

MINER GRANT ATWOOD

Pioneer of 1850
Spouse Mary Delilah Guilde

Written by: Lillie Knight
Granddaughter
Handed in by Mrs. Lawrence N. Atwood
Granddaughter-in-Law

Miner Grant Atwood was born March 18, 1823 in the town of Willington, County of Tolland, State of Connecticut.

His father Dan Atwood, and his mother, Polly Sawyer Atwood, lived on a farm and followed the vocation of farming. Miner says of his father, that he labored very hard to support his family, which consisted of five sons and three daughters. He was honest in his dealings with his fellow men, a believer in God and the Holy Scriptures. He was also a professor of religion after the order of the Methodist Faith and instructed his family in the strictest discipline of his religion.

Through frugality and sacrifice, the family was comfortably situated and all the children had the privilege and advantage of a common school education, a great blessing and privilege at that time.

When Miner was four years of age, the family moved to Mansfield and rented a farm in the Western part of the city. Two years later another farm was rented in the southern part of Mansfield. Here the family lived for six years. Begin greatly prospered here, the farm was purchased with a substantial down payment, which they had been able to save. The two older boys, Warren and John, were put out to work while Millen, Miner and Samuel assisted their father on the farm. They also turned their attention to the making of brick and soon had the farm free of all encumbrances. Each one of the boys considered it his duty to work for his father until they were twenty-one years of age.

When a young man, Miner did not enjoy very good health. His parents despaired for his life many times and thought he would not live the



day through, but through the grace of God and the faith of his parents he was spared to take an important part in establishing the Gospel of Christ in the earth.

Though an observer of the Sabbath day and a church goer with his parents, he did not seem to be too religiously inclined and never troubled his head about the various churches as to which one was right. He tells in his journal of an interesting experience which happened when he was fifteen years of age, which greatly influenced his life. Let me record it in his own words. "When I was fifteen years old, I attended a Camp Meeting one night which lasted throughout the night, singing, praying, shouting, preaching etc... When I left the camp around the next morning on my way home the dogs that came out and barked at me sounded exactly like the shouting I had heard at the meeting. I thought I had gotten religion but when I got home and had some rest and sleep, the barking of the dogs was quite natural and I concluded not to have anything more to do with Camp meetings or their religion."

"It was plain to me that they did not live according to their profession. Then I began to

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believe in the Universal Salvation but that did not seem to suit me. Finally I came to the conclusion that I would join none of them. I would do what was right and leave the future to God. About the time I was forming this resolution I learned there was to be a Mormon meeting about six miles from where we lived. I learned this as my brother Samuel and I were on our way to attend a Presbyterian Meeting. After consulting awhile, we decided to go and hear the Mormons preach.

"The Elders names were Robbins and Moses and I found their preaching to be quite different from that I had been accustomed to hear, for they preached as one having authority. They said an angel from heaven had flown through the midst of heaven, had come to earth and delivered the keys of the Kingdom of God, had restored the ancient order of things and raised up a prophet to organize his church. Although I was young I felt that these men had preached the truth for they sustained their doctrines from the Bible. Elders Robbins and Moses did not hold any more meetings at that time but after awhile other elders came and they bore testimony to the same things. Some believed and were baptized for the remission of their sins and were confirmed members of the church, having hands laid upon them that they might receive the Holy Ghost."

"I attended their meetings and my mind began to be enlightened. The Bible did not seem so blind to me. I began to contend for this doctrine and I found that no one was able to refute it. The Elders continued to preach in and about the neighborhood unmolested for a while when the Devil began to rage. Attending one of these meetings with Millen and Samuel, Joseph T. Ball, an elder of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, preached by the power and gift of the Holy Ghost and we became convinced that he was truly a Servant of God and what he said was the truth.

"There was a goodly number who attended the meeting but they did not understand as we did. They raved and swore that they would tar and feather the Elder and I verily believe that they

intended to do so but my brothers and I stepped forward and told them that the Elder had spoken the truth and if they showed him any violence that we would protect him, whereupon they disbursed without doing him any harm. Afterward, I was surprised to hear those who professed to be preachers of the Gospel say they wished the boys had tarred and feathered that Elder. I said to them that the Constitution guaranteed unto every man the right to worship God according to the dictates of their own conscience, but they were determined to put Mormonism down."

"In my youth I had heard a great deal about American Freedom and Liberty. I had attended the Independence Day Celebrations and listened to their orators laud the Constitution and glorify the Revolutionary Heroes, but I soon discovered there was a wide difference between their boasting and doing when it came to Mormonism. I firmly believe that this is the best government on earth; that the framers of the Constitution were inspired of God in writing that document; that their first thought was to guarantee to every man freedom of speech and protect him in his right.

