

Daniel C. Sill

Daniel Cornwell Sill was born 4 October 1830, in Ocean County, New Jersey.¹ Daniel was the illegitimate son of Sarah Sill, and in the will of his grandfather John Sill, he is mentioned as an adopted grandson.² Daniel was living with his grandparents in 1840 in Upper Freehold, Monmouth, New Jersey.³ Daniel's uncle John had been baptized into the Mormon Church in January 1839, the first family member to join. Daniel was baptized in January 1850, and was living with his grandparents in September 1850 in Plumsted, Ocean, New Jersey.⁴

Daniel crossed the plains to the Salt Lake Valley and was re-baptized in February 1858 in the 15th Ward in Great Salt Lake, Salt Lake, Utah Territory.⁵ His grandmother Edith also made her way to Utah by 1859. Daniel was living with her in the 15th Ward in 1860, when he was listed as a teamster. They lived next door to his uncle John Sill and his family.⁶

In April 1862, Daniel enlisted as a private in Lot Smith's Company of the Utah Cavalry.⁷ The company included 106 men: 23 officers, 72 privates, and 11 teamsters. Earlier that month, President Abraham Lincoln had called upon Governor Brigham Young of Utah to raise, arm and equip a company of cavalry to be employed in protecting the property of the telegraph and overland mail companies around Independence Rock, where there had been Indian trouble. They were to receive the same pay as other US troops and would serve 90 days, or less if relieved by a detachment of regular army.⁸

Daniel H Wells immediately raised a company, enrolled and swore in officers and privates, and set up camp near Salt Lake City. They took up the march with ten baggage and supply wagons, and headed for Independence Rock. Ben Holladay, the proprietor of the overland stage line, telegraphed that mail service would be resumed as soon as the "boys" arrived. In July 1862, Captain Lot Smith and his company set out from Fort Bridger in pursuit of a band of hostile Indians that had robbed the nearby ranch of John Robinson. They force-marched into the heart of Indian country in the Snake River region for eight days on short rations. The only casualty was Donald McNichol, who fell in the river and drowned. The company returned to Salt Lake on 9 August and was discharged 14 August 1862. The expedition was one of the most hazardous in the annals of local Indian warfare.⁹

Daniel and his partner William Haynes Hamblin¹⁰ were raising sheep in Nevada in 1863.¹¹ Hamblin had befriended a Paiute Indian named Moroni, who brought him a piece of glittering ore. Moroni refused to tell him where it came from, as his dying father had warned him never to disclose the location to Whites, because they would drive the Indians from their hunting grounds to secure the riches. Eventually Hamblin wore down his resolve and gave him a new rifle as a gift. Accompanied by William Pulsipher and Daniel C. Sill,¹² the three men dug down and exposed a well-defined vein and

¹ Utah Mormon Pioneer Overland Travel Database, 1847-1868.

² New Jersey Probate Records, 1678-1980.

³ United States Census, 1840.

⁴ United States Census, 1850.

⁵ Utah Mormon Pioneer Overland Travel Database, 1847-1868.

⁶ United States Census, 1860.

⁷ *The Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine*, Vol 2, p. 139.

⁸ *Ibid*, p. 138.

⁹ *Ibid*. Note that in this book Daniel is recorded as Daniel C. **Lill**, which must have been a typographical error.

¹⁰ William Haynes Hamblin was born 1830 Ohio, married and bore 17 children. He was given the nickname "Gunlock Bill" by Apostle George A. Smith, for whom he worked as a gunsmith. He was famed for his marksmanship.

¹¹ *Saga of Three Towns*, by Marietta Mariger, 1851, p. 30.

