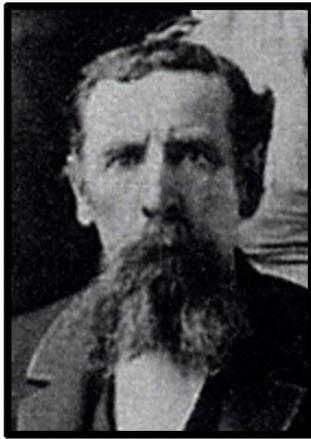


William Jasper Henderson,  
Alvira Aureila Dickson  
and  
Lydia Drucilla Johnson



*A Family History*

by Shelley Dawson Davies

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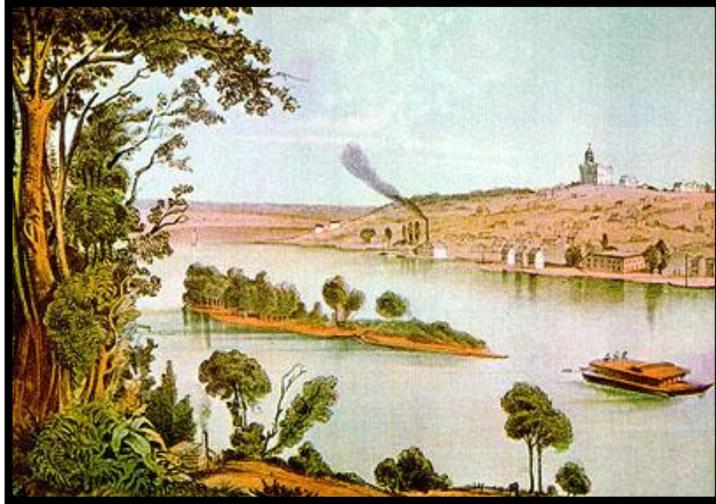
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## Chapter 1

# Little Pioneers

## From Nauvoo to Utah

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*Nauvoo as it appeared in 1846, as seen from the Iowa riverbank.*

**W**illiam<sup>1</sup> grew up with no memory of his parents. His mother, Anna,<sup>2</sup> died when he was only a toddler, and his father James<sup>3</sup> followed her to the grave nine months later in the autumn of 1844, leaving three-year old William and his eight siblings orphaned and vulnerable. Fortunately, the children lived near their Grandfather and Grandmother Henderson in Nauvoo, Illinois, where the extended family had relocated from Missouri's farmland to escape persecution by cutthroat mobs determined to rid the state of the Mormons.<sup>4</sup> William's older brothers and sisters tried for some time to keep the family together, but in the end it was impossible for them to work and care for little William and five-year old Samuel.<sup>5</sup> "There was a well-to-do man who had no children of his own, named Gates and he and his wife took Samuel and raised him as if he was their own son," said William, who was taken in by his grandparents.<sup>6</sup>

Samuel<sup>7</sup> and Elizabeth Henderson<sup>8</sup> had already raised a large family of sixteen children,<sup>9</sup> many of them who lived in the surrounding communities of Nauvoo. The Hendersons themselves were well-established in a home on the corner of Partridge and Joseph Streets,

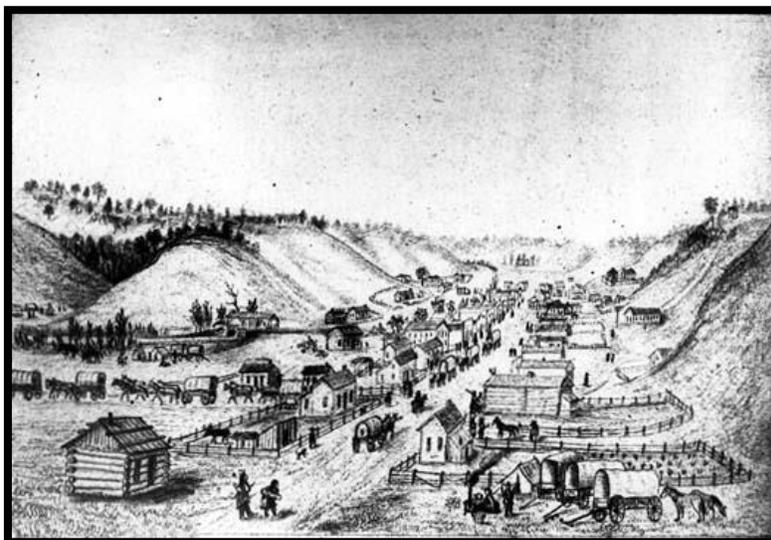
but their hopes of retiring in the peaceful “City of Joseph” had ended with the prophet’s martyrdom early that summer. Hostile forces continued to harass church members in order to drive them from Illinois. By the fall of 1845, preparations were being made to abandon Nauvoo for the west, where the Saints could find a safe haven.

The first refugees began leaving the city in February, 1846, and by early September, only a few hundred residents were left, most of them either elderly, ill or too poor to have left earlier. Among these stragglers were the Hendersons, with six-year old William and his sisters Martha,<sup>10</sup> eleven, and Sarah,<sup>11</sup> ten. Anti-Mormon vigilantes were determined to force even these remaining members of the church out of Nauvoo with a final attack on the city on 13 September. William was old enough to remember “when the mob of about 1,800 strong made their raid and bombarded the city of Nauvoo, killing and driving the Mormons away from their homes. The battle lasted three days and three nights. All the able bodied men left the city along with all those were able to move and who had sold their eleven acres and left, crossing the river into Iowa with the authorities of the church and secured to plant crops that the poor and sick might follow up and cultivate and harvest the crops.

“The mob drove out the widows and orphans, plundered their houses and rushed them, including me, on flat boats that were moored at the banks of the Mississippi River. They actually drove us out of our own homes, down the streets of Nauvoo onto these flat boats and sent us adrift. The current carried us across to the Iowa side and while we were on the river, they continued to fire their cannon balls, some going over our heads and some falling into the river, and they continued firing until we had landed on the other side of the river.”<sup>12</sup>

The Hendersons made their way to one of the refugee camps scattered along Iowa’s riverbanks, where most people had nothing more than blankets or hastily made bowers of brush for shelter. “We were driven like a herd of sheep before ravenous wolves, and we fled into the timber along the river banks, and the trees was all the covering we had for many days,” said William. “To make our situation worse, a chilly rain started in with snow. We had no provisions and very little clothing except what we picked up in our haste when we were driven from our homes.”<sup>13</sup>

Just when their situation was becoming desperate, a remarkable event occurred. To everyone’s surprise, large flocks of quail flew into camp, “some being docile and some fell into the laps of the women. I remember Grandmother filling her apron with them and that is what we lived on for three days. We would surely have starved to death had it not been for our kind and Heavenly Father in sending flocks of quail into our camps,” said William.<sup>14</sup>



*The Hendersons lived in Kaneshville, Iowa, for several years while they prepared for the journey west.*

Somehow the Hendersons eventually managed to travel across Iowa, where they settled briefly on a farm near Kaneshville (now Council Bluffs). “My grandfather took up a place near Dulch Lake, about three miles from Omaha on the east side of the Missouri River,” said William. “There was lots of timber growing there, so he built a log house there in the woods. This house just had one big room in it with a fireplace built in the middle of it, and one small window in the gable end near the roof and a door on one side. The door was made of hewn logs and was barred inside with the same kind of material so to make it safe as possible from the Indians, as they were very hostile in that part of the country.

“They had some work horses and one cow, but not many provisions. They lived on hominy and what milk the cow furnished. I remember seeing my grandmother cooking or making hominy in a large kettle hanging over the fireplace, as that was the only convenience for cooking at that time among the poor people.

“Well, everything went on smoothly for a while, but to their horror, one day they heard Indians whooping. They peaked out and saw the Indians driving away the horses and one of the Indians came to the door could not get in, so they shot the cow and went away. George<sup>15</sup> was about eighteen then, and he decided to go help so he climbed out of the window which was on the opposite side of where the Indians went, so he got away unnoticed and went to the nearest settlement help and got it. They came the next day and moved us to the settlement [Kaneshville].”<sup>16</sup>

Like other families in Kaneshville, the Hendersons spent the next few years preparing for their journey west to Utah. Everyone who was old enough worked to put food on the table and add a few pennies to the travel fund. William teamed up with his cousin Riley<sup>17</sup> to deliver produce. "I thought a great deal of Riley," said William. "We carried garden stuff in a basket to the city. For this we got five cents a basket and made two trips a day. We also picked and cleaned the vegetables. So you see, I had to work hard for a meager living."<sup>18</sup>



*A Mormon wagon train makes its way across the prairie.*

## The Journey West

It took five long years before the Hendersons were financially able to afford a wagon and the team to pull it westward. Grandfather Henderson arranged to join the Easton Kelsey Company, which left Council Bluffs on 29 June, 1851.<sup>19</sup> Like the other youngsters in the train, eleven-year old William was assigned to gather buffalo chips for the evening's campfire, in addition to helping with the dishes and making up beds after supper. Most evenings there was music, dancing and an evening prayer service. William adjusted to what became a tedious routine of packing up camp the next morning and helping his grandfather hitch up the oxen, followed by hours of walking under the blazing sun.

