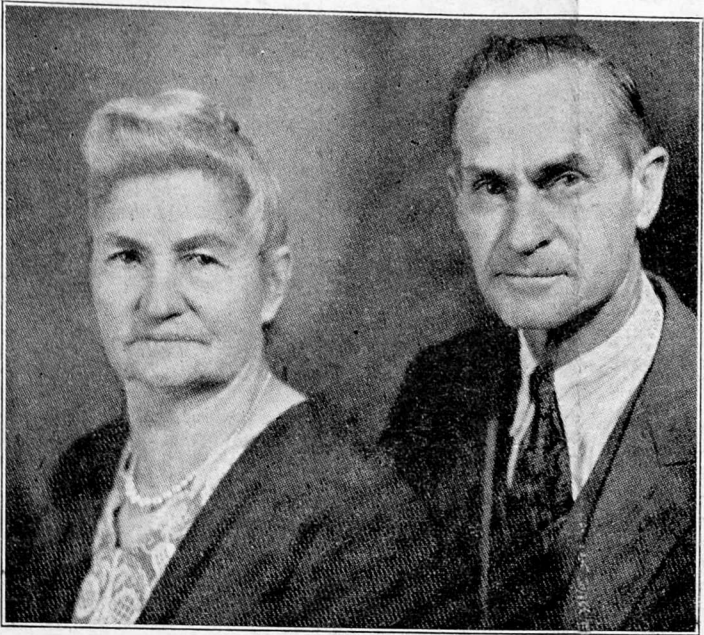


## Descendants of Dixie Pioneers



MR. AND MRS. ALBERT E. MILLER

### Take Active Part In Civic, State Affairs

By Mabel Jarvis

Second only to those who trekked the long miles across the burning western plains to Utah, and later on took up the march to Utah's Dixieland, are the children born while this section of country was still in the throes of semi-barrenness, human want, and hazardous undertakings. While fathers watched the heavy labor of their hands go careening down the wilful streams that washed dam after dam away, or covered almost ripened harvests with flood debris and sticky clay; while mothers converted every usable inch of homespun or other available material, every ounce of produce, into clothing to cover and warm their almost nakedness, and

food to partially sustain their starved bodies, children who should carry on what they had begun were being willingly brought into the world and taught the vital lessons of pioneering.

From two such courageous families came St. George's present Mayor, Albert E. Miller, son of Henry W. and Fanny Gunn Miller, and His Wife Mary Ann Cottam Miller, daughter of George E. and Rachel Holt Cottam.

Albert Edwin Miller was born in St. George January 9th, 1873, when the city was just eleven years old, his parents having established the first Mormon settlement in Arizona in 1864 at Beaver Dams. This section being

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# Outstanding Events of Dixie Told By Albert E. Miller In Recalling Developments Here During His Lifetime

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abandoned they moved to St. George in 1866. His father came from New York, while his mother was proud of her line as a brave Norman from Devonshire. Both came from families of more than ordinary means but had been trained to thrift and self-dependence. Fanny Gunn followed the occupation of dresser of Fancy dolls filling orders wholesale for domestic and foreign trade. Among his souvenirs the Mayor prizes one of his mother's business cards, also her personal records written in England showing her contributions to the Emigration Fund subscribed to voluntarily by converts of the L.D.S. Church in Foreign lands, as well as her tithing accounts.

That his father was an outstanding citizen of his day is evidenced in his record as the first Representative of P o t t a w a t t a m e e County to the General Assembly of Iowa, during his residence in that State. After coming to Utah, he served two terms as a member of the Territorial Legislature, was a member of the first Board of Directors of the St. George Gardner's Club, a distinctive civic organization of early Dixie, and during early days a commissioner of the City. Mr. Miller also has his father's business card, as well as other of his valuable papers.

Albert E. Miller received his preliminary education in the third ward district school, later attending the St. George Stake Academy taught in the basement of the Stake Tabernacle, and graduated from these courses given under Professor Eugene Shoppman. Along with other Dixie boys he was a constant enrollee in the University of Hard Knocks from some departments at least, of which he has graduated, and he appreciates the vital lessons he has learned in that institution, as well as the occasional post graduate work to be had where one is seeking civic betterment. "You know", he confided, "I have spent the best part of my life with such men as your father, (Brigham Jarvis), Joseph Orton, and my wife's father, George T. Cottam, and it was from them I learned that a desirable citizen must be a public servant, and that means he must willingly give one hundred percent of honest effort in the bringing into realization the dreams that are worth while in the upbuilding of the community and the state. It is not enough that a man works the prescribed eight hour day, but he must give ten, twelve, sixteen hours of hard work, and often the additional hours of the night in carefully going over what has been done, and what is to be done, that the project under way may not fail of accomplishment.

