

Hannah Bigler Miller

Hannah Miller, daughter of Jacob Bigler and Elizabeth Harvey Bigler, was born June 24, 1820 at Harrison County, Virginia. Little is known of her childhood and youth. Her mother died when she was about seven years old leaving three children, Henry, Hannah and Emeline. They stayed at the home of their grandmother Harvey until the marriage of their father to Sarah Cunningham. After this marriage other children were born, Adam, Mark, Jacob and Sally.

In speaking of her childhood home Hannah mentioned the numerous negro children who lived near them and worked on the surrounding plantations. Her opportunities for schooling were limited due to the fact that children on the frontiers were expected to help on the farm and in the home for the maintenance of the family.

In 1838 Jacob Bigler and family accepted the Mormon Gospel and moved to Far West where the body of the Church was then located. At that time the Saints were being driven from place to place by their enemies. The following year the Saints were exterminated from the state of Missouri and went to Illinois. The Bigler family located in Adams county. In 1839 they moved up into Hancock County about four miles from Carthage and carried on farming. They endured persecution and the privations incident to the establishment of the Latter Day Gospel.

Hannah related an incident on the expulsion from Missouri. As they were nearing their day's travel they had intended to stop for the night at Haun's Mill but on arriving there decided to go farther. That very night the Haun's Mill massacre occurred. Had

they remained there as they first intended they would undoubtedly have met the same fate as did some of their friends. This occurrence left such an impression on Hannah's mind with so many other tragic incidents that transpired in her early life which in some girls would have developed fear and weakness, but to her was given courage and strength of character and she had no fear of friends or foe.

As a girl beaming with a cheerful disposition and a heart full of love and sympathy for others, she was ever ready to assist those who needed her help. In the early summer of 1844 she went into the home of Daniel A. Miller whose wife lay seriously ill. There were five young children ranging from three to ten years. Here Hannah nursed the sick mother, cared for the children and did the work of the home.

After months of suffering the afflicted wife of Daniel A. Miller passed away on September 1, 1844.

Hannah remained in the Miller home sometime after this death. The children dearly loved her and she in return loved them. Later their aunt Almira Miller took care of them until December 29, 1844, when Hannah became the wife of Daniel A. Miller.

Joseph Smith, the prophet, and his brother had been martyred at Carthage and persecution of the Saints continued. Many of their homes had been burned and the inmates left destitute. Very often they were cared for by the Miller family. Aunt Hannah, as she was now lovingly called, always had house room and heart room for those in distress.

In February 1846 most of the Saints were compelled to leave their homes and they crossed the Mississippi River on the ice. On March 1st of that year Daniel A. and his brother Henry W., disposed of what property they could and fitted up wagons to move westward with the Saints to the Rocky Mountains. Aunt Hannah's first babe was just a few weeks old when they left their home. She also had the five motherless children of her husband's to care for. The weather was cold and stormy, the bleak winds howled through their wagon covers as they travelled day after day through a wild, desolate country. Their progress was very slow. They had to make roads and build bridges over streams. The Miller families were in the advanced company of Saints. They formed temporary settlements along the way for those Saints who could go no farther and for those who should follow later on.

They traveled on till the middle of June when they reached the Missouri River. And it was now decided that the Saints should remain here till the next spring. The Miller brothers bought a house and some land of a Frenchman near Mosquito Creek about nine miles east of the Missouri River. Several families located here. At first it was called Millers' Hollow. But as it was headquarters for the enrollment of the Mormon Battalion it later received the name of Kanesville in honor of Colonel Kane. And years later was called Council Bluffs. Aunt Hannah's oldest son was born here August 12, 1847.

