

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE LIFE OF LOUIS PHILIPPE CARDON

(A report presented by Louis Bellamy Cardon at the Cardon reunion, 2011)

My assignment is to present some highlights from the life of Louis Philippe Cardon. The reason for this special attention to this middle child of Philippe and Marthe Cardon is that this year, 2011, is the one hundredth anniversary of his death, which took place in the Mormon colony of Dublan in 1911, one year before the general exodus of the Mormon colonists from that area at the time of a major revolution. My father, Louis Sanders Cardon, who was born in Dublan in 1901 – and was therefore 10 years old at the time of the death of his grandfather, Louis Philippe, used to tell me of his earliest memories of the old gentleman. For some time it was the fact that Louis Philippe was so obviously a gentleman, which made my father fearful of even talking with him. Louis Philippe always wore a suit, and carried a cane, while my father never wore shoes unless he had to. So he went out of his way to avoid encountering the old gentleman on the street or in the house. And then one day, as he was walking, or trotting, on a long path through a wheat field, to his dismay he saw his grandfather coming towards him in the opposite direction. There was no way he could avoid meeting him and speaking with him. When the meeting took place, however, he was pleasantly surprised to discover that Louis Philippe was actually a gentle and pleasant man, and very easy to talk with. After that, my father really enjoyed contacts with his grandfather up to the latter's death in 1911, when my father was 10 years old.

While the characteristic of gentleness which this story illustrates, is a desirable trait, it is not the one I chose to emphasize in this appraisal as a whole. But before I proceed with my commentary on his principal traits, perhaps I should comment first on his name. Most of us on our genealogical charts have the name of Louis Philippe Cardon as the fifth child of Philippe and Marthe Cardon. We assume that that was the name given him at his birth. But actually his name was recorded on the parish record as Philippe Cardon. Evidently it was only after he came to Utah, at the age of 22, that he began using "Louis Philippe" among his associates (reportedly taking the name "Louis" from Louis Malan, his godfather, who presented him for baptism as a newborn infant). He was always called "Philippe" by members of the family, but by others he was sometimes called Louis Philippe or even just Louis. In this discussion I will call him Louis Philippe, which seems to have been the name he preferred.

Perhaps the most salient characteristic of Louis Philippe was his life-long pattern of pioneering. I am using this term pioneering, or pioneer in a simple

and traditional sense. A pioneer is one who leads others by developing a new area of activity – perhaps a new area for settlement – and by so doing performs a major service for those who follow. The Cardon family as a whole were pioneers in the adoption of the new religion which came into their lives in 1852, when they were among the first Waldensian converts to the Mormon faith. Certainly they were pioneers when they responded to Brigham Young’s call to leave their homes and gather to Zion. In 1854 the Cardons were in the vanguard of those who disposed of their property and left the land they had defended for 600 years to begin the difficult voyage to Utah. Louis Philippe was ordained a Teacher in the Aaronic Priesthood before leaving Italy. And then he was ordained a High Priest at the age of 24, two years after his arrival in Utah.

As you might suppose, the trip from the Piedmont to Utah had its trials and dangers. The voyage to Utah took almost nine months. The first part of the trip, from the Piedmont to Liverpool, England, involved weeks of travel by sled, by carriage and by rail. Then came about two months by ship to New Orleans, which included an encounter with a terrific storm on the way. At New Orleans, on their arrival, the Cardons found the city under quarantine for cholera. It was said that this city of 35,000 inhabitants lost 5,000 to the dread disease in one twelve day period that year, 1854. Pressing on by river steamer up the Mississippi and Missouri rivers, the Cardon group reached Kansas City where they outfitted to cross the plains in a wagon train with ox teams. That part of the journey took a little over three months – from July 18th to October 28th, 1854.

For Louis Philippe it also included a near-death experience on the trail across the plains. One night a band of Indians slipped in and drove off all the wagon train’s oxen and other livestock across a river and into the brush on the other side. The next morning every man and boy who could swim was called upon to go over, round up all the livestock they could, and herd them back across the river. To their great relief they were successful in bringing back every animal. Then some of the boys and younger men expressed their exuberant feelings by “horsing around in the water.” Louis Philippe was considered a fair swimmer, but had the misfortune to step backward into a deep whirlpool. The others managed to drag him out and with great effort and prayer, revived him. But the experience had been close to death indeed.

After their arrival in Salt Lake, the Cardons were soon able to demonstrate how valuable they could be as pioneers. Unlike many of the early settlers, some of whom had been residents of well-established cities at the time of their conversion, the Cardons knew how to wrest a living from the most barren farming conditions. Moreover Philippe and several of his sons, including Louis Philippe were skilled home builders and stone masons. They

were highly proficient in building homes and barns from crude materials. So Louis Philippe and his father and brothers were soon in much demand. Among those they helped were a number of their Waldensian neighbors, who followed the Cardons to Utah over the next few years. One such family was the Stale family, which had walked across the plains in 1856 in the first handcart company. The father of the family, Jean Pierre Stale, had died on the way, of exhaustion and starvation – but thanks to his efforts, his wife and children had reached Salt Lake. The Cardons helped them with shelter and food, and in early 1857 Louis Philippe married Susette Stale, the oldest daughter. This was a plural marriage, as shortly before Louis Philippe had married another young woman from the Piedmont, Sarah Ann Welborn. While Sarah Ann had no children, her marriage to Louis Philippe appears to have been a happy one. She was loved by Louis Philippe and by the children of Susette. Susette bore five children and was exceptionally active and happy up to the very day of her death in Tucson Arizona in 1923.