¹² *Making Space on the Western Frontier: Mormons, Miners and Southern Paiutes*, by W. Paul Reeve, p. 24. Note: In this book, Daniel is referred to as Daniel C. **Cill**.

laid claim to the spot.¹³ When others heard of it, they tried to buy them out, but the partners refused to sell.¹⁴

In the fall of 1864¹⁵, Bishop Edward Bunker, from Santa Clara, organized an expedition to the site. His group (including Hamblin, Pulsipher, and Sill¹⁶) surveyed and outlined a square claim but did not organize a mining district or post the traditional notice.¹⁷ The next year, a group from Salt Lake City arrived to find Hamblin, Moroni, and Sill, working on their claims. They came to an agreement, and the Meadow Valley Mining District was formed. The interested group returned to Salt Lake City for supplies, and Hamblin and Sill returned to their homes at Clover Valley.¹⁸

Organization of a mining district stripped the land from the Paiute Indians and loosened the grip of the Mormon leaders who hoped to settle the area.¹⁹ Paiute hostility stopped the mining activity for almost six years. Meanwhile, investors were sought, and John H. Ely invested machinery. Ely and William Raymond bought the original titles from Hamblin, Pulsipher, and probably Sill, and founded the famed Raymond & Ely Mine.²⁰

In spring of 1872, Hamblin was subpoenaed to Carson City, Nevada, to testify at Pioche in a case concerning the ownership of the mine. He took a doctor friend and a lawyer with him. Despite his wife's warning to eat or drink nothing in a public place, he nervously sipped coffee at a restaurant.²¹ He stood and gasped, "I've been poisoned" and fell to the floor.²² The doctor friend began to treat him immediately, and when he was well enough to travel they loaded him into a wagon and set off for home in Gunlock, Utah.²³ A few days later, he had a stroke and only lived a short time. Hamblin died 8 May 1872 at Clover Valley, Utah.²⁴

Daniel knew he could not try to hold his mine against such lust for wealth, so he brought his few sheep and came to Utah. He kept a few horses, cattle, and sheep, and was fairly prosperous.²⁵ In July 1893, Daniel C. Sill of Silver Reef homesteaded an original patent of 60 acres in Washington, Utah.²⁶ As of July 2011, his name is still on the patent.²⁷

He had neither wife nor children, but he had three great loves -- his church, his animals, and children. He attended the dedication of the Salt Lake Temple on 6 April 1893. On his return he brought each man, woman, and child in Leeds a fine, large Florida orange and delivered them in person.²⁸

In 1901, Daniel filed for a Civil War pension as an invalid.²⁹ This was probably as a result of his cancer, which he spent a lot of money and effort trying to get cured. He made many trips were made to Salt Lake City for treatments; it was cured in one spot but broke out some place else.³⁰

¹³ Ibid. p. 22.

¹⁴ Saga of Three Towns, by Marietta Mariger, 1851, p. 30; piochenevada.org/historic-overview.htm

¹⁵ Making Space on the Western Frontier: Mormons, Miners and Southern Paiutes, by W. Paul Reeve, p. 174.

¹⁶ Ibid, p. 175.

¹⁷ Ibid, p. 22.

¹⁸ Ibid, p. 24.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid, pp. 26-27.

²¹ [William Haynes Hamblin](#), by Naida Williamson; Autobiography of [Priscilla Hamblin Alger](#).

²² Making Space on the Western Frontier: Mormons, Miners and Southern Paiutes, by W. Paul Reeve, p. 29.

²³ Autobiography of [Betsy Jane Leavitt Hamblin](#).

²⁴ Autobiography of [Priscilla Hamblin Alger](#)

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ *Salt Lake Tribune*, 23 Jun 1893, p. 3.

²⁷ [thelandpatents.com](#)

²⁸ Saga of Three Towns, by Marietta Mariger, p. 30.

In July 1907, Daniel applied to appropriate water from the Colorado River drainage area for irrigation from Quail Creek to Leeds.³¹ He was still a farmer when he died 11 July 1908 of malarial fever, in Leeds, Washington, Utah. He was buried in the Leeds Cemetery.³²

²⁹ U.S., Civil War Pension Index: General Index to Pension Files, 1861-1934; US Veterans Administration Pension Payment Cards.

³⁰ *Saga of Three Towns*, by Marietta Mariger, p. 30.

³¹ Utah: Engineer's Office, 1907, p. 19.

³² Utah Death Certificates, 1904-1964; Utah Death Registers 1847-1966; Utah, Death and Military Death Certificates, 1904-1961