In the spring of 1848 it was arranged between the Miller brothers that Daniel A. should move on to the Great Salt Lake Valley while Henry W. remained in their new location until he could

dispose of it. The outfit for the move west consisted of four ox-teams, two yoke to each wagon, and a horse team driven by Aunt Hannah Miller, one horse to drive the loose stock, seven cows, seventeen sheep, four pigs, and five chickens. Two young men were added to the family as teamsters making eleven persons in all that Aunt Hannah cared and cooked for throughout the whole journey. Her husband was appointed Captain of one of the ten's. President Young was in charge of the whole company of Saints. They left Kansville the first part of June and arrived in the Salt Lake Valley on the 4th day of September, 1848. Aunt Hannah not only shared the hardships connected with that long tedious journey but she also carried the greater responsibility of her large family while her husband was in charge of 50 persons and 20 wagons.

In the early part of October the Miller family moved 16 miles north and settled at the place now known as Farmington. They soon had a two-roomed log cabin built of cottonwood logs. With lumber roof and floors also lumber doors and windows. Aunt Hannah later said, never before nor since, was she happier than she was in that log cabin. When we consider the many weeks she lived in a wagon cooking the food for 11 persons on a campfire, baking bread in a bake kettle, climbing in and out of the wagon, making beds down and rolling them up again, washing their clothes by a river or creek bank, drying them on the bushes, driving a team all day; besides watching five small children in the wagon, one less than a year old, could we wonder at her happiness when she moved into her two-room cabin? She told of how her husband put up shelves in one corner of her kitchen where she kept her food and dishes, over

which she hung a curtain. He also made some benches to sit on at a table. She told of their killing a beef late that fall and with the corn meal and flour they had brought with them they had plenty to eat and some to spare to the four other families who lived here and were less fortunate. Aunt Hannah was a good manager and an efficient housekeeper. She was left much alone with her large growing family to discipline while her husband did missionary work but she never complained. From the sheep they brought with them the wool was taken, after which it was washed, picked, carded, spun and woven into cloth all in the home. This furnished much of the clothing for the family.

Hannah was Blessed with some things that many others did not have. She never failed to share with them. As time went on the Millers owned quite a large herd of sheep and a mutton was often killed for home use. Her children tell of how their mother would send them with a piece to this sister, and a piece to that one. She would say "I know she hasn't had any fresh meat for a long time and would like some." This was the case with everything that she had which others did not have. One of the outstanding features of her life was generosity. Her home was never too full to hold one more person and her table never too crowded to feed the hungry. Though cheerful, yet unassuming, she was a friend to all. Her greatest strength was that of a true wife and mother. To her were born ten children, four sons and six daughters. All but one survived her. She also reared seven motherless children of her husband's besides caring for four others who lived several years at her home. If there could have been any partiality shown toward any

of the children it was in favor of the motherless ones. She unselfishly did a mother's part toward them all. Neighbors' children loved to gather there and were always handed a slice of bread and butter whenever her own children were. Years later one of these children, now grown to manhood, in passing the Miller home said. "There lives a woman who is a mother to everybody." Hannah Miller lived her religion every day of her life. She was always the same, staunch and true to her friends, full of humility and devotion. She accepted and lived every principle of the gospel.

Her death occurred at her home in her eighty-fifth year on March 13, 1905. The morning of her death she sat at her breakfast table. Later in the day she realized that the end was near and called for her children and friends. She greeted them warmly, and apparently did not suffer pain. She said "I feel so tired and want to rest."