"My parents taught me that our forefathers were men of courage who came to America to find a haven where they could be free and worship their God as they saw fit. Some of our near kin spilled their blood in the Revolutionary war, gave their all to obtain liberty. I feel that I have some of the blood and spirit of my forefathers and I stand ready to fight to sustain our Constitution and protect the liberties of all people.

"But to return again to our religion, we soon discovered that the churches had all gone astray. The pastors made their profession a business proposition, teaching for hire and defining for money. Many drew near to the Lord with their lips but their hearts were steeled against the truth and any new revelation from God. They surely had changed the ordinances and broken the everlasting Covenant."

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It was in the year 1845 that the Atwood family was baptized with the exception of the two eldest sons, Warren and John. The ones who joined the church at this time were--Dan and Polly Sawyer Atwood, the parents; their three sons, Millen, Miner Grant and Samuel; their three daughters--Emily Cornelia, Mary and Fannie. Warren and John never joined the church, in fact Warren became quite bitter against it.

Millen married Relief Cram. He left Connecticut and went to Nauvoo, Illinois. He took an active part in the final exodus of the Saints and was one of the original Pioneers, entering the valley in Brigham Young's company.

Samuel married Mary Jane Cromwell; Emily married William Branch; Mary married Orvil Atwood; Fannie married Edson Stohl.

Miner Grant married Mary Delilah Gulde of Plainsfield, Connecticut, on the 6th of October, 1844. She was the daughter of William D. Build and Hannsh Mowrey (Morey). Seven children were born to them, namely; Isora Maris--Married John Allen Knight; Otis Miner--died when a baby; Millen Dan--married Sarah Wanless; Jane Elizabeth--married Harry Burrows; Mary Guild Atwood--married Moron Preece; Elnora Mirandy--married 1st, William Scheeker and 2nd, John Robertshaw; Alice Isabella--died as a child.

Times were hard and the Mormons were ostracized by their neighbors and it required the combined efforts of all members of the family to make ends meet. Mary Delilah, the mother, was a fine dressmaker and found ready employment in the settlement near by. She would spend a week at one place, returning home for the weekend and for Sunday worship. None of her kin ever joined the church, which was a great sorrow to her.

In the year 1850, the Atwood Family, with the exception of Millen, who left previously, and Warren and John, began their trek across the plains for Utah. At Florence, Nebraska, they

joined the Wilford Woodruff company. Leaving there in April, they arrived in the Salt Lake Valley on the 14th of October, 1850.

During the winter all the family lived with Millen Atwood. Miner, his wife and one child sleeping in their wagon box. In 1851, Dan Atwood, the father, purchased a small farm in Little Cottonwood. Miner Grant was sent to work on the farm. Their living quarters was a one room log cabin. Shortly after their arrival, to be exact the 18th May, 1851, a baby boy was born. All during the night it rained and the water seeped through the roof onto the bed. To protect the mother, those who attended her caught three pans of water.

In 1853 Miner Grant moved back to Salt Lake City. He purchased a home on 5th East Street between South Temple and 1st South. Early in 1857 Miner sold his property on 5th East and moved to 1st South between 5th and 6th East Street. The family lived here until his death in 1887.

Miner Grant Atwood was set apart as Counselor to Bishop Leonard M. Hardy, in the Twelfth Ward in Salt Lake City, April 16, 1856. He served in this capacity for twenty-one years.

At April Conference, 1857, Miner Grant was called, with about one hundred other Elders to go on a Mission to the Eastern States and Europe. This group was to make their way to Florence, Nebraska, with hand carts. The company was organized with Henry Herriman as president Stephen H. Goddard and Joseph W. Young as Counselors, with William H. Branch as Captain. They left Salt Lake on the 23rd of April. There were 26 handcarts in the caravan. Samuel Riter, Henry Herriman and Miner Grant Atwood were assigned to the same cart and took turns pulling and pushing the cart a distance of 1000 (one thousand) miles. A volume could be written about their experiences. It required forty-nine days to make the journey. In his journal which contains a complete log of the trip, he frequently records that they were footsore, weary and often hungry but the entire group was in excellent health and spirits; they

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were extremely happy to be about their business of preaching the Gospel of Christ." Hardships and privations were of small moment to this group of sturdy young men from Zion. Miner served in the New England States.

