



NOAH LUMAN SHURTLEFF

1846–1892

After being driven from Nauvoo, Altamira Gaylord Shurtleff gave birth to Noah Luman Shurtleff on 25 November 1846, in a crude cabin in Garden Grove, Iowa. The baby's father Luman Andrus Shurtleff was away at the time, having been called to return to the Mississippi River to help others leaving Nauvoo. There was a shortage of food and clothing as the population of the camp at Garden Grove increased. The baby's father was called to go back again to solicit aid which took him away for three months.

In the summer of 1847, the family again started westward. In November they crossed the Missouri River to Winter Quarters. Here the family lived until the next spring when they moved to Pottawattami County, Iowa where they lived until Noah was five years old. The journey to Salt Lake was finally completed September 23, 1851. In November that same year, Luman accepted part of Levi Murdock's claim and moved his family to Bingham's Fort. While the men hauled the wheat into the fort during the first harvest, Noah was left to watch the wheat left in the field from being taken by Indians that commonly came to the area.

Noah was baptized and confirmed a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints 1 November 1855, by his father. At that time, Noah was the oldest boy at home. Luman's first son, Lewis Warren, left the month before to serve in the Limhi Salmon River Mission.

When Johnson's Army came to Utah in 1858, the settlers moved south to Spanish Fork. Noah helped his sick mother and the other small children move into the only place available to them, a dugout under ground. After 38 days of uncertainty and discomfort, peace was made and the saints were permitted to return to their homes.

Upon their return, his mother's family lived in three rooms located on property Luman owned two lots south of Union Square in Ogden. He helped his mother raise watermelons and braid straw to make hats which were sold to the immigrants passing through Utah on their way to the gold fields of California. Altamira remained in Ogden.

In 1859, Noah, his brother, Francis, his father, and Mary, his father's fifth wife, moved to the Shurtleff farm in Harrisville. Noah assisted his father in tilling the soil, milking cows, raising sheep, hauling wood from the mountains, making adobes, and building houses and barns to shelter his father's large family and their farm animals.

The trials and hardships in the lives of Noah's parents proved too great for his mother to endure, and 29 July 1860, she obtained a bill of divorce from her husband. Soon after his parent's separation, Noah made adobes and with his father's help, built a two room house on

a homestead near his father's place, and lived there with his mother until he married. Adjacent to the house he built a blacksmith shop, which he and his brother Francis operated for some time.

In 1870, Noah married Cornelia Samantha Hancock, daughter of Charles Brent and Priscilla Rawson Hancock. He borrowed \$2 from his father for wedding expenses and the happy couple took the lumber wagon over dusty roads for a full days' journey to Salt Lake City where they were married in the Endowment House by D. H. Wells. Noah worked all the next day for his father cutting hay with a scythe to pay back the loan of \$2.

His bride washed, corded, and spun wool into yarn. She knit their stockings, made blankets, and even jeans for her husband. When their children came, she made the boy's suits and girl's dresses. Her mother-in-law, Altamira, was a good seamstress and helped cut and fit their clothes.

Their first child, Horace Luman, was born 17 September 1871. A second son, Noah Walter, was born two years later, but died from croup before he was a year old. Within three months after the death of this son, Noah left for a short term mission to seek genealogy. While he was away, his wife taught school in her kitchen. The scholars sat on benches made of slabs.

Noah returned only to leave five years later to serve another mission, this time to the Southern States. He had just traded his watch and some hay for a new wagon. In order to get money for his mission, he sold the wagon for \$80. He took half of this with him and left the other \$40 with is wife. Industrious Cornelia not only kept the family, but built a porch, bought a stove with money earned by drying and selling apples and peaches, and kept the \$40 in gold in tact so that Noah might use it to come home on when his mission was finished.

Noah made red bricks using the process he learned while watching his father make adobes. He put clay and water in a vat. He then hitched a horse to a windlass that turned the vat until it became a sticky mass. He poured the mass into a mold and put it in the sun to dry. Next he "burnt" the bricks in a home made kiln. Several early homes in the area were made from bricks he made in this way.

