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MATTES #1079



Luman Andros Shurtliff
My Grandfather
1807

When my garden was in and fenced, I took ten acres of land on
The owner furnished the seeds and the
the saying of the prophet Joseph, "Keep water as what I am wont to
I had four cows, one two year old bull, two teams two years old, one
two year old heifer and a few yearlings and calves. This was all
the stock I possessed. I had as much corn as I would need for bread
and four bushels of wheat and no meat or groceries for a fit out.

It looked like a miracle for me to get to the valley this year. When
I started home I fell into a serious train of reflection. I had a
large family and but little means and now had to get counsel to go
west. I had made it my business of always obeying counsel under all
circumstances and never had I refused to do it or at least try and
was never counseled to do a thing I could not do. Yet, this looked
impossible for me to accomplish.

1851 I sold my farm for a yoke of oxen and a watch. This is the first I
have ever realized from sale of my property since I gathered in the
Church at Kirtland in the fall of 1837 and it was now the spring of
1851. In this time I think I had built and owned eleven log, one
frame and one brick building and this was the first I had received
for anything, being obliged to sacrifice or leave all for the sake
of the Gospel. I now sold a two year old heifer and got the pay in
groceries. The watch I turned out to pay the last debt I owed in
Iowa and by trading around, hauling freight, and borrowing money to
pay for the flour, I got fixed up to go west.

On the 20th of May 1851 we started for the west, expecting to join
the company which was gathering at the ferry. Haskill drove one
wagon with two good yoke of oxen and one yoke of cows. I drove one
wagon with three yoke of steers and two yoke of cows and my son, Lewis,
now nearly sixteen, helped me drive. That night we camped on the bot-
tom of a small creek near the Missouri bottom. The next morning it
was raining and rained all day hard and our travel was difficult.

When we got to the ferry on the Missouri River we found the company
in which we intended to go west was organized and no company should ex-
ceed fifty wagons and no wagons should leave unorganized in some com-
pany so we had to tarry there until one hundred wagons arrived so we
could be organized. Being a water man myself and Haskill having
worked on a boat some, we hired out to work on the ferry boat and
got the money. This was quite an advantage to us. The feed was good
and our teams were doing well.

While laboring here my wife, Melissa and I crossed the river to Wint-
er Quarters, looked over the flat where once stood a thick settled
town and no house now remained to show the site of a once populous
city. We walked up the Bluff to the burying grounds where hundreds
of the Saints were lying who had been driven from Nauvoo in health
and in fair prospects of reaching the valley as we had and had finish-
ed their journey and were lying here waiting the resurrection morn.
Their lives were required by this nation. We took one last look at
where once were the joyous homes of the Saints whose prayers ascend-
ed morning and evening to God for their protection.

In the distance was the little house where I married this, my good
wife and her mother. Beyond this was the muddy Missouri on its serp-
entine course going on to the Mississippi, the father of Rivers,
upon whose bosom I have been borne many hundred long miles, but so,
no more. I was now about to leave this country forever and take up
my abode in the chambers of the Rocky Mountains far from the abode
of civilized men, if men can be called civilized who are guilty of
shedding the blood of the Saints and driving them as I have been
driven from all that I possessed except what little I could take with
me in my flight. From such civilization I pray God to deliver me
and my family.

The brethren continued to gather on the east bank of the river. We
were in camp here three weeks when we were notified the company would
be organized the next day at one o'clock.

Easton Kelsy was nominated captain of the one hundred with Luman A.
Shurtliff captain of the first fifty and Isaac Allred captain of the
second fifty, and Brother Amos Musser secretary of the company. We
then organized into companies of ten with a Captain to each ten wag-
ons and made preparations to start across the river.

As fast as the teams and wagons crossed the river we went out to the Six Mile Grove where we stayed until the whole company got across the river. When the hundred were all together we moved on the river called Horn. This was very high and rising hard.

After staying over night at the Ferry we traveled North up the river. We got along very slow. The rain fell in torrents and the thunder shook the earth and two of our brethren were knocked down with lightning. About 10 a.m. one morning a company of armed men came to our camp and delivered a letter from Brother Hyde telling us of trouble with Indians and advised us to return to Six Mile Grove. After some dissention we obeyed the orders and returned the next morning. We arrived on the 27th of June and had been gone from home for thirty-seven days, and had gained twenty miles to the west from where we started. Here I was appointed Bishop of the company and told to use any property in the company my wisdom dictated was the best for my company.

We got a letter that night from Brother Hyde stating that the Indian difficulty was settled and we could now go ahead in safety. On June 29th 1851 we once more rolled out of camp, took a northwesterly course. The feed was excellent, the weather fine, our teams good, and we got along well and soon came to the forks of the Horn. We readily crossed and nothing worthy of note occurred and we soon came to the west fork of the Horn a little before sundown. There were now three companies of us which we called the Grove Company.

Some of our horses were stolen by the Indians and the hills above us were like swarms with Indians watching our every move. About sunset some of them made their appearance and came up within one half mile and seemed to be holding a council, sat down and sat until it began to grow dark. I did not feel satisfied to let them stay there for I thought they meditated evil. I called on two of the brethren to go to them and invite them to come to camp and stay with us all night and if they would we'd let them keep all of their weapons until morning. I would give them supper and a breakfast and let them have a tent to sleep in.