LDS Biography of Jacob Miller

Miller, Jacob, a Patriarch in the Davis Stake of Zion, is the son of Daniel A. Miller and Clarissa Pond and was born December 9, 1835, near Quincy, Illinois. When about eight years of age, he was baptized into the Church by Henry W. Miller. He was ordained a Teacher in 1850 and was for several years a president in the Fortieth Quorum of Seventy. In 1877 he was ordained a High Priest by President John W Hess, being at the same time set apart as a counselor in the Farmington Ward Bishopric. In 1856 and 1857 he filled a mission among Indians on the Salmon River. In 1873 he went on a colonizing mission to Australia and during this mission he circumnavigated the globe. Elder Miller's activity in Church work is seen in the following. For many years he labored as a Sunday School Superintendent as a Ward Teacher as Second and First Counselor to Bishops John W. Hess and Jacob M. Secrist, respectively of Farmington Ward. Since 1882 he has served as Ward Ecclesiastical and Tithing Clerk, and was for several years Tithing Clerk of Davis Stake. Elder Miller married Helen Mar Cheney March 16, 1856, and he took to wife Annie S. Christensen May 13, 1885. He is the father of twelve children, seven of whom are living. Among the civil positions he has held can be mentioned the following: School Trustee, County Superintendent of Schools, Notary Public, County Selectman, County Clerk, etc., all in Davis County. The subject of this sketch had engaged successfully in school teaching, accountant and farming. For many years he worked as clerk, bookkeeper, and treasurer of the Farmington Co-op, also as treasurer and secretary of the Davis County Co-operative Company,

and later as a director of the Farmington Commercial and Manufacturing Company. Brother Miller came to Utah in 1848 and his home has ever since been in Farmington, Davis County.

James Gardner Miller

James Gardner Miller was born March 15, 1771 at Lexington, Greene County, New York, and married Ruth Arnold, October 27, 1798. She was descendent of Thomas Arnold who came to Massachusetts in 1635, and is a kin of Caleb Arnold, The Patriot, born May 16, 1725, who with his eight sons and three sons-in-law served during the Revolution as is verified by "Commerative Biographical Record, page 1231, Tolland and Windham Counties, Connecticut".

To the union of James Gardner Miller and Ruth Arnold seven children were born: Susanna, Abigal, Sally, Henry William, Daniel, and James Davis. All these children were born at Lexington, Greene County, New York, except James David, who was born at Norwich, Chenango County, New York, September 27, 1818.

The children were called to part with their mother early in life. Ruth Arnold Miller died September 5, 1816. The oldest child was sixteen and the youngest four years old. The father never married again. We presume he keep the children together until the two older girls married.

Sometime in the year 1830 James Gardner Miller with his daughter Sally, and his three sons left the state of New York and went West to the state of Illinois. They purchased some government land on Bear Creek near Quincy in Adams County and erected a steam grist and saw mill.

Here the Miller family formed the acquaintance of a Pond family who had moved from Vermont to the state of Ohio in 1805 and in 1829 had moved to Bear Creek, Illinois. Henry W., the oldest

son was married to Almira Pond, daughter of Thadeas and Lovisa Miner Pond on June 19, 1831.

A year and a half later Daniel A., the second son, married Clarissa Pond, an older sister. They were married December 29, 1833.

In February, 1839 many of the Mormon people who were driven from Missouri came to Adams County. Citizens of Quincy met to adopt measures to relieve the suffering of these homeless and destitute people. The Miller families generously assisted in getting food and lodging for them. Later they became interested in their faith and after further investigation James Gardner Miller, his two sons, Henry W., and Daniel A., and their wives were baptized in September 1839 by Abel Lamb.

In 1840 when Nauvoo became the gathering place of the Saints the Millers decided to dispose of their mill property. They had been very successful in business the ten years they had lived there. Now they desired to gather with the Saints and be nearer the body of the Church.

They sold their property to Mr Totton and took in part payment a farm situated four miles south of Carthage, and eighteen miles from Nauvoo.

James Gardner Miller had lived most of the time on the farm with his son, Daniel A. He was quite active, doing light work in the garden and in the farm. He liked children, took an interest in their play. Always patient with and kind to them.

On the 27th day of August, 1845 he seem apparently in his usual health. After he had taken dinner and finished eating some watermelon, he lay down to take his usual nap. He went to sleep and passed away without waking.

Just before his death, in Nauvoo, Illinois, he was ordained a High Priest of the Latter-day Saints Church, under the hands of his son Henry W. Miller.