

Weldon G. Cannon History Files

EULESS NURSERY

In this folder donated to the City of Euless, labeled EULESS NURSERY, are a few key documents and other materials from files donated to The University of Texas at Arlington for the Weldon G. Cannon Euless Collection in the Special Collections of the University Library. Following is a brief summary of materials in the 1 folder under this subject that were donated to UTA.

1. EULESS NURSERY

Folder Contents

Narrative and work file of varied materials for application for Texas Historical Marker; application was rejected, being too much family and genealogically oriented; some of the material was later incorporated into an application for a marker for Commercial Horticulture in Euless that was approved; 1".

[Also see another folder, COMMERCIAL HORTICULTURE IN EULESS.]

The application
rejected by THC -
replaced with "Commercial
Horticulture in Eules" -
which was approved,

EULESS NURSERY

Eules, Texas

Application for Texas Historical Marker

June 2006

Weldon G. Cannon

Eules Nursery

Eules, Texas

By Weldon Green Cannon, Ph.D.

For more than six decades, the Eules Nursery, founded in 1897 in Eules, Texas, helped Texas and surrounding states bloom with shrubs and trees. The primarily wholesale business produced fruit trees and vines, plus a wide variety of ornamental shrubs and trees for sale. It also furnished quantities of fresh fruit for people in the Dallas-Fort Worth region. While blackberries and rose bushes were nursery specialties, its flowers graced special occasions in Eules and the surrounding country – funerals, birthdays, anniversaries, as well as school and community events. The business was a boon to the local economy, improved the environment, and gracefully enhanced neighborhoods and businesses throughout the Southwest.¹

Archibald Newman (or Newton) Cannon and his wife, the former Sarah Idella Whitener, established the nursery, when they purchased a 100-acre tract in Eules. Arch was born in Bedford County, Tennessee, in 1866, and moved with his parents in 1872 to Tarrant County, Texas, settling at Bedford, named for their Tennessee home. Della, born in 1870 in Coffee County, not far from Arch's birthplace, moved in 1880 with her family to Eules. They married in 1891.²

The Cannon farm was located in the Eastern Cross Timbers, a narrow strip of sandy land between black land prairies. Cotton and corn grew well in the area, but the soil was especially adapted to production of fresh fruits and vegetables as well as growing trees, vines, bushes, and shrubs that could be easily dug up. Hence, the area became the birthplace of many wholesale and retail nurseries.³

When they moved to Eules, Arch and Della's nearest neighbor was Dr. A. H. Boyd, a physician, druggist, community leader, and nurseryman with outlets in Fort Worth and beyond. Dr. Boyd gave Arch four pear trees. The physician also advised him to become a nurseryman and to sink his money in the ground instead of gold stocks, a current fad. Arch followed the advice and soon developed a booming nursery business.⁴

Prosperity came quickly. In 1900, Cannon sold more than \$1,100 worth of blackberries from 10 acres of vines. While maintaining a fine orchard, he also grew fruit trees, bushes and vines to sell. By February, 1903, he had adopted a name for his business, "Eules Nursery." Claiming in advertisements to be "one of the greatest

propagators of blackberries,” he declared himself the “Berry King of Tarrant County.” He also developed and sold peach varieties that he called “Cannon’s Wonderful” and “Cannon’s Cling.” In addition, he propagated and sold many varieties of plums, apples, pears, apricots, and grapes.⁵

He had chosen wisely. While the nursery business paralleled general farming in many ways, there were distinct differences. Both were subject to the vicissitudes of nature – drought, deluges, freezes, and extreme heat along with plant diseases, animal depredations, among others. The nurseryman, however, could tolerate them better than the general farmer. Weather extremes might wipe out a cotton or corn grower in a given year, but the nurseryman, with a variety of trees, shrubs, and fruit bearing trees, was better able to endure the hard times. Nurserymen sometimes repeated the adage: “Plant cotton, and you will do the work. Plant fruit trees, and they will do the work.”⁶

Another evidence of the Cannons’ prosperity was their new home. In 1900, Arch and Della and their three sons and three daughters (a fourth daughter was born in 1904) moved from a log house to a spacious one and one-half story wood-frame house they built on present South Main Street. They modeled it after Dr. Boyd’s house. In 1990, the still substantial house was listed in an inventory of historic buildings published by the Historic Preservation Council of Tarrant County. It was described as a “Victorian farmhouse [which] is the city’s most impressive link with its agricultural past [and] appears to be eligible for the National Register.” Unfortunately, it was torn down shortly before the inventory’s publication.⁷