With the approach of Johnston's Army in 1858, Miner's family was taken South by his brother Samuel. Miner remained to apply a torch to the homes if occasion required. Later he met his family at Provo and upon his return to Salt Lake assumed his duties as guard at the home of President Brigham Young.

Miner Grant was just getting himself comfortably settled and in a fair way to properly care for his family when another call came for foreign service. Early in May, 1862, while walking down Main Street, President Brigham Young, who was on the opposite side of the street talking or conversing with some of the brethren, said to them, "There is the man I want to go to South Africa and settle the difficulties among the Saints there." President Young called to Brother Atwood and told him what he wanted him to do. Without hesitancy Miner said, "If that is your wish, I am ready."

On May 11, 1862, he was set apart for this mission under the hands of Orson Pratt, Wilford Woodruff and George A. Smith. Ten days later on May 21, 1862 at 10:00 A.M. he bid farewell to his loved ones and started on a journey that was to take him more than half way around the world.

To prepare for this mission in so short a time was a stupendous task. It required the combined resources of the entire Atwood family. After thanking them for their loyalty in providing the means and such things as he needed for the journey he blesses the family group and desires above all things the faith of his people which would be worth to him more than gold in keeping him in the line of his duty and free from the sins of the sickened world. He closes his epistle with the assurance to his family that God will protect him and he would return to them in safety.

Miner G. Atwood arrived in Port Elizabeth, South Africa, December 30, 1862, seven months and ten days after leaving Salt Lake City. The Mission record states that they were sixty-one days at sea from London but they arrived in good health and spirits.

Immediately Elder Atwood began an investigation of the difficulties among the prominent members of the church in Cape Colony. That had been the reason for his call to this faraway mission.

The mission history made this statement under the date of January 20th, 1863. "The difficulties between brothers Stock and Slaughter with regard to their business was amicably settled after the Elders had conferred together about the case. Other difficulties were soon adjusted and Elder Atwood was free to carry on an intensive campaign which took him to all parts of the colony. There were many baptisms, and each year a company of Saints emigrated to Utah. After laboring for many months Elder Atwood was the only Elder from Zion remaining in the mission. Instructions were issued for him to return home.

Preparations were immediately begun to organize a company of Saints who desired to go to Zion. Forty-six members of the church and two Kaffir servants constituted the emigrant company for which they paid the owners of the Vessel L569 sterling for the passage from Port Elizabeth to New York. At high noon on, April 12, 1865, the Captain weighed anchor and the homeward journey was begun. It required sixty-eight days for the rather tiresome journey. The journey was uneventful except for the death of Brother George F. W. Kershaw, June 6th, 1865, when they were about 980 miles from New York. He was forty-two years and left a wife and six children.

It was 5:00 P.M. on June 18th, when the vessel Mexicana cast anchor in New York. There had been some friction on the journey between Elder Atwood and the Captain because the Captain had given some medicine to Brother Kershaw without the consent and approval of Elders

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Atwood and Noon who were in charge of the company. However, upon their arrival in New York, Elders Atwood and Noon prepared a testimonial expressing the good will and best wishes of the Saints for the quick promotion in his line of duty. The Captain attempted to collect a head tax from the passengers but after discovering he could not force the payment he released the baggage and permitted the Saints to land.

Preparations were immediately begun for transportation of the company as far as Wyoming where they arrived June 30th at 11:30 A.M. ten days on the journey from New York to there.

Here, Miner Grant was assigned the task of caring for a company of Danish Saints. It required thirty-three days to gather oxen, wagons and supplies preparatory to making the journey of a thousand miles to Utah. There were forty-five wagons and four hundred souls in the company.

It was a long and tedious journey frequent clashes with soldiers stationed along the route for the protection of emigrants and mails, were more serious than the Indian uprisings. Several people died and were buried by the roadside. A number of babies were born during the journey On September 22nd, in a skirmish with Indians, seven of the Danish brethren were wounded and one woman was carried away by the red men. She was never heard from. Provisions became scarce and it was necessary to get help from Salt Lake City. Elder Atwood wired President Young to send help and provisions to Green River. This was on September 29th, 1865. Help was received and the company continued their journey They arrived in the valley on Wednesday, November 8th, 1865.

After an absence of three and one half years Elder Atwood was once again reunited with his family. On February 10th, 1866, Miner Grant Atwood married Rosina Kathleen Jemmett. Two children were born to them: Edgar Grant--born July 18th, 1867 and Dora Mable born July 24th, 1870--died August 16th, 1871.