Since the arrival of Brigham Young with the first wagon train, in 1847, the city of Salt Lake, with its broad streets and its homes, and its surrounding farms, had begun to emerge with remarkable speed. By the time the Cardon family arrived by wagon train in 1854 – seven years after Brigham Young’s arrival – much of the work of pioneering had already been accomplished, so far as Salt Lake was concerned. The establishment of a functioning city in a desert was well underway.

But don’t forget that it was never Brigham’s intention to build one city in a wilderness. Right from the beginning, year by year, he sent out families from Salt Lake to pioneer other communities – Ogden, Provo, Logan – and eventually communities all the way from Canada in the north to Mexico in the south. That was the stage of Mormon pioneering which Louis Philippe and the other Cardons got in on. Builders and pioneers that they were, they responded time and again to their leaders’ call to help establish new towns – first north to Ogden, Logan, and southern Idaho – then south to help build a number of new communities in Arizona, and then on into Mexico to colonize an undeveloped area there.

Like virtually all the inhabitants of the Piedmont valleys and hills, and like virtually all the early Mormon settlers in Utah, Louis Philippe was a farmer, at least part time. But like his father Philippe and his younger brother Paul, he was first and foremost a mason. He was a builder of stone homes, and chimneys, and town walls – and, when he had an opportunity, of temples. It seemed that wherever he went, that capability was in demand, and was appreciated.

The Cardons settled first in the Ogden area, and Louis Philippe's first two children, Joseph and Emanuel, were born there in 1858 and 1859. But in 1961, Brigham Young called the Cardons to help settle Cache Valley. Here their building skills were truly invaluable. Paul, Louis Philippe's younger brother, is credited with helping to build the first house in Logan. Later, he was in charge of the mill that produced lumber for the temple. Philippe and Louis Philippe, besides building homes, built the fireplaces for a great many of the homes in Cache Valley, and worked on the temple. Paul was also the first treasurer of Logan City, and longtime town marshal.

After ten years in Logan, the Cardons were well established. But Logan itself was becoming a larger town, and was beginning to draw the attention of the U. S. government's enforcers of anti-polygamy laws. Danger of arrest impelled Louis Philippe to move with his two wives and three children to a more outlying community, Oxford, at the northern extremity of Cache Valley. Here an additional two children were born.

By 1876 Oxford too was becoming unsafe for polygamous families. Federal authorities were arresting both husbands and wives for "unlawful cohabitation." Consequently a worried Louis Philippe made a trip to Salt Lake City to seek Brigham Young's advice. Upon his return home he reported that in response to his question, "Brigham Young rose from his chair, smote the palm of one hand with the doubled fist of the other and said 'Brother Cardon, it is time for the Saints to settle Arizona, as I have been thinking about. Be here in a week with your wife and belongings. The company will be ready to leave then.' "

As it turned out there were four companies involved in the move to Arizona. The move was actually a part of Brigham Young's plan to plant colonies from Canada to Mexico. Circumstances had again made Louis Philippe a pioneer. Louis Philippe's two sons, Joseph (18) and Emanuel (17) were not originally included in Brigham's call to build pioneer settlements in Arizona. So they planned to just help their father move down and then come back to Oxford. But the apostle Brigham Young, son of President Brigham Young, quickly changed that plan. He told the two young men that they were to consider themselves to be "Missionaries," called to serve in Arizona by helping their father build settlements there. A young lady accompanied 17 year old Emanuel, and the company stopped long enough in Salt Lake for the two to be married. Joseph, 18 years old, already had a wife and a child at the time of the move. He married two more wives a few years later.

In Arizona the Cardons participated in the establishment of several new settlements. The first one, Obed, was on the Little Colorado River. Louis Philippe, as a mason, supervised the building of houses and also a nine-foot

stone wall entirely around the town, to guard against Indians. Unfortunately, the site proved swampy and malarial, and had to be abandoned. Louis Philippe and his two sons and his son-in-law were subsequently prominent in the settlement of Woodruff and Taylor. Joseph, Louis Philippe's oldest son directed the surveying of the Taylor site, and the four Cardon men (Louis Philippe, his two sons, and his son-in-law) formed a company which took a freighting contract, worked on a railroad, and took 3000 sheep on shares, to earn money to supplement their pioneering farming efforts.

At this point, in 1884, polygamy prosecution again intervened. The Edmunds anti-polygamy law had been passed and Utah enforcement officers began making raids in Arizona. Consequently that fall, LDS President Taylor advised Louis Philippe and Joseph to move to Mexico, where polygamy was legal.

Later, both Louis Philippe and his sons, Joseph and Emanuel would be placed on the honor roll of heads of founding families and builders of the Colony of Juarez. Louis Philippe was prominent there in the erection of homes, public buildings and the first mill for grinding grain. For himself, Louis Philippe built a fine two story brick home, where he lived for many years. In the meantime his youngest son, Louis Paul (my grandfather) after graduating from Brigham Young College in Logan in 1893, taught school for four years in Taylor, Arizona, and then was called by President Woodruff to go to Mexico to help establish an educational system for the Church there. In Dublan, he served as school principal for fourteen years and built a large home which still stands. With most of his family now in Dublan, Louis Philippe gave in to their urging and after 1900 moved from Juarez to Dublan, where he died in 1911.

The exodus of the Mormon settlers the year after that was permanent for many, including most of the Cardons. However, others returned to the colonies later, and nowadays the area is beautiful and productive, and boasts a really lovely L.D.S. temple. It is just one of a number of communities which are to some extent memorials to the pioneering labors of Louis Philippe Cardon and his family. And the Cardon family itself, whether we recognize it or not, has probably been shaped in part by attributes passed on by Louis Philippe and his family of pioneers.