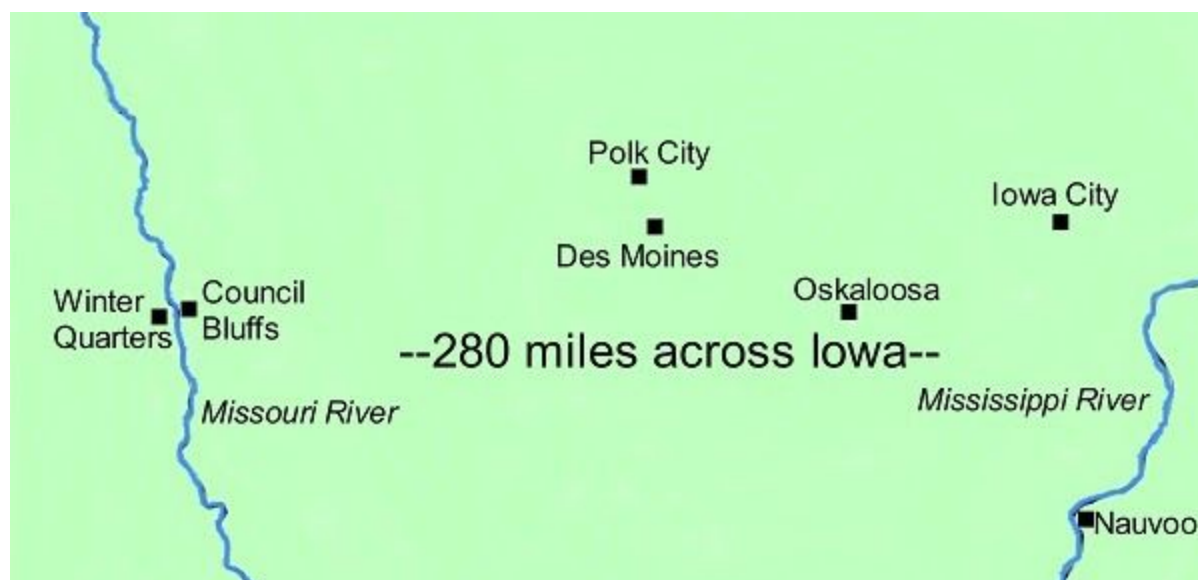
We are all in good health. Edwin has not forgotten you. He often says he would like to see you. He says he wishes you would stay in this house all the time. Little Lewis is a fine stout little fellow. He talks very plain – & now I must say something about little Martha. She truly is a lovely child. Those that know you & have seen her say she looks very much like you. You used to wish you had a sister in the West. You have one now and you must come and see her. Your Father wishes to be remembered to Uncle Collette and Aunt Jane – and he would be very happy to have a letter from little Tabitha.

I have nothing more of importance to write. We shall expect soon to hear from you.

Your very affectionate friend (Signed) Amelia Telle

David and Martha Rogers Leave Nauvoo

By this time, the summer of 1846, Martha and David Rogers had departed with the Saints who were heading west to Winter Quarters, a refugee community on the eastern edge of Nebraska at the Missouri River. David left Martha and their youngest son Henry with Ross's wife and children, who had settled on a farm in Oskaloosa, Iowa. With their families secured through the winter, David and Ross worked along the two hundred and eighty mile stretch of wagons in various encampments between Nauvoo and Winter Quarters, aiding in repairs so the companies could continue to move west.



Hester and her husband George were among the early settlers of Iowa City and found themselves so comfortable that they did not want to leave. Caroline and her husband Arron settled in Polk City with the intention of following the Saints west as soon as they raised the needed funds. These Rogers families were among many members of the Church who were welcomed by the citizens of Iowa, who encouraged the refugees to settle in their areas and build up their communities.

Susanna, in the meantime, had been able to purchase train fare from London to Liverpool and then passage to the United States for herself and Guglielmo. Upon reaching New Orleans, she bought steamship tickets up the Mississippi River to St. Louis. However, due to the severe trials occurring in Nauvoo, she chose to stay in St. Louis where there were six branches of the Church. She was told that her parents were headed for Winter Quarters but that her sister Amelia and her family had recently left St. Louis and returned to Nauvoo.

Having exhausted her funds by the time she reached St. Louis, Susanna entered into an unauthorized plural marriage. Realizing she was expecting a baby and that her situation was precarious, Susanna left St. Louis with a family who was willing to take her and Guglielmo with them on a steamboat up the Missouri River to Winter Quarters where she hoped to find her parents.

Amelia Rogers Telle Dies

By the summer of 1847, Lewis and Amelia and their children had returned to an empty Nauvoo as Brigham Young's vanguard company headed west from Winter Quarters to the Great Basin. The town had no leaders and for a time was a lawless place. Lewis had brought money back with him from St. Louis which enabled him to purchase a few deeds for Nauvoo properties which had been left by the Saints.²⁹ If the market improved, Lewis felt he could make a profit. As there were no longer any banks, he kept his funds under the mattress. Amelia was concerned, fearing that mobbers might attack them at night, but Lewis put his loaded gun at the head of the bed and told her he would defend their family.³⁰

On a very hot July night, Amelia, unable to sleep, quietly left the bedroom. She checked on the children and then walked in their small garden. When she returned, Lewis did not recognize Amelia. He grabbed his gun and shot her, the bullet passing close to her heart and exiting through her back.

However, Amelia did not die. Emma Smith came to the rescue, taking Amelia into her home and caring for her, and it seemed for a time that Amelia would recover. Amelia stopped Lewis from informing her family, saying, "Wait till I get better, Mother will feel so bad about it."

Amelia lived four months before passing away in November of 1847. On her deathbed, she asked Lewis to give little Martha to her mother.

Lewis again found himself the sole parent of a young family. His son George was now fifteen. Edwin was four; Lewis just three. Martha was eighteen months old.

Martha, Caroline and Hester learned of Amelia's death in late 1847. The following spring, Caroline, just twenty-one years old and pregnant with her second child, was able to make

²⁹ Nauvoo Land and Records shows Lewis Telle purchased seven properties in Nauvoo.

³⁰ Details of the last months of Amelia's life come from the writings of her sisters Caroline and Susanna.

arrangements to travel to Nauvoo with neighbors who had planned a trip to Illinois for goods. Caroline and her toddler son traveled two hundred miles in the back of a flat-bed wagon through all kinds of weather, camping by the roadside at night when unable to find shelter.

Caroline collected her niece Martha from Lewis, who for the second time was giving away a precious daughter to relatives. It was at this meeting that he shared the details of Amelia's death with her family. Caroline, close to her niece Martha throughout her life, wrote about Amelia's testimony so that Martha would always have it:

I wish to tell [Martha] the testimony my sister Amelia left to her belief in the gospel of Jesus Christ. Her husband asked her on her death bed what religion sustained her throughout her trials. She looked up into his face with a smile and said that religion that was taught by Jesus Christ. She was a religious woman and left a good testimony behind her, even though she died very young.

Caroline made the return trip to Iowa with her friends, although this time she traveled with two toddlers instead of one. Upon arriving home, Caroline was greeted by her mother, age fifty-five, and her older sister Hester, age twenty-two, who had buried a young daughter just before Caroline had departed for Nauvoo.

Upon seeing little Martha, Hester begged her mother to let her raise the child, and Martha consented. Hester and George raised Martha as their own child, with Martha not knowing she was adopted until much later.

George Beebe had built a log cabin for his family in Polk City in May of 1846. He laid out streets, donated land for a town square, and built a grist mill on the Big Creek River for grinding flour, corn and livestock feed. Initially George supported his family by farming, but the mill became very successful, with settlers coming to the mill from all parts of the county. Hester ultimately had thirteen more children. The last child, a son, was born in Polk City in 1876. Six of Hester's children are buried in a cemetery near the town square.

During the fall, after her return from Nauvoo, Caroline gave birth to her second child; her next eight children were all born in Utah.

Lewis Telle Marries Rachael Chapman

In the summer of 1848, Lewis Telle married thirty-seven-year-old Rachael Chapman, the daughter and granddaughter of American war veterans who had settled in Ohio. It appears that Rachael had known Amelia, because early the following spring, Rachael gave birth to a daughter whom she named Amelia Anne.³¹ In 1853, Rachael had another daughter, Frances Jane.

³¹ 19 April 1880, Sarah Ann Telle King to Martha Telle Cannon. Sarah mentioned her father's third wife: "She had two little girls when he died, one of them named Amelia after your mother."

Lewis died three years later at the age of forty-nine. After their mother's death in 1888, Rachel and Frances both settled in California. There, Frances married and raised two children, one being her daughter Phoebe Rachael, the namesake of Frances' mother. Phoebe talked with her mother and aunt about their parents, Rachael Chapman and Lewis Telle, and recorded the information they gave her. Phoebe became the mother of two children: Violet Frances Bae, born in California in 1899, and Truman Alden Bae, born six years later. Violet collected and typed the family history information before her untimely death in 1922. Preserved in this information was the detail that Josiah was the first name of her great-grandfather Lewis Telle. Lost was the fact that he had been a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

In 1932, Violet's brother Truman married a member of the LDS Church, Lela Allen. He was baptized the following year and with the assistance of his wife began researching his family and performing ordinances for his deceased ancestors, using the information his sister had typed. In 1946, during a trip to Salt Lake City, Lela was a proxy for Truman's grandmother, Frances. In 1978, Truman learned for the first time that his great-grandfather Lewis Telle had been a member of the LDS Church.³² Truman lived to be one hundred years old.

Lewis Telle's three sons remained in Nauvoo after their father's death. Emma Smith, who had cared for a dying Tabitha and then a mortally injured Amelia, took in Edwin and Lewis.³³ Ultimately, George settled in a small town in Illinois where he married and helped raise his wife's son. Lewis suffered an early death in Arkansas. Edwin received a degree in dentistry and settled in New Orleans where he and his previously widowed wife raised five children.

Martha and David Rogers are Reunited with their Daughter Susanna

Susanna and Guglielmo arrived in Winter Quarters in December of 1847, just as President Young and many from his company were returning from the Salt Lake Valley. It was during this winter that President Young was sustained as president of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Upon learning of Susanna's situation, he annulled her marriage.

Susanna lived in a dugout shelter which had been vacated by a family who had left the previous summer for Salt Lake City. Susanna struggled through the winter, although twelve-year-old Guglielmo, who by now was called Sanjo, helped immensely with gathering water, collecting firewood and performing other chores. He was intrigued with the Native Americans and the hustle of preparations made during the winter by the families preparing to head west.

Susanna's baby, a boy whom she named Horatio, was born in the spring of 1848. Unable to learn the whereabouts of her parents, Susanna remained in Winter Quarters. In June of 1849, with her baby asleep on a cot in the dugout, Susanna and Sanjo worked outside weeding their

³² About 1978 I found the 1946 temple ordinances for Frances Jane Telly which named her parents. Through the old Index Bureau, I learned the name and address of the submitter, Truman Bae, who still lived in the same home.

³³ Susanna wrote that Emma had cared for the two boys, as did Martha's daughter Grace. Edwin was enumerated in Emma's home during the 1860 census.

small vegetable garden. A stranger approached, calling her name. In the next moment, her brother Ross was holding her. He had learned from Church members that Susanna had made her way to Winter Quarters. Ross immediately put Susanna and her sons in his wagon and took them to their parents' home in Oskaloosa for what was surely a joyous reunion.³⁴

George Beebe	38	m	Farmer	5000	Ia.
Hester Ann	25	f			"
Alfred	12	m			Ia.
Mary	2	f			Iowa
Alvaro	4	m			"
Martha Telly	4	f			Ia.
Susanna Saugiana	37	f			S. L.
Guillermo	15	m			English
Theratic	2	m			Nebraska T.

In 1850, Susanna, her two sons, and Martha were enumerated with the Beebe family in Polk City where Sanjo could attend school. While Martha believed she was the natural-born daughter of the Beebe's, the person who spoke to the enumerator in 1850 knew differently.

David and Martha Rogers Travel to Salt Lake City, Settle in Provo

Early in the spring of 1850, Caroline, her husband Aaron and their two children, traveling with her brother Ross, his wife Helen and their three children, left their farms in Iowa and resettled in Winter Quarters, across the Missouri River in Nebraska Territory. Certainly Caroline and Ross had assured their parents that they would make a home for them as they left them in the care of Hester and her husband George Beebe, along with Susanna and her two boys. Surely four-year-old young Martha embraced her aunt, uncle and cousins as they said good-bye. Caroline and Ross and their families traveled under the leadership of Milo Andrus, whose company left Winter Quarters in June and arrived in the Valley at the end of August.

After arriving in Salt Lake City, Ross and his family headed south where he and his family and others in their company were among the earliest settlers of Provo. Aaron built his family a home in Salt Lake City.

Martha Telle and Her Adoptive Parents Remain Behind as Her Grandparents Leave Iowa

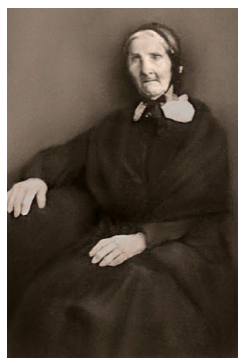
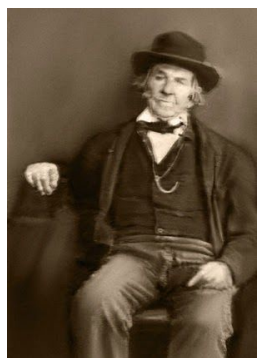
In 1852, David, age sixty-four, and Martha, age fifty-nine, their twenty-two-year-old son Henry and daughter Susanna, age thirty-nine, and her two sons left Iowa with the John S. Higbee company, leaving Hester, George, three young children and their adopted daughter Martha

³⁴ In Search of Living Waters, XV. The Reunion, page 60.

behind in Polk City. They arrived in Utah in the middle of August with Sanjo later writing that he had enjoyed the journey very much, being fascinated with the Native Americans, their trading camps, and all the scenery and wild animals.

Aaron Daniels and Ross Rogers met the travelers about twenty-five miles east of Salt Lake City, preparing a feast for their dinner that night and then assisting them down the mountain into the Valley.

Initially, Martha, David and Susanna stayed with Caroline's Family in her home in Salt Lake City. Ross convinced his parents and brother Henry to come with him to Provo, which they did. There, David and Martha, shown below, started all over again, clearing land and building a home. They lived there for the rest of their lives, always remaining faithful.



That year, Caroline, Ross, their spouses, and Susanna received their endowment in the Salt Lake City Council House, shown at



right. The top floor of this building was used for sacred purposes until the Endowment House was completed in 1854.

The following year, Caroline and Aaron left their home in Salt Lake City and moved their family to Provo. Susanna remained in Salt Lake City in Caroline's home. She supported herself and her sons by teaching school. By 1856 Susanna had married a faithful widower, James Keate. Taking another wife the same day he married Susanna, James followed President Young's call for pioneers to build up St. George. There, Susanna adopted a Native American child who was sold to James by kidnapers, who otherwise threatened to kill her. Susanna raised this child, Cora, with all the love a mother could give a daughter. Cora died from cancer a few years before Susanna's death in 1905.

David Rogers Serves a Mission

In 1854, David was called to serve a mission to the Eastern States where many members of his extended family lived. On his way to New York, he stopped in Iowa to visit his daughter Hester and her family, including Martha Telle, who had just turned eight.