When I saw them coming we brought up our stock and put them in our corral, pitched our tent in the opening of the fort for the cattle, so if any of the Indians stampeded the stock by scaring them at the back of the corral the cattle would tramp down the tent and the Indians together. I thought the Indians would understand this and to save their chiefs would let our cattle alone. They came up looking very friendly and handed me every weapon I could see about them and we introduced them into the tent and gave them a good supper and placed a double guard on the outside of the tent and gave orders to let no one pass in or out without orders from me. I then put a faithful guard around the camp and felt somewhat safe.

We had no trouble that night and in the morning when the Indians in the tent had their breakfast they soon left and went towards the timber. As they reached the timber their camp seemed to break up and move off toward the north and I never saw half so many Indians in my life before. Some of them came to our camp and remained until we moved off and left them. We stayed in camp late late waiting for the other companies. About ten o'clock the other company came up and we started on again. We crossed rivers on timber bridges and forded rivers, passed hills and then came to a rolling prairie, with good feed and water, then we came to sand hills.

We then changed our course and bore more west or southwest and kept nearer the Platte River. We traveled for days and the feed became more scarce. We made a corral of our wagons at night and turned our stock loose but had them stampede and had much trouble.

The next day we traveled southwest all day and in five more days we came onto the Bluffs of the Platte Bottom which was a beautiful sight. Here there were herds of Buffalo on either hand and in front from ten to five hundred in droves. Thus we passed on beholding the buffalo as we passed almost within rifle shot, but none were shot as I had forbidden my men shooting any that day and promised to stop one day and kill and smoke meat and put it up so it would not be wasted.

As fast as the teams and wagons crossed the river we went out to the

This night we camped on the old road running from Winter Quarters to the valley and thanked God that we had got where white men and women had been before and we spent the evening very pleasantly. We made arrangements to hunt buffalo early the next morning.

Two young ones were brought to camp and we found the meat delicious. We put up some crotches and layed sticks across, cut the meat in slices and then built a smoke fire under it. It dried sweet and good. We remained here two days. The hunters killed all the meat and we enjoyed our rest. It was pleasant weather and with a constant cool breeze blowing from the west. The grass for our cattle was sweet and rich though short, being constantly fed by the thousands of buffalos which grazed on these bottom lands.

On July 30, we raised our camp and started up the Platte River. Here now were seven companies of emigrating Saints with their neatly covered wagons, their handsome spread tents, their hundreds of grazing cattle and horses and here and there a mule and further back, grazing on the plains thousands of buffalos with occasionally an Indian or a brother stealthily moving among the herds to select a beef to his liking. Near by and among the tents and wagons, they were busy and engaged in something, hundreds of men and women and children, like ants on their pile. All this scene was beautiful and inspiring to the beholders. Our teams were now in good order for traveling and we went on our way rejoicing.

We followed the road of the earlier pioneers on and through Echo Canyon over Big Mountain and Little Mountain and down through Emigration Canyon and here beheld the valley of the Great Salt Lake. And what feelings of joy and gratitude swelled within us as we stood and viewed the promised land where we would soon be located in peaceful homes to be driven and molested no more. On our journey, the Sabbath Day was observed. We rested and worshipped surrounded by the grandeur of nature, and with voices lifted to Heaven we felt as if we were in the Temples of the Gods.

We got into the Salt Lake Valley September 23, 1851, thankful to the God of Heaven that I and my family were in the valley of the Rocky Mountains. Here where the Prophet Joseph Smith had said thirteen years before that the Saints would go if the government did not put a stop to the mobbing and the persecuting of them. Yes, very thankful that we were far removed from those beings professing to worship the God of Israel and in great piety and zeal toward God, had driven me and my family six times from all we possessed except what little we could take with us in our flight and what we could not take, they took possession of.

When I got into the valley I met my cousin, Vincent Shurtliff, who had come out to meet me. He had been called to go on a mission to England. Part of the missionaries had started but he had stayed to welcome me to his home, which he did and told me to take provisions I needed until I could obtain such things for myself. We spent a happy night together and in the morning cousin Vincent bade us good-bye and started on his mission.

I stayed in the city one week, took a grist of Vincent's wheat, went to the mill to have it ground into flour.

The legislature was now in session and many of my old friends were in the assembly so I stepped into the lobby to spend an hour or so and see my old tried and true associates. It was really cheering to see so many faces smiling upon me to bid me welcome to the privileges of our mountain home.

Brother John S. Fulmer after learning that I had no particular place in view told me he had a good crop fourteen miles north of the city which the cattle were destroying, the fence being poor and wished me to move my family up there and watch and gather it and take my pay out of it. This suited me fine as I wished to get some place where we could be laying up some thing for winter. I soon moved there and camped near a little creek and found that horses and cattle were fast destroying the grain which was in the field in shocks. Haskill and myself cut the grain while Lewis kept the cattle off it, Haskill taking turns with him nights. Thus, we labored night and day, until all the grain was secure. We had plenty to eat and thanked God and Brother Fulmer for it.