

ARVIN MITCHELL STODDARD (1823-19 )

CAROLINE SARGENT (1835-1905)

Evidently missionaries of the newly organized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints contacted the Stoddard family in Leeds County, Upper Canada, for they are found located in Nauvoo, Illinois in 1840.

Arvin Mitchell was born to Nathaniel and Jane (McMann) Stoddard 1 Sept, 1825, in Portland, Leeds County, a settlement near Toronto in what is now the Canadian Province of Ontario, then called Upper Canada. Arvin's father died either before they left Canada, or soon after, but his mother, with her children and other Stoddard families, did leave Canada to be with the main body of the Church. Arvin was nineteen years of age when the people of Nauvoo sorrowed over the assassination death of the Prophet Joseph Smith in 1844.

The Stoddards had joined the Church at a time when public prejudice was severe, and cruel; a time when the testimonies of the members of the Church was strongly tested, but in most cases, was only strengthened the more as adversities and persecutions were heaped upon them. Arvin Mitchell's family was among those who made the 'Western Exodus' with the Saints to the Valleys of the Rocky Mountains.

We do not have any personal journals to reveal the experiences of this family. A brief but vivid account of the western exodus rendered in "Meet the Mormons", becomes sufficient to make up for the lack of such personal references as a journal may have given if such a record had been kept.

"Those who thought the death of Joseph Smith would bring an end to the Church established through him were disappointed. While there were many heavy hearts, there was no panic in Nauvoo following the martyrdom. 'Be still and know that the Lord is God' was the word that guided the people. The Council of the Twelve Apostles, with Brigham Young as President, assumed leadership. The Church organization and function continued almost uninterrupted...

"Neither did Joseph's death bring an end to the persecution. Prejudice continued to harden the hearts of the people. The Nauvoo city charter was repealed. Illinois demanded that the Mormons leave the state.

"What could they do? Where could they turn?...How could they repudiate what they knew to be true?

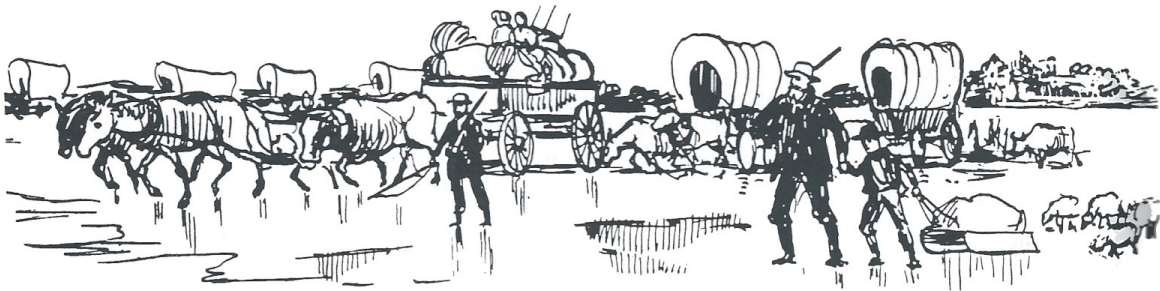
"There was only one answer...They would go west to the Rocky Mountains!...Six months they asked. Time only to dispose of their property, time to build wagons and buy horses and oxen to pull them, time to gather a supply of goods to see them over thirteen hundred miles of plain and prairie, into the lands of the Omaha, the Sioux, and Ute Indians, a thousand trackless miles beyond the fringes of civilization.

"Six months did not seem too long to ask. But the mobsters were impatient, and violence was increasing. Shops and forges hummed around the clock.

"It was midwinter, February 4, 1846, when the first of the exiles said goodbye to Nauvoo and crossed the Mississippi River to face the elements and the savages."<sup>1</sup>



The work of ferrying across the river went on day and night. By the fifteenth of February, the mile wide river was frozen so solid that many outfits were able to cross on the ice.





Camps were soon organized; faces were turned west across Iowa toward the Missouri River. Each day some progress was made by each pioneer company of early Nauvoo exiles. They traveled through the deep snows of winter and the rains and mud of spring. At night, after a toilsome day, the saints would scrape back the snow and square dance until the unfriendly prairie reverberated with the sounds of their music and the clapping of hands and stomping of feet.