During this period, possibly at the urging of his father, David's son Charles, whose wife resisted leaving New York, moved from New York to Iowa and lived with Hester and her growing family. Charles communicated with his mother and siblings in Utah and promised to move to

Utah in the future. Hester's home became the center of the family during her father's mission. David sent his letters to her and she forwarded them on to Utah via returning missionaries.

After three years, in the summer of 1857, David returned from his mission, passing armed soldiers and government supply wagons who were headed to Utah.³⁵ President James Buchanan, listening to partial advisors, had sent these forces to subdue those loyal to President Brigham Young, believing LDS Church members were hostile to the United States. President Young recalled all missionaries and even members of the Church in California and other parts of the United States, but this did not happen instantly.

The following spring, about one hundred missionaries from the east coast and Europe gathered in Des Moines, Iowa. While awaiting the arrival of more returning elders so they could cross the Missouri River and travel through Nebraska and Wyoming together, the missionaries reached out to the Beebe family and strongly encouraged the family to travel west with them. Although the Beebe's resisted, young Martha, now age twelve, desired to be baptized. Elder John W. Berry, who had served in England and was captain of the returning company, baptized Martha. Elder John H. Tippetts, returning from the Northern States Mission, confirmed her.³⁶

Name in Full: <i>Martha Telle Cannon</i>		No. <i>4</i>
Father's Name: <i>Lewis Telle</i>		Mother's Maiden Name: <i>Amelia Rogers</i>
Born at <i>St. Louis, Mo.</i>	<i>28 May 1846</i>	Ordned
Blessed by		
Baptized by <i>John W. Berry</i>	<i>19 Apr 1858</i>	
Confirmed by <i>Elder Tippetts</i>	<i>19 Apr 1858</i>	
Married to <i>Geo. Q. Cannon</i>	<i>16 Mar 1868</i>	
Received from <i>Farmington, W.V.</i>	<i>6 Jun 1896</i>	Excommunicated
Removed to <i>20th Ward, Emery, Utah</i>	<i>3 Feb 1919</i>	Died

Leaving the Beebe family and young Martha behind, the missionaries entered the Salt Lake Valley in June. Federal agents reached a compromise with President Young; a new governor was installed, the soldiers moved to Camp Floyd out of the Salt Lake Valley, and peace was restored.

The Beebe Family Travels to Utah

As the traveling season of the summer of 1859 approached, Hester and George Beebe took Martha and their six children, crossed the Missouri River and headed west to Utah, traveling

³⁵ In Search of Living Waters, XVIII. James Keate, page 79.

³⁶ At the creation of the Cannon Ward in 1896, Martha recalled the names of these missionaries for her ward clerk as he created her membership record. I believe the names of Martha's parents, her birth information, and the two elders' names are in Martha's handwriting.

with an express freight wagon train.³⁷ On this trip, Native Americans bearing rifles attacked the company and a bullet passed through the cover of the wagon in which Martha and her siblings/cousins were hiding for safety. The bullet grazed Martha's head, but she was otherwise unhurt. Martha also later related that they watched a buffalo stampede near their encampment.³⁸

During their time in Utah, Hester, George and their family lived in Provo with David and Martha. In March of 1860 the couple received their ordinances in the Endowment House, shown here, in Salt Lake City, and were sealed to each other.³⁹



It is likely that at this time that Martha learned she was adopted. Perhaps the topic of Amelia's tragic death arose during her family's stay in Utah. Martha's daughter Grace later wrote:

When this information came to her, through the inadvertent remark of some friend of the family, she was stunned, and it was a year or more before she could realize that these good people were not her real parents. She was given every consideration by them, and her love for them and their love for her were unbounded.⁴⁰

George Beebe was disappointed in the conditions in Utah and made plans to return to Iowa, although it is more likely that he had not planned to stay in Utah even before leaving Iowa.⁴¹ Young Martha, deeply converted, wanted to remain, and it appears that her relatives offered to make a home for her in Provo. George and Hester Beebe assured Martha that they would educate her, and with that promise in hand, she agreed to return to Iowa with them.⁴² The family was enumerated in Polk City on the 1860 federal census, shown below. George's occupation was shown as a miller. Whoever spoke to the enumerator reported that Martha was born in Illinois, not Missouri, the latter actually being the case. The ticked boxes on the right indicate that every child in the family was in school.

³⁷ In Search of Living Waters, Chapter XVI. Westward Bound. Susanna's biographer included many family letters which made it possible to track the whereabouts of her siblings and parents. This biography doesn't mention the Beebe family leaving Iowa until 1860 and states that they didn't stay long in Utah. Endowment House records confirm that the Beebe's were in Utah in 1860.

³⁸ Martha Telle Cannon by Ida Mae Cannon Smith, January 11, 1951; Sketch of the Life of Martha Telle Cannon by Grace Cannon Neslen. Martha's daughter Grace states Martha traveled west twice, in 1860 and 1866, and she was specific that in 1866 her mother traveled part of the way in John W. Young's freight train.

³⁹ Sealing children to their parents was not a common ordinance at this time, although it did happen in Nauvoo.

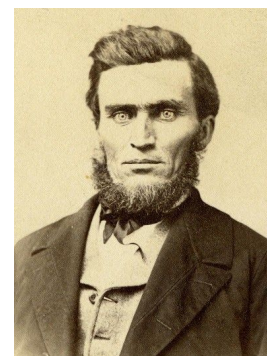
⁴⁰ Neslen, Grace Cannon, Sketch of the Life of Martha Telle Cannon, 20 May 1937.

⁴¹ In Search of Living Waters, XVIII, page 80, Charles wrote in 1859, "Brother Beebe is growing richer by day...Hester and family are anxious to come to the Church and Brother Beebe may ultimately come. He talks that way at present."

⁴² Martha Telle Cannon by Ida Mae Cannon Smith, January 11, 1951.

George Beebe	49	m	Miller	15000	Love	W. Y.			
Hester A. "	28	f				"			
Martha "	14	f				Ill			!
Mary "	11	f				Love			!
Alonzo "	9	m				"			!
Caroline "	7	f				"			!
David "	5	m				"			!
Rebecca "	4	f				"			!
Ellen "	2	f				"			!

As Martha reached her late teenage years, she attended Iowa State College in Ames, not far from her home. After completing her teaching degree in 1866, and with her adoptive parents' approval, Martha made the determined decision to travel to Utah alone, evidence of her faith and conversion even though she was just twenty years old.⁴³



Martha was able to travel on the American Central Railway to the Missouri River, possibly traveling farther on the Union Pacific line through some of Nebraska. It appears she traveled the final but most difficult leg to Salt Lake City with an express freight train led by John Watkins Young, shown at right, a man with much experience traveling between the Missouri River and Salt Lake City, the trip likely taking several weeks.⁴⁴

Chapter 3: Martha Telle Marries George Q. Cannon

Twenty-year-old Martha Telle rented a room within the Fourteenth Ward boundaries in downtown Salt Lake City.⁴⁵ The Fourteenth Ward was one of the original Salt Lake City wards, having been organized in 1847. Members there lived within easy walking distance of Temple Square where the massive Salt Lake Temple was under construction. Many prominent members of the Church also lived in this ward, such as Apostle John Taylor and his nephew and fellow apostle George Q. Cannon.

⁴³ In Search of Living Waters, Chapter XVI. Westward Bound. Susanna's biographer included many family letters which made it possible to track the whereabouts of her siblings and parents. This biography doesn't mention the Beebe family leaving Iowa until 1860 and states that they didn't stay long in Utah. Endowment House records confirm that the Beebe's were in Utah in 1860. Martha's daughter Grace states Martha traveled west twice, in 1860 and 1866, and she was specific that in 1866 her mother traveled part of the way in John W. Young's freight train.

⁴⁴ Neslen, Grace Cannon, Sketch of the Life of Martha Telle Cannon, 20 May 1937: "Her longing to come could not be overcome, and this trip was made with horses and wagon in John W. Young's company." Martha Telle Cannon, by Ida Mae Cannon Smith, 11 January 1951. Aunt Maydae was clear that Martha rode the train in 1866, but I do not believe tracks were laid all the way to Utah until 1869.

⁴⁵ Cannon Family Historical Treasury, "Martha Telle was a young school teacher in the Fourteenth Ward School in the winter of 1867...."



While Martha, shown at left, was intent on being independent and opening a school, she also was determined to marry into polygamy.⁴⁶ From her interactions with missionaries and perhaps during her trip to Utah six years earlier, she learned that plural marriages were approved by the First Presidency, that husbands needed to be men of high integrity and they must be able to support multiple families. Possibly Martha was drawn to the advantages of communal living, of raising children in an environment with the supervision of collective adults and the companionship of many siblings.



Elder Cannon had been ordained an apostle in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in 1860, replacing Elder Parley P. Pratt who had been murdered during a mission in Arkansas in 1857. At the time George met Martha, he was already the husband of three wives, each strong women in their own right: Elizabeth Hoagland, far left, whom he had married in 1854; Sarah Jane Jenne, who had married

George in 1858; and Eliza Tenny, right, who had joined the family the year before Martha arrived in Utah.



The family, with five children, three of Elizabeth's and two of Sarah Jane's, had recently moved into a large home in the ward which was known as "the Big House," shown at left.⁴⁷

Martha opened a school in the west wing of the Fourteenth Ward chapel, shown below. There she taught arithmetic, grammar, composition, geography and elocution, an important public speaking skill in the days before microphones. She was also qualified to teach algebra, astronomy, philosophy and history.

⁴⁶My aunt, Ida Mae Cannon Smith, who personally knew Martha Telle, told me this.

⁴⁷ A reference in a paper by grandson John H. Cannon stated that the second downtown home was on South Temple near First West. This is the home Martha lived in as a bride; it no longer stands.



Perhaps Elizabeth, Sarah Jane and Eliza became impressed with Martha, which was occasionally the case when another wife was added to the family.⁴⁸ It is doubtful that Elder Cannon would have considered Martha without the approval of his other wives; certainly Elizabeth would have had some say.

Martha, in fact, was not shy or demure about this. Less than a month before her marriage, Elder Cannon offered her tickets to a performance. She quickly sketched a reply:

Tues: PM Feb. 21st/68

Mr. Geo. Q. Cannon

Dear Brother

Am I to avail myself of the advantage which Leap Year grants to Ladies? Were such my privilege, or did it belong to my sphere to do so, I would invite the sender of the tickets to accompany me. Not, please do not think me audacious, nor fill your editorial columns with criticism on the "improprieties of young women nowadays."

With due regards to your kind considerations, I am

Yours truly

(s) Martha Telle⁴⁹

As a result, the following month, Elder Cannon sent a telegram to the Beebe's in Iowa:

February 29, 1868

Mr. And Mrs. George Bibee,

Polk City, Iowa

⁴⁸ My experience in researching other family lines with plural marriages has taught me that this was sometimes the case. In particular I am thinking of Emaline Grover, a daughter of Caroline Whiting and Thomas Grover. She was recommended to Charles C. Rich by his wives, who adored her and thought she would fit well into the family.

⁴⁹ This letter, written in pencil on thin onion skin paper, was found among the papers of Espey T. Cannon after his 1971 death. His nephew, Howell Q. Cannon, transcribed this and gave me a copy of the transcription.

Dear Brother and Sister:

You are probably sufficiently acquainted with the habits of our people to not be surprised at what I am about to write. I have made the acquaintance of your adopted daughter and niece, Miss Martha Telle, since her arrival here, and have become much attached to her. I have made a proposal of marriage to her, which she has been pleased to accept. It would give us great pleasure to have your approbation of our marriage, and it is with the hope of obtaining that approval that I now write.

It may not be out of place to say that my father was a brother of Sister Leonora Taylor's, the wife of Elder John Taylor, and I was partly brought up by them. I have often heard Aunt Taylor speak of you, and became familiar with you by name, and also remember you when we lived at Nauvoo, though being but a boy at the time, I have no idea that you knew anything about me.

I shall do all in my power to make Martha happy, to treat her with respect and kindness; in short, to be to her all that a husband, in the broadest sense of the term, should be.

If upon receipt of this, you will be so kind as to send me an Unpaid Telegram, addressed Geo. Q. Cannon, Editor Deseret News, Salt Lake City, I shall feel much obliged. If you approve, one word – "Yes" – will be all that is necessary, and we will understand it.

With respect,
I remain
Your Brother,
Geo. Q. Cannon

Martha married George in the Endowment House on Monday, March 16th, 1868, with President Brigham Young officiating. Martha then moved into her own apartment in the Big House. Two weeks later, she returned to teaching. The notice of Martha's school, published two weeks after her marriage, is shown at right. Pictures of Martha and George, taken at this time, are shown below.

Martha's first two children were twin daughters, born in her home on the 16th of February, 1870. Martha named the first child Hester, after her adoptive mother. The second daughter was named Amelia after her own mother.

Upon the safe delivery of these precious daughters, George wrote Martha's adoptive mother Hester Beebe in Iowa. Hester responded, mentioning her two youngest daughters

LADIES' SELECT SCHOOL.

—:0:—

Mrs. Martha T. Cannon
Will open a **LADIES' SELECT SCHOOL.**
in the West Wing of the
FOURTEENTH WARD SCHOOL HOUSE,
ON MONDAY, the 13th of APRIL,
For the Instruction of young Ladies who desire
to obtain a sound English education.
**SHE WILL THOROUGHLY TEACH THE
FOLLOWING BRANCHES, VIZ:—**
**Mental and Practical ARITHMETIC,
GRAMMAR,
COMPOSITION,
GEOGRAPHY
and
ELOCUTION.**

Having been engaged in Teaching during the
last four years, she will, if required, give in-
struction to a class of young Ladies who may
wish to acquire the art of government in
School with a view of becoming Teachers.

TERMS:
Those entering Teachers' Class, \$7 00 per Quarter
All others, : : : \$6 00 " " "

Should any wish to study

**ALGEBRA,
ASTRONOMY,
PHILOSOPHY
and
HISTORY,**

ARRANGEMENTS can be made for forming
a class in those Branches.

d103tr

who were adolescents at this time. She also named her older daughter Mary, who lived nearby with her young family:

Polk City, Iowa
Feb. 28th 1870

Dear Brother Cannon

Your very welcome letter bringing us the joyful news of Martha's safety is received, and truly feel thankful, and rejoice with you. I presume it would

be needless for me to write that I had great anxiety on her account, and have wished many times that I could have been with her. For I have not forgotten her kindness and attention to me, many times when I have needed it. But it has been a source of comfort to know that she was situated among those who would render her all the attention and care that even a Mother could. Tell Martha that she has realized what was one of the greatest desires of my life. Well I won't attempt to write what the children have to say, for I should not know where to commence. But Nina and Ozza say if they were only there to help take care of them it would not be as it is with Mary's babe, that they could each have one without quarreling.



Hester concluded by asking George to not forget "to kiss the babes for Grandma." She signed the letter, "From your Br. and Sr. in the Gospel, George and H. A. Beebe."

Two years later a son was born. Martha named him Lewis after her father. Another son, Brigham, named after President Brigham Young, was born in 1874 just a few months after Elder Cannon was called to be an assistant counselor in the first presidency. Martha gave all of her children the middle name of Telle, although son Radcliffe did not use it.

During this same period, President Cannon served as a delegate to the United States House of Representatives. With the completion of the intercontinental railroad, President Cannon and his wife Elizabeth and their children traveled back and forth between Salt Lake City and Washington D.C., returning to Utah by train when Congress was not in session.