The monotonous journey was occasionally peppered with exciting events, such as a visit by Indians who laid their blankets along the trail to collect food donations. There were several buffalo stampedes, one of which "came direct toward our wagon train," recalled fellow

traveler Augusta Drious Stevens. “The stampede ran providentially just in head of the train with the fierceness of the rush and tramp and as it appeared almost a cyclone of dust. This caused a great commotion and almost stampeded among the oxen and horses of the train. The few rifles available were used and fortunately enough for the emigrants, a few buffalo fell which were prepared and this gave us extra provisions on the long journey ahead of us.”<sup>20</sup>

Although there were many interesting sights and landmarks along the way, William was particularly struck when passing the grave of his aunt Hannah,<sup>21</sup> Reilly’s mother, who had “started for Utah in 1850 with her five children. She died crossing the plains. I saw the mark of her grave on a buffalo skull, the only mark left to show the grave of that lonely woman.”<sup>22</sup>

The Hendersons remained only a few days in Salt Lake City after their arrival late in September. Grandfather meant to pick up farming again and there was no better place than Davis County, twenty-five miles north where a piece of land could be had for the price of working it. He remained in a cabin near Kaysville’s Holmes Creek for three years before finally retiring at the age of sixty-nine.<sup>23</sup> William stayed behind in Kaysville with his brother Samuel after his grandparents moved to Salt Lake City, where he learned how to make his own living in Samuel’s sawmill.<sup>24</sup> It was while living in Kaysville that William fell in love with pretty Alvira Dickson.<sup>25</sup>



*The Salt Lake Valley in 1853.*



*Alvira Aurelia Henderson*

## Alvira's Childhood

Kaysville was a growing community, attracting many families who yearned for a farm of their own in the shadow of the Wasatch Mountains. Billa<sup>26</sup> and Mary Ann Dickson<sup>27</sup> were among those who set up a household there in the 1850s. Like the Henderson, the Dicksons had been driven from their Illinois home by hostile mobs and found work in Iowa before immigrating to Utah with their six children.

Born just weeks before the first Saints left Nauvoo in the winter of 1846, Alvira was six years old by the time she crossed the plains with her family in John B. Walker's company, arriving in the fall of 1852.<sup>28</sup> The Dicksons started out south of Salt Lake in American Fork where Billa's blacksmith shop provided a good living over the winter. The next spring, Billa and his sons Albert<sup>29</sup> and Judson<sup>30</sup> planted their first crop.<sup>31</sup>

Three years later, the family relocated north to Centerville, where the men worked one of Utah's first threshing machines<sup>32</sup> before moving a little farther north to Kaysville in 1856.<sup>33</sup> Kaysville was only lightly

settled when Billa rented a piece of land far from the settlement's center, and with Indians still living in the area, Billa thought it best to join with a few other families who banded together in a small fort on Kays Creek's south bank.<sup>34</sup>

Alvira was ten years old when her family moved into one of the fort's single-room log cabins. Living space was cramped, but secure, with the ring of rustic cabins protected by a wall of solid rock. Alvira was now the only help her mother had at home since sister Samantha Jane's<sup>35</sup> marriage the previous year, and she had her hands full helping with household chores and tending to her younger brothers, six-year old Will<sup>36</sup> and three-year old John.<sup>37</sup>

Although the "Little Fort" had been built for protection on the isolated sand ridge area, the local Indians were friendly, welcoming Billa and his neighbors to their camp for evening visits. One evening, Billa took Will along to the Indian camp, where the tired boy fell asleep near the fire. Billa felt so comfortable with the native that he left the boy sleeping there until the next morning.<sup>38</sup>

Even though the Dicksons were comfortable with their native neighbors, they found living at Little Fort difficult the first season, when severe cold and snows three feet deep caused the loss of cattle from starvation and freezing,<sup>39</sup> but good harvests the next summer were encouraging, and a few years later Billa purchased eighty acres of land along the Mountain Road where he moved his family into a comfortable brick home.<sup>40</sup>

The Kaysville ward of the church was spread out over many miles of Davis County farmland, making travel to Sunday services an all-day affair, but attending meetings was one of the few events where people could gather for spiritual and social support. For young people like Aurelia, there was no better place for getting to know the young men in Kaysville than at church, and by the time Aurelia was sixteen, she had caught the eye of William Henderson.

## ENDNOTES

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- <sup>1</sup> William Jasper Henderson (1840-1919), #KW81-S95, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org), where verification of all vital dates can be found. Also see family group sheets at [www.DaviesDawsonHistory.weebly.com](http://www.DaviesDawsonHistory.weebly.com)
- <sup>2</sup> Sarah Anna (Harris) Henderson (1808-1841), #W186-QC7, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org) Anna probably died in childbirth with infant Phillip, who died the same year. "James Henderson-Anna Harris family group sheet," supplied 1997 by Reta (Davis) Baldwin. This sheet offers only a generic list of materials consulted.
- <sup>3</sup> James Goforth Henderson (1805-1842), #KWJY-8NT, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>4</sup> Notes from researcher John Nash at <http://www.wikitree.com/wiki/Henderson-334>
- <sup>5</sup> Samuel Newton Henderson (1838-1922), #KWN5-2BL, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>6</sup> Reta Davis Baldwin and Laura Jane Davis Auble, compilers, *Davis Family History 1831-1947* (self-published, Ogden, Utah, 1982), page 179.
- <sup>7</sup> Samuel Henderson (1785-1856), #KWJY-85Q, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>8</sup> Elizabeth (Harris) Henderson (1800-1884), #LKVB-MH9, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>9</sup> Samuel was father to nine surviving children born to his first wife, Mary Goforth (1784-1825), #LCJR-TGH, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org), and seven children from his second wife, Elizabeth Harris. See Notes from researcher John Nash at <http://www.wikitree.com/wiki/Henderson-334>
- <sup>10</sup> Martha Ann (Henderson) Day (1835-1922), #KWJX-TVD, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>11</sup> Elizabeth Sarah (Henderson) Lindsay (1836-1911), #KWJZ-ZWZ, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>12</sup> Baldwin and Auble, *Davis Family History 1831-1947*, pages 179-180.
- <sup>13</sup> *Ibid*, page 180.
- <sup>14</sup> *Ibid*.
- <sup>15</sup> George Washington Henderson (1828-1901), #LWYL-2F3, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>16</sup> Baldwin and Auble, *Davis Family History 1831-1947*, pages 180-181. The family is shown living at Blockhouse Branch, Pottawattamie, Iowa, 1846/1849. Ronald G. Watt, "Iowa Branches Members Index 1839 - 1859, Volumes 1 and 2, (Historical Department of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1991). <http://earlylds.com/getperson.php?personID=I20210&tree=Earlylds#cite6>
- <sup>17</sup> Riley Henderson (1838-1860), #L3X1-KGP, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org), son of Samuel and Hannah (Harris) Henderson.
- <sup>18</sup> Baldwin and Auble, *Davis Family History 1831-1947*, page 183.
- <sup>19</sup> The Kelsey Company originally departed 10 June but was forced to turn back due to Indian unrest. The company began again on 29 June. See: The Easton Kelsey Company, 29 June-22 September, 1851, <http://history.lds.org/overlandtravels/companyPioneers?lang=eng&companyId=175>
- <sup>20</sup> Augusta Drious Stevens, Autobiography," <http://history.lds.org/overlandtravels/trailExcerptMulti?lang=eng&companyId=175&sourceId=1794>
- <sup>21</sup> Hannah (Harris) Henderson (1804-1851), #LHJV-Y6D, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>22</sup> Baldwin and Auble, *Davis Family History 1831-1947*, page 182.
- <sup>23</sup> *Ibid*, page 181.
- <sup>24</sup> Samuel's home still stands at 9 South 200 West in Kaysville.
- <sup>25</sup> Alvira Aurelia (Dickson) Henderson (1846-1924), #KWJY-8NR, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org).
- <sup>26</sup> Billa Dickson (1815-1878), #KWJY-8VV, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>27</sup> Mary Ann (Stoddard) Dickson (1817-1903), #KWJY-8VJ, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>28</sup> Mormon Pioneer Overland Travel Index, 1847-1868 <http://history.lds.org/overlandtravels/companyDetail?companyId=309>
- <sup>29</sup> Albert Douglas Dickson (1840-1923), #KWZM-FDK, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)

- 
- <sup>30</sup> Judson Stoddard Dickson (1843-1910), #KWVC-9XH, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>31</sup> Albert Douglas Dickson, "Autobiography of Albert Douglas Dickson," <http://www.dwjacobson.org/getperson.php?personID=1153&tree=Jacobson>.
- <sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>34</sup> The fort was located in what is now a field at North Fort Lane and East Golden Avenue in Layton.
- <sup>35</sup> Samantha Jane (Dickson) Van Orden (1838-1916), #KWVC-9XQ, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>36</sup> William Henderson Dickson (1850-1936), #KWC6-6PH, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>37</sup> John Henry Dickson (1853-1940), #KW8S-7HN, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>38</sup> Dan and Eva Carlsruh, editors, *Layton, Utah: Historic Viewpoints* (Salt Lake City: Moench Printing, 1985), page 36.
- <sup>39</sup> Annie Call Carr, *East of Antelope Island* (reprint, Salt Lake City, Utah; Publisher's Press, 1969), page 123.
- <sup>40</sup> The house stood near what is today 1363 North Highway 89 in East Layton. Harris Adams, interview 26 June, 2001. Transcript held by interviewer Shelley Dawson Davies.