"I have checked carefully on the Cottonwood water project, which gives our City its supply, and know it would have been folly to have brought the water over other attempted lines than the present one as proposed and later completed by Brigham Jarvis and sustained by George T. Cottam, both of whom were then members of the St. George City Council under Mayor Edward M. Brown, the other members at that time being Charles F. Foster, John G. McQuarrie, and Samuel Miles Jr. Mr. McQuarrie is the only member still living."

According to records Mr. Miller had the last sub-contract on the tunnel ridge, which marked the actual turning of the Cottonwood water towards St. George and recalls the elation of those present, and especially of the man in charge, Brigham Jarvis, when this stretch of heavy ditching was completed. With this in mind he feels it is a rather gratifying coincidence that he should happen to be Mayor of the City when really ultimate accomplishment has been realized in the official turning of the water into the City through the pipe line completed and celebrated June 16th, 1937.

When this Dixie born boy was sixteen years of age he secured a job at Silver Reef, then still producing. He led the horse that operated one of the hoists at one of the principal mines and remembers much that occurred during that hectic period and which has been variously rehearsed and recorded. He knew personally old Dick Gillispie, Jim Louder, Taylor Bayles, and other characters of distinction of the old reef.

Years later, in following his trade as carpenter, he witnessed the tearing down of the Harrison House, famous hostelry of the Silver Reef. Much of this material went into the R. C. Lund Jr. home still standing in this city.

The bar from this hotel, over which thousands of dollars were passed by miners of Silver Reef in exchange for filled glasses as per order, was a marvelous piece of Canadian black walnut, twenty feet long, 21 inches wide and 1½ inches thick. When brought to St. George this served first as the counter of the old R. G. McQuarrie & Co. store, which many will remember. When jarring the heavy bar around to get it into position for this counter, a ten dollar gold

piece, which had somehow escaped the crowded till and lodged in the frame work, jingled to the floor and of course was happily rescued.

Some years later, in 1906, Mr. Miller was again the Carpenter when this counter was transferred to the first home of the Bank of St. George remodeled, and fitted with the teller's window and metal screen, for that institution. And the same heavy walnut counter with its complete fixtures was eventually moved to the County Court House, where it still serves as the collector's counter in the office of the County Treasurer, though considerably altered.

It was while working in Silver Reef that Mr. Miller spotted the massive smoke stacks of some of the old mills with a thought of their possible future usefulness. In 1917 he became a Director and Secretary-Treasurer of the St. George-Santa Clara Field Canal Company. For long years the frequent and expensive washouts of canal lines, especially where they crossed or followed close to washes and gullies, made some drastic treatment expedient. A flume for some of these places was recommended, but previous sad experience of the Old Virgin Field Canal Company with their flume across the Mansfield Hill Wash, brought about much opposition. However, it was finally decided to try fluming as a last resort. The smoke stack from what was known as the Old Babylon or River Mill was purchased at \$1.00 per foot and set up across the Cottonwood Wash. This served admirably for some time. Later, at a similar cost per foot, they purchased the mighty smoke stacks of the Silver Reef California Mine and put that to use. It is still standing up splendidly. "And," says Mr. Miller, "one would think this was exactly intended for our use. This smoke stack was made of finest Norway Iron and was three feet in diameter. For our purpose we must have it opened hence it must be unriveted. But this was made much easier for us, for, instead of being stagger riveted, or riveted in sections first on one side then on the other, this was riveted in one long straight line, and we soon had the rivets out and the flume set up.

"I had also spotted the great boiler at the California Mine, and when the Dixie College was under way, suggested the use of this for the required heating system to be installed. Investigations were made which resulted in an actual gift of this boiler to the College by the late B. Y. McMullin, then Bishop of Leeds Ward. Today this is still a part of the College heating plant and standing up admirably."

Mr. Miller was a member of the St. George-Santa Clara Field Canal Company Board from 1917 to 1931 inclusive and served that Company in another of its big projects, that of laying a permanent cement dam across the Santa Clara Creek, to replace the many other structure dams that floods had carried out. Profiting by previous experience of the Washington Field Canal Company, Mr. Miller, who superintended the project, first cribbed the stream to divert the major current temporarily, while the construction work went on. This dam, completed in 1922, has a wide buttressed spillway across the entire channel, with the necessary diversion gates on either bank. To the writer's father, Brigham Jarvis, is accorded this spillway idea, which is now being effectively used throughout the United States in damming or diverting streams for general irrigation purposes. And this spillway system alone, according to Mr. Miller has made possible the successful damming of the Santa Clara Creek.