Martha taught the Cannon children in her own school. By this time, Sarah Jane had four children, although Rosannah was very young and likely did not attend. William had been born to Eliza and attended class, although Eliza also had a new baby too young for school. Elizabeth

had five living children ranging from late teens to a baby, Emily. It is likely that these children were in D.C. with Elizabeth for part of the school year.

Martha's third son and fifth child, Willard, named after Apostle Willard Richards, was not born in Salt Lake City. In the fall of 1876, with Martha having been married ten years, she traveled to St. George with her husband in the company of Brigham Young, Wilford Woodruff and other Church leaders who desired to inspect the progress of the nearly-completed St. George Temple, shown at right.⁵⁰

Loading their horses and carriages onto the train, the party traveled as far as Nephi, where the leaders preached to members and where they spent the night. The next day they continued traveling by carriage, and Martha, in the early weeks of her fourth pregnancy, became very cold. George wrote:

President Young kindly pressed upon me the use of his fur coat and boots for my wife, who was much affected by the cold. He said he would not use them himself. I felt greatly obliged to him for his thoughtful kindness.



The group arrived in St. George after nine days of traveling and visiting with members. Everyone was thrilled to see the St. George Temple, the first temple where proxy ordinances could be completed for ancestors. After a recent storm,

...it stood out in bold relief and in marked contrast with the black and red hills which surround the little valley in which St. George stands. The temple is pure white, and is a massive, unique building. It excited peculiar emotions in all the party to witness once more a temple erected to the Most High God.

Leaving Martha in the care of the family of George's sister Ann Cannon Woodbury, President Young and Elder Cannon spent the evening with his brother David, both shown at right. The next day the leaders visited the temple. George wrote:



⁵⁰ This render of the 1877 St. George Temple was made by my friend [Brian Olson](#) and is used by permission.

The font is being bronzed. From the basement we ascended into the grand hall; and here our emotions -- or I will speak for myself, my emotions almost overpowered me. I felt as though I did not want to talk to but yield [to] the sweet impressions of the occasions....A person who can enter that room without feeling peculiar sensations and being impressed that it was a holy place must be either very thoughtless or dead to all sensibility.

After a weekend of meetings in the tabernacle, Apostle Brigham Young, the son and namesake of President Brigham Young, set Elder Cannon apart before George's departure for Washington D.C. They discussed Martha's situation, as she was clearly not feeling well. Elder Cannon wrote:

My wife's health scarcely permitted her to travel without risk. I submitted the matter to Prest. Young, and he advised me to leave her here for the winter, and she might be able to help in the Temple; and have the children sent down to her.

George returned to Salt Lake City and then went on to Washington D.C. by train.⁵¹ The following month, on Christmas Day, Martha wrote George:

I have had three letters from you since I wrote; the first written at Salt Lake City Nov. 28th; the second written Dec. 3rd soon after your arrival in Washington. Your last letter dated Dec 8th found us together again, mother and children united once more. The children arrived safe on Monday afternoon in eleven days from home in tolerable health...my health is much better than when you were here. We are still living with David's folks. You can imagine how thick we are with six of us and eleven of theirs. And with nine children under seven in one room there is plenty of wise and stir you may be assured. The rooms are nearly ready for me to move into -- but it may be some time before I can verify them as there has been a call made for the plasterers to go to the Temple to work.⁵²

Elder Cannon returned to St. George in April of 1877 for the dedication of the temple and was reunited with Martha for a short time before he returned to Salt Lake City. He wrote her on the 10th of June to let her know of the recent births of Sarah Jane's and Elizabeth's sons, Joseph and Sylvester:

Elizabeth was safely delivered of a boy on Sunday morning (the 10th). It was born at 7.20. I was surprised when I got up to see the baby being washed. He is a promising child. I hope every day to get a dispatch respecting yourself and your safe delivery. I hope you do not allow yourself to get the least despondent. You must keep cheerful. The hot weather I hope will not oppress you too much. I feel very hopeful concerning you,

⁵¹ [George Q. Cannon Journal November 1876](#)

⁵² Martha Telle Cannon to George Q. Cannon 25 December 1876. In a letter dated the next day, Martha told George that "the Mansfield's" brought her children from Salt Lake City to St. George, charging \$30, which her brother-in-law David said was very reasonable.

and expect to hear good news when I hear any. Sarah Jane and baby are doing well. We call him Joseph. The children are much delighted with their new brothers. If you and the children were here the family circle would be complete. I hope you will be soon.⁵³

Willard was born in June of 1877. The following month, after Martha had recovered from her delivery, she visited the newly-dedicated temple. There, in behalf of her mother Amelia, Martha was baptized in the bronzed font. Two days later Martha returned to the temple and performed further ordinances for her mother. Ordinances were completed at this time for additional ancestors including Hannah Sinclair, Martha's great-grandmother. Most likely Martha worked with her aunt, Susanna Keate, at right, in this effort.⁵⁴



While ordinances for the living could be performed in the Endowment House in Salt Lake City, most ordinances for the deceased had to wait until 1877. This was the beginning of a lifetime of temple work for Martha and other family members, including Martha's aunt Caroline, who later would serve with Martha in the Salt Lake Temple after its completion in 1893.

Also, during Martha's time in St. George, she made the acquaintance of Addison Everett, who had joined the LDS Church in New York City at the same time as her father and Rogers grandparents. Addison told Martha that he had known not only her father, but her "Grandmother Telle," which would have been Ann Espy Telle. As Ann had died in 1834, Addison's friendship with Lewis predated their membership in the Church. Brother Everett was a source of information about Martha's family for which she was very grateful.⁵⁵

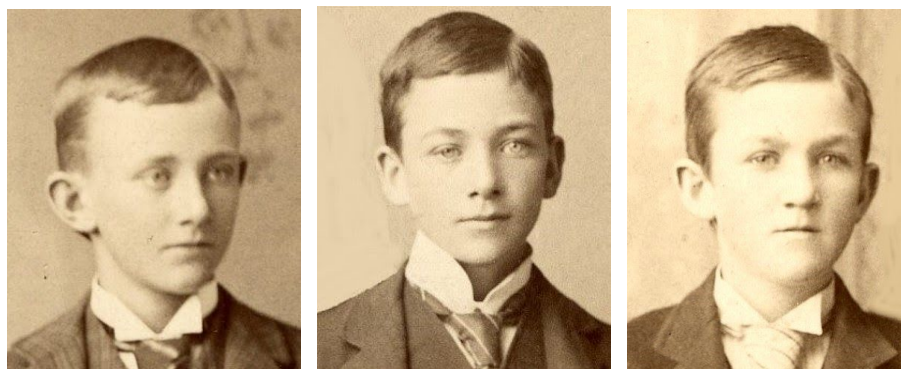
Before the end of the summer, Martha returned to her home in the Big House with her children, including her newborn son, Willard.

⁵³ Letter from George Q. Cannon to Martha Telle Cannon 12 June 1877.

⁵⁴ I can see that ordinances for other women in Martha's ancestry were completed in 1878, possibly by Susanna. In normal times I could access films of these ordinances and learn more information, but right now, in October 2020, the pandemic has closed the Family History Library and the Harold B. Library is not open to non-students.

⁵⁵ This detail from an 1880 letter took me a long time to figure out. In 1880, with George Q. Cannon serving in the House of Representatives in Washington D.C., Martha's long-lost sister Sarah Ann Telle King reached out to him, asking about Martha. George replied to her, and in part said: "It was with great delight she made the acquaintance, which spending the Winter of 1876-7 in Southern Utah for her health, of a family by the name of Everett or Averett, who had known her Father and Grandmother Telle." As Ann Espy died in 1834, and Addison was from New York, it is most likely that Ann had lived with Lewis for a period of time in New York City. It is likely that President Cannon mentioned this, recognizing that Sarah Ann might have known Addison Everett, who is KWJY-5FF in Family Tree. His obituary confirms the details necessary to be a match for the man President Cannon referenced.

These three new sons of President Cannon, Sylvester, Joseph and Willard, shown left to right, were born so close together that they were known as “the triplets.” About fifteen years later these three received an admonition from their father after setting turkeys on fire, although no other details are known.⁵⁶

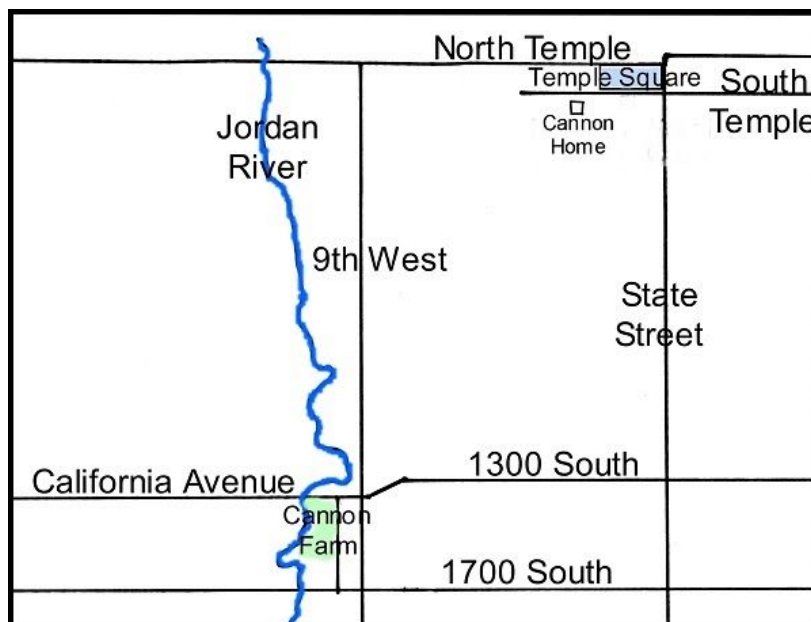


A large family with caring sister-wives and ready playmates for her children was part of the lifestyle which had drawn Martha to polygamy. Martha’s return to Salt Lake City came in the midst of the family’s relocation to the Cannon farm.

Chapter 4: The Farm

In the late 1860s, President Cannon purchased a homestead three miles southwest of downtown Salt Lake City. Sarah Jane and Eliza were the first to move to the farm, initially living in log cabins which were on the property when it was purchased. However, before the permanent homes would be built, President Cannon had asked his wives about their hopes for the farm.

It appears that these women had considerable input on the situation of their new homes. In May of 1878, a year after Martha’s return from St. George but before the construction of the homes on the farm began, President Cannon, at that time in Washington D.C. with Elizabeth, replied to a letter from Martha. He referred to his brother Angus, who lived in Salt Lake City:



Your favor of the 1st inst. has just reached me, and I hasten to answer it. I have been waiting with some degree of impatience to hear from you all respecting the business

⁵⁶ “Pioneer, Prophet, Politician, Prisoner,” by Grant Cannon, 1911-1969.

which I laid before you – I mean in connection with your dwellings. You are the first to write me upon the subject; but you do not say much, only to tell me that you have had a meeting and have reached a conclusion which Angus will doubtless communicate to me. It is gratifying to know that you have had this meeting. I now await the receipt of Angus' letter before I can tell anything about what my decision will be....It is the flight of time that causes me to be anxious to learn what you have decided upon, so that I can know what steps to take.⁵⁷

The strong indication of this letter is that Sarah Jane, Eliza and Martha sat down together, likely not an easy task with eleven young children between them, including three infants. Their discussion perhaps centered on determining the location of their homes and possibly the other structures they wanted to see on the farm.

Five accounts indicate that these women did not compete with each other, but instead embraced not just the concept of plural marriage, but the practice of pure communal living. In an 1878 letter, Elizabeth reached out to Martha and extended a sincere invitation that Martha leave the Big House downtown and move into Elizabeth's farmhouse so Martha could live on the farm with the other wives and not wait until her home was completed.⁵⁸ Martha accepted.

Another example comes from an 1880 letter in which Martha defended her way of life to her half-sister Sarah Ann Telle King in New York City, wherein she used the phrase, "beauties of the Mormon faith."⁵⁹ These four women, Elizabeth, Sarah Jane, Eliza and Martha, worked together in their faith to make life better for everyone, whether in their home downtown, or later on the farm.

A third example became evident after Elizabeth passed away in 1882. Martha wrote George, in Washington D. C., about Elizabeth's children not long after her death. Unable to be in Utah at that time, he replied:

I am glad to hear from you respecting Mary Alice, David and Emily feeling cheerful. Do what you can for them, as I know you will. I know the lonely feeling which frequently takes possession of the motherless, and makes hearts sad and tears flow freely in solitude. The Lord bless you.⁶⁰

A fourth example comes from the actions of Eliza. Her three children later reported that she loved the farm and took great pride in caring for her own animals. Eliza took on the

⁵⁷ Letter from George Q. Cannon to Martha Telle Cannon dated 10 May 1878.

⁵⁸ Letter from George Q. Cannon to Martha Telle Cannon dated 16 June 1878. This letter mentioned a sincere proposal Elizabeth had for Martha that accompanied his letter. In context, I believe it was Elizabeth's choice to invite Martha and her children to live with her on the farm. The timing is perfect, and that is in fact what happened.

⁵⁹ Letter from Sarah Ann Telle King to Martha Telle Cannon dated 19 April 1880. Sarah quoted Martha's words in her reply.

⁶⁰ Letter from George Q. Cannon to Martha Telle Cannon dated 6 March 1882. A month later, Martha wrote a second update. It was clear George had not been able to return to Utah so far that year.

responsibility of procuring all the groceries for her family and for her sister-wives, traveling on a local train car into downtown where she shopped at a store operated by 13th Ward members.⁶¹

In this last example, Grant Cannon, a grandson of Sarah Jane Jenne Cannon, shared a story. Grant was raised in a home in the Avenues near the home in which Martha lived during her later years. He wrote:

I remember this fourth wife, Aunt Martha, who caused the move to the farm, very well, for she lived near to us. Whenever we met she always recognized the Cannon look of me and asked, “Now let me see, who are you? And I would say, “I’m Joseph’s son.” And then she invariably said, “I hope you’ll be as good a boy as your father,” which always vaguely embarrassed me.⁶²

Two points from this last example are striking: one is that Martha knew Grant’s father well enough, as he was one of “the triplets,” to know that he was a “good boy.” An obvious conclusion to make is that each wife knew all the children very well. Second, Grant stated that Martha “caused the move to the farm.” This likely meant that after Martha’s marriage, the Big House no longer sufficed.

In an 1879 letter to Martha concerning the progress on the farm, President Cannon, in Washington D. C., indicated that his son Abraham was building the homes:

I am glad the improvements of which you speak are progressing. Abraham writes me encouragingly about the mission I gave him – the building of the houses. Under the blessing of the Lord, if our lives and liberties are preserved to us, the place will apt be made attractive and delightful. I think it has proved as healthy thus far as we hoped it would be.⁶³

Eliza’s home was completed first. Sarah Jane’s was the next to be finished, and Elizabeth was living in her newly-completed home by 1879.

During that year, with Elizabeth in Washington D.C., and Sarah Jane and Eliza on the farm, Martha remained in Salt Lake City in the Big House with her five children. However, with Elizabeth’s invitation to live in her newly-completed home, Martha was able to return to teaching the Cannon children.⁶⁴ When the school house was completed in late 1879, it seemed logical to move Martha from Elizabeth’s home next door into that structure with her children.

⁶¹ Cannon Family Historical Treasury, from the chapter about Eliza. Her children stated she loved the farm.