## Chapter 2

# Life on the Frontier

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### Early Settlements



*Sacred ordinances such as sealings were performed in Salt Lake City's endowment house while the temple was under construction.*

Celebrations were in order on the Fourth of July, 1862. Not only was it Independence Day, but for William and Aurelia it was their wedding day. The entire Henderson and Dickson families gathered to watch the young couple take their vows in a Kaysville ceremony. The pair was sealed for time and all eternity the following week on 12 July, in the Salt Lake Endowment House.<sup>41</sup>

William continued to work at his brother's sawmill<sup>42</sup> while Aurelia prepared for the birth of their first child, William Jasper Junior,<sup>43</sup> who arrived the next September. Not long after little Will was born, William accepted a calling to drive an ox team in one of the church's "down and back" wagon trains sent to bring poor Saints to Utah from the Missouri trailhead. He accepted the call, leaving Aurelia and their infant son for almost five months.<sup>44</sup> Aurelia felt particularly alone without William, as her parents had left their Mountain Road farm that same year to settle new land on the opposite side of the Wasatch Mountains in Richville.<sup>45</sup>



*Farmland in Morgan County.*

The Dicksons were doing so well in Morgan County that it didn't take much to convince William to buy land in Richville soon after his return from the trail. He worked his fields all summer and teamed up with the other men harvesting trees during the fall and winter.<sup>46</sup> William added cattle ranching to his operations around 1874.

The Henderson family thrived in the beautiful mountain countryside, where Alvira gave birth to four daughters and a son over the next thirteen years. The local grist mill ensured a ready supply of flour and it was easy enough for William to provide meat for the table. "In those days, it was easy enough to get fish for breakfast before the sun was up, or to shoot enough chickens for dinner," according to one of the residents.<sup>47</sup> Aurelia often prepared wheat and corn by grinding it a coffee mill, and used parched barley as a coffee substitute. Other items on the menu were potatoes, squash "and sometimes beef. During the summer months we had milk and butter," according to Will Jr.<sup>48</sup>

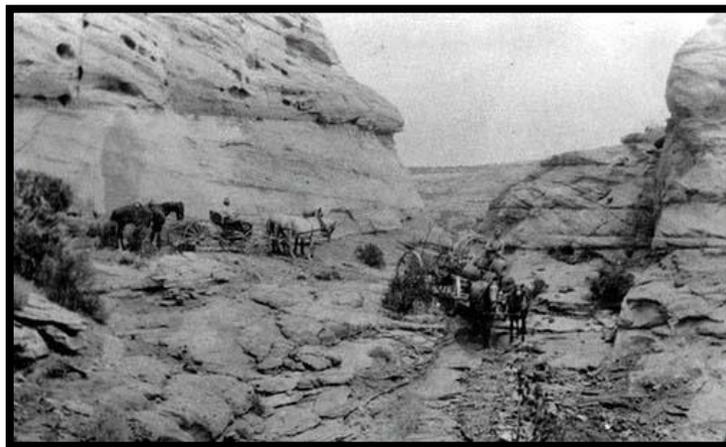
## Pioneering Southern Utah

After living in Richville for ten years, William and Alvira were comfortably established, and Alvira in particular fond of having the consolation and support of her extended family living nearby, especially when William was away for long periods of time driving cattle. Alvira was pregnant with her sixth child when William and her brother John left on a winter-long cattle drive to southern Utah in the fall of 1876,<sup>49</sup> but with her isolation softened by the company of her parents, she made do running her household alone until spring.

Alvira was nearing her confinement by the time William and John returned to Richville, but the impending birth wasn't the only news she had to share with her husband. A church calling from Salt Lake City was waiting for William. The Hendersons had been asked to move permanently to southern Utah to help begin a new community in red rock country. While William was willing to accept the call, he wasn't sure how he would manage relocating his family over three hundred miles without a suitable wagon or team. John Dickson stepped in with an offer to not only lend William the transportation he needed, but he would accompany the family to Garfield County as part of the bargain.<sup>50</sup>

Nothing about the move would be easy. Alvira spent several weeks packing up the family's possessions and preparing to make the arduous journey with five children aged three to fourteen years and a newborn. Worst of all, Alvira would be required to leave the company of her parents and brothers and sisters to make a new life without them in the wilderness.

The Hendersons eventually joined a handful of other families living in a small knot of log cabins called Clifton. The village took its name from a range of notable sandstone rocks nearby where occasional Sunday school and sacrament meetings were held in sunny weather.<sup>51</sup> After struggling with irrigation issues for a year or two, the entire town elected to move to a better site several miles north near the headwaters of the Pahreah River. All of the log cabins were hauled to a location surrounded by white hills and the settlement was renamed Cannonville.<sup>52</sup>



*This nineteenth century photo of Escalante Road in Garfield County shows how difficult travel was over the rough terrain.*

The settlers made land deals by trading horses with the local Paiute Indians, who considered two or three horses a fair price for a piece of flat property suitable for farming. “The country was open and squatter’s rights were more respected than a warranty deed is today,” according to Will Jr. “When Father settled in the Cannonville area he had to trade with the Indians for land. The Piute Indians lived here and this was their home. You decided what part of the country you wanted and looked up the Indian who owned it and made the trade. When the Indian made a trade he never tried to go back on it.”<sup>53</sup>

William and Alvira chose a lot in the center of town, large enough for their three-room log home, a barn and rows of crops out back.<sup>54</sup> William cleared the land of sagebrush himself before planting with a hand plow, a wooden toothed harrow and the wood cultivator he brought from Richville. He later supplemented these tools with a scythe and snatch block purchased for \$2.50 at the nearby Panguitch coop and bought a grain cradle from another farmer for \$5.00.<sup>55</sup> Most farmers quickly discovered the area surrounding Cannonville was a good place to winter livestock and added ranching to their livelihoods, including the Hendersons, who by 1878 were raising sheep for the Kanarra Coop.<sup>56</sup>

Keeping food on the table was a challenge. Despite growing potatoes, carrots, squash and onions, drought and hard winters sometimes forced the settlers to harvest wild thistle greens, pigweed and dandelions for supper. William and Will Jr. often fished and hunted deer, antelope, bear and sage hens in the nearby canyons,<sup>57</sup> but there were no sweets, butter or milk to be had for some time.

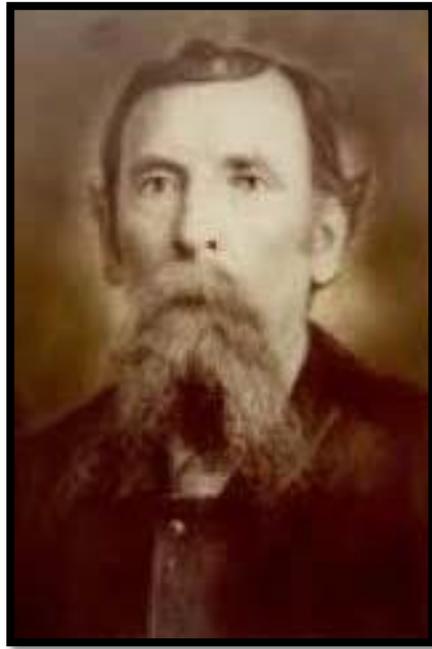
Life was difficult in red rock country, with one hardship after another for Aurelia, who “wondered why they had ever come to such a forsaken place,” according to granddaughter Elda Wheatley.<sup>58</sup> Making do was a way of life. “Just about everything they had was handmade, hand sewn, hand grown, cooked, bottled or dried,” said Elda. “Grandma made the clothing, bedding, curtains, everything.”<sup>59</sup> Alvira even wove her own cloth from wool she carded and spun until a woolen mill was opened in neighboring Washington County. Will Jr. recalled wearing “pants and shirts made of jean cloth. The shirts were made from lighter cloth than the pants. I went barefooted most of the time. One time when it was extra cold I wore moccasins. We traded with the Indians for some of our moccasins and some of them we made from cow hides.”<sup>60</sup>

