



**SAMANTHA CORNELIA
SHURTLEFF AGREN
1875–1970**

Samantha Cornelia Shurtleff was born to Cornelia Samantha Hancock and Noah Luman Shurtleff on 12 November 1875, in Harrisville, Weber County Utah, in a little two-roomed adobe home built by her father. Her grandfather, Luman A. Shurtleff, blessed her on 12 December 1875, and she was given the name of Samantha Cornelia after her mother and grandmother. She was sometimes called Mattie.

While her father was on a mission to the Northern States in 1879, Samantha's mother often went with the children to the big barn in the summer and they slept in the hay where it was cooler and away from mosquitoes. One night, four year old Samantha and her eight year old brother, Horace, fell asleep in the house. They woke up in the dark night, checked their mother's bed, but she was not there. Together they went to the barn in the dark to find their mother. They had to climb a tall ladder. Horace held Samantha in front of him and helped her place her feet on the ladder rungs to climb. They went onto the hay and crawled around feeling the hay bed, but their mother was not there. They made their way back down the ladder in the pitch dark and arrived safely back to the house. Samantha was so concerned that she had a hard time keeping the tears back, but Horace and Samantha reassured each other that their mother would soon come. Their mother had carried baby William in her arms and gone to visit her sister, Alta, who lived in a little adobe house [765 N. Harrisville Road]. Samantha and Horace were very relieved when their mother finally returned. She expected they would stay asleep and she felt bad to learn they were worried.

The next winter when Samantha's father returned from his mission, he was assistant schoolteacher in Harrisville to Levi Taylor, and he took Samantha, age five, to school with him. At the age of seven, she learned her first theatre part as the little girl in "Ten Nights in a Bar-Room." She was a natural in front of an audience, and started giving readings. Her mother paid 35 cents for a little paper-covered book of poems. Her husband scolded her for buying the book because he said that it was just throwing money away. Samantha's mother taught her daughter a humorous reading out of this book. It was so well received by the public that they requested more. Samantha's father apologized to her mother about the book and said that the one recitation was worth a dozen such books.

Samantha attended LDS primary meetings in the old adobe meeting house. Mary Taylor was the first president and the children liked to call for her and walk with her. She always carried her knitting and would knit going to and from meetings. President Taylor had the children sit in a circle so she could see all of them, and she would teach the whole class the same lesson. She had them learn a verse out of the Bible, and had them stand and repeat it one at a time.

Samantha was baptized on November 12, 1883. When she was ready for her baptism, her mother put a blanket in the wagon and her father hitched up the horses and drove to the Four Mile Creek just a little above the meetinghouse. Her father baptized her and a little Italian boy by the name of Hans, whose family lived in the old blacksmith shop. A group of children were there to witness the event and the boys called out, "Mattie and Hans were baptized together." She wished she had shared her baptism with one of her girl friends and not Hans.

Samantha remembered the long walk to the adobe schoolhouse. Mary Critchlow was her first teacher after her father's year of assisting. She and her friend, Ida Harris, liked to take hold of the teacher's hands and walk with her down to the meadows at noon and also do little errands for her.

In the spring, the boys and girls in Harrisville liked to take long walks through the fields between Harrisville and the Hot Springs north west of Pleasant View. Sometimes they climbed up the mountain to see a little house that they were sure was haunted. It had a round room with windows surrounding it, funny carvings on the door post, another room above the round room, a loft above that, and all the rooms were painted different colors.

Samantha's father, Noah, made a little brick mill. He made his own adobe, dried them, fired them into bricks, and used them to make a two-story house [906 North Harrisville Road]. He also built a large barn, sheds, corncrib, and a smokehouse. The property had a natural stream running through it called Dixon Creek. He planted an orchard with all kinds of small fruits including peach, three different kinds of plums, a variety of apple trees, and also grapevines. They also had strawberries, black, red, and yellow currants, three different kinds of plums, and one big pear tree. The orchard produced loads of apples. So the apples would not waste, Samantha's mother would let her have "apple bees." She invited all the girls and boys in her crowd. Two would peel the apples and the rest would core the apples until there were several tubs and boxes full. There would be apple peeling all over the floor and sometimes around the girl's necks. A "jolly good time" followed with sandwiches, cookies, and apple cider. Samantha's mother also hired Clara Crowther to come and help peel and core apples for drying. The family also dried peaches and plums. They sold the dried fruit in town and used the money to buy new clothes.