The entire family, no matter how young, pitched in to support the family business. Arch, a self-confident entrepreneur, provided managerial skills to the ever-growing business, while handling marketing and sales and staying current with trends in plant propagation, supervising sizeable work crews, maintaining records, paying bills, and doing whatever was necessary to keep the business going. Della supervised the household, rearing children and cooking for the large family, plus hired hands, relatives, boarding school teachers, and drummers. She also tended a large garden yielding fresh vegetables. In addition, she canned and preserved fruits and vegetables. The children performed household chores, kept the yard immaculate, and toiled in the fields when they were old enough.⁸

Arch traveled considerably – day trips to Fort Worth, Dallas, and other nearby cities, plus frequent treks to West Texas and New Mexico, drumming up business. He belonged to professional nursery organizations, often going to meetings, and to horticultural workshops to enhance his skills.⁹

With the nursery growing rapidly, Arch expanded his products. In 1903, he optimistically predicted he would sell \$3,000 worth of berries alone. The next year the editor of The Arlington Journal described the business as a “large commercial nursery.” In December 1904 the editor noted that Arch had “just commenced to ship and fill orders” and “his wagons were loaded,” proclaiming him the “backbone” of business in Eules. By 1907, Arch broadened his stock to include ornamental shrubs and trees, such as arbor vitae, roses, and sycamores. He also bought a nearby 128-acre black land farm and rented acreage in the Trinity River bottoms between Eules and Arlington for cultivating cotton, corn, and hay. In 1910, following another visit to the nursery, the Arlington editor observed that the nursery had been profitable every year, a “perpetual dividend-paying” operation, an “object lesson in industrial achievement,” and an inspiration to view. The editor also dubbed Arch the “Berry King of North Texas,” a moniker Cannon proudly bore.¹⁰

In 1931, Bradstreet attributed to the Eules Nursery a greater amount of wealth and gave it a higher credit rating than any other business in the Eules, Bedford, and Hurst area. Arch’s favorite plant, and probably the most profitable, was the rose. He even created a new rose variety, naming it “Louise.” After a 1932 visit to the nursery, a Fort Worth Star-Telegram reporter declared Arch the “Rose Man of Eules” preparing to ship 10,000 rose bushes to West Texas, New Mexico, and Oklahoma. At the center of the 100-acre nursery, the reporter observed, still stood the four pear trees that Arch had planted 35 years earlier, surrounded by acres of evergreens, blocks of roses, and crepe myrtle hedges.¹¹

Arch and Della’s three sons each eventually established his own nursery business, but the middle son, Ross, also always worked with his father in the Eules Nursery, living with his parents until he married at age 26 in 1923. Then, he and his wife, the former Winnie Day, built a house adjacent to his parents on nursery grounds and fronting South Main Street. As Arch aged, Ross gradually took over day-to-day operations. A savvy businessman, Ross made money even in the Great Depression. For example, he filled an order from a Fort

Worth retail nurseryman in the 1938-39 season for 4,420 rose bushes, 1,920 fruit trees, and 1,000 ornamental shrubs. In a deal with American Airlines president C. R. Smith, he traded landscape jobs at company properties in Fort Worth for flight tickets to New York and Chicago world's fairs.¹²

When Arch died in 1941, Della became owner of the business, but she trusted Ross to manage it. In fact, the next year Ross "made \$12,000" as his mother's share of profits from the business. He also built new business headquarters--office, storage facilities, garages, shops, and greenhouse – near his and Winnie's house, but still on Della's land. After her death in 1946, he purchased 11 acres from her estate, including the new structures, plus trucks, tractor, farm machinery and equipment. Thus, Ross became sole owner of the Euless Nursery.¹³

Although Ross operated his own business, the Ross Cannon Nursery, on extensive acreage that he owned, he later merged his enterprise with the Euless Nursery. In the 1940s, he developed other business interests, selling some nursery tracts and eventually erecting or acquiring 10 commercial buildings and eight residences. In 1949, he developed a Euless subdivision, the Ross Cannon Addition, and opened Ross Avenue. Hence, he contributed significantly to the prosperity and development of Euless. A civic-minded citizen, he served on the Euless school board in the 1930s, promoted the town's incorporation in 1950, and was an alderman from 1951 to 1953.¹⁴

With his booming rental property and no other family members interested in assuming the nursery's operations, he began winding down the business, finally closing it in 1960. The Euless Nursery had survived 63 years as an important part of the local economy with the Cannon family contributing significantly to the development of Euless. The nursery provided fruit and flowers to eager residents of the Dallas-Fort Worth region and helped beautify stretches from North Texas to New Mexico and Oklahoma. The historical marker will be erected at the site of the nursery headquarters on property that has been owned by the Cannon family since 1897.¹⁵