The few families who lived in Cannonville naturally depended upon each other for survival. “The people were always looking out for each other. No one went hungry if his neighbors knew about it. They all shared and shared alike,” said Will Jr., who remembered how this

spirit of community was extended to a pair of visiting miners in the summer of 1877. “They stopped at my father’s place in Cannonville and asked Father if they could buy some milk. Mother gave them some milk, but refused to take pay for it. These miners had been gone about a year and the milk was a treat for them. They enjoyed it so much that they came back and asked Mother to please sell them some milk. Mother told them she had some more milk and should be glad to let them have it, but she did not want pay for it. To show their appreciation, the miners gave Mother about half of a package of tea wrapped in a piece of paper. Tea was very seldom seen in Cannonville in those days, and Mother was very pleased. There was six families living in Cannonville at that time. They were Littlefield’s, Thompsons, Claytons, Packers, Blissés and Hendersons. Mother divided up the tea in six equal parts and gave one to each of her neighbors. She said it gave her as much pleasure as anything she had ever done.”<sup>61</sup>



*The William Jasper Henderson home in Cannonville, Utah.*



*William Jasper Henderson*

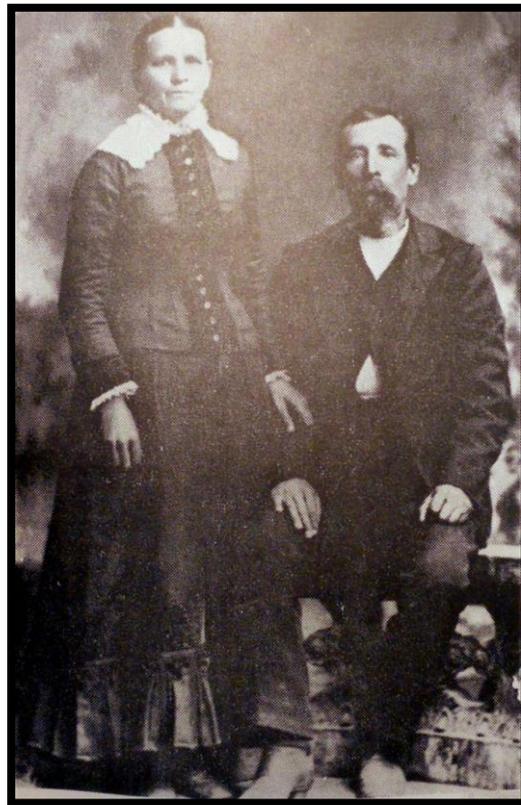
## Henderson's General Store

It didn't take long for William to notice the need for a good general store in Cannonville, and he took the opportunity to open one right next to his home along Main Street. He fashioned the single room building with a stone foundation, milled logs and pine shakes he made himself, then stocked the shelves with both basic supplies and a few luxuries he brought in from Parowan, an eight-day round trip over rutted roads. In addition to flour, sugar, raisins and spices, customers could purchase necessities such as nails, wire, pans and knives, cloth and sewing notions, pencils, slates and even candy and gum. Also on hand was a selection of hand-made mats, rugs and blankets traded by Navajo travelling through the area. With cash in short supply, even most white residents bartered for their purchases. William, following the southern Utah practice of minting local trade currency, stamped his own set of coins for transactions at the store, using a set of dies to inscribe them with "William Henderson, Genl. Mdsde. Cannonville, Ut."<sup>62</sup>

Working behind the counter required not only business skills, but a level of diplomacy, which William demonstrated one day when a local resident came into the store with a pound of butter she had

made. The woman told William “she really didn’t want anything except a small favor,” according to Cannonville historian George W. Thompson. “She said a mouse had drowned in her cream. She got it out all right and the cream wasn’t hurt a bit, so she churned it, but she didn’t quite want to eat the butter. Would he please trade her someone else’s pound of butter for it? It wouldn’t matter to them for they wouldn’t know the difference. While she was looking at the new cloth, he took her butter behind the counter and changed wrappers on it with another pound he had in stock, then, when she was ready to leave he gave her own butter back. Like she said, she didn’t know the difference so she was happy.”<sup>63</sup>

William operated the store for many years, often extending credit to residents down on their luck during long spells of economic depression. Unfortunately, William’s charity was his undoing. “The store eventually went broke because credit was given and people were unable to pay their bills,” said his daughter Lydia Alvira.<sup>64</sup>



*Alvira and William Henderson*

## Getting Together

Amusements were as hard to come by as almost any other commodity in the isolated communities of Garfield County, so people created their own ways of having a good time. A dirt-roofed dancing hall was made from logs to house community events, the most popular being the weekly dances on Saturday nights. The building had a dirt floor and large rock fireplace installed in one end. The windows and door frames remained exposed for some time until glass panes and a door were installed, but that didn't stop people from dancing up a storm to music made by whistling Edward Clayton, accompanied by Louisa Littlefield, who "blowed through a comb with a paper over the teeth."<sup>65</sup> It was simple music, but it was enough to accompany the waltzes, quadrilles and reels that were danced in bare feet for lack of shoes.

As the town's population grew, box-lunch auctions were often held prior to the dances, with lunches made by the girls and bid on by the boys. "Who bought which box was supposed to be a secret, but somehow there seemed to be a means of understanding among the young folks so the right couples got paired together," according to George Thompson. Summer activities included horse racing and horse shoe tossing for the adults, and games of marbles for the youngsters, whose favorite spot was a sunny bare bit of ground on the south side of Henderson's General Store.<sup>66</sup>

When he wasn't running either his cattle or the store, William was involved in community service. He was elected as one of the early school trustees responsible for constructing and maintaining a suitable building, hiring a teacher and furnishing desks, textbooks and heat.<sup>67</sup> William was also selected as secretary to the East Fork Irrigation Company of Cannonville when the people banded together to dig a canal in 1889.<sup>68</sup>

## Taking Another Wife

William's dedicated service to his family and community did not go unnoticed. When an official ward of the church was organized in Cannonville in 1879, he was called as the first counselor to Bishop Jonathan L. Packer, later becoming bishop himself in 1884, a position he held for seven years.<sup>69</sup> Bishops were often encouraged by the church leadership in Salt Lake to support the principle of celestial marriage by taking at least one additional wife, and so with Alvira's consent William married Lydia Drucilla Johnson<sup>70</sup> on 26 March, 1887, in the St. George temple.



*Lydia Drucilla Henderson*

The idea of plural marriage was natural to Lydia, whose own mother<sup>71</sup> was the second wife of Seth Johnson,<sup>72</sup> a southern Utah pioneer who helped settle several small towns in Garfield County. Lydia spent most of her childhood in Hillsdale, where the nearby mountains became an extension of her own backyard. She joined her friends in wading across the river to hunt birds' nests along the ledges, and was often sent to the nearby hills to gather sagebrush, which was reduced to ashes important in softening her mother's laundry water. Lydia followed behind any shepherds passing through the area, gathering bits of wool left on branches by the animals to use in quilts, and joined other children every evening in bringing the cows home from pasture for milking. On one occasion, as the children neared the herd, they encountered a huge panther. Despite their fear, the children rounded up the cattle and started homeward, looking over their shoulders the entire way. It wasn't until they were almost home that the big cat finally gave up and disappeared back into the hills.

Lydia was sixteen years old when she joined her father near Yellow Creek, where he helped settle the community of Georgetown, three miles south of Cannonville.<sup>73</sup> The Johnsons attended church in Cannonville, three miles up the road, where Lydia soon became friendly with Bishop Henderson's daughter, fifteen-year old Laura Jane,<sup>74</sup> and already felt part of the family by the time William proposed marriage the next year.

