

MILLER, SAMUEL CARRON

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MILLER, SAMUEL CARRON, born at Peoria, Illinois, November 3, 1840; son of John J. and Meridosia Miller; married, Mary Francis Sanders (1852-1908), daughter of Julius and Celia (Powell) Sanders, at Prescott, A.T., April 4, 1867; "the wedding cake was cooked in an old fashioned Dutch oven as stoves were then an unknown luxury in that then almost unbroken pine forest"; children, Robert E., George H., Samuel J., John W., Albert T., Celia D. (Mrs. John R. Book) and Mary H. (Mrs. Hugo Behan).

Crossed the plains to Nevada in 1858 with his brother, Jacob L, where they engaged in mining, stock raising, and operating a pack train across the Sierra Nevada to Placerville; because of ill health he sold his stock ranch and other property and moved to California; at Kernville in the spring of 1861, he, with his father and brother, joined the Walker Party of which he was the youngest member; the party crossed northern Arizona prospecting for gold, stopped for a time in New Mexico and then went on to Colorado; but at Santa Fe, on November 11, 1861, he enlisted to serve six months as Private in Captain Mortimore's Company A, 3d New Mexico Volunteers; transferred to Captain Graydon's Independent Company of Mounted Volunteers on March 1 and honorably discharged April 29, 1862.

Rejoined the Walker Party in Colorado which returned to New Mexico that fall and engaged in prospecting near Fort West; early in 1863 the party went via Tucson and discovered some gold on the Hassayampa in April; the cabin which he and his brother Jacob built near that stream was the first house erected in Yavapai County; they made a number of the original placer mining locations on the Hassayampa, Big Bug and Lynx Creeks and he also recorded several of the very early quartz claims; the following is taken from a manuscript history of Arizona by Joseph Fish:

"Early in May (1863), Samuel C. Miller and four others went up on Lynx Creek. Here, while some of the others were out hunting, Miller went over a bank nearby and washed a pan full of dirt, from which he got \$4.80. Word was at once sent to the main camp on the Hassayampa of the rich find. The party at once broke camp and moved onto Lynx Creek, where they worked successfully in placer mining and trapping.

"Miller had a fight with a lynx that he had wounded on the banks of this stream and from this circumstance the stream derived its name."

Fish also states that:

"In the winter of 1863-64, J. T. Alsap, S. C. Miller, and Con Moore started from Granite Creek to the placers on Lynx Creek. They stopped upon the mesa to cut some grass for their horses, using their butcher knives. While engaged at this, they were attacked by a band of Apaches who stampeded their horses and opened fire on them. The party ran to the nearest timber a few rods distance, where they kept the foe at bay for an hour or two, then they ran for an old cabin near by.

"Miller had already received a bullet wound just above the knee but made no mention of it as it might discourage the others. On reaching the cabin, a kind of half dug-out, they defended themselves until some miners, hearing the firing, came to their relief. Three or four Indians were killed."

"In 1867, S. C. Miller's ranch at the edge of Prescott was attacked by Indians, who commenced to drive off the stock. Miller was not at home but Mrs. Miller, who was alone, took her husband's gun and opened fire on them. Miller, who was on his way from town, heard the firing and soon came to the rescue, but it was through Mrs. Miller's pluck that the stock was saved."

He afterwards stated that he and his brother took out \$14,000 in gold from the gravel bars of Lynx Creek much of which they invested in "the biggest string of teams in the Southwest with the slickest lot of mules that ever came from Missouri" to engage in freighting between Prescott, Fort Mohave and Hardyville on the Colorado River; this account of what happened on one trip in April, 1866, was printed in the Prescott Courier at the time of his death:

"As a freighter, Mr. Miller was more sought, perhaps, by the Indians, than any other man in northern Arizona. Vigilant, active, and a good shot, he repelled their attacks, exhibiting remarkable

nerve in many close encounters. It was on one of these trips from Hardyville to this city that his remarkable coolness and prompt action saved the lives of himself, Mr. and Mrs. George Banghart and their four daughters, by shooting the Indian chief, Wauba Uba.

"Reaching Beale Springs the outfit was parked for the night, when at sundown the horizon appeared alive with red skins. Wauba Uba, the chief, rode up and demanded a treaty, informing Mr. Miller that the horses, mules and flour was all that was needed by his tribe. During a brief argument, Mr. Miller grasped his Hawkins rifle and shot the Indian chief dead.

"The Indians promptly dispersed after the shooting of Wauba Uba and did not molest the party again until the safe arrival of the outfit in Prescott. Mr. Miller treasured the Hawkins rifle that fired the shot that killed the chief -- which is still at his home in Miller Valley."

A quite different opinion was expressed by Brevet Brigadier General T. E. Devin, Commanding the District of Arizona, in a report relating to the Walapai Indians which he made in 1869:

"Prior to 1866 they were at peace with the whites, but in that year their head chief, Wauba Yuba, was killed by a freighter named Miller on the mere suspicion that some of his young men had assisted in the killing of a white man (Edward Clower) at the toll gate near Aztec Pass, a point east of the usual range of the tribe, since which time they have been in open and bitter hostility with our people.***

"The Territorial government also took action on the subject, but owing to the, as charged, disgraceful connivance and sympathy with the "Indian Killers" of the United States District Judge (William F. Turner) the accused were set free."

In the early seventies the Miller Brothers transferred their freighting outfits from Hardyville to a shorter road to the Colorado River at Ehrenburg and in 1877 developed an even better route to a new steamboat landing at Aubrey near the mouth of the Bill Williams River reducing the distance to 135 miles; how a part of the road that they built was sold on August 10, 1877, is told in the Arizona Miner:

"The Board of Supervisors met this morning for the purpose of considering S. C. Miller's proposition to sell to the County of

Yavapai the Iron Spring Wagon Road, running from Prescott to Skull Valley, and after due deliberation and consideration concluded to make the purchase and pay to Mr. Miller \$10,000 in bonds, according to the act of the Legislature. We believe the county has a good property which will be hereafter a free road."

In 1878 they suffered serious financial reverse, but the construction of the Southern Pacific railroad in 1880, which destroyed steamboat traffic on the Colorado, was the final cause of their going out of the freighting business; they then engaged in farming and cattle raising, which was profitable as is indicated by his paying taxes to the County Treasurer in 1891 amount to \$852.

Member of the Board of Supervisors of Yavapai County, 1871-72; member from Yavapai County, 9th Territorial Legislature, 1877; member, Aztlan Lodge No. 1, F. & A.M., and comrade, Barrett Post No. 3, G.A.R., at Prescott. Died at his home near Prescott, A.T., October 6, 1909, aged 68; buried in the Simmons Cemetery, Miller Valley, near Prescott.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

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MILLER, Samuel C. Prescott pioneer since 1868, died. [redacted] place 46 years. Member of Walker Party. (Extensive [redacted])

----Prescott Journal-Miner, Oct. 7, 1909 5:1
 ----Prescott Journal-Miner, Oct. 8, 1909 4:3