'The Mormon Story', by Rulon S. Howells is a pictorial account of Mormonism and of the Iowa epic. It states:

"The ability of Brigham Young, as the leader, to unify the sorely-tried people as they attempted to make camps along the trail in Iowa territory was remarkable.



Pres. Brigham Young

"At Sugar Creek, Iowa, the first camp was made. This was on the Mississippi River, which at the time was flowing with huge ice cakes, making it even more difficult to cross. No sooner had they made camp than men were assigned to go ahead and find sights for subsequent camps further west. Others were to go into neighboring communities to buy grain, and to work so they could obtain provisions. All was organized to the end that those who followed would be at least partially taken care of.

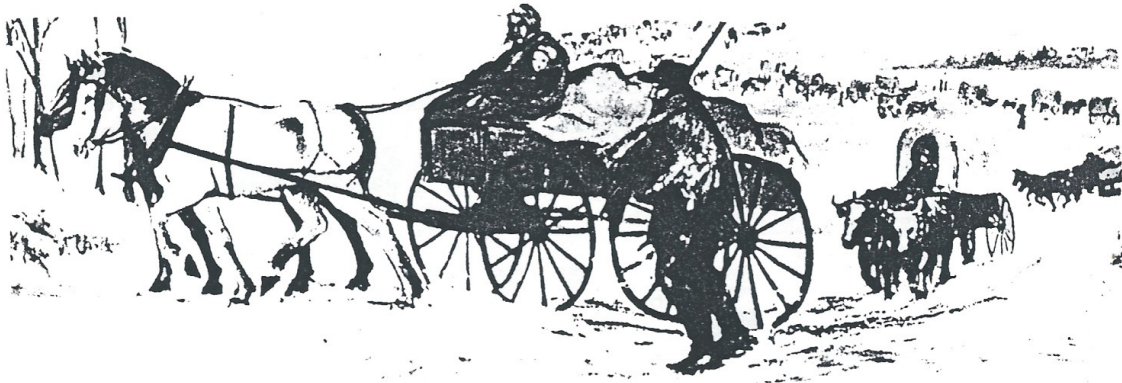
"It was cold, fresh snow had fallen, food was scarce, but amid all of these trying circumstances they kept up their spirits with festivities in the form of song, instrumental music, dancing and humorous readings. The instrumental band was invited into other communities in Iowa to entertain, the proceeds going to purchase foodstuffs, wagons, oxen, milch cows and other necessities. Surely, they made the best of every situation." <sup>2</sup>

'Plant that others may reap!' became the watchword as many stopped at the several camp sights along the country stretches of Iowa to prepare the land for crops. As spring came, hundreds of acres along the trail were plowed

and planted by the advance companies of the never-ending column of exiles. Later companies would cultivate and when the crops were ripe, still others would reap.

By mid-May 1846, nearly twelve thousand Saints had crossed the river, among whom were the Stoddards, the Rices (1-6) and the Sargents (8-3). Those who were left in Nauvoo, numbering about six hundred, were forcibly driven out by September 1846. The Butler family was among this group of destitute and ill-prepared Saints for the travel west. Many contracted chills and fever from exposure as they crowded into makeshift tents on the Iowa side of the river. (see i-6)