Noah was a teacher in the Harrisville School, and was always active in community projects. He was involved in many church callings. When 18 years old he and Levi J. Taylor, age 15, were ward teachers together, and their district extended to all of the homes from the Ogden City limits to the Hot Springs. In 1863 he was ordained a Seventy. He faithfully worked in the activities of auxiliary organizations, collected genealogy, and labored in the bishopric, and was always active in community projects.

Noah felt he needed an unabridged dictionary but had very little money with which to buy one. He decided he would walk the entire distance from Harrisville to Salt Lake City to attend general conference and walk back. He used the \$12 which should have paid his conference expenses to buy the coveted dictionary. He slept in the tithing barn, ate the lunch he carried with him, bought the dictionary, and carried it home with him home after the

conference. He and his family enjoyed this reference book for many years. His own children, as well as the neighbors, remember the old dictionary along with the family bible.

On 31 January 1888, at a time when the saints were being persecuted for polygamy, Noah took a second wife, Mary Ann Saunders. His family hung a red blanket on their clothesline to warn him when it was not safe to come home because the marshal was after him. Officials eventually apprehended him and sentenced him to six months in prison and a \$200 fine. For Noah, the worst part of prison was the bed bugs. To avoid further persecution, Noah left one wife in Harrisville and went to Canada with another wife and family to colonize Alberta, Canada. He built a home in Cardston. He worked on the church farm, was active in church, and endeared himself to the people. He was known as a ministering angel in times of sickness and death and was loved and respected by all.

Noah lived in Canada for about four years when one night he was called out to visit the sick. Mary Ann was not concerned over his delayed return and retired as usual. About three o'clock the next morning, 9 July 1892, she woke up after a horrible dream that he had fallen into the well, and it caved in on him. After awakening, she hurriedly dressed and ran to the well. To her horror, she found the situation just as she had dreamed. Neighbors were aroused and they found Noah's body under the cave-in where he had been stunned and drowned. He was buried in Canada. His widow, Cornelia, was left with eight children, including a baby less than six months old: Horace Luman, 1871; Samantha Cornelia, 1875; William Joy, 1877; Jesse Hyrum, 1882; Lester Joseph, 1884; Noah Lee Andrus, 1885; Cora May, 1888; and Wilford Elijah, 1892. His wife Mary was left with two sons, George Sterling, 1889, and Parley Leonard, 1890.

Noah Luman Shurtleff was a man of small stature who weighed 140 pounds. He had black hair, sandy whiskers, and blue eyes. Though firm, he had a pleasing countenance and a quiet disposition. His voice was gruff and very deep. He loved music, and even though he lacked a nice singing voice, he was successful in teaching music to others. He was a leader in drama, directing and presenting many ward plays. He was a fluent and interesting speaker, and he was always prepared and ready to respond when called upon. He did farm and ranch work, repaired shoes for his family, did blacksmithing, and horseshoed his horses and his neighbors horses. He made and laid the brick for his home and other buildings. He prepared and cured meat and other food products for his family. He could do almost any kind of work there was to be done.

SOURCE:

Agren, Samantha. "History of Noah Luman Shurtleff." Unpublished manuscript.

Brown, Thelma. *Personal History*.

Shurtleff, William H. "Personal Interview." Dec 1999.

Bingham's Fort	Shurtleff, George Sterling
Cardston, Canada	Shurtleff, Horace Luman
Garden Grove	Shurtleff, Jesse Hyrum
Gaylord, Altamira	Shurtleff, Lester Joseph
Hancock, Charles Brent	Shurtleff, Luman Andrus
Hancock, Cornelia Samantha Hancock	Shurtleff, Mary Eliza Adams
Hancock, Priscilla Rawson	Shurtleff, Noah Lee Andrus
Johnson's Army	Shurtleff, Noah Walter
Murdock, Levi	Shurtleff, Parley Leonard
Pottawattami County	Shurtleff, Samantha Cornelia
Saunders, Mary Ann	Shurtleff, Wilford Elijah
Shurtleff Francis	Shurtleff, William Joy
Shurtleff, Altamira Gaylord	Taylor, Levi J.
Shurtleff, Cora May	Wells, D. H.
Shurtleff, Cornelia Samantha	Winter Quarters