Entering into a plural marriage had its risks in 1887. The U.S. government was determined to eliminate the practice altogether by making any such union a felony punishable by five years of imprisonment and a five hundred dollar fine. Plural wives were legally required to testify against their husbands, practitioners were

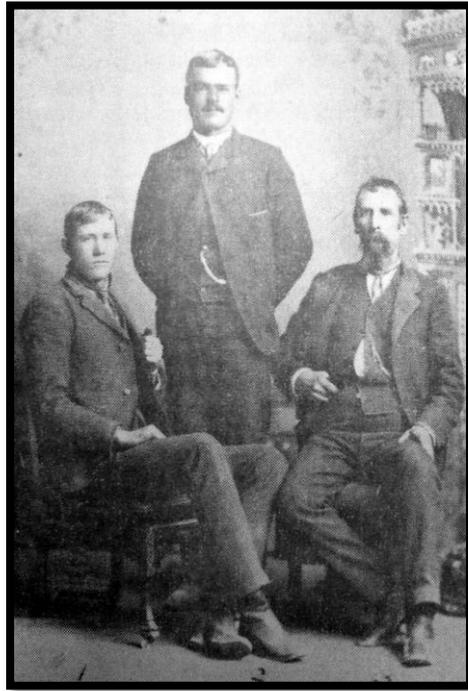
disenfranchised and the church itself was disincorporated. With many polygamists in hiding to avoid arrest and prosecution, William made certain his marriage to Lydia was kept quiet. He prepared a hiding place in a nearby apple orchard where he and Lydia spent their first night together as man and wife. "Her girlfriends teased her a great deal about this arrangement," her granddaughter Alice Pizza was told.<sup>75</sup> Lydia also used this same spot to hide whenever the federal marshals came to town looking for polygamists.<sup>76</sup>

William built Lydia her own three-room log home, less than a block away from Alvira's. Both women "got along very well," according to Lydia Alvira. "We always called Father's first wife Auntie and we loved her very much. She treated Mother like she was one of her own daughters."<sup>77</sup> In turn, Alvira's children called their father's second wife "Aunt Drucy."

Alvira happily took the younger wife under her wing, especially when Drucy discovered she was expecting her first child. Alvira happened to be pregnant with her tenth child at the same time, and was happy to help Drucy prepare for the upcoming birth. Alvira's daughter Sadie<sup>78</sup> arrived on 5 December, 1888, followed three days later by the birth of Drucy's baby on the eighth. Drucy named her daughter Lydia Alvira in honor of her sister wife.



*Drucy and William with Parley, Jennie,  
Lydia Alvira and Sarah.*



*Hyrum Elmer, John Henry Davis and William Jasper Henderson posed together before leaving on missions in 1889.*

## Mission to the Midwest

There was a flurry of marriages in the Henderson family beginning with Alvira's two oldest daughters, Mary Anne<sup>79</sup> and Alvira,<sup>80</sup> who both wed in 1884; Will Jr. took a wife the day before William Sr. married Drucy in 1887, and seven months later, Laura Jane became the second plural wife of her sister, Mary Anne's husband, John H. Davis,<sup>81</sup> leaving Alvira at home with teenagers James<sup>82</sup> and Lucy,<sup>83</sup> six-year old Frances,<sup>84</sup> three-year old Mae<sup>85</sup> and baby Sarah.

It came as a surprise to everyone when William was called on a mission to the Midwest only four months after his wives presented him with two new daughters. Even more surprising was his son-in-law's call issued at the same time for the same mission in Iowa and Nebraska. Both William and John H. Davis were set apart as missionaries on 23 April, 1889, and they left together soon afterwards for Council Bluffs.

Serving a mission was always sacrifice for the entire family. With the breadwinners gone for an extended period of time, it was up to the women to run the farm and ranching operations, all while attending to the demands of their children, but the Henderson women were fully supportive of their men, insisting they fulfill their callings. The women proved their commitment when, soon after Laura Jane gave birth in October, 1889, the Davis house burned down, forcing Mary Anne, Laura Jane and their small children to move in with Alvira for some time. Unfortunately, while John was able to complete his mission, William was forced to return in November, 1889, due to his poor health.<sup>86</sup>

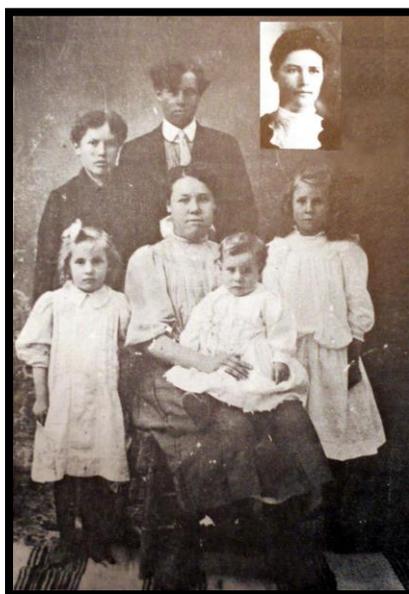
## An Increase in Posterity

Both Drucy and Aurelia added to the family in 1891, with the birth of two sons: Parley<sup>87</sup> in February, and Wallace<sup>88</sup> later that November. Drucy gave birth to seven more children over the next eleven years and often served other families by taking in children who lost their mother until other arrangements could be made.<sup>89</sup> Death visited both Henderson households during those same years, with Drucy losing nine-year old Ernest<sup>90</sup> and sixteen-month old Anthony<sup>91</sup> within a few years of each other. During a diphtheria epidemic in 1903, Aurelia's six-year old daughter Elda Maude<sup>92</sup> died from the illness. "She was born when my Grandma Henderson was fifty one years old," said granddaughter Mary Harker.<sup>93</sup> "I remember my Grandma saying, 'It nearly killed me to give her life and it just about killed me to have to give her up.'<sup>94</sup>

Whether they passed through good times or bad, Alvira and Drucy drew love and support from each other before sharing it with others. Each woman worked hard to raise their children in warm and welcoming homes despite challenges both great and small. Alvira, who served as Relief Society president for many years,<sup>95</sup> was known for her tidy house, even when her homemade broom added to her chores. "She made a broom out of brush or straw and every time she used it she would jaw [complain] mildly because pieces would break off and clutter the floor," remembered Elda.<sup>96</sup> Throughout her entire life she worked very hard and never shirked responsibilities. Her management and judgment in conducting her household affairs and rearing and nurturing her large family were almost unexcelled. She seemed to always know how to make ends meet.<sup>97</sup>



*The family of Alvira and William (back, left to right): Francis, Laura Jane, James, Mary Annie, Lucy. Middle: Alvira, holding Wallace, William, Hyrum Elmer (son of Aurelia Henderson Elmer). Front: Sarah, Mae.*



*Drucy's children (back, left to right): LeRoy, Parley. Front: Alice, Jennie holding Riley, Martha. Lydia Alvira, inset.*

Both Alvira and Drucy loved to bake, especially their famous hot Salt Rising Bread. Lydia “usually got the starter going, then passed a cup of it around to the other women in town and there would be a regular bake day. We always knew when she was baking bread. We could smell it blocks away,” said Alice.<sup>98</sup>

## *Grandmother Drucy’s Salt Rising Bread*

*3 medium potatoes*

*1 tsp sugar*

*1 tsp salt*

*4 cups boiling water*

*3 Tbls corn meal*

*Dough*

*2 cups luke warm milk*

*1/8 tsp soda*

*1 cup water*

*1/8 tsp salt*

*2 Tbls melted lard*

*Pare and slice potatoes. Add corn meal, sugar, salt and boiling water. Wrap bowl in heavy cloth, cover and allow to stand overnight in a warm place. In the morning, remove potatoes, add milk, water soda and shortening. Add sufficient flour to make a dough just stiff enough to knead. Knead until smooth and elastic. Form into loaves and place in well-oiled pans. Cover and let rise until double in bulk. Bake in moderate oven 45 minutes. Makes three loaves. Alice S. Pizza and Enid H. Thompson, *William Jasper Henderson Senior Family History, 1840-1982*, page 7.*

Drucy not only worked many long hours doing her own housework, but took in washing for more prosperous ladies in the community. In trade, she received fabric and hand-me-down clothing, which she transformed into clothing for her children, often staying up late at night to do the sewing.<sup>99</sup> The women shared work caring for the farm animals as well as a vegetable garden and small orchard, from which they harvested fresh foods and preserved them in bottles for winter consumption.<sup>100</sup> Drucy “would arise very early each morning, milk the cows, prepare breakfast and then go with her husband to the field to plant corn, potatoes or any other work that needed doing,” recalled her nephew, Udell Jolley. “At eleven o’clock she would return to the house to prepare dinner, then return to the field and work until night, after which she returned home and attended to her household duties.”<sup>101</sup>

Supporting his large and growing family was a constant challenge for William, who moved his wives and children between their homes in Cannonville and farms outside of town where the cattle herds were kept. After three years of living on the Lee farm, the family was forced out when “Billy Moore, a rough character and his outfit came and rustled all the cattle and drove them over the border to Arizona,” said Lydia Alvira.<sup>102</sup> William next purchased the Wooden Shoe farm, five miles outside of Cannonville. “Most of my childhood was spent on the farm and everyone worked very hard, especially Mother and Father,” said Lydia Alvira. “Mother worked in the fields beside us all day, then took care of our home, preparing meals and milking the cows. Mae and Sadie our half-sisters and Wallace, a half-brother, would come to the farm to help us with a small herd of sheep we accumulated and to herd the cows during the day.”<sup>103</sup>

The families finally moved into town permanently in 1897. By then, with many of the older children married or working away from home, Alvira and Drucy were caring for Mae, eleven, Sadie, nine, Wallace, six, Lydia Alvira, nine, Parley, six, Jennie,<sup>104</sup> five, and one-year old Earnest. Living conditions were austere. Lydia Alvira recalled helping her mother hang a muslin partition in the living room to create “a bedroom for seven children. Here we slept in the winter and in the summer we all slept out in a thick wooded grove of wild plum trees.”<sup>105</sup> Drucy gave birth to her fifth child, LeRoy,<sup>106</sup> that December, followed two years later by Martha Jane,<sup>107</sup> Alice<sup>108</sup> in 1903, Riley<sup>109</sup> in 1906 and Anthony in 1908.