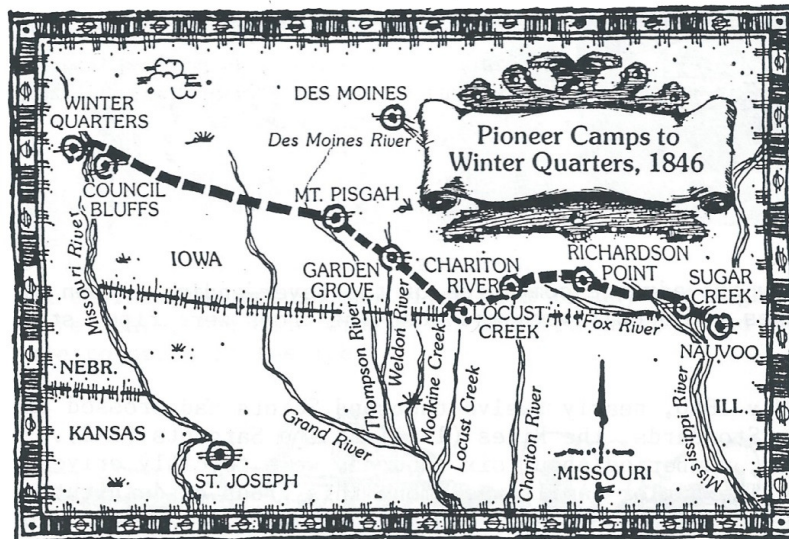
Relief in the form of provisions, tents and wagons, was sent to this "Poor camp" by the Twelve, and on October 9, 1846, the group was organized for the journey west across Iowa.



The last of the Nauvoo Saints leave the west bank of the Mississippi River

On that same day, October 9, quail, weary from a long flight, miraculously settled near the travelers, providing them with much needed food. Some of the quail fell on the wagons, some under, some on the breakfast tables. The boys and men ran about catching many alive with their hands. They had plenty of quail to eat that day, but they did not kill beyond what they could use.

The following map shows the many camps that were founded along the way from Nauvoo, Illinois, to Winter Quarters and Council Bluffs.



Among these camps the ones at Sugar Creek and Garden Grove are often mentioned in pioneer histories, and Mt. Pisgah became an important stop where blacksmith stations helped make repairs and supply wagons aided the needy. It was at Mt. Pisgah that the leaders of the Church received the call from the Government for soldiers to assist in the war with Mexico and the well-known 'Mormon Battalion' was enlisted in answer to that call.



"By the fall of 1846, about 15,000 people with 3,000 wagons, 30,000 head of cattle, great flocks of sheep, and many horses and oxen, had been moved to the Missouri River. (see maps #20, 21) Here, they decided, they would spend the cold months and they went to work to make their 'Winter Quarters' as comfortable as possible..." <sup>3</sup> (maps #16 and #17)

"At Winter Quarters the Nauvoo Saints surveyed a town of eight hundred twenty lots and constructed a large stockade and seven hundred log homes before Christmas of 1846, providing shelter for over three thousand five hundred Saints. A high council presided over the ecclesiastical, municipal, and educational needs of the new community, while a police force maintained order. Tragically, many of the Saints were near destitute, and poor diets contributed to the deaths of over six hundred. John R. Young described Winter Quarters as 'the Valley Forge of Mormondom'." <sup>4</sup>

"It was a hard winter. Malnutrition, inadequate clothing and shelter, and an outbreak of 'black canker', combined to take their toll. Testifying of this is a well-kept graveyard on the hills above Florence, Nebraska, where the six hundred of their numbers were laid to rest.

"Spring finally came, and the 'Camps of Israel', one after another, again headed west, with an advance company led by Brigham Young and the Twelve Apostles blazing the way." <sup>5</sup>



THE TRAIL WEST

It was late in July, 1847, when the advance company entered the Valley of the Great Salt Lake, and a steady stream of wagon trains followed through the summer and fall months.



The barren Salt Lake Valley as seen by the first pioneers.

by Culmer

Arvin Mitchell Stoddard traveled in the second company of pioneers under the direction of Apostle Charles C. Rich, and arrived in the Salt Lake Valley in October, 1847. He, along with Apostle Rich, became founders of the town of Provo, a settlement to the south of Salt Lake City. It was here that Arvin became acquainted with Caroline Sargent, whom he married in about 1851 or 2. At this time he was 27 years of age and Caroline was 17.

Charles C. Rich, mentioned above, was the husband of Caroline's sister, Harriet, so it is very possible that this relationship had something to do with the romantic situation of Arvin and Caroline.