Mayor Miller has thus far filled the following civic positions; City Councilman, St. George, 1906-1907; State Senator 1907-1911; City Commissioner again for 1912-1913; Mayor, 1918-1919, during the period when the United States was participating in the World War. City Mayor 1922-1923, and again elected to this position for 1936-1937.

While serving as State Senator in 1907, then one of its younger members, he introduced the Bill, Senate Joint Resolution No. 2, providing for the division of the State taxes in the Setting up of the State High School System. This was at first defeated, and the measure was four years under consideration and agitation before the Bill was finally passed, but it was worth the effort. Mr. Miller has carefully filed, all of his correspondence on this measure, which includes some very impressive and interesting letters, and taken all in all, the Mayor regards this as the major achievement of his political career. This Bill provides for the following distribution or segregation of the States allotted eight mills of taxes: 3 Mills for Elementary Schools, ½ Mill for High Schools, and 4½ Mills for general State Purposes.

In the year 1908, in cooperation with the late Thomas P. Cottam who was also at that time a member of the Legislature, Mayor

Miller was enabled to secure the appropriation of \$7,000.00 of State funds to assist in the erection of the two Virgin River Bridges, the one connecting Hurricane and LaVerkin, and the other across below the St. George Valley. A complete report of the expenditure for these two bridges is printed in the Senate Journal of January 15th., 1909, shows the total cost of each bridge.

While serving as Mayor during 1918-1919, this civic Leader created what is perhaps the only such office in the Cities of the State, that of Custodian of the Flag. George Jarvis, the Sailor pioneer from England erected the first flag mast and served as Captain of the flag as long as his health permitted when the duty of flag raising was delegated to his son, the writer's father, who under this city office created by Mayor Miller became the first so designated Custodian of the Flag. And of this Mr. Miller reminds me of one important happening. The word of U. S. President Warren G. Harding's death having been received over a small radio set constructed by his son, the custodian dressed and called on Mayor Miller at 3 a.m. notifying him of the sudden passing of the Nation's President. And when dawn gilded the horizon, the almost new City Flag soared to the top of the pole, then moved slowly back to half-mast in honor of the Nation's Chief.

Among his files of letters Mayor Miller has preserved all correspondence respecting the securing of the massive cannon which tops the Memorial erected to the World War Sons of Washington County on the Court House grounds. One letter recognizes the fact that Mr. Miller's request was the first received in the distribution of the twenty-five military pieces allotted to Utah. Mayor Miller enjoyed the distinction of being Chairman of the State Electoral College and of casting Utah's vote for President Herbert Hoover in 1928.

Following his first letter to State Senator George Sutherland, in February, 1911, Albert E. Miller, never ceased to importune in behalf of the people for a federal Building for the City of St. George. His many letters in this connection bear interesting facts and figures. Now that the new Federally constructed Post Office is nearing completion, he rejoices in seeing the realization of one of his long cherished and much sought dreams.

And in all of these accomplishments, or ultimate realizations of the things he has set his heart to help procure, Mayor Miller has not failed to recognize that much of his everyday success is richer because of the hearty cooperation so willingly given by the girl Mary Ann Cottam, whom he married in the St. George Temple, December 25th., 1895, President David H. Cannon officiating. To them were born eleven children, nine of whom are living and eight are married. Also all but one has graduated at least from the Dixie Junior College, some having gone on to Universities. One married after completing High School work. They are: Henry W. Bigler Miller, Manufacturing chemist of Brunswick Drug Co., Glendale, California; George C. Miller, practicing Attorney, Beaver, Utah; Howard Orton, Engineer Mt. States Fuel Co., Salt Lake City, Utah; Mrs. Mary Wagner, Akron, Ohio; Rachel Cones, Grand Junction, Colorado; Mrs. Edith Frei, Santa Clara, Utah; Mrs. Grace Bullock, Mrs. Rosalind Cannon and Grant Miller all of St. George. Grant being at present a student at the University of Utah.

In a Religious capacity Mayor Miller has held many positions. He was a member of the Stake High Council from 1895 to 1900, leaving for a Mission to the Western States. He has also served extensively in the Ward Sunday School and Young Men's Mutual Improvement Association organizations.

"My hobby?" he smiled at my question. "My hobby is serving my fellowman". And the writer adds also, the careful and detailed filing of worth while historical data in the way of documents, letters, etc., and the preservation of pioneer relics.