Money was tighter than ever, forcing the women to economize however they could, which usually meant going without even such necessities as footwear. “We had one pair of shoes a year and those had to last all during the cold weather,” said Lydia Alvira. “In summer we all went barefoot. I remember being embarrassed at a party, as I was the only girl there with bare feet. I decided to do

something about it, so I earned money cooking.” By the time she was fourteen, Lydia Alvira had joined her half-sister Frances working thirty miles away in Panguitch, where she earned \$1.50 a week. “I got so homesick, never being away from home before, but I kept at it. That year, by Christmas, I had saved enough money to buy my two little sisters, Alice and Martha, their first real dolls and the material to make my sister Jennie a dress.”<sup>110</sup>



*The desolate beauty of Garfield County.*

## ENDNOTES

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- <sup>41</sup> Alice S. Pizza and Enid H. Thompson, *William Jasper Henderson Senior Family History, 1840-1982* (Genealogical Society of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1983), page 3.
- <sup>42</sup> Reta Davis Baldwin and Laura Jane Davis Auble, compilers, *Davis Family History 1831-1947* (self-published, Ogden, Utah, 1982), page 184.
- <sup>43</sup> William Jasper Henderson (1863-1945), #KWC1-M9P, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>44</sup> Baldwin and Auble, *Davis Family History 1831-1947*, page 184.
- <sup>45</sup> Albert Douglas Dickson, "Autobiography of Albert Douglas Dickson," <http://www.dwjacobson.org/getperson.php?personID=1153&tree=Jacobson>
- <sup>46</sup> Baldwin and Auble, *Davis Family History 1831-1947*, page 184.
- <sup>47</sup> Mrs. William Chadwick, "History of Morgan County," *The Morgan County News*, 4 April 1947.
- <sup>48</sup> Interview with William Jasper Henderson, Junior (Panguitch, Utah), Federal Writer's Project, 4 Jan, 1939; typescript from Utah State Historical Society (MSSB 289 Box #4). Copy held by Shelley Dawson Davies.
- <sup>49</sup> Baldwin and Auble, *Davis Family History 1831-1947*, page 191.
- <sup>50</sup> Pizza & Thompson, *William Jasper Henderson Senior Family History, 1840-1982*, page 3.
- <sup>51</sup> Interview, William Jasper Henderson, Junior, 4 Jan, 1939.
- <sup>52</sup> At some point, probably before he moved to Cannonville, William built a cabin in Tropic Canyon, now part of Bryce Canyon National Park, where the Henderson Canyon Springs was named for him. See: John W. Van Cott, *Utah Place Names: A Comprehensive Guide to the Origins of Geographic Names* (University of Utah Press, 1990), page 229.
- <sup>53</sup> Interview, William Jasper Henderson, Junior, 4 Jan, 1939.
- <sup>54</sup> Kathryn Riffel, "William Jasper Henderson, Senior, My Great-Grandfather," <http://kathryn-riffel.blogspot.com/2012/02/william-jasper-henderson-sr-my-great.html>
- <sup>55</sup> Interview, William Jasper Henderson, Junior, 4 Jan, 1939.
- <sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>58</sup> Elda Maude (Davis) Wheatley (1911-2003). Baldwin and Auble, *Davis Family History 1831-1947*, page 194.
- <sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, page 193.
- <sup>60</sup> Interview, William Jasper Henderson, Junior, 4 Jan, 1939.
- <sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>62</sup> Linda King Newell and Vivian Linford Talbot, *A History of Garfield County* (Salt Lake City, Utah; Utah Historical Society, 1998), page 147-148.
- <sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, page 148.
- <sup>64</sup> Lydia Alvira (Henderson) Taylor (1888-1975), #KWCG-JJ8, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org) *Ibid.*, page 98-99.
- <sup>65</sup> Interview, William Jasper Henderson, Junior, 4 Jan, 1939.
- <sup>66</sup> Newell and Talbot, *A History of Garfield County*, page 149
- <sup>67</sup> Baldwin and Auble, *Davis Family History 1831-1947*, page 185.
- <sup>68</sup> Newell and Talbot, *A History of Garfield County*, page 199
- <sup>69</sup> Pizza & Thompson, *William Jasper Henderson Senior Family History, 1840-1982*, page 2.
- <sup>70</sup> Lydia Drucilla (Johnson) Henderson (1870-1936), #JKW81-S9T, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>71</sup> Martha Jane (Stratton) Johnson (1848-1910), #KWZ6-QQW, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>72</sup> Seth Garnsey Johnson (1839-1927), #KWCL-Y6S, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>73</sup> Pizza & Thompson, *William Jasper Henderson Senior Family History, 1840-1982*, page 6.
- <sup>74</sup> Laura Jane (Henderson) Davis (1871-1911), #KWCJ-8L1, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>75</sup> Pizza & Thompson, *William Jasper Henderson Senior Family History, 1840-1982*, page 5.
- <sup>76</sup> Riffel, "William Jasper Henderson, Senior, My Great-Grandfather."

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- <sup>77</sup> Newell and Talbot, *A History of Garfield County*, page 98-99.
- <sup>78</sup> Sarah Marie “Sadie” (Henderson) Johnson (1888-1913), #KWZF-LYN, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>79</sup> Mary Anne “Annie” (Henderson) Davis (1866-1937), #KWCC-4JQ, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>80</sup> Alvira Aurelia (Henderson) Elmer (1868-1885), #KWJY-82N, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>81</sup> John Henry Davis (1860-1947), #KWCC-4JS, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>82</sup> James Newton Henderson (1874-1967), #KWCQ-JPT, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>83</sup> Lucy Henderson (1877-1901), #KWJY-822, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>84</sup> Frances Evelyn (Henderson) Whitney (1883-1930), #KWZ8-ZKR, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>85</sup> Maggie Mae (Henderson) Fletcher (1886-1967), #KWJY-821, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>86</sup> Baldwin and Auble, *Davis Family History 1831-1947*, page 187.
- <sup>87</sup> Parley Harris Henderson (1891-1949), #KWJH-4MX, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>88</sup> Wallace Dickson Henderson (1891-1947), #KWC8-PNG, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>89</sup> Baldwin and Auble, *Davis Family History 1831-1947*, page 198.
- <sup>90</sup> Ernest Henderson (1896-1905), #KVVH-DN2, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>91</sup> Anthony Henderson (1908-1909), #KVVH-DNG, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>92</sup> Elda Maude Henderson (1897-1903), #KWJY-82P, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>93</sup> Mary Alvira (Davies) Caffell Harker (1888-1980), #KWZY-B4B, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>94</sup> Baldwin and Auble, *Davis Family History 1831-1947*, page 323.
- <sup>95</sup> *Ibid*, page 184.
- <sup>96</sup> *Ibid*, page 191.
- <sup>97</sup> Pizza & Thompson, *William Jasper Henderson Senior Family History, 1840-1982*, page 3.
- <sup>98</sup> *Ibid*, page 5.
- <sup>99</sup> *Ibid*.
- <sup>100</sup> *Ibid*.
- <sup>101</sup> Baldwin and Auble, *Davis Family History 1831-1947*, page 196.
- <sup>102</sup> Newell and Talbot, *A History of Garfield County*, page 98-99.
- <sup>103</sup> *Ibid*.
- <sup>104</sup> Jennie Drucilla (Henderson) Stock (1892-1950), #KWCB-QWW, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>105</sup> Newell and Talbot, *A History of Garfield County*, page 98-99.
- <sup>106</sup> LeRoy Henderson (1897-1940), #KW88-QWW, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>107</sup> Martha Jane (Henderson) Graff (1899-1942), #KWJZ-JYJ, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>108</sup> Alice (Henderson) Dunham (1903-1979), #KWCQ-ZW7, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>109</sup> Riley Johnson Henderson (1906-1944), #KWC2-WQ9, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>110</sup> Newell and Talbot, *A History of Garfield County*, page 98-99.

## Chapter 3

# Heart and Hearth

## Loving to the End

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*Cannonville as it looked around the turn of the twentieth century.*

The Hendersons continued to live quiet, busy lives as the rest of their children matured and left home. Little had changed in the tiny town of Cannonville over the years; William still left the house every morning to tend to his crops and cattle while Alvira and Drucy looked to the cooking, cleaning and caring for family members who lived around them.