⁶² “Pioneer, Prophet, Politician, Prisoner,” by Grant Cannon, 1911-1969. Grant was born in 1911, his association with Martha being in the Avenues, where he lived on C Street, Martha living on E Street.

⁶³ Letter from George Q. Cannon to Martha Telle Cannon dated 5 February 1879.

⁶⁴ “Sketch of the Life of Martha Telle Cannon,” by Grace Telle Cannon Neslen, 20 May 1937. Reminiscences of the Old Cannon Farm, by Lewis Telle Cannon, 1 January 1942. Lewis and Grace both remembered that their mother taught school on the farm.

Each of President Cannon's wives shared his feelings about education and ultimately all the Cannon children received excellent educations. In an 1879 letter to Martha, President Cannon wrote from Washington D.C.:

You are doing well, I hope, with your school and scholars. In this I feel exceeding great interest. Education is a subject which we must pay attention to. Our people have to cope with the world, and I desire my children, as well as the children of all our people, to be fitted for the contest. That this lies before us becomes more apparent every day; it appears particularly so to me since this recent decision of the U.S. Court. Not only the boys, but the girls should receive the best possible education in every thing that will develop their abilities and qualify them to meet the world.⁶⁵

In response to Martha's next letter, George wrote:

Respecting a dictionary, I shall try and bring a large one home with me for your school use. Should other maps be needed please inform me. If you need slates, pens, ink, writing books, or any class books, I think I can obtain...at wholesale rates.⁶⁶

In the summer of 1880. George again wrote Martha from Washington D.C.:

I hope your quarters in the School House will be more pleasant hereafter and will not annoy you with dust, flies, etc as in the past. By this time I suppose the plastering and wood work have been finished....I am pleased you are so fortunate as to keep the school going.⁶⁷

In the midst of teaching school and the excitement and activity which was happening on the farm, Martha's sixth child, Grace, shown at right, was born on the first day of 1880. All four of President Cannon's wives were enumerated together on the farm that summer. The census page is shown below.



Work began on Martha's house during the summer of 1881⁶⁸ and she moved into this new home on November 20th. President Cannon wrote in his journal:

My wife Martha is moving into her new house, the lower rooms of which are all finished. It gives me great pleasure to see her in more comfortable quarters. She has not had a place of her own scarcely since her marriage, upwards of thirteen years ago. While we lived in the large house in the city, she had her rooms, but

⁶⁵ Letter from George Q. Cannon to Martha Telle Cannon dated 29 January 1879.

⁶⁶ Letter from George Q. Cannon to Martha Telle Cannon dated 5 February 1879.

⁶⁷ Letter from George Q. Cannon to Martha Telle Cannon dated 2 June 1880.

⁶⁸ [George Q. Cannon Journal, 12 May 1881.](#)

7	Cannon J. Martha	W	F	34		Wife	1	Keeping house
	— J. Hester	W	F	10		Daughter		at school
	— J. Amelia	W	F	10		Daughter		at school
	— Lucie	W	M	8		son		
	— Brigham	W	M	6		son		
	— Willard	W	M	3		son		
	— Tracy	W	F	12	jan	Daughter		
	Evans Elizabeth Mary	W	F	18	✓	Servant		
8	Cannon H. Elizabeth	W	F	44		Wife	1	Keeping house
	— A. Mary	W	F	12		Daughter		at school
	— H. David	W	M	9		son		
	— Emily	W	F	6		Daughter		
	— Sylvia	W	M	3		son		
7	Cannon J. Sarah	W	F	40	✓	Wife	1	Keeping house
	— J. Angus	W	M	12		son		at school
	— Hise	W	M	10		son		at school
	— A. Rose	W	F	8		Daughter		
	— Joseph	W	M	3		son		
	Jones Henry	W	M	20		Hired help		Farmer laborer
	Wilson Peter	W	M	20	✓	Hired help		Farmer "
	Richards Mennie	W	F	16	✓	Servant		
	Shimpton Elizabeth	W	F	19		Servant		
9	Cannon L. Eliza	W	F	35		Wife	1	Keeping house
	— J. William	W	M	9		son		
	— J. Reid	W	M	5		son		
	Jenney Olga	W	F	76		Mother	1	

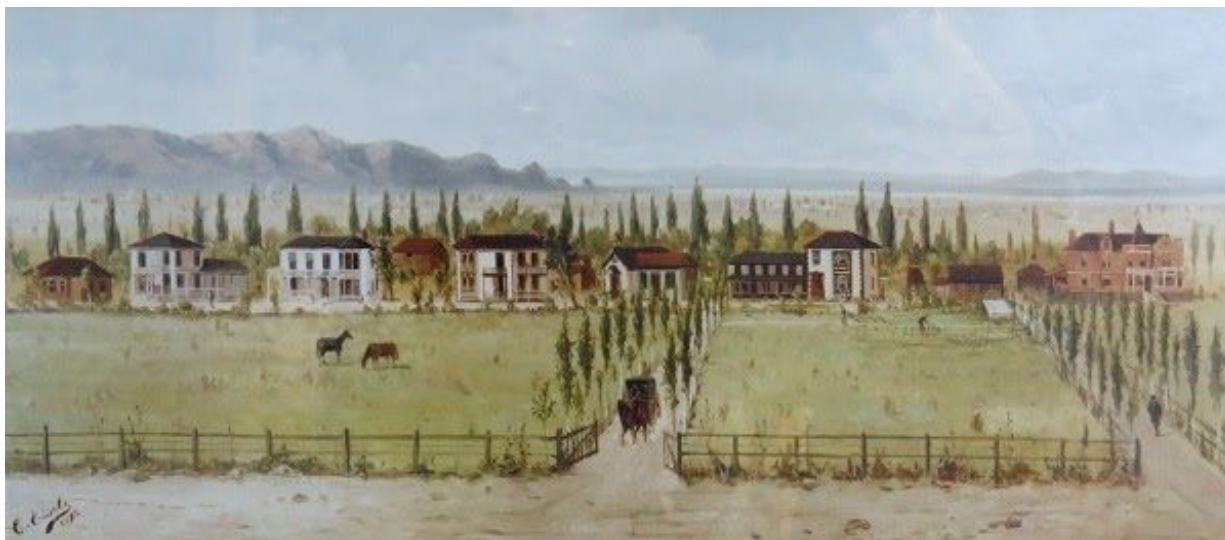
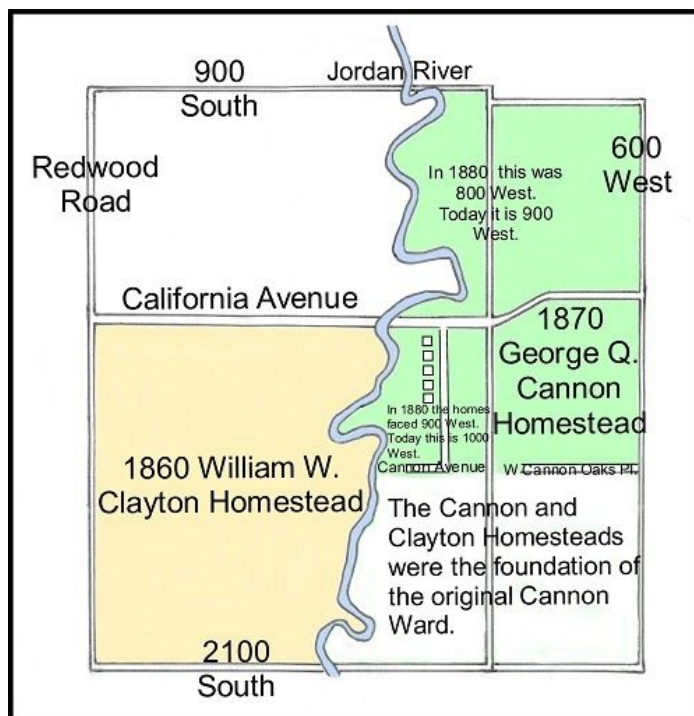
with that exception she has been living in makeshift quarters, and since being on the farm has been living in the school house, which has been very inconvenient on account of it only being one room, and the only partition a cloth one. She has never complained and bore all with great patience and equanimity but appreciates none the less the privilege of having a house such as she has. When I get the upper rooms finished, it will be a very nice residence, and will contain eight rooms and a bathroom, and water closet. I breakfasted with her this morning, my nephew, George Lambert, being with me.⁶⁹

The farm homes had two stories, each built with adobe bricks and then plastered. Porches surrounded the homes on several sides, leading into the main floor with a parlor, a kitchen, dining room and pantry. Bedrooms and a bathroom were upstairs. A secret room had been built into an upstairs closet of Elizabeth's farmhouse. One entered this room by pulling the shelves in the closet forward and climbing behind. There, a ladder led to a small attic. Children in the

⁶⁹ [George Q. Cannon Journal 15 November 1881](#). George Lambert was the son of Mary Alice Cannon Lambert.

family hid many men in this attic during the years of the federal marshal raids in the 1880s, including, on at least one occasion, their father.⁷⁰ A map of the farm and the surrounding property is shown here.

In 1892, President Cannon hired German artist Charles Christian Eisele to create a painting of the farm, shown below. On the far right is the home of the last wife of President Cannon's, Caroline Young Croxall, whom he married in 1884. Caroline's home was the final home to be built, in 1890. Next is the stable for the prize horses; other stables and outbuildings are not depicted. Elizabeth's farmhouse is



shown in white and black, although Elizabeth was deceased by the time of the 1892 painting; President Cannon lived in her home with her children until 1898. By 1892, the school house, shown in the center, was used as a dining room, and in 1896 this structure served as the meetinghouse for the newly created Cannon Ward.

Martha's home is the third white home from the left, next to Sarah Jane's home. Eliza's home is left of Sarah Jane's. Next to Eliza's home is the newly constructed home built for her son William and his wife Ada, who was an older daughter of Caroline's. President Cannon is shown

⁷⁰ "The Painting," by Margaret Clayton Cannon. "The George Q. Cannon Family and the Polygamy Raids," by Rick Jay Fish.

in the surrey with a driver taking him to town. The homes face east; the Jordan River runs north and south behind the homes. The Great Salt Lake can be seen in the background north of the Stansbury Mountain Range.

After Martha moved into her own home, the school house was used for its intended purpose, but only for a few years. Many years later, Martha's son Lewis recounted a few experiences from the early 1880s at the annual birthday gathering honoring their father:

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.⁷¹

Martha's seventh child, Radcliffe was born in 1883, and by that point the duties of teaching had been given to others. For a time, a nephew of President Cannon's taught the students, then one of Sarah Jane's older sons. In the picture below, taken about 1880, an outside school teacher, Sondra Saunders, had been brought in to teach.



Martha's son Lewis is standing on the far right. Hester is seated in front of him. Brigham is seated next to her, and Willard is standing on the other side of Mr. Saunders. Amelia is seated on the far left. The student standing behind Amelia is Charlie Davey, whose mother worked on the farm. Charlie would later become the bishop of the Cannon Ward, and in 1928 he would speak at Martha's funeral along with Sylvester, Elizabeth's youngest child, who is standing next

⁷¹ "Reminiscences of the Old Cannon Farm," by Lewis Telle Cannon, 1 January 1942.

to Willard in the center. Joseph, a son of Sarah Jane's, seated on a stool in the front, would also be a speaker at Martha's funeral, more evidence that the farm was not just a collection of houses, but a community, one that lasted into the next generation.

While President Cannon worked hard to make this farm a safe and healthy place for his family, there were unfortunate diseases which could affect children and even adults at any moment. In the fall of 1893, Martha fell ill with typhoid. This water-bourne disease was easily identified at the time, but the necessary antibiotics to cure it would not be available for another half-century. It appears that the preference of several family members was not to call upon a doctor, whose cures might prove to be more dangerous than the illness.⁷² Instead, at this time the family had chosen to rely on faith and Priesthood blessings. George wrote several entries in his journal about Martha's illness and the illnesses of other family members. This situation occurred during the nationwide financial panic of 1893, when everyone's resources were stretched:

Friday 20 October 1893: My wife Martha is very seriously sick with typhoid fever, complicated with pneumonia. Brothers Brigham Young [the son of deceased President Young] and C. H. Wilcken [his driver] were invited by me to administer to her, and Brother Wilcken expressed himself to the effect that I ought to have a doctor. Some of my own family have been of this opinion also; but I cannot do so and maintain my feeling of self-respect and consistency; for I have been speaking considerably of late against the practice which many of the saints have fallen into of sending for doctors when anything ails their children or themselves. I feel to trust in the Lord in this, and this is the feeling of my wife also. We are nursing her and taking as great care of her as we can.

Friday, October 27th, 1893: I can discover a slight improvement in my wife Martha's health; am doing all in my power for her, administering myself when at home at least twice a day, and getting some of the brethren also. She has not been at all delirious during the attack.

Wednesday, November 1st, 1893: I keep administering to my wives and entreating the Lord to have mercy upon them, and I feel encouraged that they will soon be well.

Thursday, November 2nd, 1893: I was awakened last night by my son Willard coming to my window and calling me, informing me that his mother was worse. The shock of awakening me suddenly and the news made me feel quite sick. I got up and dressed myself and awakened my son-in-law Lewis, and we went and administered to her. She was a little delirious, but I sat with her and soothed her, and she felt quiet.

Saturday, November 4th, 1893: President Woodruff and wife came to my place this morning to visit my sick people, the President desiring to join with me in administering to them. We visited my wife Martha first and administered to her. We then called upon my

⁷² [George Q. Cannon Journal 5 April 1901.](#)

wife Sarah Jane and spent a short time at her house, and then went to my wife Carlie's and administered to her. I thought it was very kind of President Woodruff to take this trouble, as he feels that at his time of life it is not wise for him to administer much to the sick.

Saturday, November 11th, 1893: I have a very sick household at the present time. Besides my wife Martha, our daughter Hester and Miss Lottie Reese, who is living with us, are in bed, suffering from sore throats, chills and fever. My wife Carlie is unable to leave her room and her health seems very poor. This with our financial embarrassments oppresses me. Just as I was starting home I met my son-in-law, Lewis M. Cannon, who told me that news had come that my wife Martha was sinking. I learned from him that my daughter Mary Alice had just come from home, and I sought her and learned from her that my sister Mary Alice had visited my wife and felt that she was in a precarious condition, and that the nurse had said that she was sinking. I drove home very sorrowful, picturing to myself how desolate my children's home would be without their mother, she having nine children, one of them married however, and what a condition I would be in. I felt to cry unto the Lord with all the faith I had in behalf of my sick family, for my daughter Hester, and her companion Miss Lottie Reese, were also prostrated, also my son Espey. The Lord condescended to hear my prayer and I felt comforted.

Sunday, November 12th, 1893: I was cheered this morning by the changed appearance of my sick ones; my cries last night to the Lord brought help, and improvement is visible.

Tuesday, November 14th, 1893: I was gladdened with the news when I reached home this evening that my daughter Amelia, the wife of H. W. Chamberlain, was delivered of a fine son this morning. This brought great joy to her sick mother.

Monday, December 25th, 1893: [Upon returning from a three-week trip to New York City to handle business related to Utah's statehood,] Reached Salt Lake City at 3 o'clock this morning. Brother Wilcken and my son Hugh came up by daylight for me. I found my family all well, excepting Martha. Her disease seems to have settled in her left arm and it is helpless. Although I am cramped for means and unable to make the customary Christmas presents, I felt profoundly thankful that we had good health and could meet together under such favorable circumstances.