On December 23, 1867, Miner G. began attending the school of the Prophets. In his journal he records his experiences while attending this school. President Young presided, doctrinal questions were discussed and all were privileged to ask any questions they desired. Frequently the time was devoted to a discussion of farming and temporal affairs.

Miner Grant Atwood was called to the high council in 1868 on November 23rd. Which calling was Alternate as the Church Encyclopedia by Andrew Jensen states that at Conference in May 1870, Miner Grant Atwood, Alternate High Councilor was called to fill a vacancy in the High Council. He served in this position till May 8, 1887 when he was excused on account of failing health. This was just before his death.

He served in that capacity for nineteen years; nine years of that time he was also Bishop's Counselor.

At the October Conference in 1877, Miner was called to be a Home Missionary in the Salt Lake Stake of Zion, to preach the Gospel. He was set apart on the 8th of October by Lorenzo Snow, C. C. Rich, Angus M. Cannon and Joseph E. Taylor. From 1877 to 1882 Miner Grant was an active missionary in the Salt Lake Stake of Zion, filling appointments to some ward in the city or county practically every Sunday. He records in his journal a detailed account of his services and who his companions were. Charles W. Penrose, John T. Caine, George Romney, Rudger Clawson, John R. Winder, David McKenzie, John Clark, John G. Midgley, Hamilton C. Park and Charles Wilkins were among them.

Another item of interest that should not be overlooked--On May 20, 1874 a meeting was held in the Twelfth Ward and a branch of the United Order was organized with Bishop Leonard W. Hardy as President; E. Snelgrove as 1st Vice President; Miner Grant Atwood as 2nd Vice President; Joseph T. Kingsbury as secretary; James Jack as treasurer and the following

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directors--A. C. Piper, C. W. Staines, Joshua Midgley, Joseph C. Kingsbury and George Brooks.

Miner Grant served as City Councilman when A. O. Smoot was Mayor of Salt Lake City.

Miner owned a five acre plot on 3rd East just North of 27th South. Here he raised wheat, oats, corn, potatoes beans and squash. He also farmed on shares a five acre plot in Sugarhouse, owned by his brother Millen. He also contracted for hauling of rock, sand, brick and adobes, and also lumber. In this way he obtained a livelihood for his family.

While irrigating in the field in Sugarhouse, June 12, 1882, an exceptionally hot day, Miner was suddenly taken very ill. His son Edgar and John M. Knight were with him and with some difficulty he was taken home where the doctor pronounced his illness as sunstroke. He never did fully recover from this affliction and was confined to his home the greater part of the time until he died, May 10, 1887.

His funeral services were held in the Twelfth Ward Chapel on Sunday, May 15, 1887. The

services were conducted by Bishop Hyrum B. Clawson. The Presidency of the Stake and High Council attended in a body. Elders John T. Caine, John R. Winder and Angus Cannon were the speakers. Elias Morris the invocation and Horace S. Eldrege pronounced the benediction.

The body was laid to rest in the City Cemetery to await a glorious resurrection.

Thus was brought to a close a life of devotion and service to the Church of Christ, faithful to his trust, obedient to every call. Service for the general good rather than personal advantage were the outstanding characteristics of this noble life. He left to his posterity the heritage of a good name and an example of faith and devotion which is of more value than the wealth of the world.

From the Pioneers Biographies

LDS Biographical Encyclopedia, Andrew Jenson, Vol. 4, p.378

Atwood, Miner G., president of the South African Mission from 1864 to 1865, was born March 18, 1823, in Mansfield, Connecticut, a son of Daniel Atwood and Polly Sawyer. He embraced the Gospel on July 21, 1849, being baptized by Cyril Brown; emigrated to Utah in 1850, crossing the plains in Wilford Woodruff's company. He was chosen counselor to Bishop Leonard G. Hardy of the Salt Lake City 12th Ward in 1856, went on a mission to the Southern States in 1857, and was set apart for a mission to South Africa May 11, 1862; he returned in June, 1865. His last mission was to Arizona in 1874, He was a member of the High Council of the Salt Lake Stake of Zion, being called to that position at the April Conference in 1869. He died May 17, 1887, in Salt Lake City, Utah.

From the Daughters of the Utah Pioneers Collection

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Our Pioneer Heritage, Vol. 9, p.42

In that year three organized companies crossed the plains and mountains from Wyoming, Nebraska, to Salt Lake City, Utah. Eighty-three persons came in miscellaneous companies.

