

## ILLINOIS GIANT BOY

Almost at the top of the highest hill in Division #1 of Union Dale Cemetery in Pittsburgh's North Side stands an imposing black granite monument. It bears this inscription: DAVID NAVARRO, JR. / THE ILLINOIS GIANT BOY / BORN IN ROCHELLE, ILL. / JUNE 22, 1861 / DIED MARCH 7, 1882. A footstone adds the postscript: LOVED BY ALL WHO KNEW HIM.

What manner of giant was this? The *Pittsburgh Commercial Gazette* for Wednesday morning, March 8, 1882, adds more light on the subject:

### "DEATH OF THE FAT BOY.

"A Young Man Whose Corpulence was his Fortune.

"The fat boy has gone the way of all flesh and the bright-eyed girls who flock to the Sixth Street Museum on sunny afternoons to view the many curiosities there, will have to turn their eyes on the fat woman instead, or as she prefers to be spoken of, the largest large lady in the world. The bearded woman, the long haired lady and the spotted boy mourn the loss of their old companion, David Navarro, who departed this life yesterday morning at an early hour. That terrible pustulant pest, smallpox, was the cause of his death. He did not suffer very much in his last hours, but a very short time before his death was sitting up chatting with his father, who was taking care of him. He expressed a desire to lie down, and in a very few minutes died while apparently suffering no pain. The dead boy was not yet twenty one years of age. He was born June 22, 1861, at Rochelle, Illinois, near Chicago, where his father and mother owned a fine farm. It was only after he reached the age of thirteen years that he showed signs of becoming enormously fat, and he increased so rapidly in weight as to attract the attention of showmen. He traveled first with Van Amburg's menageries and afterwards filled engagements with Barnum, Maddleton & Uffner, of 293 Bowery, N. Y., and elsewhere. Last summer Mr. Harris secured him for an establishment he was then running at Brighton Beach. He earned a salary of fifty dollars a week, besides the board of himself and parents. By the sale of his photographs he was enabled to add to his income considerably.

"In the early part of week before last he threw up his engagement at the Sixth Street Museum because of some imaginary offense that had been offered him. In a few days after he left the Museum symptoms of smallpox manifested themselves and he was taken to the Municipal Hospital. He was slightly reduced in size by his illness, and his mammoth proportions prevented the use of a hearse at his funeral. His coffin measured 6½ feet long by 2 feet 9 inches wide and is 2 feet deep. He was buried at 3 P.M. yesterday at Uniondale Cemetery. It took eight men to carry the coffin."

Ken McFarland