

ALBERT MINER

by Ray C. Howell

Albert Miner was born on March 31, 1809 in Jefferson County, New York. He was the son (and fourth child) of Azel and Sylvia Munson Miner. In the year of 1815 Albert and his family moved to New London, Huron County, Ohio. It was here that he met and married his sweetheart, Tamma Durfee, daughter of Edmond and Delancy Pickle Durfee. They were married on the ninth of August, 1831.

In the winter of 1831 Albert was introduced to the Mormon church and to the gold Bible. In April of 1831, Solomon Hancock arrived in Ohio and started to preach to the people. Solomon joined in with the Methodists and the Campbellites and would preach in their meetinghouses. In May 1831 Tamma's family was baptized by Solomon Hancock. Tamma believed that the church was true, but was not baptized until her father was leaving on his mission in December of that same year.

Albert's family was not so eager to join the church. They had quite a lot to say about the church, but it was not always in a positive manner. Albert was heard to say on several occasions that "the more they talk, the quicker I will be baptized." (Voices From The Past: Diaries, Journals, and Autobiographies, BYU Press, 1980, pg. 76). They must have really kept talking for he was baptized in February of 1832 and could hardly wait for a hole in the ice to be cut.

Albert's first child, Polly, was born 1 May 1832 in New London, Ohio.

In May of 1833, Albert and his wife moved to Kirtland, Ohio. During these years at Kirtland they were able to participate in many of the glorious and devastating experiences of the church. Albert helped haul the stones every Saturday for a long time to built the Temple.

While in Kirtland, four more children were born: Orson, 22 Oct. 1833; Moroni, 4 June 1835; Sylvia, 18 June 1836 and Mormon on 26 Sep 1837. When Joseph Smith blessed Moroni he said that "he should be as great as Moroni of old and the people would flee unto him and call him blessed." (Voices From The Past, BYU Press, 1980, pg. 77).

Temple building was still going on; and some of the brethren that came from great distances stayed until the next spring. Some stayed with the Miner family and received their endowments and were there to the dedication of the Temple in

March 1836. However, after that a good many began to apostatize and broke up the Kirtland Bank.

In the spring of 1837, the family was in Caldwell Co. Missouri, where they stayed that summer and fall. That fall Albert had a very sick spell. The last of January he recovered a little so that he could ride in a sleigh on a bed while Tamma held an umbrella over him. With two little children on her lap, they travelled 80 miles from Kirtland, Ohio to Huron Co. (New London, Connecticut ?) where Albert's folks lived. The four days traveling were pleasant and warm but it turned fearfully cold weather in Connecticut. Albert seemed to feel better there so they stayed until May. It was hard to say goodbye to Albert's mother, sisters, and brothers (Albert's father died in 1829)

After Albert's recovery he returned to Kirtland to sell his farm and to put some of his means into the Kirtland camp. With the remaining balance, he and his family started for Far West, Missouri in the middle of June of 1838. They would travel until they were short of means and then they would stop and work until they had enough money to begin again. They visited the Kirtland Camp and then went on to Missouri. They arrived in DeWitt in the latter part of August. The children were all sick and Tamma had been so sick that she could not walk. They stayed in DeWitt for one week while the entire family recovered from illnesses - except Sylvia, who did not recover and died about the first of Oct. 1838.

In the first part of September 1838 they arrived in Far West, Missouri. They were in Missouri at the time of the mob's persecution. Tamma describes her feelings of this persecution in the following way. "Thus we were plundered, smitten, and driven from our homes, our lives threatened, and we were ill-treated on every side by our enemies - enemies to the truths of heaven. They would come one to five hundred right to our houses and nobody around but women and little children, take our men prisoners without any cause whatsoever - only because they were Mormons and believed in the truths of the Gospel. They wanted to know if we had any guns or pistols or ammunition or butcher knives and all such things. No one can describe the feelings of the saints and what they passed through. No tongue can express the depredation -- only those that experienced it and was an eye witness....." (Voices From The Past, BYU Press, 1980, pg. 78).

Albert and his family lived on Log Creek, six miles from Far West. They were there when the mob killed David Patten, took a lot of prisoners, and forced the Saints to lay down their arms. Not long after their arrival to Far West they and others found themselves without flour. A council was held by the saints and Albert was selected to go and get some flour. On his return he was captured by the mob

and taken to their camp. After explaining the plight that his family and others were in, having no flour to cook with, the mob allowed him to deliver the flour, but only if one of the mob members accompanied him. After delivering the flour he was taken back to the mob's camp and was held prisoner until they broke camp. After the mob took his best horse he was left with the other horse to get home with his wagon as best as he possibly could.