Monday, January 1st, 1894: This morning—the first of the new year—I arose with thankfulness to the Lord for the blessings which I and my family enjoy. With the exception of my wife Martha, whose health has not been completely restored but who is tolerably well, we are all in the enjoyment of good health and strength, and we have food, raiment and shelter, our houses are comfortable, and we need nothing to add to our

physical comfort. For these blessings I feel profoundly thankful, and in wishing my family a happy new year I felt to bless each and all of them.⁷³

Chapter 5: The Raid

In 1881, President Cannon took another wife, Emily Hoagland Little, shown at right, the recently divorced sister of Elizabeth, who by this time realized she was dying. Elizabeth encouraged George to marry her sister to bring Emily some financial security. Emily continued to live in town, never moving to the farm, and President Cannon did not have any children with her. He did, however, make references to Emily in his journal in a Hawaiian code he had developed in an attempt to keep his relationship with her private.



Emboldened by the Edmunds Polygamy Act of 1882, Federal marshals began searching out polygamous husbands, trying their cases in court and ordering them to prison. While some husbands were sent to the federal penitentiary in Idaho, most Utah men were sent to the nearby prison in Sugar House on the outskirts of Salt Lake City. At this time, President Cannon and other Church leaders went into hiding, traveling in disguise and living in safe houses. President John Taylor hid with friends in Kaysville north of Salt Lake City. Joseph F. Smith, the other member of the First Presidency, sought haven in the Hawaiian Islands where he had served a mission two decades earlier.

During this period of persecution, in 1884 President Cannon married his last wife, the aforementioned Caroline Young Croxall, shown at right, a thirty-three year-old divorced daughter of Brigham Young. Caroline was the mother of eight children, although three had died before her marriage to President Cannon. She had also raised two children of her sister's after the latter died in childbirth. At the time of Caroline's marriage, President Cannon formally adopted her three youngest living children.



The federal marshals knew of Emily's marriage; they appear not to have known of Caroline's, and she remained safe in her home in Salt Lake City. In the fall of 1885, Caroline gave birth to a son whom she named Clawson in honor of Rudger Clawson, a Church leader who was then imprisoned for unlawful cohabitation.

In early February of 1886, federal marshals raided the Cannon farm. Some family members were forced to post a bond in order to remain free, including Martha and Sarah Jane. Eliza,

⁷³ [George O. Cannon Journal, October-December 1893, January 1894](#)

pregnant with her son Edwin, evaded capture by hiding among the willows behind her home at the Cannon farm along the Jordan River.⁷⁴

In the middle of February, Martha was forced to endure harsh questioning by a prosecutor in a public courtroom:

Are you not now a pregnant woman?

Martha refused to answer. The prosecutor then asked:

Are you not now with child by your husband George Q. Cannon?

Again, Martha refused to answer.⁷⁵

President Cannon was arrested at the end of February, 1886. He escaped his captors but forfeited a hefty bond and returned to a life of hiding, living in disguise and finding himself dependent on the secrecy of others. The next two years were extremely difficult for him, his family members, and other Church leaders.

John Taylor died in 1887 while in hiding. Wilford Woodruff, who would be sustained as President of the LDS Church in 1889, led the Church as President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles from the underground. In his journals, President Cannon wrote of frequently staying with his wife Caroline in Salt Lake City in the evenings after working in his office during the day, but on the weekends his driver took him to the farm, with George always traveling in disguise.

Martha's eighth child Espey, given the maiden name of Martha's Telle grandmother Ann Espy, was born in the summer of 1886, four months after her questioning by the marshals and seven weeks before Eliza's son Edwin was born. Two years later, both Martha and Caroline had sons in July of 1888. Caroline's son Wilford was born on the 4th, and Martha's last child, Collins, bearing her grandmother's maiden name, was born on July 31st. Both babies were delivered by President Cannon's sister-in-law, Dr. Martha Hughes Cannon, shown far right.

Martha's aunt Caroline, shown center right, was present for the birth of Collins, evidence that Caroline had watched and prayed for Martha since she took custody of her niece four decades earlier.

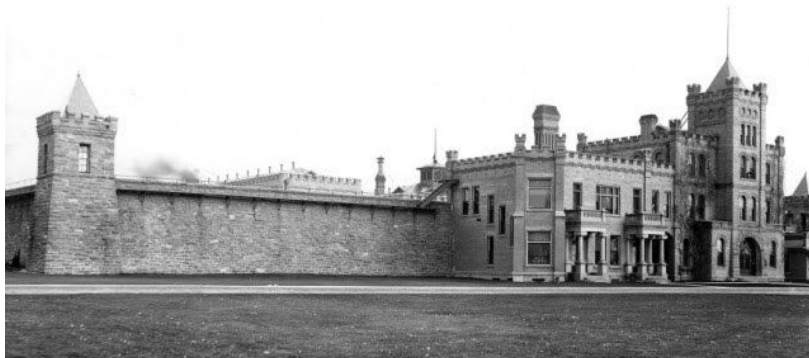


⁷⁴ Twentieth Ward History 1856-1979, by Ruth J. Martin, p. 66. LDS film 1059487; Cannon Family Historical Treasury.

⁷⁵ 15 February, 1886 Deseret Evening News, from [Journal History of the Church](#).

Caroline was likely concerned and worried about Martha, as her husband was still being hunted by the marshals.

A few months later, President Cannon surrendered to federal authorities and was immediately sent to the federal penitentiary in Utah.



After President Cannon's surrender, Martha and Caroline, fearing for their own safety and the security of their children, left Utah, both traveling by train. Caroline, assuming the surname of Madson, went to California, with Martha, assuming the surname of Lawrence, going to Manassa, Colorado, a place of refuge for many polygamous wives. Martha had taken her three daughters, Hester, Amelia and Grace, and five of her six sons: Brigham, Willard, Radcliffe, Espey and Collins, an infant. Sixteen-year-old Lewis had remained on the farm working on improvements to his mother's home.⁷⁶

President Cannon was released from prison after serving five months, but while he seemed free to travel throughout Utah and speak at conferences, he felt some concern for Caroline and Martha as Church members awaited a ruling by the United States Supreme Court. This ruling finally came late in the spring and stated that polygamist men who had served their terms could not be re-arrested even if they returned to their wives and children. At this point, Martha returned from Colorado with her children and found her home updated.

Caroline also returned to Salt Lake City at this time. Her home on the farm was completed the next year and she moved her family, which by this time included a new baby daughter, Anne, to the farm.

Also in 1890, Wilford Woodruff announced the Manifesto which brought an end to new polygamous marriages. For the next decade, President Cannon lived in the home of his deceased wife Elizabeth with her youngest children, Mary Alice, David, Emily and Sylvester, who was four when his mother died.

By this time, President Cannon's terms as a delegate in Washington D.C. had concluded. Although his Church duties were strenuous, President Cannon was able to spend much more time at the farm. Hired hands helped with the work and the children were sent to school in town. This freed the schoolhouse to become a small event center, including functioning as a dining room. There, hired cooks relieved Sarah Jane, Eliza, Martha and Caroline of this chore, allowing

⁷⁶ [George Q. Cannon Journal](#), 11 March 1889; 16 March 1889, 4 April 1889; "I examined the plans of the alterations proposed in my wife's, Martha, house, which have been drawn by my son Lewis." "The George Q. Cannon Family and the Polygamy Raids," by Rick Jay Fish.

the family to eat together, although many of the older children were married with families of their own and were no longer living on the farm.

The expense of this change was not insignificant, and in 1896 President Cannon suspended the practice. For the next two years, President Cannon spent one evening a week at each home, sharing dinner with that family. Tuesday was the day President Cannon ate dinner in Martha's home. Their son Collins later wrote:

[Tuesday] was Father's night to dine at Aunt Martha's. What a bustling throughout the house all day long, what a sweeping and dusting. The state table cloth was skillfully mended, the vegetable soup was perfectly prepared and the rolled rib roast was done to a turn. The four candle power globe in the socket over the table was replaced by a sixteen and there were -- napkins!

An earthenware water pitcher, shown at right, had a place on Martha's dining table for many years.

In addition to weekly meals with each family, President Cannon began having weekly meals together with his wives. At this point in time, President Cannon was in his late sixties. Sarah Jane was fifty-seven; Eliza and Martha were in their early fifties; Caroline was forty-five. President Cannon wrote about these meals in his journal:



My wives Sarah Jane, Eliza, Martha and Caroline took dinner with me, and we had a very enjoyable evening together. I have designed for us to dine together at least once a week, so that I can know of their condition and we can exchange views on family matters.⁷⁷

Occasionally these events turned into performance venues for the children. The following month George wrote:

My wives Sarah Jane, Martha, Eliza and Caroline took dinner with me today, and after dinner the children came in with their mandolins and guitars and gave us some very nice music. Songs were sung by Hester, Emily and Carol, and Rosannah gave us two recitations. We had a very pleasant evening.⁷⁸

These four women, Sarah Jane, Eliza, Martha and Caroline were not rivals; they were in fact mothers in a large, shared family. In one more example of this, the Cannon Ward was created in 1896 from parts of several neighboring wards. Before a chapel could be built, meetings occurred in the dining room. Sarah Jane had been a faithful Relief Society worker in the Fourteenth Ward

⁷⁷ [George Q. Cannon Journal 26 February 1895](#)

⁷⁸ [George Q. Cannon Journal 6 March 1895](#)

until the Cannon family moved to the farm. By 1890, with her family mostly grown, Sarah Jane served as a member of the General Relief Society Board, traveling throughout Utah to encourage and support local Relief Society leaders. Upon the creation of the Cannon Ward, Sarah Jane was called to be its first Relief Society President. Martha and Caroline were called to be trustees, handling funds in the days when members of the Relief Society paid dues.⁷⁹ These women were builders, united in their church and family ties.

Chapter 6: Martha Researches Her Family

After forty years of construction, the Salt Lake Temple was dedicated in 1893. At that time, Martha and Sarah Jane began serving as temple workers. In addition to weekday responsibilities at the temple, they often attended Sunday morning temple meetings with President Cannon and other Church leaders. In just one example, President Cannon wrote:

A very unpleasant, stormy day. Snow and sleet fell, and it was very disagreeable. I attended fast meeting at the temple with my wives Sarah Jane, Martha and Caroline and my son Brigham. We had a most interesting meeting.⁸⁰

For many years, Martha had written letters and searched out genealogical information in order to comply with the gospel directive to perform ordinances in behalf of her ancestors. Janath Russell Cannon would later write, “[Martha’s] real satisfaction...came from temple and genealogical work, in the pursuit of which she traveled extensively in the East, and in watching her children grow into fine, useful men and women.”⁸¹

Martha researched her grandmother’s Espy family and their relations.⁸² After completing her research on this line, she wrote it all out by hand in a small book which measured six by eight inches and gave it to the Genealogical Society of Utah.⁸³ The cover is shown below.

This effort of Martha’s to gather family history data began early in her life. In 1867, one year after Martha’s move to Salt Lake City, she received a warm, friendly letter from her brother Edwin. In answering her question about relatives, he said:

I received a letter to day from Cousin Hattie Telle at Salem, Ind. We have three Uncles there George Ambrose & Edwin, they were all well when Hattie wrote, were you to

⁷⁹ Women’s Exponent, 15 September 1896. In a meeting held August 6th, 1906, Bathsheba W. Smith referenced events she witnessed at the organization of the Relief Society in Nauvoo in 1842 and had repeated at the organization of the Cannon Ward Relief Society.

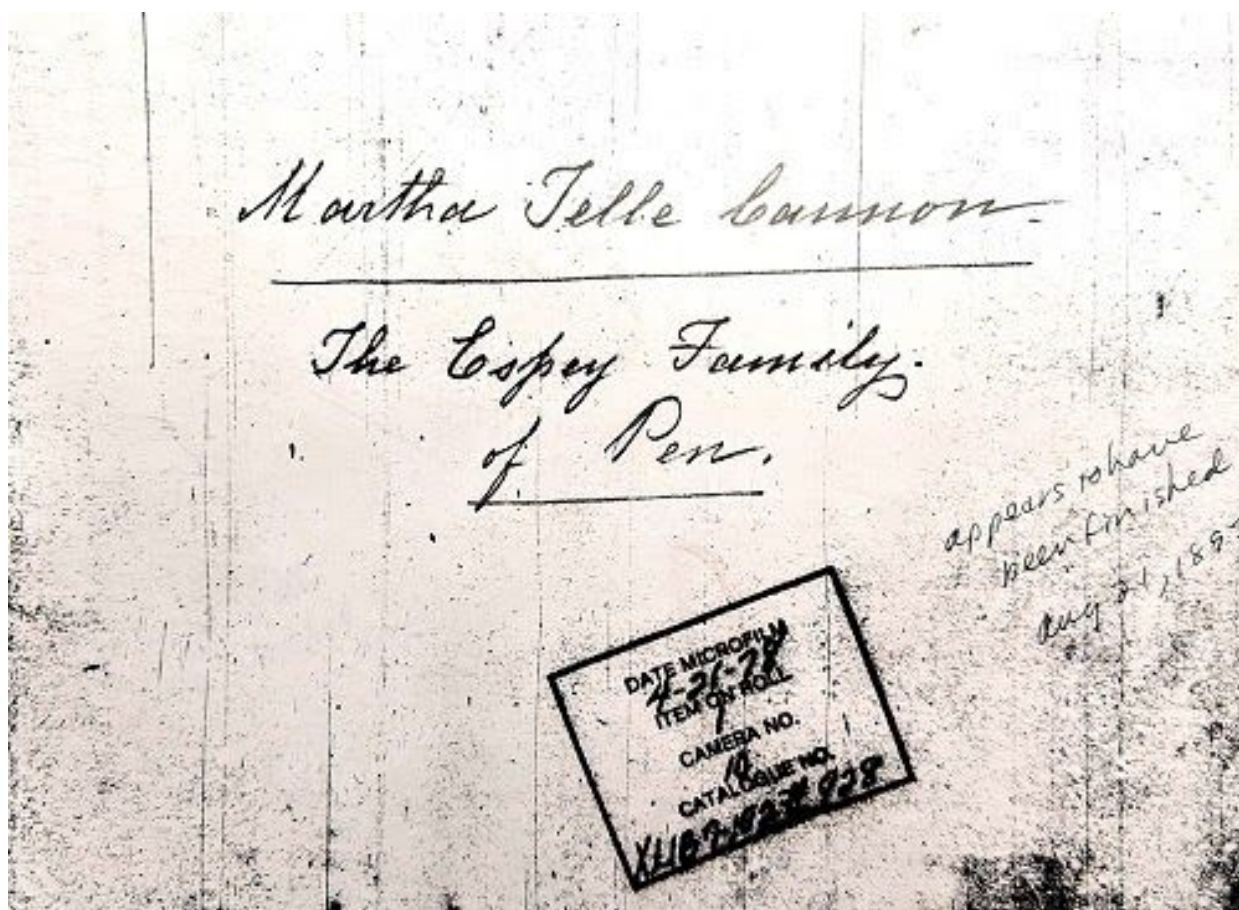
⁸⁰ [George Q. Cannon Journal, 2 April 1899.](#)

⁸¹ Cannon Family Historical Treasury, biography of Martha T. Cannon by Janath Russell Cannon, who was the daughter-in-law of Edwin Q. Cannon.

⁸² Martha usually wrote this surname as Espy. In historical records it is often spelled Espy.