Both women had developed deeply charitable feelings for others, having suffered their own share of adversity. Drucy, who had lost two young sons to death, became “a sympathetic advisor, one to whom other could turn to in times of sickness or difficulties of any kind,” said nephew Udell Jolley. “She has never been too busy to render service to those who have needed it. Her great, loving heart and her tireless, capable hands have throughout her life brought peace and comfort to those in distress and happiness to those who were depressed.”<sup>111</sup>

Alvira was forced to endure the loss of two sons, George<sup>112</sup> in 1882, and James in 1901, and three daughters from complications in childbirth: Alvira in 1885; Laura Jane in 1911; Sarah in 1913. As difficult as all these deaths were, perhaps the most painful loss was that of Alvira's twenty-four year daughter, Lucy, whose cause of death forever remained a mystery.

Lucy was working as a housekeeper in Price, three hundred miles north in Carbon County. Her many letters home spoke of the good family she worked for, and how much she and the children love each other. Then, in 1901, her letters suddenly stopped. For almost a year and a half, the Hendersons wrote to their daughter without receiving any response. Finally, they sent their son James to Price to find out what had happened to her. James spent several days asking around town, but no one would give him any information about Lucy. Even the family who employed her denied knowing anything about where Lucy was. Finally, an old man took pity on James, driving him to a cemetery six miles outside of Price in the small town of Wellington, where Lucy was buried. He refused to give James any further details about Lucy or how she came to rest in such a lonely cemetery far from her home.<sup>113</sup> "This was a sorrow almost unbearable, but as always she rallied to the cause, and was there with her big heart and loving soul to help and comfort those bereft," said Alice. "One of the most outstanding qualities Grandmother possessed was her willingness and ability to endure and overcome hardships."<sup>114</sup>

Alvira had a knack for herbal cures which she used to help anyone she could. "She had a way with mixing medicines that was remarkable," recalled great granddaughter Nell Alleman.<sup>115</sup> "For instance, she combined alum, golden seal, honey and sage to make a canker medicine that is still in use by her descendants. When I was five years old my clothes caught fire and were burned to me. One leg was burned so bad I couldn't straighten it. The doctor was dubious about my chances of walking on it. My father<sup>116</sup> was ill and my mother needed help in caring for the burns. To keep out infection all the cloths were scorched on the stove then spread with Vaseline. The used bandages were slowly loosened and taken off and the fresh ones applied daily. This went on for over a month, and who had the most time to help? Why Grandpa and Grandma Henderson. They seemed the very personification of cleanliness and goodness. I trusted them and knew that when Grandpa said I would be able to walk again that I would."<sup>117</sup>



*Alvira in her later years.*

## Grandma Alvira's House

William, Alvira and Drucy were happy to become dotting grandparents. Nell Alleman and her family received regular visits from William and Alvira over the years. "I greatly loved Grandma Henderson. She used to tell me about her experiences as a child of five years when she crossed the plains."<sup>118</sup> Elda Wheatley remembered her Grandmother Alvira as a "dear, sweet soul"<sup>119</sup> who gave Elda a special birthday gift one year. "My thirteenth birthday fell on a Sunday. I hurried and got ready for Sunday school and then down to Grandma's to tell her it was my birthday. She gave me thirteen pennies and they looked like a whole lot of money to me. I went on to Sunday school tickled to pieces."<sup>120</sup>

All of the grandchildren had warm memories of their grandparents' Cannonville home, which "always smelled fresh when I went after the milk each night," said Nell.<sup>121</sup> "Grandma's home smelled of baking bread, pine logs burning in the heater and fresh cut yellow roses on the table."<sup>122</sup>

The old house remained small, but comfortable, with a grey granite washstand sitting next to the kitchen door where anyone coming in with dirty hands was required to wash with some of Alvira's homemade soap. With no running water in the house, the bucket had to be filled from the well. "Grandma would often say to the boys or men, 'Before you go, set me in a bucket of water.' To tease her they would pick her up and make like they were putting her in a bucket of water," said Alice.<sup>123</sup>

On display in a small kitchen cupboard were Alvira's clear glass dishes rimmed in ruby red, complete with a creamer, sugar and butter dish.<sup>124</sup> In the back of the cupboard was a oddity the grandchild often begged to see. One day while Alvira was getting a chicken ready for the pot, she chopped her finger off instead of the chicken's head. She preserved the finger in a bottle of alcohol, saying she wanted it buried with her. "We grandchildren would tease her to bring it out and show us, as it was a rare curiosity to us. Occasionally she would stop her work and show it us," said Nell.<sup>125</sup>

The old black stove was the main attraction in the kitchen, where Alvira baked loaves of bread and baking powder biscuits and where William loved to sit with his feet in the warming oven. "Grandpa said he was 'toasting his shins,' said Opal Hatch.<sup>126</sup> "He never wore a pair of shoes out; he most always burned them off. This habit of Grandpa's was a great aggravation for Grandma as she could not move freely about her stove. Grandma told me how she would cook breakfast with Grandpa seated in front of the stove with his feet in the warming oven. When it was time to pop the biscuits in she would have to ask him to move. This would upset the old gent, but the next morning he would right back at his post in the usual position. Grandma commented on this by saying, 'He was a trying old man, Opal, but I guess he will be glad to see me when I get over on the other side.'"<sup>127</sup>

William also liked to prop himself up in the living room with a good book, leaning back in a captain's chair with his long legs stretched out on the nickel-plated stove rim, "even when there was a hot fire in the stove. I wondered how he could stand the heat," said Nell.<sup>128</sup>

Alvira kept her sewing machine against one of the living room walls, opposite of the horsehair sofa and ornate round table that held the Bible and family photo album. The grandchildren were particularly fond of the photo album as it played "Silver Threads Among the Gold" whenever the cover was lifted. Grandmother's keepsakes were hidden away in an old trunk placed next to the phonograph, where she liked to spend evenings in her rocking chair. The room was decorated with a framed mirror, braided rag rug and starched lace curtains at the windows.<sup>129</sup> The single bedroom was just large enough to accommodate a corn shuck mattress covered with layers of patchwork quilts Alvira stitched herself.<sup>130</sup>

Alvira always planted a large kitchen garden out back near the fruit trees, and even after he retired from ranching, William kept a cow, a pig and some chickens. "I can just see Grandma holding up her apron, which held feed for the chickens," said Elda. "She would call to them: 'Here, chick, chick, chick,' while tossing out feed to them."<sup>131</sup>

When he wasn't puttering around the yard or visiting the neighbors, William could found reading. He liked to keep up with current events by way of the *Desert News*, which was delivered from Salt Lake City twice a month. He became especially concerned with news from the Western Front, as by 1918, his sons Parley and LeRoy were both enlisted in the army.<sup>132</sup> "I want to say to you my Dear Boy," he wrote in a letter to LeRoy, "that there has never been an hour in the day but what I think of you and always Praying for your safety and Trust on the Lord for he has promised the Mormon Boys if they will trust in him and do his will there will not be many of them that would be slain and I want to say to you that this is my testimony ... Now may the Lord Bless and protect you from accident and harm and from all danger is the Prayer of your old Father."<sup>133</sup>

William's fatherly concern was extended to all of his children, who sought out his advice when faced with difficult life decisions. Lydia Alvira remembered the love and concern shown when she counseled with her father about marrying outside of the church. "I went home for a visit and talked to my father about getting married, telling him I had met someone, but he was not a good Mormon," she said. "Father told me that if I could save one soul and bring him into the church that it was the best thing I could do." Lydia Alvira married Raymond Taylor<sup>134</sup> in 1910, and thanks to the love and support shown to Ray by her family, she and her husband were sealed in the temple three years later.<sup>135</sup>

## Splurging at ZCMI

Keeping up with the latest fashions was never an option for ladies like Alvira, living so far removed from civilization, and she didn't give her simple clothing a second thought, even when visiting Will Jr. and his family in Salt Lake City. One winter, Will's daughter, Opal, decided to see to it that her grandmother's attire was brought up to date. "I informed Father that if he was going to take Grandmother to see her relatives, he better 'fit her out,' meaning new clothes," said Opal, who was tired of seeing her grandmother in a "very plain flannel and waist and skirt" that didn't even match. "Bless my dear old dad, he and I took Grandmother Alvira to ZCMI. The poor dear was simply bewildered at all the splendor of the big store.

"Father told the clerk he wanted a silk dress for his mother. The clerk led Grandmother back to a rack of black taffeta dresses. She looked back at me, so I ran to be at her side through this ordeal. She settled on a beautiful dress and the clerk told her where the fitting rooms were. Well, you will never know the look that came over Grandmother's face. I told her I would go with her. She wore her

garments and a 'shimmy' made out of white factory material. We put the dress on over her head and you should have seen the expression on her face of utter disbelief at how she looked. I brought her out to show Father and he was very pleased.

