

A House for the George Brooks Family by Willa Nita

Brooks Derrick

Contributed By: [Lida Larkin](#) · 17 November 2015 ·

A HOME FOR THE GEORGE BROOKS FAMILY By Willa Nita Brooks Derrick In the winter of 1877 George Brooks, already the father of two children, [Emily & Mary] decided it was time to put his full efforts toward building a home of his own. He and his wife, Cornelia, had walked over the brush-covered hillside and decided on the approximate location. In the clean-up of the Temple and Tabernacle yards, George had already hauled away many loads of stone chips and irregular rocks so that the material for the walls was already on the ground. George kept a little account in pencil with entries here and there without any date at all – sometimes month and year were given. But even so, the book tells much of the problems which attended building the home. A scribbled “digging hole and foundation and moving dirt” evidently refers to the excavation of the basement. Another item “running lime \$1.75” refers to the practice of preparing lime for use in mortar or plaster. Much of the work was paid for in needed items – with no money exchange. For example, Joseph Judd was the carpenter who managed floors, roof, ceilings, doors and windows! The book shows that in January, 1877, eleven loads of manure were hauled to him – in February five more and one ton of hay delivered. Additional hay was delivered in April – credit for a gravestone for \$5.00 cash – and then more hay. He was paid also beef, flour and credit from other workmen. B. F. Blake sold George 214 feet of lumber for \$24.00 for lettering gravestones. In October, 1877, he let his team out to D. Lougee for 23 days at \$1.50 a day, netting a credit of \$34.50. A major problem was to get lath for the ceiling. An entry labeled only 1877 lists from Eli Whipple 400 three foot lath - \$7.45. Another later entry – 200 lath for \$3.00, Milo Andrus loaned 62 lath and Ashby, as a loan – credit 400 lath. Hardy for 350 lath in his shop was paid by hauling hay and cutting a hearth stone. On the same page George notes, “Settled in full with McNeil up to Feb. 16, 1878 - \$18.50. McNeil was a stone man, quarryman and mason, who had apparently brought in the black rock for the basement and foundation. So it was that by scheming, laboring, trading – he even exchanged his lantern for \$2.50 credit – the house was up and finished. The shingles in July of 1877 by loan from W. Squire, 3,000 and later 2,000 more completed the roof. By early 1878 the plastering and painting were done and they moved in. In their new home in May their third child was born. [Josephine] They were very proud of this home with its thick, solid foundation, its full unfinished dirt cellar beneath and its two rooms above – a spacious living room kitchen, 20 x 28 feet with a fireplace and a smaller bedroom and buttry in the back. The rest of the spring George worked at clearing, planting trees and vines, building corrals and digging out a pond. They had a lot of animals, too. When his first son, George Jr., was born on December 21, 1879, George planted two locust tree saplings. The one on the sidewalk edge still stands and has been declared a historic tree. [a plaque now shows the designation] Sometime around 1879 or 1880 George was able to build on to his house a large kitchen 23 x 24 inside on the north side of the rock house. The kitchen was of abode with a sloping shingle roof – the floor a step lower than the regular home. A sleeping deck was put up outside the north door under the locust tree and provided room for two double beds and made an ideal arrangement for the girls about nine months of the year. The Brooks family raised 12 children* in this home – very small by today’s standards – but it was a happy place. When George and Cornelia died, the home went in twelve equal shares to the children. *the rest of the children were William, Rosilla, Cornelia, Sam, Edith, Edward,

Llwellyn, & Laura About 1938 (Will Brooks had married Juanita in 1933, a second marriage for both) Will and Juanita felt that the home was not being properly cared for so decided to purchase each of the other eleven shares. Dub Pace estimated the home was worth about \$2,000 – each share worth about \$167.00. Will and Juanita gradually paid each brother and sister off, until by George Jr's death in 1940, they had the place completely paid for. About 1944 when they traded their beautiful down-town home [on 100 East] for a farm in Hurricane, Will and Juanita moved their little family into the Old Home on the hill. They put in new floors on the two large rooms, build an addition in the back for their bedrooms on the ground floor and Willa's above it. They then made a bedroom for the boys in the basement. They opened a door to the south into the basement and added a bathroom as well. The boys called it "The Dungeon Room". Will and Juanita managed quite well in the little old house but decided the younger children deserved something better. Will was firm about not tearing down the old home and would not have it plastered over. He wanted to stay under the trees which were as important to him as the home. After much discussion Juanita wrote to Robert Gardner, an architect in Cedar City, and asked him to look at the home. He came up with a design to use the old house with a new addition. They followed his plan and were very pleased with it. They wanted the stone to match the old house so when the D. D. McArthur home was razed, Juanita called and asked if they might use some of the stone. It was given to them free for hauling it away. Ed Nisson, a retired stone mason, cut and placed all the stones. The home was finished in its present state in 1954.

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