



1/ Henry Davis Minot. 2/ A B-52H flies over Minot AFB, N.D. 3/ President John Kennedy congratulates a B-52 crew at Minot after a record-setting flight in 1962.

MINOT

A Boston Brahmin Goes West

Minot Air Force Base, located on the high plains of North Dakota, got its name from a nearby town. Of this there is no doubt. Citizens of Minot, N.D., donated land parcels, and USAF chose the name in their honor.

That, however, just leads to another question. How did Minot—the town—get its name, now famous throughout the Air Force?

Here's the answer: It came from Henry Davis Minot, a late 19th century American who never wore the uniform, never held office, and barely reached the age of 30.

He was a passionate ornithologist and investor with a killer instinct for railroad business. He probably never set foot in Minot.

Minot was a Boston Brahmin, born into a family whose lineage traced to a 1630 company of Puritan settlers. He was the fourth of five sons. A sickly child, Minot took to bird-watching and, at 17, published *The Land Birds and Game Birds of New England*.

Young Minot entered Harvard in the same year. There, he befriended another frail bird-watcher from a rich family—Theodore Roosevelt. Minot and the future president co-authored a book about birds.

Minot joined Jackson & Curtis, a Boston investment banking firm spe-

cializing in railroad securities. Soon he was traveling the West, researching railroad companies for investors. He was good—and soon very rich.

The young capitalist himself invested in steamships, streetcars, and most importantly, new rail companies. This brought him into contact with the famous railroad tycoon, James J. Hill. Minot became one of Hill's executives.

Hill planned a railroad running from St. Paul, Minn., to Seattle and began laying track westward. When the track-layers reached Gassman Coulee in North Dakota in late 1886, Hill bought the surrounding property and incorporated a new town.

He named it "Minot," after his young executive and investor.

Thus did Hill's Great Northern Railway beget the town of Minot. At one point, Henry Minot was director of this line. He also was president of the Eastern Minnesota Railway.

In time, Minot and Hill fell out over the older man's refusal to designate Minot as his successor. The Boston Brahmin continued in the western railroad business, however. He lived in St. Paul, where he maintained an elegant home in the posh St. Anthony Hill district.

Minot was killed on Nov. 14, 1890, in a major train collision near New Flor-

HENRY DAVIS MINOT

Born: Aug. 18, 1859, Forest Hills, Mass.

Died: Nov. 14, 1890, near New Florence, Pa.

College: Harvard University

Service: None

Occupation: Ornithologist, investment banker, railroad executive

Offices: President, Eastern Minnesota Railway; Director, Great Northern Railway

Books: *The Land Birds and Game Birds of New England*, *The Summer Birds of the Adirondacks in Franklin County, NY* (with Theodore Roosevelt)

Famous Friends: Theodore Roosevelt, James J. Hill

Famous Relatives: The Minot family of Boston

MINOT AIR FORCE BASE

State: North Dakota

Nearest City: Minot, N.D.

Area of Main Base: 77 sq mi/ 4,928 acres

Area of ICBM Complex: 8,500 sq mi

Status: Open, operational

Activated: Feb. 8, 1957

Former Owners: Air Defense Command, Strategic Air Command, Air Combat Command

Current Owner: Air Force Global Strike Command

ence, Pa. Though only 31, he left a large fortune.

Nearly seven decades later, Minot Air Force Base came into being. It was for most of its history a Strategic Air Command ICBM and bomber base. Today, it is the home of Air Force Global Strike Command's 5th Bomber Wing, with its B-52 aircraft, and 91st Missile Wing, with its Minuteman III ICBMs. The missile field, with its silos and launch control centers, covers thousands of square miles of North Dakota prairie.