⁸³ Martha Telle Cannon, “The Espy Family of Pen.” My handwriting on a photocopy of this book indicates that the internal information indicates this book was completed by 1897. Also my studies of this book show that Martha saw to the ordinance work for many of these people.

correspond with her I think you would like her very much, her name and residence is her address.⁸⁴



Martha and Edwin continued to write and share their collective news about their siblings and other relatives. They both held concerns for their brother Lewis, who for a time worked as a miner in Montana making six dollars a day, a sizable sum. In 1884, Edwin informed Martha of Lewis's premature death in Arkansas where Lewis had sought treatment for his poor health. Edwin arranged and paid for the burial arrangements.⁸⁵

In 1894, Martha received a long-awaited response from her cousin George Washington Telle, a minister who lived in Salem. George told Martha that two of their uncles, brothers of their fathers and both residents of Indiana, had recently died. George informed her of a fourth uncle, Sidney, who was likely alive in Ohio.

Martha continued corresponding with George and in 1899 she visited him in Indiana. One year later, George wrote to Martha as he reminisced about her visit. George mentioned Martha's son Willard and her daughter Grace in his letter. In 1899, Willard had just finished his studies at Harvard while Grace had completed a year-long cooking course in Boston. Martha had traveled

⁸⁴ 8 June 1867, Edwin Telle to Martha Telle.

⁸⁵ 18 May 1884, Edwin Telle to Martha Telle Cannon.

east at that time, possibly stopping in Pennsylvania and New York as she searched for additional genealogy information. She then met Grace and Willard in Boston and they visited Indiana with her on their return to Salt Lake City. George's 1900 letter also mentions his brother-in-law, Charles Mobley:

We often hear it said that it is the unexpected that happens. I think you will take this letter as an instance of it. No doubt you ceased long ago to expect a letter from me. But I have not forgotten you. I plead guilty to slowness of speed in the shape of letter-writing, but not to the charge of forgetfulness of that relative who, on a quiet Sabbath morning, about a year ago, suddenly appeared in our midst, and as suddenly disappeared. Your visit was a pleasure to all of us, but in one respect disappointing – it was too short. I agree with Mr. Cannon in regard to your visit. The only remedy that I can think of is for you to come again and stay longer. I wish that your wish that wife and I could visit Salt Lake City, might have realization. But the way for such a treat does not at present seem clear. I am very favorably impressed by what I have heard and read, with your city and State. I think you have great reason to be proud of their prosperity and development so largely due to the faith, perseverance and enterprise of the Latter Day Saints. It is because of my early antecedents that I do not share in the prejudice so many have for your church people. You will recall Willard's remark at Mobley's that, "a little more and you would have been a Mormon." The papers you have sent me have been interesting.....

Thanks for the picture you sent us of yourself, Mr. Cannon, Lewis and Grace. My wife sends her regards, and joins me in the hope that you may be able some time to visit us again. Louise says she sent a letter to Grace not long since and is beginning to look for a reply.⁸⁶

Martha had asked her cousin George about their grandfather, Ambrose Telle, and George replied that he was born in Saxony, Germany, but George did not know where he had died. Martha had asked George when her father Lewis was born. George was unable to tell Martha where "in line of brothers Uncle Lewis came...." It is clear from this letter that Martha had engaged her extended family in searching out their relatives and that her efforts were met with some success.

Martha also exchanged letters with her half-sister Sarah Ann. It seems that they did not start off on the right foot after Martha initially brought up the Church and her testimony of polygamy. In 1880, Sarah Ann responded to one of Martha's letters:

New York, April 19/80

Dear Sister Martha:

⁸⁶ 24 May 1900, George Washington Telle to Martha Telle Cannon. Although President Cannon is mentioned, he did not record any of this in his journal, indicating to me that he was not on this trip.

Your kind letter came this morning and I was surprised to see how little time is required to send a letter to Utah and receive a reply. I have also had a letter from Edwin and his wife giving very favorable account of them. They have three children. All are well & prosperous. We have reason to be proud of our brother Edwin. Lewis is somewhere in Texas, they did not know where. I have also had a letter from my brother George. Poor fellow! He is still on the river, his farming, I guess, did not amount to much. I want to see him very much and if he does not come East to see me, I shall certainly go to St. Louis to see him.

I think that with you that we ought to write to each other occasionally; I know I have often thought of you during our long silence and wondered how you were getting on. I shall be very glad to receive letters from you and reply to them; and I think we shall get along very nicely if in the future we avoid any allusion to the "beauties of the Mormon faith." Let this letter be an exception, for in giving you an account of our father I shall have to touch upon the, to me, detestable subject. I will also remark in passing, that I cannot for the "Life of Me" see where you get your authority of the "Divine origin of polygamy". I am sure the only marriage the Lord ever performed was the one in the garden of Eden, and that he gave Adam only one wife and he did not even promise him another. As for the old Jews and Arabs of ancient times, I do not consider them very brilliant examples of either decency or respectability. It may be better "to be acknowledged wives than unacknowledged Mistresses," but why should there be either?

What right has the male portion of humanity to arrogate to themselves a privilege which must of necessity be unjust to the female part. And what sort of family relations can exist where the husband and the father is divided up into half a dozen households. "Where does he reside? and which particular dinner table is blessed with his paternal presence? If he is sick, which wife takes care of him? or do they take turns? but if he should die which family inherits his estate? but enough of this nonsense, my indignation has got the better of my intention, pardon me.

And now let me tell you what I know about our father and his parents and kindred. He was born in Pennsylvania. His father, Ambrose, was a German professor or scientist, a man of considerable learning, but of no practical ability: so near as I can make out, a shiftless eccentric fellow of very little use to his family or any one else. His wife was, "Anne Espy," our grandmother, the daughter of a well-to-do Dutch farmer. "(I will say here that the Espy's are among the best families in the state of Penn.)"; She was a remarkably handsome and intelligent woman. (I remember her well.) She had all the energy and force of character her husband Ambrose lacked. She brought up her six sons by her own unaided exertions giving them all trades and fitting them to make their way in the world. Our father learned the carpenter's trade and went to New York where he established himself as a "builder." There he married my mother, a daughter of a Westchester County farmer. They were enterprising and thrifty, and in a few years had amassed quite a little competency; but in an evil hour my father fell in with the Mormons

and became a disciple to their faith, which did not at that time include polygamy – he was persuaded by their leaders to sell out his business and property and buy western lands of them, and immigrate to “Nauvoo”. On his arrival in the “Land of Promise”, he found his title to the property the “Saints” had sold him, utterly worthless; and that it was already in the possession of another by right of Squatter Sovereignty.

“Jo Smith” and his apostles smoothed the matter over, and got him to buy more land of them in the City of Nauvoo; more than that, they borrowed all his money, or nearly all; Jos Smith himself borrowing a thousand dollars which he was never able to repay, if indeed he ever meant to, which is doubtful.

Meantime the family sickened with Malaria in the stone house by the river, where we were living till our house could be built, and my mother and little brother died; died for want of proper care, which it was impossible to obtain, as every one around us was sick and destitute. Late in the fall, my father with his three remaining children (I was one of them and was 11 years old) more dead than alive, returned to New York, where he disposed of his children among their mother’s relatives.

And the next Spring he returned to Nauvoo, to sell his property and get back the money he had lent the “brethren.” This he found he could not do, so he married a Mormon sister and settled among them for good and all.

His second wife, your mother, was a very nice intelligent woman; after her death he married a third wife who my brother wrote was also very nice and smart. She had two little girls when he died, one of them named Amelia after your mother. He did not follow the Mormons to Utah and long before they left Nauvoo he had withdrawn from fellowship with them. He died suddenly on New Year’s Day 1856. He was about forty-eight years old. I do not know the day of his birth. Our father had three brothers in Indiana. They all had nice families and were doing well when I heard from them which was several years ago. -----we have an uncle, Hamilton Telle, living here in New York, a carpenter, married but no children. There was another brother Sydney who lives some where in Pennsylvania, but I never knew anything about him more than his existence.⁸⁷

Martha responded to this letter, but not for two years:

Salt Lake City, Feb. 26th 1882

My dear Sister,

I have before me your letter dated April 19th 1880, also one dated June 8th, 1880; both of which I have just perused. Had any person told me at that time that nearly two years

⁸⁷ 18 April 1880, Sarah Ann Telle King to Martha Telle Cannon. Information about the last years of their father’s life surely came to Sarah from their brother, George E. Telle.

would elapse without my so much as even acknowledging the receipt of those letters, I would have said that he or she was telling a “big story.” When I was a girl I delighted in correspondence, and I do not believe that I have any less a liking for it now, only there is so much difference I find in wifehood or motherhood and girlhood. Then I could write as often and as many letters as I chose, now I have the little ones to take up my time and attention, and then when I do find time to write, there is always a letter from Mr. Cannon which I must answer. He is away from home so much of the time and I think I must at least write one letter to three or four from him.

Could you have looked in upon me at almost any time during the last two years you would not have been at all surprised at your letters lying so long unanswered. I have during those two years moved three times. I first moved out of my house for repairs and the repairs required were of such a character that I had to move “bag and baggage” and all into another house; when the repairs were complete I returned. That was in 1880. Last spring Mr. Cannon concluded that I needed a larger and better house and when my house was completed, I was ready, I assure you to move again. So you can see how unsettled I have been since we commenced to exchange letters. Then in addition to all this, good help has been hard to get and I have been without the necessary assistance to enable me to get along as successfully as I could wish to do. --So much for so much --

Your letter dated April 19th 1880 I have read and reread a number of times; although some parts of it caused me sorrowful feelings. I thank you for your kindness in giving me an account, as you did, of our Father’s kindred. This information I had been anxious to obtain, as I know nothing and was totally ignorant even of their names, birthplaces, etc. That my father had withdrawn from fellowship with, I was aware, but that he was ever wrongly treated in any respect whatsoever, I am quite ready to dispute. We know that those who enter our church are not forced to do so, and if they accept our principles in the spirit in which they are given they can see the true beauties of “Mormonism,” and will never feel like withdrawing from the Church. There is where I my father are unlike.

That you are very much prejudiced, the spirit of your letters very clearly indicates. This, we as a people are used to and expect. I had to smile at your expression. “I think we will get on very nicely, if in the future we avoid any allusion to the beauties of the Mormon faith.” “But” said you, “let this letter be an exception,” and I am sure it was an exception. Some of your questions concerning the polygamous relations of the “Mormons,” I would be pleased to answer, but if I do, there will be several allusions to the “Beauties of the Mormon faith.”

While descendants of Martha today would love to know how she described her family life with her husband and her sister-wives, sadly, only this part of the letter survived eighty-nine years until it was found and transcribed.⁸⁸

⁸⁸ 26 February 1882, Martha Telle Cannon to Sarah Ann Telle King. Howell Q. Cannon transcribed this letter, which he found in papers which had belonged to Espey Telle Cannon.

Martha had also reached out to her half-sister Tabitha, who for many years did not respond, possibly after Martha told her of her marriage into a polygamous family. However in 1893, Tabitha wrote Martha from her Peekskill home in Westchester County:

Peekskill
June 27, 1893

My dear Sister Martha,

The reproach implied in the opening of your letter that “more than twenty-five years of silence lie between us” is, I regret to say, richly deserved by me; and my first act must be to humbly beg for your pardon for the unkind and unsisterly manner in which I closed our correspondence. It may sound very strange to you when I saw that all these years that letter has lain heavily upon my conscience, but it is the truth. I have grieved about it more than I can ever tell you. And I have resolved times without number, to write and ask you to forgive that thoughtless, inconsiderate, impulsive act of my youth. But I have let the weeks and months glide into years, and the poor little reparation I might have made years ago has been left undone simply – I will not spare myself – from neglect. I have said to myself a thousand times – I will write, and less than a year ago, I obtained your address from Edwin’s wife. – She sent me one of your letters which contained the names and ages of your children, and I copied them and have them before me now, and I felt sure that I would write immediately, but – I did not, and you have added to my remorse by your kind sisterly letter. Glad as I am to hear from you and at last to open a correspondence which I hope will continue as long as we live, I shall still always regret that I was not the first to write.⁸⁹

In this letter, Tabitha informed Martha of the death of their sister Sarah Ann. She also told of other family members, including their father’s younger brother Hamilton who lived in New York City.

Martha remained close to her adoptive parents’ family. A sister/cousin lived in Provo and President Cannon had performed her marriage. Hester Beebe died in Provo in 1885. Her husband had died in 1881, not long after they had finally settled in Utah. Martha’s grandparents, David and Martha Collins Rogers, had also died in Provo in 1881. Two of their sons, Ross and Henry, accepted mission calls to settle in Arizona, where they raised large families.

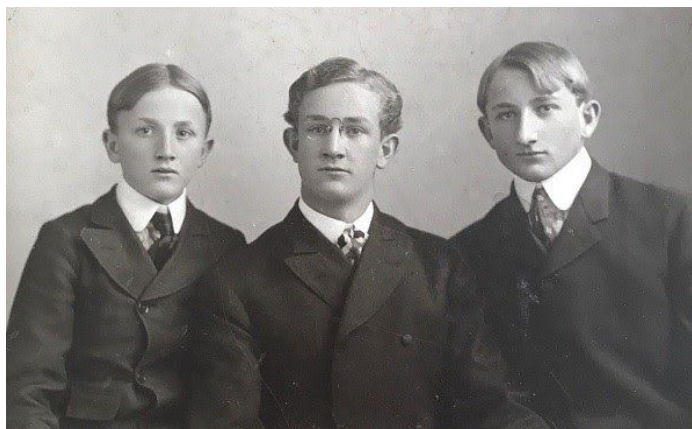
Martha reached out and cared for her aunt Caroline. Caroline’s marriage had not survived, and she had then entered into a polygamous marriage in her later years, becoming the sixth and last wife of the prominent Provo church leader and businessman, Abraham Smoot. After his death, Caroline moved to Salt Lake City. In 1911, Martha’s son Collins asked about her during his mission in Switzerland:

⁸⁹ 27 June 1893 Tabitha Sykes to Martha Telle Cannon

Your very brief reference to Auntie Smoot is the first I have heard since I came. Is she well and prosperous? Does she still go to the temple every morning? You must give her my love and tell her I often think of her.⁹⁰

Chapter 7: Changes in the Family

Martha's youngest child, Collins, was of elementary school age during the 1890s. His brother Espey was two years older, as was Eliza's youngest son Edwin. Two of Caroline's younger children, Wilford and Anne, were half-siblings and playmates. In the picture at right, Collins and Espey are shown on the left and right, with Radcliffe in the center.



More than fifty years later, Collins spoke about this time at an annual family gathering held on their father's birthday. In particular he told about a meeting with his father in 1898, when Collins was ten:

It was during these full times that I came along. It is easy to understand that I of all Geo. Q's children was the least known to him. There was a disparity of nearly 65 years in our ages. He was intensely preoccupied with affairs of church and state and a strict compliance with a manifesto of his authorship caused him to spread himself mighty thinly around his large families. The very thinnest spreading of all, it then seemed to me, was at our house.⁹¹

President Cannon became aware of Collins' concerns when young Aune said to him, "Why don't you take your other wives around as you do Ma?" President Cannon wrote in his journal:

Coming from a child of eight years, I was impressed with it. I asked her where she had heard such talk -- for I did not think it originated in her own mind -- and she said that Collins said this to her.