Samantha's father had a two seated buggy and a young swift buggy horse which he hitch up to take the family to Sunday School and back again to meetings at two o'clock in the afternoon. In the fall, her mother would load the children in the buggy and take them to Ogden to T.L. Clark's dry-goods store to buy their winter coats, dresses, and shoes.

Her father's two sisters, Sarah and Janette Shurtleff, came to live with the family after their mother died. Samantha remembered a yellow-headed earthen doll that Sarah gave her, and how the aunts would do her work so she could play. Synthia Bingham, another of her father's sisters, who was a widow, used to come to their home with her four small children and stay several days. Melissa, her oldest child, and Samantha used to climb to the peak of the barn and cross on the beam from one end to the other.

Samantha's father made a picket fence in front of their yard and along the big orchard. There was always a picket off the fence just opposite a sweet apple tree. Samantha thought the picket was missing on purpose to accommodate the schoolboys who would help themselves to apples on their way home from school. In the front yard of their home was a sidewalk and shade trees. Across the street from the house, to the south, was open sagebrush land sloping down to the meadow. Every summer Indians came in their wagons with their families and pitched their tents on this land and stayed. The Indians would go to the mountains and pick chokecherries, wild currants, and serviceberries, which they dried for the winter fruit. Sometimes the Indians would come to Samantha's family home and beg for bread and say, "Biscuit and milk, I pike away." Samantha's aunt told her that one time an Indian squaw came asking for bread. Her mother cut a piece off the bread she had just taken out of the oven, and gave it to the squaw who then went back to camp. Soon Indians came two and three at a time until her mother had given away all the fresh bread, and she had to bake biscuits for her family's supper. Her mother sometimes hired Indian boys to help pick the apples. She won their respect and once they brought her some dried serviceberries. Samantha remembered how wonderful they tasted when they were cooked.

Her mother had an old-fashioned flower garden with roses, balsam, bachelor buttons, forget-me-nots, snapdragons, sweet Mary, and stripped ribbon grass on each side of the walkway. Honey-suckle vines climbed up the porch. The grove of box elder trees in the cow yard, with the Dixon Creek running through the center, was a grand place to play. There was also a fish pond through the fence where the boys went swimming. Her father imported carp fish into the pond for their use.

Samantha joined the Young Ladies Mutual Improvement Association in the LDS Church when she was thirteen years old. Her mother was the president. Two years later Samantha was appointed assistant teacher in the first intermediate class in Sunday School. On 3 January 1891, she was appointed assistant teacher in the Primary and two years later she was sustained as head teacher.

In 1888, Samantha's father, Noah L. Shurtleff, was called by the president of the LDS Church to go to Alberta Canada to work on the church farm and look after the cattle. He was counseled to marry a second wife and take her with him. He married Mary Ann Saunders, and they moved to Canada and built a home. He lived there four years then lost his life when a well caved in on him. He was buried in Canada. Noah's death was a sad blow for the family. Samantha was seventeen when her father died. Her brother, Horace, was twenty one years old and they had five younger brothers and one younger sister, William 1877, Jessie 1882, Lester 1884, Lee 1885, Cora 1888, and Wilford 1892. Another brother, Walter born 1873, died as a baby. Years later, Lee Shurtleff and his wife Alice, drove to Alberta, Canada. They took a headstone with them and placed it on his father's grave.

Samantha and her brother Horace found work to help with family expenses, taxes, etc. Their Uncle Lewis Shurtleff, President of the Weber Stake of Zion, lived in Ogden. He had a large house and grounds. He hired both of them to work for him. Samantha helped his wife, Emily, and Horace took care of the grounds, garden, green house, horse's curry, and buggy. He also milked the cow. They both lived there for some time. Another Uncle, Frank

Shurtleff, superintendent of the railroad of Eccles Lumber Company in Baker City Oregon asked Horace to work for him. He could furnish him a more satisfactory job and better pay so Horace and Samantha lived with their Uncle Frank and Aunt Betsy for a year. Samantha returned home in 1897, and was sustained to assist W. B. Wilson, District Schoolteacher, in LDS religion class in Harrisville. The next winter she was appointed to assist John C. Neal in the LDS religion class. On 6 August 1898, she received a call from Stake President L. W. Shurtleff, to take a course in Sunday School kindergarten taught by Dennett Smith from Salt Lake City. The class was held at Weber Academy.