"I again told father that she needed two dresses, maybe a black serge one. We repeated the whole dressing and undressing over again. Father added a black seal skin coat, a saucy black velvet hat with a blue flower, my choice, and some new shoes. Then a beautiful blue shawl and a lavender one to take back to Cannonville for Aunt Drucy. Such a day! My Grandmother looked in the long mirror and said, 'I'm as beautiful as the queen of England.' Such joy Will gave his beloved mother. Grandmother told of this all her life."<sup>136</sup>



*Alvira gathering vegetables in her kitchen garden.*



*Drucy with Riley's wife Georgia.*

## Passing Away

William, Alvira and Drucy remained happy together in their dual homes until 1912, when William and Alvira were called to work in the St. George temple. Drucy looked after things in Cannonville during the four years William and Alvira spent in St. George, until William's failing health finally forced the couple to return to Cannonville in July, 1916.<sup>137</sup>

William grew gradually weaker over the next few years, but kept his "ready wit and humor [that] had a sparkling quality which helped him over the bumpy roads in life. He was well known for his sympathy and kindness. He was blessed with a special gift of healing and with the power of the priesthood, was untiring in his devotion to those in need. Much of his time was spent visiting, administering and blessing the sick," said Alice.<sup>138</sup>

It was finally William himself who was ill enough to require a doctor's care, but there was little to be done. William died at the age of seventy-nine in the early morning of 21 September, 1919.<sup>139</sup>

Alvira was seventy-three years old at her husband's death, and not in the best of health herself, but she carried on with the same smiling outlook everyone had come to expect, endearing herself to her grandchildren as "a dear, cheerful, witty woman,"<sup>140</sup> Alvira came to depend even more on Drucy, and the bond between the two women deepened as Alvira's strength ebbed. Drucy "loved Alvira very much. Alvira had always been so good to her and loved her like a daughter. She understood her and helped her through her life," said Alice, who noted how "our dear Aunt Drucy cared for to her dying day. These were precious women, Grandfather's two wives."<sup>141</sup>

Alvira became delirious during her final illness, rendering her unable to recognize family and friends. She died at the age of seventy-seven on 17 January, 1924,<sup>142</sup> and was buried the next day by the side of her husband in the Cannonville cemetery.

Drucy not only cared for Alvira over the years, but travelled where ever she was needed to tend to her children and grandchildren. She journeyed to Arizona several times to help with the birth of her daughter Jennie's babies,<sup>143</sup> and in turn, the Stock family drove up to Cannonville on occasion to visit their Grandma Drucy. Alice recalled her grandmother living in "a small three-room log cabin in Cannonville. There was very little beauty there, but her presence made it a lovely place to be. The floors were bare, but scrubbed clean. The kitchen floor sagged badly where the heavy stove stood at one end of the kitchen. The floor was almost worn through in front of the stove."<sup>144</sup>

Alice noted that among Drucy's prized possession were a kerosene lamp with flowers painted on it that I thought was the prettiest lamp I had ever seen," and two beautiful tea pots that she treasured."<sup>145</sup> Drucy loved having her tea, according to Alice, who remembered visiting her grandmother "one day when she was doing some washing (on a scrubbing board, of course) when she sat down to rest a minute and have a cup of tea. She asked me if I would have a cup with her. I said, 'You aren't supposed to drink tea.' Her reply was, 'Oh, a little cup of tea never hurt anyone,' and she fixed me a cup of tea with several spoons full of sugar, a lot of milk and enough tea to warm it up and put some color into it. She was right, that little cup of tea with my grandmother didn't hurt me a bit. I was only seven and very happy that I had been invited to tea."<sup>146</sup>

Apparently, Alvira had also enjoyed have a bit of tea from time to time, but felt more conflicted about it than Drucy. Not long before her death, Alvira was very ill with the chicken pox, but she was still concerned with staying "on the straight and narrow path." Elda

recalled her grandmother sending her to ask Will Jr. “if he thought it would be alright for her to drink a little tea, saying, ‘I think it will make me feel better.’ He gave me the tea to take back and told me to tell Grandma to drink all she wanted if it would make her feel better.”<sup>147</sup>

Drucy was only in her mid-fifties when she became so ill she was not expected to live.<sup>148</sup> Although she recovered over the winter, her health was never again very stable. She began suffering from a toxic goiter, which slowly broke down her body. Drucy became worrisome, nervous and unable to sleep. Her loving heart now raced uncomfortably and the hands that once worked so diligently in caring for others quivered with uncontrollable tremors. Eventually Drucy was unable to leave her bed, and it was there where she died at the age of sixty-six on 5 December, 1936.<sup>149</sup> She was buried next to William and Alvira in the Cannonville cemetery.<sup>150</sup>



*The graves of William, Alvira and Drucy are marked by this tall pillar as well as smaller, individual stones.*

## ENDNOTES

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- <sup>111</sup> Reta Davis Baldwin and Laura Jane Davis Auble, compilers, *Davis Family History 1831-1947* (self-published, Ogden, Utah, 1982), page 198.
- <sup>112</sup> George Albert Henderson (1880-1882).
- <sup>113</sup> Alice S. Pizza and Enid H. Thompson, *William Jasper Henderson Senior Family History, 1840-1982* (Genealogical Society of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1983), page 91.
- <sup>114</sup> *Ibid*, page 3.
- <sup>115</sup> Fenella "Nell" (Caffell) Alleman (1912-1985), #KWCB-NP4, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>116</sup> Thomas Earl Caffell (1888-1918), #KWZ2-6GR, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>117</sup> Baldwin and Auble, *Davis Family History 1831-1947*, page 194.
- <sup>118</sup> *Ibid*.
- <sup>119</sup> *Ibid*, page 192.
- <sup>120</sup> *Ibid*, page 194.
- <sup>121</sup> *Ibid*.
- <sup>122</sup> Pizza & Thompson, *William Jasper Henderson Senior Family History, 1840-1982*, page 3.
- <sup>123</sup> *Ibid*.
- <sup>124</sup> Baldwin and Auble, *Davis Family History 1831-1947* page 192.
- <sup>125</sup> *Ibid*, page 194.
- <sup>126</sup> Opal Alvira (Henderson) Hatch (1910-1992), #KWZJ-V4T, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>127</sup> Pizza & Thompson, *William Jasper Henderson Senior Family History, 1840-1982*, page 3.
- <sup>128</sup> Baldwin and Auble, *Davis Family History 1831-1947*, page 194.
- <sup>129</sup> Pizza & Thompson, *William Jasper Henderson Senior Family History, 1840-1982*, page 3.
- <sup>130</sup> Baldwin and Auble, *Davis Family History 1831-1947*, page 192.
- <sup>131</sup> *Ibid*, page 192.
- <sup>132</sup> Linda King Newell and Vivian Linford Talbot, *A History of Garfield County* (Salt Lake City, Utah; Utah Historical Society, 1998), page 98-99.
- <sup>133</sup> Pizza & Thompson, *William Jasper Henderson Senior Family History, 1840-1982*, page 187-189.
- <sup>134</sup> Augustus Raymond Taylor (1890-1939), #KWCG-JJZ, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>135</sup> Newell and Talbot, *A History of Garfield County*, page 98-99.
- <sup>136</sup> Pizza & Thompson, *William Jasper Henderson Senior Family History, 1840-1982*, page 4.
- <sup>137</sup> Baldwin and Auble, *Davis Family History 1831-1947*, page 191.
- <sup>138</sup> Pizza & Thompson, *William Jasper Henderson Senior Family History, 1840-1982*, page 1.
- <sup>139</sup> William Jasper Henderson, death certificate no. 62 (1919), Garfield County, Utah Department of Health, Salt Lake City.
- <sup>140</sup> Pizza & Thompson, *William Jasper Henderson Senior Family History, 1840-1982*, page 4.
- <sup>141</sup> *Ibid*, page 6.
- <sup>142</sup> Alvira Aurelia Henderson death certificate, no. 3 (1924) Garfield county, Utah Department of Health, Salt Lake City.
- <sup>143</sup> Pizza & Thompson, *William Jasper Henderson Senior Family History, 1840-1982*, page 5, 187-189.
- <sup>144</sup> *Ibid*, page 5.
- <sup>145</sup> *Ibid*.
- <sup>146</sup> *Ibid*.
- <sup>147</sup> Baldwin and Auble, *Davis Family History 1831-1947*, page 193.
- <sup>148</sup> *Ibid*, page 198.
- <sup>149</sup> Lydia Drucilla Henderson death certificate # 00003600966 (1936) Garfield County, Utah Department of Health, Salt Lake City.
- <sup>150</sup> Utah State Archives and Records Service; Salt Lake City, UT; *Utah State Archives and Records Service*; File Number #: 1936004893.

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