President Cannon then called a family meeting which specifically included the younger children on the farm:

I drew out from the children what their feelings were concerning my course, and Collins, when I mentioned his name and what he had said, burst out crying and blurted out, with such plainness as to cause the other boys to laugh, what he thought was wrong in his Aunt Carlie being favored. Among other things, she had a better house than his mother

⁹⁰ 1911, Lausanne, Collins Telle Cannon to Martha Telle Cannon.

⁹¹ "A Brief History of the Young Life of Collins Telle Cannon," 11 January 1952.

had; the children had money that he did not have, and I took her away with me instead of his mother. He said a number of things of this kind....

I asked him a good many questions so as to draw out all the feeling there was in him on this subject. I then talked to him and to the other boys. I told them that Aunt Carlie had means of her own, which she had inherited from her father's estate, and if she chose to live in a better house and to give her children money that my other children did not have, I could not find fault with that, and they must not. It was her own, and she could do as she liked with it.

I explained to them the course I took with all their mothers. I said to Collins, Espy and Radcliffe that their mother had \$1100⁹² a year from me, while Aunt Carlie only had \$600. I did not pay her anything to help her with her first children; but I gave her an allowance for my children, the same as their mothers had for them. I talked for some time on this matter. I was desirous that these children should understand me and my position, and not misjudge me.⁹³

At this time, in 1898, President Cannon was seventy-one years old. Unbeknownst to anyone, he would only live three more years. He had lived as a single parent in Elizabeth's home since 1882. However, Martha, Sarah Jane, Eliza and Caroline often accompanied him to many venues, including a variety of church meetings, temple meetings and events where his relationship with his wives was relatively private. Young Collins would not have seen much of this. In addition, when President Cannon traveled publicly, he often traveled with Caroline, whom he had married after the death of his wife Elizabeth. In the eyes of some, this made her a legal wife, and as a result neither would be a target of harassment when seen together in public.

After this first meeting with the younger children, President Cannon called a second meeting with all of the family members still living on the farm, both children and adults. He asked how they would feel if he chose to spend the rest of his days in his wife Caroline's home, especially since the last child of Elizabeth's was leaving the farm.⁹⁴ President Cannon wrote:

Sarah Jane responded first, and she did so to the effect that I could do as I pleased, she would be satisfied. Eliza made the same remark. Martha spoke a little more freely, and Carlie spoke freely also. . . . I talked very plainly to my family. I told them if there was any feeling in their breasts about me and my conduct, I wanted it known; for I wanted love and harmony to prevail in my family, as I believe it always had done. I said I was very greatly surprised to learn that the little folks had made such remarks as I had heard. We had a delightful meeting in many respects.

⁹² This would be about \$36,000 in 2020 dollars.

⁹³ [George Q. Cannon Journal 18 September 1898.](#)

⁹⁴ I had always been told that Sarah Jane, Eliza and Martha had made the decision that George would live with Caroline after the 1890 Manifesto. While technically this is true, President Cannon's journal shows that this happened in 1898, and that he initiated the discussion.

In recording this event in his journal, President Cannon let a little light shine on the financial arrangement he had with his wives. In addition to a monthly stipend, they received other monies:

I had always done everything in my power for their happiness. As soon as I had a little property of my own, I divided it with them, so that they would have means of their own to handle. I had followed that up for over twenty five years. I said, you all have your own income. You do not have to ask me for anything. I have tried to give you this and make your lives happy; and to talk about your being martyrs or of making sacrifices for me, I do not want any such thing. If anyone is to make sacrifices, I am the one.

President Cannon spent his last three years on the farm in relative prosperity and family harmony, even traveling on assignment by the president of the Church with Caroline to Hawaii for the fiftieth anniversary of the arrival of the first missionaries, of which George was one in 1850. President Cannon rapidly declined upon his return and died in the spring of 1901.

At that time, Martha received a letter from the daughter of her sister Tabitha, Annie Sykes Smith:

326 Washington St.,
Peekskill, N.Y.
April 21st, 1901

My dear Aunt: –

The paper containing your sad news reached me a couple of days ago. I cannot tell you, dear Aunt Martha, how sorry I am for the trouble you are in, and how deeply I sympathize with you and your children. It is a terrible thing when the head of the house is taken away, and the wife and children are left alone without him....

Another thing that I always think of, dear Aunt Martha, is the memory that one has to keep of the one that is gone. In this you surely have and always will have, the comfort of looking back to your husband as a man to be proud of, whose life was one long success, and an honor to himself and all who belonged to him. I am not one to whom a difference in faith is of vital importance. It is the life I look at. And for Mr. Cannon, and his active and honorable career, I have always felt the greatest respect. I wish I might have met him....

You will not want to hear of our little doings just now, so I will make this a short letter, and write again after a little. In the meantime I shall think of you often, and send much love and sympathy to you and all your family, in which Charles joins me.

Lovingly your niece, (S) Annie

Martha's Children Leave the Farm

During the 1890s, Martha's children began to leave the farm. Amelia, shown at right in her wedding dress, was the first to marry, in 1892, after studying at the University of Deseret and becoming an accomplished organist. Ultimately, Amelia had six children.



Willard, at left, was the next to marry, in 1900. That year he received a degree from Harvard, and after returning home from Boston, he married his step-sister Carol Croxall, an older daughter of Caroline's who had also studied in Boston. After their marriage, Willard and Carol served as mission president and companion in the Netherlands. Willard became an executive for the Utah & Idaho Sugar Company. He and Carol had seven children.

Lewis, right, the third to marry, received a degree in architecture at the University of Utah and then served a mission in Germany. However, his half-brother Preston had become very ill, and Lewis accompanied Preston home so he could receive medical care. The next year Lewis returned to Europe to complete his mission, this

time serving in Switzerland. After his return, in 1901, he married Martha M. Howell, the daughter of a U.S. Representative. Lewis ultimately became a notable architect, designing chapels, schools and other buildings throughout Utah. He and Martha had six children.



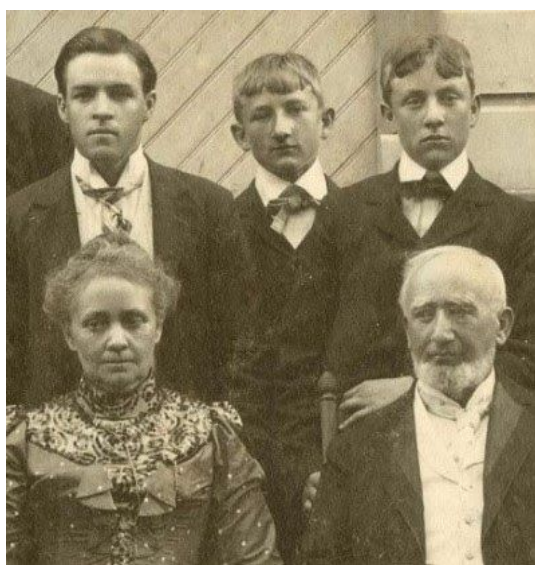
Hester was the fourth of Martha's children to marry. She is shown at far left with Amelia. By 1902, Hester had studied at the University of Deseret and performed with the Tabernacle Choir. She married a well-educated professor who was almost twenty years her senior. Hester had one child, a son.

Grace, below left, studied cooking in Boston and upon her return to Salt Lake City, opened her own cooking school. She married in 1905 and had five children. Her husband, Clarence Neslen,



became mayor of Salt Lake City and served as the bishop of the Twentieth Ward for twenty-five years. During this period Grace served in many responsible callings in the Church and in the last few years of her life, she served on the General Relief Society Board. In 1945, while returning from the dedication of the Idaho Falls Temple, Grace's car was struck by an oncoming vehicle and she and another passenger were killed.

Brigham, right, received an engineering degree from the University of Utah and served a mission in Germany. In late 1905, Brigham traveled to Omaha, Nebraska where he married Cecelia Farrell, the daughter of a successful businessman. The couple returned to Salt Lake City where they had two children. Cecelia died during the 1918 flu pandemic. Brigham owned his own business and ultimately married twice more.

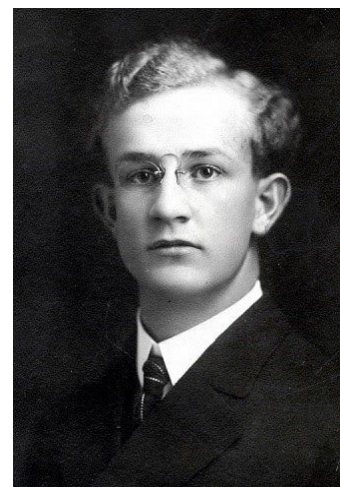


Espey is shown left, center, in Hawaii in late 1900 with his father, Caroline, and two half-brothers. Espey served a mission in Switzerland beginning in 1906 and then studied in Berlin afterward, returning home in 1910. He married Alice Farnsworth while completing his degree in mining and civil engineering and they had four children.

Radcliffe, right, graduated from the University of Utah before serving a mission in Belgium. In 1911, he married Maude Riter, the daughter of a successful banker, and

Radcliffe worked for various banks throughout his career. He and Maude had four children.

Collins is shown below on the left of an entrance to a Utah mine in 1914 with his associate Harry Jessen. Collins was called to the Swiss-German mission in 1910. Upon his return in 1913, he met Ida May Burton, a great-granddaughter of Joseph Fielding, one of the first seven LDS missionaries who passed through New York City in 1837.



Elder Fielding had initially introduced the gospel to David and Martha Collins, and then, with his companion Heber C. Kimball, served in Liverpool. There, they shared the Restored Gospel with George and Ann Quayle Cannon, the parents of George Q. Cannon. Both George and Ann had died by 1844.

Collins and Ida May married in 1915. After a venture with a knitting mill in Logan which ended with the Great Depression, Collins returned his family to Salt Lake City where he worked for the City Engineering Department and Utah & Idaho Sugar. They had five children.

Chapter 8: Martha Leaves the Farm

The farm remained a vibrant place after President Cannon's death. In fact, just a few months after his passing, his widows hosted May Wright Sewell, shown below, center. Mrs. Sewell was the president of the International Council of Women and a highly respected advocate of women's rights and suffrage. Having been hosted in Salt Lake City for several days, Mrs. Sewell's last stop was the Cannon Farm. There, Sarah Jane, Eliza, Martha and Caroline opened their homes to Mrs. Sewell and other dignitaries. Their host was John Q. Cannon, shown far right, an older son of Elizabeth's. He showed the guests through the homes and grounds which had become prosperous and beautiful due to the efforts of so many family members.⁹⁵



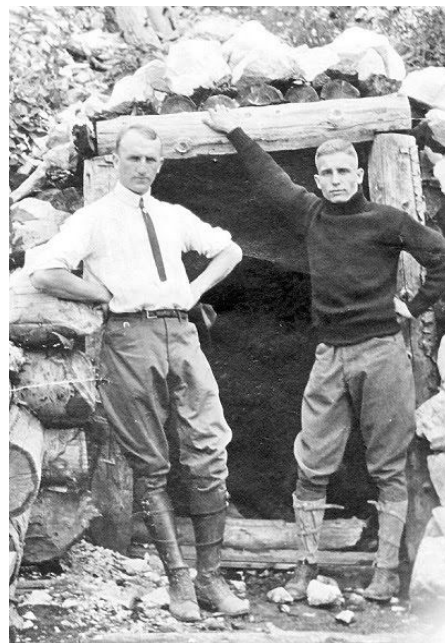
The Cannon family finances were handled by the Cannon Family Association which provided various trusts for family members.

Initially, William Tenney Cannon, the oldest son of Eliza, was the president. Funds, stocks and real estate were handled by this business entity, and news articles reflect involvement from many of the children.

Martha was involved with several real estate transactions at this time, buying a property from Sarah Jane's daughter Rosannah, buying a property from Charles Davey, the young boy who grew up on the farm and who was now a leader in the area, selling property to her son-in-law, Clarence Neslen, and even buying some property from her son Brigham, who was also quite involved with real estate.⁹⁶

⁹⁵ "Mrs. Sewall's Visit," Women's Exponent published 1 August 1901.

⁹⁶ Notices of real estate transactions were posted in the Deseret News.



In 1903, Caroline Young Cannon passed away in her home on the farm. Emily died in her downtown home in 1906. Eliza died in 1908 after moving off the farm and in with her son William. Sarah Jane became very involved with the national women's suffrage movement, even though Utah women had been given the right to vote in 1896. She moved into her daughter Rosannah's home and died in 1928, the last of President Cannon's wives to pass away.

By this time, several of the older Cannon children had married and were returning to the farm with their large families. In 1905 Martha sold her home to the bishop of the Cannon Ward, her husband's nephew, Lewis M. Cannon. At that time Martha moved to a home not far from the farm and near her daughter Grace's family. Three of her sons, Brigham, Espey and Collins lived with her, with both Espey and Collins students at the University of Utah.

Grace and her family moved to her husband's family home in the Avenues, taking in Martha's aunt Caroline.⁹⁷ At that time, Martha moved downtown where she was much closer to the Salt Lake Temple.

Martha was enumerated in this rented home in 1910 with her sons Radcliffe and Espey, who had both returned from their missions, and her son Collins, who was working for older brothers as a surveyor before he departed on his mission.⁹⁸ Also living with Martha was her thirteen-year-old granddaughter Hester, shown at right, a daughter of Amelia's. Sadly, at this time Amelia was estranged from her husband; the marriage did not survive.



Cannon Martha J	Head H - 07	F	W	63	W
Radcliffe J	Son	M	W	26	S
Espey J	Son	M	W	23	S
Cannon Collins J	Son	M	W	22	S
Chamberlain Esther C	Granddaughter	F	W	13	S
Peterson Aline	Servant	F	W	17	S

Martha was now sixty-three years old and had lived an incredible life, from a child on the frontier to a well-respected widow of a prominent Church leader with nine children and in 1910, seventeen living grandchildren. Although Martha would continue to look after others, her children stepped up and began looking after her.

⁹⁷ The city directory showed Caroline Smoot living with Grace and her family.

⁹⁸ The 1909 city directory shows that Martha's son Collins' worked as a draftsman for Cannon Brothers.



Martha's son Lewis, who was in business with two of his brothers, designed a home for his mother in the prestigious Avenues. Lewis designed the home in the Dutch half-timber style, reflecting the German influence of his and his brother's missions.

The interior was similar to homes built in the Avenues in that era; two large rooms came off each side of a wide hall on the main floor, including a large living room and dining room.⁹⁹ Four bedrooms, plus two sleeping porches, were upstairs.¹⁰⁰ Martha moved into her new home during the summer of 1910.¹⁰¹

Martha's new home cost \$6,000. A news article from 13 March 1910 is shown at right, along with a current photo of the home, above. Today the value of this home is over three quarters of a million dollars.

Martha Telle Cannon's life after her move to the Avenues was very prosperous due to the judicious management of the Cannon businesses by the family association.

Dutch Half-Timber Style

NEW HOME OF MRS. MARTHA T. CANNON
In E Street, Showing Half-Timber Effect.

THE perspective is that of a beautiful, modern home designed in what is known as the Dutch half-timber style, now being erected for Mrs. Martha T. Cannon in E street, between First and Second avenues, at a cost of \$6,000. The plans were drawn by Cannon & Fetzer, architects.

The house is two stories, with full basement. The first story is constructed of brick, this part of the work having been completed, and the second story is to be built of timber.

