

**BIOGRAPHY OF MARY ANNER ARMSTRONG (THORN)
PIONEER OF 1853**

WRITTEN BY HER GRANDDAUGHTER MARGARET JOHNSON MINER

BORN, 22 SEPTEMBER 1784, DUTCHESS COUNTY, NEW YORK

ARRIVED IN UTAH 9 SEPTEMBER 1853 COMPANY OF CAPTAIN DANIEL C.
MILLER AND JOHN W. COOLEY

MARRIED RICHARD THORN, 6 SEPTEMBER 1806, CLINTON, DUTCHESS COUNTY,
NEW YORK

DIED 7 MARCH 1856, SALT LAKE CTTY, UTAH

WRITTEN BY GRAND DAUGHTER MARGARET JOHNSON MINER IN 1972

SUBMITTED 7 APRIL 1972 BY MARGARET J. MINER, EAST SOUTH UTAH COUNTY
DAUGHTERS OF UTAH PIONEERS CAMP AARON JOHNSON, SPRINGVILLE, UTAH

MARY ANNER ARMSTRONG THORN,
PIONEER OF 1855

Mary Anner Armstrong was born in Dutchess Co., New York Sept. 22, 1784. She was married to Richard Thorn Sept. 6, 1806 in Clinton, Dutchess Co., New York. They were the parents of ten children, six sons and four daughters. One son, Alford, died at age 2 years, another son, Abner, died in Nauvoo in 1846 age twenty six years, and Phillip died in 1851. The Thorn family had lived in Long Island and Dutchess Co., New York since their Pilgrim ancestors settled there in the early 1600's. The five oldest children were born in Dutchess Co. but the youngest were born in Cayuga Co. on the western border of New York State.

The Thorn family all joined the Mormon Church and gathered to Nauvoo, except the father, Richard Thorn. We do not know whether he ever accepted the gospel. It was a sad thing that she parted from her husband. He later married a widow with two children and moved to Iowa. His youngest daughter, Lydia Ann Thorn (whom the family said was her father's pet) went back with her husband after the railroad was built especially to see her father. Later he moved to California with his wife and step children. His wife died first and then he lived with his step children until his death at the age of 98 years. His daughter, Lydia Ann, kept in touch with him.

My grandfather, Richard Thorn Jr., was born in Cayuga Co., N. Y. on the 18th of June 1825. He married Harriet Anne Glines in Nauvoo in 1846. She was born in Churchville, Ontario, Canada and joined the church there. The family were active in Nauvoo and my grandfather was a member of the Nauvoo Legion. They were among the first to leave Nauvoo. Their story of Nauvoo days has never been written only as among others who suffered persecution and loss of property at the hands of the mobs. Three of the daughters had married in Nauvoo and one, Abigail, came to Utah with the earliest pioneers in 1847. She married Samuel Russel but he was among those who were attracted by the Gold Rush to California. She told him that she had come to Utah for her religion and she was going to stay. Later she married Stillman Pond and reared her family in Cache Valle.

The family moved with the Saints and settled in Mt. Pisgah and then later they went to Winter Quarters, Pottowattamie, Iowa where they remained for three years. They built their own wagons from scrap iron they could pick up and the native lumber near by. Joseph Thorn was the blacksmith and Solomon Chase was the carpenter. With the help of all the men in the company they were well prepared for the journey.

Through my research, I found a record of the company with whom this family traveled to Salt Lake City in the day by day Journal of Utah Pioneers. This record substantiates the story handed down by these grandparents who made the trek. However the date of arrival is Sept 9th instead of Sept. 2nd & that could be in copying the family record. I quote from this journal "The second company to cross the plains in 1853 were Saints from the Pottowattamie lands, being encamped at Six Mile Grove about six miles from Winter Quarters. They were organized for traveling June 9, 1853 in charge of Daniel C. Miller and John W. Cooley. The company consisted of 282 souls, 70 wagons, 27 horses, 470 head of cattle, 154 sheep and 2 mules. Part of the group were from England and they had difficulty in getting started as the men had trouble handling the oxen. Most of them had never seen an oxen or a horse and none of

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them had ever driven one. So after many delays and much practice on the part of the men the Company finally got started on its way.