A more complete story of the Sargent family is told in (8-3). Caroline was the eighth child of her parent's nine children. She was born 28 October 1835 at West Liberty, Fountain County, Indiana, to Abel Morgan and Sarah (Edwards) Sargent. While yet a small child, her parents joined the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and moved to be with others of the same faith in their new settlement at Jackson County, Missouri. They endured much persecution during the churches banishment from the State of Missouri. Caroline's father, with his wife, Sarah, and seven children (their first two children had died in infancy), left their worldly possessions at that time and fled over the prairie to Indiana and to the home of Sarah's parents, arriving there in destitute circumstances.





Soon Sarah, in delicate health after the birth and death of her tenth child, died. Three years later, Abel Morgan was able to bring his family together and they left Indiana to be with the body of the church now in Nauvoo, Illinois, where they resided until the Saints were again driven out of their homes by mobs in 1846-7. The great exodus westward began at this time.

At Council Bluffs, Caroline's father, Abel Morgan Sargent, as well as Norman Sharp, the husband of her sister, Martha Jane, enlisted in the Mormon Battalion. Caroline was then about ten years of age. Martha Jane and Caroline accompanied the Battalion as far as Santa Fe, New Mexico, when several of the company of marchers became too ill to travel on. The girls, along with Norman Sharp and Captain Higgins, were left to help with the sick, among whom was their father, Abel Morgan Sargent (8-3). They spent the winter in Pueblo, Colorado. (see map #20) This small company, left in the command of Captain Higgins, experienced many trials. One instance is told in "Our Pioneer Heritage":

"Norman Sharp met with a severe accident while he was taking his gun from the wagon. It accidentally discharged, inflicting a severe wound in his arm. About this time they happened upon a band of Arapahoe Indians who told Captain Higgins they would cure the wound, so he decided to leave Norman in their care. Martha refused to leave her husband and was so unalterable in her determination to remain with him, that Captain Higgins finally consented to leave her, Caroline, and Thomas Woolsey, a member of the Battalion, with an oxteam and wagon, and the next morning the rest of the sick detachment moved on. For four weary days the wounded man suffered untold agonies before he passed away. Private Woolsey, with the help of an Indian squaw, buried him in a lonely grave. The next morning the chief of the Arapahoes told them to go on as fast as they could as there were many Indian war parties close by. They traveled almost night and day to overtake the detachment of sick soldiers who were attempting to join companies of pioneers into the Salt Lake Valley..."<sup>6</sup>

The attempt was successful, and Caroline's father left her in Utah while he returned that same year to get his young son whom he had left at Council Bluffs until he could return for him. Caroline made her home with members of the church in Provo, Utah, to await her father's return. She never saw her father again. He and his young son died on the Plains as they were making their way to Utah. At the age of 17, Caroline met and married Arvin Mitchell Stoddard,

a handsome, promising young colonizer and friend of Apostle C. C. Rich, another great colonizer of repute. Caroline was a beautiful girl, as were her sisters. From all reports she was a pleasant and very considerate person, a dutiful wife and loving mother of eleven fine children.

Charles C. Rich was called by Brigham Young in 1849 to go to California and establish a branch of the church in that state. Harriet, Caroline's sister, accompanied her husband on that mission and they became pioneers of the area of San Bernardino. While there they purchased what was called the San Bernardino Ranch on which the present city of San Bernardino is located. Charles C. Rich was the first mayor of the town. By 1857, we find that the Riches moved back to Utah, but before that time, in 1853, Arvin Mitchell Stoddard and his wife, Caroline, were also residing in San Bernardino. Arvin helped establish that area, doing surveys and laying out the early settlement there.

In 1857, the church faced a danger of further expulsions in the threat made by Johnson's Army, and Brigham Young sent word to Charles C. Rich to dispose of the property in California and return to the Salt Lake Valley. Arvin Mitchell and Caroline returned to Utah at that time and made their home in Farmington, Utah, where they remained until sometime in the early 1870's when they moved to the area of Milford, Utah. The Stoddards are credited with being early founders of that settlement which became their permanent home. The final resting place of this great pioneer couple can be located by a graveside monument in the Milford cemetery. Caroline died 2 May 1905, at the age of 70. Arvin Mitchell died 4 April 1914 at the age of 89. The listing of their children is taken from the archive files of family group sheets, Genealogical Library, Salt Lake City, Utah:

1. Martha Jane Stoddard, b. 29 April 1852, Provo, Utah; md. Leonard Babbitt Rice, son of Leonard Gurley and Elizabeth Almira (Babbitt) Rice, 22 Dec. 1871; died 27 Aug. 1930, at St. Anthony, Idaho. (1-8)
2. Arvin Nathaniel Stoddard, b. 27 Aug. 1854 at San Bernardino, California; md. Nettie McComb.
3. Harriet Celestia Stoddard, b. 8 Dec. 1850, San Bernardino, California; md. Marion Leslie Stoddard, son of Judson Lyman and Rhoda (Chase) Stoddard, 26 Sept. 1872; died, 25 May 1937 at Cardston, Alberta, Canada. Her husband died 4 Sept. 1916. Both are buried at Cardston, Alberta, Canada.
4. Sarah Emmaline Stoddard, b. 17 March 1859, Farmington, Utah; md. James Fenamore; died Jan. 1955.
5. Caroline Stoddard (twin), b. 14 Jan. 1861, Farmington, Utah; died ae. 3.
6. Drusilla Stoddard (twin) b. 14 Jan. 1861, Farmington, Utah; md. Joshua Edrick or (Frederick) Grant.
7. Abel Morgan Stoddard, b. 12 Feb. 1863, Farmington, Utah; md. Elizabeth Blackmore.
8. Henry Mitchell Stoddard, b. 11 July 1865, Farmington, Utah; died ae. 3



9. Effie Lavera Stoddard, b. 27 June 1866, Farmington, Utah; md. George A. Snow; died 24 April 1913.
10. David Benere Stoddard, died abt. ae. 10.
11. Lettie Stoddard <sup>7</sup>

The incompleteness of the record suggests the possibility of some errors. The birthplace of most of the children establishes the approximate time of the family's move to Milford, Utah.

In "An Early History of Milford", a thesis by George A. Horton, Jr., July, 1957, in partial fulfillment for a Masters Degree, is found the following which was extracted from Chapter 3, pages 21 through 28. This write-up gives some details of the pioneering efforts that went into the making of Milford, Utah, of which the Stoddards played a significant part.

#### HISTORY OF EARLY MILFORD, UTAH

The first settlers in the Milford Valley and their motives for coming represent an extension of earlier colonization in Beaver and Minersville in the eastern part of the County (Beaver). Therefore the settlement of Milford cannot be fully understood without a brief knowledge of the pioneers of these earlier settlements.

The first colonists sent south by the Mormon leader, Brigham Young, bypassed the Beaver Valley because they felt that it was a cold and unpleasant place in comparison to the more southerly colonies. After exploration of the Tushar (Beaver) Mountains to the east, however, it was found there was a good quantity of fine timber which was suitable for lumber, and it was decided that the valley would provide fine pasturage for cattle from the Southern Utah settlements.

In the early part of February 1856, George A. Smith, Mormon Apostle in charge of Mormon settlements in Southern Utah, sent a group of men to locate what became Beaver City. Within a year, the existence of lead ore was made known in the Mineral Range to the west, and a number of people moved down to the canyon near the present site of Minersville to engage in mining activities in connection with the old Rollins (Lincoln) mine. Soon others followed, but with the purpose of farming by diverting water from the Beaver River. The first crops were planted on the present site of Minersville in 1859, but it proved very difficult to get the water out of the river onto the land, and eventually a shortage of water occurred. With this threat to their supply of livestock feed, it was necessary to seek other sources.

They found that an excellent stand of native grasses existed in the lower valley. Some farmers and stockmen began making trips to the pastures near the Yellow Banks about 2 miles north and slightly east of the Union Pacific Station at Milford. The wild hay was cut with scythes, loaded on wagons pulled by oxen or mules, and taken to be stored in the fields of Minersville to provide for the winter feeding. The settlers of Minersville laid claim to these grass lands by the Yellow Banks as early as 1862 as their "only meadow land". Annually they would cut the grass together, sometimes making the rigorous round trip of nearly thirty miles down and back in one day. Finally in 1867, under the

direction of Bishop McKnight and two others, "the land was divided into lots agreeable to the provisions entered into by the people jointly in a mass meeting called for that purpose.