= End of Narrative =

Endnotes

¹ Tarrant County Deeds, MSS, 147:298, Tarrant County Court House, Fort Worth, Texas; Application for Texas Farm Loan, T. E. Trigg, MS, original in possession of Weldon Cannon, Temple, Texas; Jewel Clementine Posey, "Family Case Study of A Country Community [Eules]," BD Thesis, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, 1931, pp.27-28, 30-31; Janet L. Schmelzer, Where the West Begins: Fort Worth and Tarrant County (Northridge, California: Windsor Publications, Inc, 1984), p. 64; George M. Green, Hurst, Eules, and Bedford: Heart of the Metroplex, An Illustrated History (Austin: Eakin Press, 1995), p. 24; Ramsey's Austin Nursery, 1875-1942 (Austin: Von Boeckmann-Jones Co., 1942), pp. 1, 12, 32; Jeffrey D. Dunn, "Teas Nursery Company," MS, Texas Historical Commission, Austin, Texas, p. 8; Fort Worth Star-Telegram, Morning Edition, October 12, 1932, p. 9; The Arlington Journal, March 21, 1901, p. 1, February 27, 1903, p. 1, June 18, 1903, p. 8, May 26, 1904, p. 5, October 17, 1907, p. 9, June 3, 1910, p. 1, February 7, 1941, p. 1

² U. S. Census, 1880, Tarrant County, Texas, p. 149; U. S. Census, 1900, Tarrant County, Texas, p. 141B; U. S. Census, 1870, Bedford County, Tennessee, p. 404; U. S. Census, 1880, Coffee County, Tennessee, p. 42; Bedford County, Tennessee: Family History Book (Paducah, Kentucky: Turner Publishing Company, 2002), p. 235; The Heritage of Coffee County, Tennessee, 1836-2004 (Waynesville, North Carolina: Walsworth Publishing Company, 2005), p. 576; Cannon Family Papers, MSS, in possession of Weldon Cannon, Temple; Whitener Family Papers, MSS, in possession of Weldon Cannon, Temple, Texas.

³ Richard V. Francaviglia, The Cast Iron Forest: A Natural and Cultural History of the North American Cross Timbers (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2000), pp. 1-3, 7, 115-116, 128, 143-145, 147, 164; Colleyville, 1855-1956 ([Colleyville, Texas]: Book Committee of the Colleyville Sesquicentennial Coordinating Committee, 1986), "Colleyville Nurseries," no p.; Stanley A. Arbingast, et. al., Atlas of Texas (Austin: The University of Texas at Austin, 1976), pp. 11, 12; The Arlington Journal, June 16, 1904, p. 1, April 30, 1905, p. 5, June 3, 1910, p. 1; Interview with Jerald Cannon by Weldon Cannon, July 10, 2005, Irving, Texas.

⁴ Fort Worth Star-Telegram, Morning Edition, October 12, 1932, p. 9; Fort Worth Daily Gazette, January 1, 1886, p. 8, January 3, 1886, p. 8, September 4, 1892, p. 8, May 23, 1894, p. 6; The Arlington Journal, April 14, 1904, p. 5; February 7, 1941, p. 1; R. L. Polk & Co.'s Texas State Gazetteer and Business Directory for 1884, Planters' and Farmers' Directory of Texas 1884 (Detroit: R. L. Polk & Co., 1884), p. 996; The Mercantile Agency Reference Book The Within States [Texas] New York: R. G. Dun & Co., 1887), p. 24; Virginia L. Reedy, People In His Purpose: An Eighty-Five Year History of First Baptist Church, Eules, Texas, 1904-1989 (Eules: The History Committee, First Baptist Church, 1988), p. 8; Interviews with Monnie Cannon Borah by Weldon Cannon, March 20, 1976, October 29, 1983, Eules, Texas, November 5, 1983, Eules, Texas; Interview with Roy Cannon by Weldon Cannon, January 10, 1986, Irving, Texas.

⁵ The Arlington Journal, March 21, 1901, p. 1; February 27, 1903, p. 1; April 30, 1903, p. 5; June 18, 1903, p. 8; Interview with Jerald Cannon by Weldon Cannon, July 10, 2005, Irving, Texas; Photograph of Eules Nursery Field, in possession of Weldon Cannon, Temple, Texas.

⁶ Ramsey's Austin Nursery, 1875-1942 , p. 32; The Arlington Journal, December 12, 1902, p. 1, April 7, 1904, p. 8, April 14, 1904, p. 5, June 16, 1904, p. 1, February 16, 1905, p. 8, February 23, 1905, p. 5.

⁷ Tarrant County Historic Resources Survey (Fort Worth: Historic Preservation Council for Tarrant County, 1990), p. 70; Interviews with Monnie Cannon Borah by Weldon Cannon, October 4, 1969, Eules, Texas; March 20, 1976, Eules, Texas; November 5, 1983, Eules, Texas; Weldon G. Cannon, Daily Chronicle, November 25, 1988, January 4, 1989.