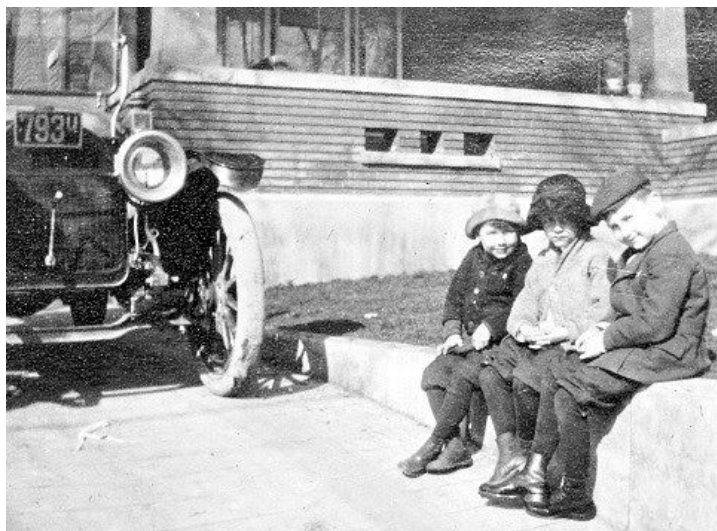
On the first floor there are four rooms and a wide hall. The most pretentious room is the big living room, and others are a dining room, kitchen and bedroom. On the second floor there are three bedrooms, dressing room and two sleeping porches.

The interior finish includes hardwood floors and stained fir woodwork. The home will contain all modern conveniences.

⁹⁹ Decades later, Martha's granddaughters, Elizabeth Cannon Kimball and Ida Mae Cannon Smith, owned homes in the Avenues. The interior description of Martha Telle Cannon's home fit both of these homes. This design allowed for excellent ventilation long before the days of air-conditioning.

¹⁰⁰ Salt Lake Herald 13 March 1910; "Ida May Burton Cannon as told to Laurie Smith, 1979," "In those days, everyone had to have a sleeping porch. It was considered unhealthy to sleep indoors."

¹⁰¹ Collins's passport application, filled out on 8 August 1910, gave his address as 77 E Street. His friend H. C. Jessen was the witness, and his brother-in-law C. Clarence Neslen was the notary.



Martha owned several automobiles, including a Buick and a Cadillac, although Martha never learned to drive. Her son Collins was influential in these purchases, pushing against his brothers who felt these cars were not a prudent use of her funds. Collins said to them, “There are no pockets in a shroud.”¹⁰²



While Martha did not drive the vehicles, Collins certainly did. An unlabeled photo, upper right, is from this time period with Collins on the right.

The same vehicle is shown in another photo above which can be dated to 1910. The house in the background is Martha’s newly constructed home on E Street. Bob and Clarey, two of Grace’s children, are on the left. Willard’s son Gerald is on the right.¹⁰³

Martha entertained guests in her home, and in at least one instance, she enjoyed a luncheon hosted by Lewis’s wife Martha and her daughter Grace in her new home. A 1912 newspaper article called this luncheon a Kensington.¹⁰⁴ Today, we might call it a covered dish, or perhaps a potluck.

Mrs. Lewis Telle Cannon and Mrs. Clarence Neslen are the hostesses this afternoon at a Kensington being given at the home of Mrs. Martha T. Cannon in E street.

Martha surely enjoyed letters from your youngest child, Collins, as he toured New York before boarding the ship *Laurentic* for Liverpool, which was then the gateway to Europe.

¹⁰² Janath Russell Cannon, the wife of Edwin Q. Cannon, wrote in the Cannon Family Historical Treasury that Martha “enjoyed considerable prosperity,” and that she owned a Cadillac. Ida May Burton told Laurie Cannon Priano in her life history that Martha owned a Buick. My father told me that his grandmother owned two cars, and that Collins encouraged his mother to buy the cars against his brothers’ wishes.

¹⁰³ The two photos on this page came from a photo album which had belonged to Collins. Shortly before her death, Ida Mae Cannon Smith, with only some success, helped me identify people and places. The picture with the children was labeled with their names. Ida Mae recognized the home. At the time, I did not think to ask about the vehicle.

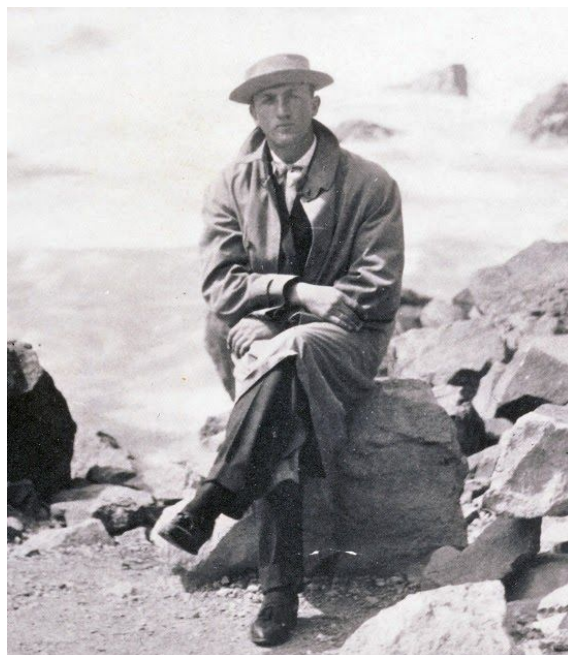
¹⁰⁴ 10 May 1912 Salt Lake Herald.

Collins wrote his mother from Niagara Falls, right, saying:

New York is by far the most interesting place that I have visited yet. I have had a splendid time here! Much better than I had either in Chicago or Buffalo. We were in Buffalo last Sunday and spent most of the day at Niagara Falls.

Martha appears to have acted as the intermediary between Collins and the Cannon Family Association, which provided him with funds during his mission:

I hope that as soon as it is possible and convenient a remittance will be sent to the office at Zurich so that I may not be under the necessity of running in debt at the mission office too early in my mission.



Perhaps in an attempt to reassure his mother concerning his well-being, he teased her concerning his status in her eyes by saying:

I hope everyone at home is as well as your favorite son,

Collins T. Cannon¹⁰⁵

An excerpt from a 1911 letter written by Collins in Switzerland sheds some light on Martha's living situation:

Do you have any trouble keeping hired girls, I guess it's a little harder now that you have a house full of folks--Grace, and her family and Hester and hers. I guess it is a good job that I came on a mission just when I did, or you would have had to move back to the big old house on the farm in order to accommodate us all.¹⁰⁶

During this period, Grace and her young family lived with Martha for several years while her husband updated his family home. Grace's daughter Gertrude was born in Martha's home, as was Sinclair, Hester's son.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁵ 1 September 1910, Collins Telle Cannon to Martha Telle Cannon. The letter was written from New York City.

¹⁰⁶ 10 February 1911, Collins Telle Cannon to Martha Telle Cannon.

¹⁰⁷ Ida May Burton Cannon mentioned in a memory of 1913 that Grace lived with Martha, the context being that their family shared Martha's home for two years or more.

Collins returned from his mission in 1913, and two years later he married Ida May Burton. While they did not initially live with Martha, she hired a nurse and invited the couple to live in her home where their first child Elizabeth was born in 1915. Their second child, Ida Mae, was also born in Martha's home. Ida Mae later wrote:

I was born, of course I was! I don't remember just how I felt about that, but nonetheless, it did happen. It happened at Grandmother Cannon's home at 77 E St. in Salt Lake City on November 28, 1916. It was in the upstairs, southeast bedroom. Betsy, and Jean and Gertrude, cousins, were born there too. Grandmother must have had some kind of lying-in hospital.¹⁰⁸



During the year of 1916, Martha hired the artist Lewis A. Ramsey to paint her portrait, shown at left. Mr. Ramsey, who had studied in Paris and was a well-respected member of the LDS Church, had opened a studio in Utah and had painted many images of the Restoration, including one of young Joseph Smith in the sacred grove. Martha's painting was framed by the well-known Charles Savage Company. Initially, the painting hung in her home in the Avenues. When Martha moved to Grace's home, the painting went with her. After Grace's death in 1945, the painting went to Collins, then to his daughter Ida Mae. At Ida Mae's death, her family gave the portrait to me. It hangs in my dining room, where my husband greets her each morning.¹⁰⁹

In early 1918, Grace took her four young children and her mother to California for several months.¹¹⁰ At this time, Grace's children, three sons and a daughter, were between the ages of eleven and three. Martha was fortunate to have good health in her later years and could enjoy this trip.

* * *

Mrs. Clarence Neslen and her mother, Mrs. Martha Cannon, will leave the latter part of the week for southern California.

* * *

¹⁰⁸ "Life History of Ida Mae Cannon Smith," by Ida Mae Cannon Smith, 1997. Jeanne Howell Cannon, born in 1917, was Lewis' daughter. Gertrude Neslen, born in 1911, was Grace's daughter. Surely Hester's son Sinclair was born there in 1911, as Collins's letter confirms his mother was living in Martha's home.

¹⁰⁹ I am always delighted when friends and even strangers enter my home, ask about the painting, and then do a double take when they notice the strong resemblance between my face and Martha Telle's. Ever since I was a young child, standing in my grandparents' living room looking up at that painting, I have seen my own face.

¹¹⁰ Salt Lake Telegram 29 January 1918. A second article in the Deseret News in March states that Grace's children were with them, and they were still in California.

Mrs. Martha T. Cannon of Salt Lake is in Logan as the guest of Mr. and Mrs. Collins T. Cannon.

The following year, Martha, who was always called “Aunt Martha” by her grandchildren,¹¹¹ visited Logan where she celebrated the Twenty-fourth of July holiday with Collins, Ida May and their three children, the youngest being their son Collins Burton.¹¹²

Collins Burton later remembered one of Martha Telle’s visits, likely about 1926. An important detail in this story is that in the 1920s, Mazola corn oil was sold in cans, not bottles.



Father was a lot of fun--he enjoyed playing with us kids. I got a train set for Christmas that was worn out when I opened it because Father had been up all night long playing with it. Father also made excellent aerial bombs out of Mazola cans. One Fourth of July, when I was about 8 or 9, he had us, and all the neighborhood kids, in the back yard with him. He’d put a handful of shotgun powder in the end of a can, and wrap it in wax paper, and then pack it with mud in the bottom and leave the open end of the can down. Then he’d light it. It would scream up into the air absolutely out of sight. We never saw lots of them come down. Well, Aunt Martha was visiting us. She heard the first one go off and by the time she gathered her wits and got out into the backyard the second and third had gone off and into the sky. She grabbed Father by the ear and said “Collins Cannon! You come in the house right now! I've told you for years and years and years you’re not going to make those horrible things!”

Granddaughter Ida Mae wrote:

My contacts with Grandma were limited. We lived in Logan and our visits to Salt Lake were not frequent. I do remember vividly that she was always 27 years old, carried a small black fan, and her green bottle of smelling salts was enough to knock a child of 10 quite flat.¹¹³

As Martha’s health became precarious, family members stepped in to help care for her. By 1918, son Lewis and his family were living in her home, and Martha had moved downtown to the Kensington Apartments.¹¹⁴ By 1920, Martha was living with Grace.¹¹⁵

Collins Burton, who was born in 1918, shared another memory of her:

¹¹¹ The children on the farm used the affectionate title “Aunt” when referring to their father’s wives. Apparently this carried to the next generation, as my father always referred to his grandmother, Martha Telle, as “Aunt Martha.” In this generation, my cousins and I refer to her as Martha Telle.

¹¹² 26 July 1919, Deseret News.

¹¹³ Martha Telle Cannon, by Ida Mae Cannon Smith, presented at the Annual Cannon Family Gathering 11 January 1951.

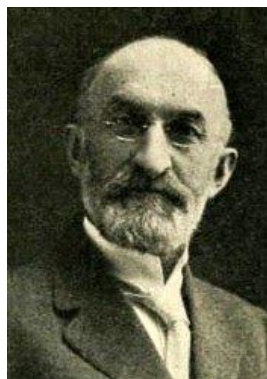
¹¹⁴ The city directory for this year gave Martha’s address for Lewis and listed the Kensington as Martha’s address.

¹¹⁵ The city directories through the 1920s show Martha living with Grace except for the year 1922, when Martha was listed in the Caithness Apartments.

Aunt Martha was very prim and very proper. She was short. She was small. It's hard to say how short she was because I was only about four feet tall myself when I last saw her. She lived with Aunt Grace as long as I knew her. She was always highly respected, extremely loquacious, and always, always well dressed, well groomed. I think she was raised that way.¹¹⁶

Chapter 9: The Death and Funeral of Martha Telle Cannon

In late January of 1928, Collins' sister Grace alerted her eight siblings that their mother Martha had suffered a serious stroke.¹¹⁷ Collins traveled from Logan to be at his mother's side and arrived before her death, which occurred in the early hours of Sunday, February 5th. Espey, who at this time lived in Los Angeles, and Willard who had been visiting him, arrived Sunday. Amelia, Hester, Lewis, Brigham and Radcliffe all lived in Salt Lake City.



On Tuesday, President Heber J. Grant, left, spoke at Martha's funeral. Also, Sylvester Quayle, far right, the youngest son of Elizabeth, spoke. At this time Sylvester served as the presiding bishop. Joseph Jenne, lower right, a son of Sarah Jane's, also spoke. Charles E. Davey, upper center, also spoke. He had attended Martha's school on the farm when his mother

worked as a housekeeper. He had been serving as the bishop of the Cannon Ward since 1917.¹¹⁸



Apostle Orson F. Whitney, shown center right, lived in the Twentieth Ward just a few blocks from Martha. He also spoke at her funeral:

I presume there are many here who knew Sister Cannon much better than I did, but I doubt if there are any who had more respect for her. She always struck me by the



¹¹⁶ "Collins Burton Cannon, as told to Julie Cannon Markham, 1982."

¹¹⁷ I have drawn conclusions from two of Martha's obituaries, one from the Deseret News and another in the Salt Lake Telegram, both published on 6 February 1928, and her death certificate, which states that her doctor treated her from January 24th until her death. I have assumed the stroke occurred on the 24th.

¹¹⁸ 8 February 1928 Salt Lake Telegram. This article stated that Martha's funeral services were "impressive." This brief article named the pallbearers and speakers. Bishop Davey was released as bishop of the Cannon Ward in 1930 and was succeeded by Tracy Y. Cannon, a son of Caroline's.

dignity of her appearance, her personality, and by her amiable disposition. She was a woman among women. She had a queenly dignity and was a genuine lady.¹¹⁹

Six of Martha's grandsons carried her casket from the Twentieth Ward chapel into the waiting hearse: Max Chamberlain, the thirty-three year-old-son of Amelia; Howell Cannon, the nineteen-year-old son of Lewis; Robert Neslen, the nineteen-year-old son of Grace;¹²⁰ Sinclair Richards, the sixteen-year-old son of Hester; Gerald Cannon, the twenty-one-year-old son of Willard; and Howard Cannon, the twenty-year-old son of Brigham. Thirty-seven grandchildren survived Martha.¹²¹

Martha is buried in the Cannon family plot of the Salt Lake City Cemetery. Martha left a legacy of faith, faith in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, faith in temple ordinances and faith in her family and all families.



¹¹⁹ Cannon Family Historical Treasury, biography of Martha T. Cannon by Janath Russell Cannon.

¹²⁰ Grace's oldest son, Clarence, was serving in the Swiss-German mission at this time.

¹²¹ A young son of Radcliffe's and a young daughter of Willard's had both died in 1913.