It was during these same early years that stock raisers from Beaver recognized the value of the fine grass lands in the lower valley and brought their stock here to graze along the river and on the bench land. Cattle were usually branded and then turned out together on the range. It is estimated that during the 1870's and 1880's there were over twenty thousand cattle on the range in the valleys of Southwestern Utah. Sheep were also introduced at a very early date. M. L. Shephard had his sheep on the east side of the river near the Yellow Banks as early as 1865, while most of the land claimed by Minersville men seemed to be on the west side of the river.

This arrangement seemed to be satisfactory for many years, but eventually difficulties arose. Fifteen men from Minersville, with E. H. Blackburn as their spokesman preferred a charge against Shephard before the Beaver Stake Council, a Mormon ecclesiastical organization, for allowing his sheep to cross the river onto their fields. After hearing both sides of the case, John R. Murdock, President of Beaver Stake, rendered a decision that both of the parties should keep their stock and hay cutting activities to their own side of the river. This decision was unanimously accepted by the High Council and the matter was peacefully settled.

Annual settlement on the present site of Milford first came sometime in the fall of 1870. To Arvin Mitchell Stoddard goes the honor of being Milford's pioneer founder, but it is not known why he came to this valley, nor why he chose the specific location he did. He was born September 1, 1825 in Portland, Leeds County, Canada, and came to Utah in October 1847 with Charles C. Riche's company of Mormon Pioneers. He was an engineer (surveyor) by profession and was employed in 1849 by Captain Howard Stansbury, who was exploring the Great Salt Lake. In the latter part of 1849, he moved south to the new settlement of Provo, where he is listed as one of the founders of that city along with one of his brothers, John Rufus Stoddard, Jerome Zabinski and others.

As Mormon colonization was extended, one colony was located at San Bernardino, California. Arvin Stoddard and his three brothers, Sheldon, Albert and Rufus, went to live in this colony. A report of the 25th Quorum of Seventies made on May 9, 1853 at Salt Lake City lists Arvin Stoddard as living in lower California. The date of his return to Utah is not known but it is known that the Mormons were threatened by the approach of Johnson's Army toward Utah in late 1857. President Brigham Young sent word for the people living in the outlying settlements, including San Bernardino, to dispose of their property and return to Utah. It is quite likely that the Stoddard brothers returned to Utah at this time, although there were a few people who did not return for many years. If they did return at this time, there is a question as to where they were for about ten years time. It has been commonly thought that Arvin Stoddard lived in Minersville before he came to settle in the Milford Valley, but the U. S. Census reports for 1860 and 1870 do not list his name in Minersville, even though there were other Stoddards living there during this period.

It is interesting to speculate why Stoddard selected the place he did. He built his house near the bottom of a small hill where the Catholic Church now stands), near the edge of a swamp. His back door opened to the sagebrush



covered hillside, and at the front was a stand of somewhat undesirable salt and wire grass in thickly coated alkali soil. At this time there were no roads, it was not on any mail route, nor had the mining activities which were just beginning to the west and south, focused attention on the possibilities for mill and smelter sites on this hillside. This was before the railroad line was even commenced south from Salt Lake City, and many years before they knew that it would come through Beaver County.

Stoddard had been associated with Jerome Zabriski as early as 1852 when they lived in Provo. One possibility is that he was told of the Milford Valley by Zabriski who had land there. The Stoddard homestead was just a mile south of Zabriski's land. A second possibility is that he came through the influence of M. L. Shepherd who had lived in San Bernardino before moving to Beaver in 1857. Or perhaps it was through the association with both of these men, plus the very short depth necessary to reach the water level of only 12 to 15 feet below the surface at the point of location. This would make it unnecessary to live nearer a spring.