June 10th and 11th they traveled 19 miles to Elkhorn River. Sunday June 12th they remained in camp and repaired wagons. Monday June 13th the company being too large to make good progress, divided by the mutual consent of the members. The following, with their families, organized under Capt. John Bigler and formed the advance company; Ashel and Elizabeth Thorn, Joseph and Lusanna Thorn, William & Ann Cost, Sisson and Miriam Chase, Eric Caste, Solomon D. and Lydia Ann Chase, Calvin, Perry and Elizabeth Bingham, Richard and Harriet Anna Thorn, Daniel & Mary Bagley, John and Mary Lusk (apparently this part of the company are those who were directly under Capt. Joseph Thorn); John Holms, William Ballard, **Joseph W. Pierce, **Joseph Crape, August Root, Oliver Batson, **Alvin Montieth, Solomon Freeman, Richard Halton, Jacob Bigler, Tallitha Avery, Werham Wheaton, John Staynor, Hephania Wiles, Amos Artuary, John Young, A. Shankey, Henry Savage, H. Taylor, making in all 116 persons, 19 horses, 240 head cattle, 56 wagons, and 81 sheep. [** Crapo Line]

The others were organized under Capt. Daniel C. Miller. The two divisions traveled close together being only a days journey apart most of the time. As recorded by the 2nd division of the Miller-Cooley Co., Friday June 17th traveled 13 miles, June 18th traveled 11 miles and caught up with Capt. Bigler's company which had had a difficulty. Two of the company had been accused of stealing a goodly number of sheep. The matter for settlement was referred to Daniel A. Miller and John W. Cooley of our company and Capt. Willis Freeman and Capt. Joseph Thorn of their company. These brethren disapproved of the course taken by the offenders who had taken the sheep. The offenders must make settlement before the company could proceed. Another notation dated July 7th, camped on Banks of Platte River above the mouth of Wild Creek, 347 miles from the Missouri river and 721 miles from Salt Lake City. Capt. Thorn company passed us while in camp yesterday. The company arrived in Salt Lake City Sept. 9, 1853 just a few hours apart."

The company had suffered very few hardships on the way. Most of the family settled in or near Salt Lake City. The two grandmothers, Mary Anner Armstrong Thorn and Amy Scott Chase came along with the company in their own light wagons. Grandmother Thorn spent most of her time after reaching Salt Lake City with her children. She was a very efficient nurse and went from home to home when the new babies arrived. She died March 7, 1856 just three years after coming to Utah at the age of 72 years. She was a loving mother and a devoted wife. She could never forget the husband she parted with because of her faith in the gospel.

This was the end of her story and this much information had been written along with sketches of her children. But to me this just could not be the end, Like the song "Not half has ever been told", I wanted to know more. Who was she? What was the name of her parents? Where did they come from and how did they live? And so I started searching.

In the Church Historian's office I found her Patriarchal Blessing. Her father was Ashel Armstrong, her mother Elizabeth--no surname. Their Children, I found later in microfilm record in the Utah Genealogical Library in Salt Lake City. Their children were born in Poughkeepsie, Dutchess Co. N.Y.

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There the name of the mother was given as Elizabeth Nelson. They were among the first settlers of New York. The Armstrong's were emigrants from England and the Nelson's had one Dutch ancestor. They all came to America in the early 1600's. They purchased land direct from the Indians and became in time what was known as Landed Gentry. The heads of the family were known as Esquires, which denoted they were property owners and community builders. I found so many interesting biographies that I have copied. All them signed papers saying that they were free men and they gave their allegiance to the new country. The Armstrong, Nelson & Thorn families lived for many years in the same counties, Dutchess and Long Island. Relatives had gathered many stories of the Thorn family which we have copied. But I found the first information about Mary Anner Armstrong Thorn.