Harrisville was noted for its excellent 24th of July celebrations, which included a cannon booming at dawn to start the day and then a grand parade. On one occasion, Samantha participated in the parade. There were six horsemen, three ladies and their partners, wearing red, white and blue. The ladies wore the riding habit with long skirts to cover their feet. Samantha wore a full suit of red including cap. Emma Anderson wore white, and Ida Dixon wore blue. All were trimmed in tinsel of silver and gold. They were led by the brass band as they rode through the streets of Harrisville down to Farr West and back home.

Samantha was set apart as president of the Young Ladies M.I.A. on 21 October 1902. She held this position until the close of 1907. In order to have a warm room to meet in, the presidency would go one hour early, take some paper and kindling and build a fire in the stove, which stood in the center of the room, and then all would sit around the stove. They only had the one class.

Samantha married Stephen Andrew Agren on 12 November 1903. They first lived in a small house in the south end of Harrisville. After their daughter, Eileen, was born, they built a two story brick home [408 North Harrisville Road] with an apartment on the north end for Andrew's mother, Bertha Faldt Agren. Andrew was a hard working farmer and provided well for the family. Eight children born to them were Ruth 1904, Eileen 1906, Bertha 1908, Fern 1911, Grant 1914, Karl 1916, June 1919, and Phyllis 1921. Two of the children died while still young, Fern died in 1913 and Karl in 1922.

Samantha was sustained secretary in the LDS Harrisville Ward Relief Society in January 1918. On 30 January 1927, she was appointed first counselor. When President Ruby Romrell passed away a few months later, Samantha was sustained as president. She was sustained as Theology Class Leader in 1938, a position she held until her release in 1955. Samantha was active in the Daughters of the Utah pioneers, camp 30, Harrisville. On 16 November 1949, she was appointed historian for the Harrisville LDS Primary Association. Later Andrew and Samantha were appointed to work with the LDS Genealogical Society in Harrisville as teacher's to visit families and assist them in making out Family Groups Sheets and Pedigree Charts.

In June 1951, at the age of seventy-five, Samantha went to Los Angeles to be with her daughter, Phyllis, who was very sick. She aided in nursing her daughter back to health. After spending time with Phyllis, she visited her daughter, Eileen Pearce, and her family. She returned home just in time to attend a stake family outing in the grove behind the Harrisville Ward meeting house. Lunch was served on a long table in the grove, after which,

those attending circled around a huge bonfire to be entertained with speeches, music, and songs. There was also square dancing on the cement platform.

In their later years, Samantha and Andrew went on a wonderful trip across the United States, visiting church and national historic sites. Andrew suffered from emphysema and preceded her in death on 4 February 1964. Samantha spent her remaining years quietly in her home, living with her son Grant and his wife Louisa and their children, Luann, Curtis, and Kaylan. Samantha passed away on 27 July 1970, at the age of 95. She is buried in the Ogden cemetery beside her husband and two children Fern and Karl.

SOURCE:

Brown, June Agren. *Biography of Stephen Andrew Agren*. Unpublished manuscript.

--, Hans	Hot Springs
Agren, Bertha Feldt	Neal, John C.
Agren, Bertha,	Romrell, Ruby
Agren, Curtis	Saunders, Mary Ann
Agren, Eileen	Shurtleff, Alta
Agren, Eileen,	Shurtleff, Betsy
Agren, Fern	Shurtleff, Cora,
Agren, Grant,	Shurtleff, Cornelia Samantha
Agren, June	Shurtleff, Emily
Agren, Karl,	Shurtleff, Frank
Agren, Kaylan	Shurtleff, Horace
Agren, Louisa	Shurtleff, Janette
Agren, Luann	Shurtleff, Jessie,
Agren, Phyllis	Shurtleff, L. W. President
Agren, Ruth,	Shurtleff, Lee
Agren, Stephen Andrew	Shurtleff, Lester
Anderson, Emma	Shurtleff, Lewis W.
Bingham, Melissa	Shurtleff, Luman A.
Bingham, Synthia Shurtleff	Shurtleff, Noah Luman
Critchlow, Mary	Shurtleff, Sarah
Crowther, Clara	Shurtleff, Walter
Daughters of Utah Pioneers	Shurtleff, Wilford
Dixon Creek	Shurtleff, William,
Dixon, Ida	Smith, Dennett
Four Mile Creek	Taylor, Levi
Harris Denison	Taylor, Mary
Harris, Ida	Wilson, W. B.