In the fall of 1838 when the saints were being forced to leave under the exterminating order of Governor Boggs, Albert signed a pledge that they would not leave Missouri until every family had left Missouri.

The men that were free on bail and had teams helped others to get to the Mississippi and then go back for their own families. Albert was one that had to take a load to the Mississippi River so his family didn't get away until the first of April 1839.

Albert and his family crossed over to Quincy, went up the river to Lima and decided to stay there a short time.. A kind reception was extended to the Saints by the people of Quincy and much aid was given to them as many of the Saints were starving. But the devil wasn't dead yet. Some of the members would go to Lima and get drunk and come back swearing and tearing - enough to frighten men, let alone women and children.

It was there that Matilda was born 12 January 1840 and the family stayed about one year. They got along the best that they could. Every fall and spring they drove thirty miles to Conference and then on the fourth of July to training. While there, on 7 September 1841 another son, Alma L. was born.

The next spring (1842) they sold what they had and bought a place four miles east of the Temple in Nauvoo. There they could go to meeting and be back home by night.

On 12 June 1843, another boy was born and they named him Don Carlos Smith.

Albert helped in erecting the Nauvoo Temple and there he and his wife, Tamma, received their endowments. After the Nauvoo Temple was completed the mobs became violent again. Albert and Tamma were in Nauvoo in 1844, when Joseph and Hyrum were martyred. Albert along with others had assisted in guarding the Prophet prior to being martyred at Carthage.

In the fall of 1844, the mob renewed their persecutions and the Saints were in

constant turmoil and fear of their lives. The mob forces continued their unlawful acts until the Saints, finding themselves unprotected by the Governor and State officials, agreed to leave the State as soon as possible.

Albert was one of the men that traveled all night and day to get the families from Lima that had been turned out of doors into the cold. He took a chill and was very ill for a long time. When his family was leaving Illinois Albert crossed the river ten times trying to get his family and his brother-in-law's family out of Illinois.

On 5 March 1846, a little girl named Melissa was born so Albert's family remained for a while. In the spring the mob began to gather once a week and threaten to drive out what was left. The first of May, they moved to town, sold their place for a yoke of oxen and wagon thinking to start on in two or three weeks. But the mob gathered every week right on the public square close by their house.

Albert and his family left for Montrose, Iowa in the fall of 1846. They stayed there two weeks - sleeping on the ground waiting for help (there were fourteen to one wagon). They traveled for three days and arrived in Iowaville. They remained there until 1848.

While enroute to Iowaville, the Miner family were deeply grieved by the death of their seven month old baby, Melissa. She was buried on the banks of the Des Moines River, under a big cottonwood tree on 1 Oct. 1846.

After his family was settled in Iowaville Albert decided to go back to Ohio to see his family (to get them to join the church and/or say goodbye one last time before heading farther west). He started to walk back to the Mississippi River all alone and without any means (money) when after two or three miles he looked down and laying there on the ground was five dollars in silver. He arrived in Ohio finding his family all well, yet they would still not believe in the gospel. On May 17, 1847, after being gone ten weeks, he arrived back in Iowaville very homesick, tired and not feeling well.

Albert felt that after a little bit of rest he would recover, but he gradually grew worse until he passed away on January 3, 1848. Albert Miner passed away, leaving his wife and seven children (the oldest fourteen) to pursue their journey to Salt Lake City.

Tamma wrote, "...a better man never lived; he was kind, good-natured, free hearted and industrious. We won many friends and he was a genius at doing anything he saw someone else do...They (the children) thought their father was so perfect that

he could not do anything wrong and that he knew everything...Albert's folks had offered him everything if he would stay with them and not go with the Mormons, but the Gospel and the truth of the Book of Mormon and the Holy Priesthood was all that he wanted."

Compiled from:

"A Short Biographical Sketch of the Lives of Albert Miner and his Wife Tamma Durfee Miner" by _____, written 19 Nov. 1913.

"Autobiography of Tamma Durfee Miner, written for the Relief Society and filed in the Jubilee Box in 1880."