Pres. Franklin D. Roosevelt helped to publish many books about New York State and its Pilgrim fathers. Ashel Armstrong lived and died in Hyde Park now the property of the Roosevelts. He was the father of Mary Anner. We owe a great deal to Pres. Roosevelt for helping to publish these books. When he was a young lawyer he was clerk of Dutchess Co. in 1929. He found the old records torn and scattered so he supervised the project of gathering all the old records including some badly torn manuscripts. Many volumes of Vital records were published in printed copies. Many of the oldest manuscripts have since been microfilmed and we read them in their original script. Often pages are gone and sometimes are too faded to read.

The Roosevelt name is derived from a Dutch name meaning "Rose Garden". Part of Hyde Park has been set aside for a national monument, and there is a world famous rose garden there. Over 500,000 tourists visited there last summer. Part of Hyde Park has been left in its Natural Setting. Pres. Roosevelt loved his Dutch ancestors and he writes that it took the combination of Dutch and English ancestry to make the sturdy New Yorkers of later generations. The English always settled in communities, but the Dutch chose quiet secluded spots in the hills. Many of the old estates stood for hundreds of years. When the automobile came, the houses were torn down to make room for new high ways. Pres. Roosevelt headed a committee to photograph many of these old houses. The settings were beautiful. The pictures filled several volumes. We found our family name among them. James Fennimore Cooper purchased the old "Thorn Homestead". It was here that he wrote the "Last of the Mohicans" and other Indian novels. In one "Nelson Home" was a famous hotel where George Washington held many conferences during the Revolutionary War. It stood for several generations. Our Dutch ancestor was a Van Der Filet and one of them married a Van Der Bilt.

Mary Anner Armstrong Thorn's children; Elizabeth married Chas, Barnum, he died then she married Uriah Curtis; Mary A. married martin Peck; Lydia Ann married Soloman D. Chase; Abigail married Samuel Russel then Stillman Pond; Ashel married Sarah Lester and she died sometime after the saints were on the move; Joseph married Lusanna Camp; Richard married Harriet Anna Glines. Two daughters of Ashel Thorn married two Bingham brothers and another daughter married a nephew of these Bingham. Alford, Abner, & Phillip died in Nauvoo.

It is interesting to note the "Bill of Particulars" or "Outfit" considered necessary for a family of five when starting their journey across the plains: 1 good strong wagon well covered with a light box, 2 or 3 yoke of oxen between the age of 4 & 10 years, 2 or more milch cows, 1 or more beef, 5 sheep if they could be obtained, 1000lbs. of flour or other bread stuffs, 1 good musket or rifle to each male over 12 yrs., 1 lb. powder, 4 lbs. lead, 1 lb tea,

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5 lbs coffee, 100 lbs. sugar, 1 lb. cayenne pepper, 2 lbs. black pepper, 1 lb mustard, 10 lbs. rice , 1 lb cinnamon, 1/2 lb. cloves, 1 doz. nutmegs, 25 lbs salt, 5 lbs. saleratus, 10 lbs. dried apples, 1 bu. beans, a few lbs. of dried beef or bacon, 4 or 5 lbs. dried peaches, 20 lbs. dried pumpkin, 25 lbs. seed grain, 1 gal. alcohol, 20 lbs. soap, 4 or 5 fish hooks and lines, 15 lbs. iron or steel, a few lbs. of wrought nails, 1 or more sets of saw or grist millirons to a company of 100 families, 1 good seine end hook for each company, 2 sets of pulley blocks and ropes to each company for crossing rivers, 25 to 100 pounds of farming and mechanical tools, cooking utensils to consist of bake kettle, frying pan, coffee pot and tea kettle, tin cups, plates, knives forks, spoons, and pans as few as will do., a good tent and furniture to each 2 families, clothing and bedding to each family, not to exceed 500 lbs., ten extra for each company of 100 families."

Written by her great-granddaughter Margaret J. Miner

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May B. Isaacson, Co Historian

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