

Dear Family,

My biggest regret remains that no one (other than the golf course operator who was called over to survey the damage) had a camera.

If I had to select a single quintessential moment from this month's biennial Willis reunion, it would have to be when Matt and Grant deposited their golf cart into the wooded ravine to the left of the 4th fairway of the Crispin Golf Course at Oglebay, outside Wheeling, West Virginia.

Ever the lawyer, Grant would want it pointed out that the cart must have been defective and technically drove *itself* into the ditch. And if I were called to testify, I'd have a hard time contradicting that claim. I was a little ways up the hill and looking the other way when I heard the cart crash—loudly, and backwards—into a tree before somehow pivoting around and heading down the remainder of the grassy slope. I think it was Grant who dove from the cart first, followed by Matt, and then Grant chased it the rest of the way down the hill screaming various unintelligible things. It looked to me like he got a couple fingers on the back of the car just as it reached the edge of the abyss and crashed to the bottom. I then played my second shot down the fairway. (The 4th is an average-length Par 5, and even though I'd topped my drive, I still thought I could set up a decent approach for my third.) I went back to the tee at the top of the hill to wave the group behind us through and then went down to see if my brothers were still alive.

They were, though Matt and Grant were clearly shaken, while Andrew was trying not to laugh. Looking through the trees down into the gully at the somehow-still-intact golf cart—with Matt's and Grant's golf bags still strapped to the back—it occurred to me to ask whether anyone had a camera. Only Matt did—on his cell phone. He snapped a couple shots, but didn't save them. (The moron!)

It was around then that various golf course personnel began arriving. Miraculously, they seemed more concerned with our well-being than that of the cart. They even helped to retrieve Matt's and Grant's bags and rushed a new car out to us so as not to further delay our round. (All I could think was that these guys could never get hired on at a golf course around here—where I think you have to check the "Jackass?—Yes" box in order even to be considered for a job.) In contrast, these guys made it sound like they'd seen it all before—though I did hear one guy remark to the other, "This is the best one all year." Grant claims his golf career is over.

For a summary of what we did the rest of the week, you can go to the [archive](#) and pull my letters from Augusts of 2007 and 2004, and Sept. 1, 2002, which describe previous family reunions at [Oglebay](#). This week was more of the same except with even more grandchildren (now numbering 16) and an even bigger 8-bedroom, 5,000-square-foot "cottage" for us to spread out in. I

wasted all my allotted space on the golf cart story, but, even though I don't know if I could tell you why (even with more space) we had a great time and I hope we go back.

This month marked the passing of my great-uncle George I. Cannon (who was probably my closest living relative with his own [Wikipedia entry](#)) who, for reasons I've never entirely understood, was known to everyone in the family as "Uncle Bud." Two thousand miles separated me from the funeral, at which both Elder Oaks and Elder Holland spoke, but I believe I would have very much enjoyed it. Elder Holland is reported to have said, "He was the rarest of men, he was as good as he seemed." Try as I might, I can't think of a higher compliment than that.

It's only fitting, I suppose, that my two most lasting memories of Uncle Bud both happened in the temple. The first was in the late Fall of 1993, at some point during Crystal's and my 15-minute pre-engagement courtship. We were on a date in the Salt Lake Temple, and while we were sitting in the Creation Room awaiting the start of the session, Uncle Bud, who had been greeting people at the door, walked up to me and asked me how I was doing. I knew who he was, of course, but couldn't for the life of me figure out how he knew who I was. (I was, after all, just one of his sister's 30 grandchildren—and not even one of the most handsome.) But as the brief conversation unfolded, it became apparent that somehow he knew. Crystal and I have only theories as to how.. At the end of the session he caught up with Crystal and me in the Celestial Room and led us on a tour of various Sealing Rooms scattered throughout the temple. We weren't yet engaged at that point, but it wasn't much longer.

The second was a year or two later—after Crystal and I were married—when he led a large group of fellow Grant descendants on a more comprehensive tour of places in the Salt Lake Temple that I'm almost certain never to see again.

(In listing these two, I've totally given short-shrift to my cousin Janelle's wedding, which we attended, and which Uncle Bud performed in one of the Sealing Rooms he'd shown us two years earlier. Sorry, Janelle, I guess that makes three.)

"He was the rarest of men, he was as good as he seemed." I still can't get over that. But I believe it. Dad's not usually one for love stories, but he never tires of the one that begins with Heber J. Grant gently suggesting to his daughter Lucy that she might write a note of condolence to George J. Cannon at the passing of his father, Abraham H. Cannon (who was just 37). Like many of you, I'm sure, I still have my copy of the 1896 letter Grandpa Grant wrote to Lucy, in which he writes of George J., "He has not been the most attractive young man that I have ever met, but I want to say to you that the best boys are not those that are at all times the most attractive, and some times the most awkward are the very best." That ringing endorsement set off a chain of events culminating in a union that produced Grandma and Uncle Bud, and so many other truly wonderful people. Sometimes I wonder if Grandpa Grant could have had any idea. I think he might have.

Have a good month. Love, Tim et al.





OGLEBAY 2009

Left: Abby, Hannah, and Lucy

Below: Grandpa, Grandma and all 16 Grandchildren outside the cottage.

(Incidentally, I know that expression on Dad's face. It's a combination of "I love my grandchildren" and "But would somebody please kill me."





More from Oglebay (Clockwise from Above):

Morgan, Abby, Lucy, and their American Girl dolls' bed

Lucy on the train at the zoo

Grace rides a pony

Sophie on the zoo train

Lucy feeds a lorikeet.