The settlers who came to the Milford Valley in the early 1870's, located primarily where water was available. Joseph Clements homesteaded a quarter section out at Hay Springs, about seven miles south of Stoddard's in the spring of 1871. and shortly after, Arvin's brother, John Rufus Stoddard, took up some land adjoining Clements on the south, with access to the spring. Several homesteaders established near the bend in the river, a little over a mile south from Arvin Stoddard, which came to be known as Horse Shoe Bend.

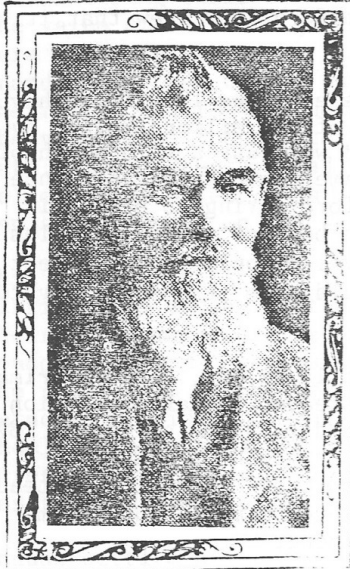
For many years it has been a popular opinion that no one lived in or near the present site of Milford until the coming of the railroad in 1880. In addition to those already mentioned, by 1872, Joseph Clements had sold a piece of land at Hay Springs to William Pritchard, J. R. Stoddard had sold a piece near the same place to Samuel Ten Eyck, and had also given permission to two men, Williams and Guio, to carry on a butchering business the following year. Peter Martin located at Horse Shoe Bend, R. A. K. Hugessen purchased a piece in the east fields from Arvin Stoddard, and Edwin Bingham homesteaded near Horse Shoe Bend (the Ivan McKnight farm) all in the 1870's.

In the fall of 1873 the mining activity in the surrounding area beckoned what became one of Milford's prominent families---the sons of John D. Williams. Instead of locating at one of the camps beginning to spring up around the mines, they homesteaded a piece of land adjoining Arvin Stoddard's.

About the same time as these boys came, the side hill near the center of Arvin Stoddard's property was selected for a mill site by a mining company just coming into the area. Daniel Williams was employed by this stamp mill which was erected on the hill near to where the present library stands. It was necessary for wagons to ford the river and the crossing was known as the mill ford. He decided to name the town Milford. The name caught on and soon was recognized as the official name of the town.

With signs of prosperity in the community, the citizens petitioned the County Court to organize Milford into a precinct. The petition was granted on October 30, 1876. The people were so confident of the future growth of Milford, that it was thought the District Court would soon be shifted from Beaver to Milford.

This would have created a sensation at the time because interest was at it's peak over the trial of John D. Lee, participant in the Mountain Meadows Massacre. Things quieted down after his conviction and execution in March of 1877. 8



The Deseret News, dated April 7, 1914, recorded the death of Arvin Mitchell Stoddard with his photograph, as shown here. It gave the following brief review, headlined, " 'Milford Pioneer Is Buried With Honor'--Funeral services for A. M. Stoddard, who died Saturday at his home in Milford, were held yesterday afternoon in that city, many friends and relatives being present. Mr. Stoddard was born near Toronto, Canada, September 1, 1825, and was a member of the second company of pioneers to cross the plains into Salt Lake Valley in 1847. He is survived by the following children Mrs. George A. Snow, Mrs James Fennemore, Mrs. Drusilla Grant, M Stoddard, Mrs. M. J. Wright and A. N. Stoddard."

Arvin Mitchell Stoddard had lived 89 years. His wife, Caroline (Sargent) Stoddard had preceded him in death by nine years. She had lived 70 years.



Arvin Mitchell Stoddard  
son of Nathaniel and Jane  
(McMann) Stoddard



Caroline Sargent, wife of  
Arvin Mitchell Stoddard  
and daughter of Abel Morgan  
and Sarah (Edwards) Sargent

1. # 189, pp. 40-42
2. #.185, p. 45
3. # 189, p. 45
4. # 183 pp. 28, 29
5. # 189 p. 45
6. # 199, p. 499, and #200, p. 11
7. #170, p. (8-2)
8. #198, Chap. 3, pp. 21-28