⁸ Interview with Ross Cannon, June 20, 1976, Eules, Texas; Interviews with Monnie Cannon Borah, October 29, 1983, Eules, Texas; January 18, 1986, Eules, Texas; March 11, 1991, Bedford, Texas; Interview with Dona Souder Cannon by Weldon Cannon, May 21, 1975, Bedford, Texas; Interviews with Loran Borah, November 9, 1993, Eules, Texas; April 12, 1994, Eules, Texas; December 15, 1999; Interview with Lewis Cribbs by Weldon Cannon, January 19, 1999, North Richland Hills, Texas; Interview with Lois Cannon Trimble, February 11, 1979, Eules, Texas; The Arlington Journal, May 26, 1904, p. 5, June 3, 1910, p. 1; U. S. Census, 1910, Tarrant County, Texas, E. D. 160, Sheet 7.

⁹ The Arlington Journal, August 22, 1902, p. 5, November 28, 1902, p. 5, July 9, 1903, p. 1, July 25, 1930, p. 3; Southwestern Association of Nurserymen Convention, September 3-4, 1930, Dallas, Texas photograph in possession of Weldon Cannon, Temple, Texas.

¹⁰ Interview with Loran Borah by Weldon Cannon April 12, 1994, Eules, Texas; The Arlington Journal, April 30, 1903, p. 5, May 26, 1904, p. 5, June 16, 1904, p. 1, December 8, 1904, p. 3, October 17, 1907, p. 9, June 3, 1910, p. 1; Tarrant County Deeds, MSS, 236:479, Tarrant County Court House, Fort Worth, Texas.

¹¹ Bradstreet's Book of Commercial Ratings: Texas (New York: The Bradstreet Company, 1931), pp. 54, 237, 389; Fort Worth Star-Telegram, Morning Edition, October 12, 1932 p. 9; Interview with Loran Borah by Weldon Cannon, November 9, 1993, Eules, Texas; Interview with Louise Fuller Crider by Weldon Cannon, January 18, 1994, Arlington, Texas.

¹² Interviews with Ross Cannon by Weldon Cannon, July 20, 1973, Eules, Texas; December 29, 1974, Eules, Texas; June 16, 1979, Eules, Texas; Interview with Jerald Cannon by Weldon Cannon, July 10, 2005, Irving Texas; Interview with Joe Cannon by Weldon Cannon, April 11, 1994, Eules, Texas; Eules Nursery Cash Book, 1938-1939, MSS, in possession of Weldon Cannon, Temple, Texas; Eules Nursery Cash Book, 1940-1941, MSS, in possession of Weldon Cannon, Temple, Texas; The Arlington Journal, August 11, 1933, p. 2, August 18, 1933, p. 7.

¹³ Fort Worth Star Telegram, Evening Edition, January 30, 1941, p. 23; The Arlington Journal, February 7, 1941, p. 1; Tarrant County Deeds, MSS, 1865:365, Tarrant County Court House, Fort Worth, Texas; Interviews with Jerald Cannon by Weldon Cannon, May 17, 1999, July 10, 2005, January 24, 2006, Irving, Texas; Interview with Loran Borah by Weldon Cannon, January 26, 1999, Eules, Texas; Interview with Ross Lipe by Weldon Cannon, May 4, 1999, Achille, Oklahoma.

¹⁴ Tarrant County Deeds, MSS, 1144:174, 1264:317, 1309:584, 1224:151, 1462:491, 1865:365, 1904:576, Tarrant County Court House, Fort Worth, Texas; Tarrant County Plat Records, MSS, 388-D:613-614, 388-F:17-18; Tarrant County Commissioners' Court Minutes, 30:44, 43:571-575, 44:608-610, 45:31-34; Tarrant County Mechanic's Lien Records, MSS, 130:387, Tarrant County Court House, Fort Worth, Texas; Tarrant County Deeds, MSS, 1437:608, Tarrant County Court House, Fort Worth, Texas; Texas Municipalities, February, 1952, p. 40; "Roster of City Officials of Texas, 1952-53", Bulletin No. 82, June, 1952, League of Texas Municipalities, Austin, Texas; Fort Worth Star-Telegram Evening Edition, February 8, 1980, Section 3, p. 7; Mid-Cities Daily News, February 8, 1980, p. 5; Interview with Troy Fuller by Weldon Cannon, November 14, 2005; Eules Nursery Ledger Book, 1958.

¹⁵ Tarrant County Deeds, MSS, 147:298, 1309:584, 7276:1339, Tarrant County Court House, Fort Worth, Texas; Eules Nursery Ledger Book, 1960; Tax Receipt, Elijah Rogers Survey, Abstract 1299, Tracts 2A & 2B2, 606 South Main Street, Eules, Texas, December 19, 2005, Betsy Price, Tarrant County Tax Assessor-Collector, Fort Worth, Texas; Fort Worth Star-Telegram Evening Edition, February 8, 1980, Section 3, p. 7; Mid-Cities Daily News, February 8, 1980, p. 5.

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