Date of Departure	Captain	Total Souls	Wagons	Arrival in Salt Lake City
Jul 31, 1865	Miner G. Atwood	400	45	Nov. 8
Augt 12, 1865	Henson Walker	200 abt.	50	Nov. 9
Augt 15, 1865	Wm. W. Willis	200 abt.	50	Nov. 29

Miner Grant Atwood was born March 18, 1823, in Wilmington, Connecticut. His parents were Daniel and Polly Sawyer Atwood and his early life was spent on a farm. Through frugality and sacrifice the family of five sons and three daughters were comfortably situated, and the children had the advantage of a common school education. Each of the boys considered it his duty to work for his father until he became twenty-one years of age.

When Miner was fifteen years of age he first heard the Mormon elders preach, and became interested in the new religion. In the year 1845, all the members of the Atwood family were baptized into the Latter-day Saint Church with the exception of two sons. On October 6, 1844, Miner married Mary Delilah Guilde. Millen, his brother, left Connecticut and went to Nauvoo, Illinois, where he took an active part in the final exodus of the Saints and became one of the original pioneers to this Valley in the company of Brigham Young in 1847. Miner came to Utah in 1850.

At the April 1857 conference, Miner G. Atwood was called with nearly one hundred other missionaries to go to the Eastern [p.43] States. This group was to make their way to Florence, Nebraska, with handcarts. There were twenty-six carts in the caravan. He later served as a missionary to the New England States and after his return was just getting himself comfortably settled and in a fair way to properly care for his family, when another call came for foreign service. Early in May 1862, while walking down Main Street, President Brigham Young, who was on the opposite side of the street conversing with some brethren, said to them, "There is the man I want to go to South Africa to settle the

difficulties among the Saints there." President Young called to Mr. Atwood and told him what he wanted him to do. Without hesitancy Miner replied, "If that is your wish I am ready." On May 11, 1862, he was set apart for this mission under the hands of Orson Pratt, Wilford Woodruff and George A. Smith. Ten days later he bade farewell to his loved ones and started on the journey that was to carry him more than half way around the world. On the fly leaf of Elder Atwood's journal appears a letter of appreciation to the members of his family for their loyalty in providing the means needed for the journey, and assurances to his family that God would protect him and he would return to them in safety.

Miner G. Atwood arrived at Port Elizabeth, South Africa, December 30, 1862, seven months and ten days after leaving Salt Lake City. The mission record states they were sixty-one days at sea from London. Immediately, Elder Atwood began investigation of the difficulties among members of the Church in Cape Colony, and they were soon amicably settled. Other difficulties were adjusted, and Elder Atwood was free to carry on an intensive missionary campaign which took him into all parts of the colony.

There were many baptisms, and each year some Saints emigrated to Utah. After laboring for many months, Elder Atwood was the only elder from Zion remaining in the mission. Instructions were issued for him to return home. Preparations were immediately begun to organize a company of Saints who desired to go to Zion. Forty-six members of the Church and two Kaffir servants constituted the emigrant company, for which the owners of the vessel were paid 569 sterling for passage from Port Elizabeth to New York. At high noon on April 12, 1865, the captain weighed anchor and the homeward voyage began. The journey was rather tiresome and uneventful, except for the death of George F. W. Kershaw which occurred June 6, 1865.

It was 5 p.m. on June 18th when the vessel Mexicana cast anchor at New York. There had been some friction on the journey between Elder Atwood and the captain because of medicine given Mr. Kershaw without the consent and approval of Elder Atwood

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and Elder Noon who were in charge of the company. However, upon their arrival in New York, the two elders prepared a testimonial expressing the good will and best wishes of the Saints for the courtesies [p.44] shown them during the long voyage. The captain attempted to collect a head-tax from the passengers, but after discovering he could not force payment, he released the baggage and permitted the Saints to land. At Wyoming, Nebraska, it required thirty-three days to gather oxen, wagons and supplies preparatory to traveling the distance of one thousand miles to Utah.

It was a long and tedious journey. Provisions became scarce and Elder Atwood wired President Young to send help from Great Salt Lake City. The company arrived November 8, 1865. After an absence of three and one-half years, Elder Atwood was once again reunited with his family. His entire life was one of devout service to his Church and he also held many important civic positions. He passed away May 10, 1887. —Files of D.U.P.

From the Daughters of the Utah Pioneers Collection

Mission To South Africa, 1862

Treasures of Pioneer History, Vol.6, p.254

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It was a long and tedious journey, with frequent clashes with soldiers stationed along the route for the protection of emigrants. Several people were buried by the roadside. Provisions became scarce and Elder Atwood wired President Young to send help from Great Salt Lake City. The company arrived November 8, 1865. After an absence of three and one-half years, Elder Atwood was once again reunited with his family.

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