

A HISTORY OF CHARLES SHUMWAY

Charles Shumway, the story is told, was once called into Brigham Young's office in Salt Lake City. After being asked to sit down President Young said, "If I hadn't asked so much of you I would request you to move to Arizona to help colonize there. It is reported that Grandpa answered, "If you desire that I move to Arizona then I shall do so." President Young then told him that a more faithful man he had never seen. This steadfast man was born 1 August 1806 in Oxford, Worcester, Massachusetts. He was born during a period of time when many of the doctrines which would become a part of the restitution of all things were to be found in various religious groups.

"It is now evident that many teachings of the Prophet were being popularized by his contemporaries, such as the reality of Christ's atonement and a millennium; endorsement of believer's baptism by immersion, the free agency of man, latter-day revelation, support of a communal society and unusual marital views; criticism of the all-inclusive and infallible nature of the Bible and recommendation of non consumption of liquor, tobacco, tea and coffee."

It was true indeed that the field was white and ready to harvest. The people of America were being prepared for the restored Gospel. It is a well known fact that people seldom accept doctrines or ideas that are too radical or too foreign to their own environment. The spirit of the Lord was helping prepare for the truth that would be restored in its fullness by the Father and the Son and other heavenly messengers sent to earth as the need arose. Mormonism is perhaps most unique in the teachings and doctrines that it brought together within the fabric of the Church. These teachings and doctrines were not new but a restitution of those teachings promulgated by Christ himself. These teachings touched Grandpa's heart and he accepted the Gospel with every fiber of his being. We are getting ahead of our story. Let us first examine what we know about the Shumway's in general.

"The Shumway's are a French family and doubtless of the Protestant sect of Huguenot" says the History of Oxford, Massachusetts. It is further said that the name was originally Chamoir or Charmois. In the more ancient records of Essex County Massachusetts the name is frequently found written Shamaway. A Protestant family named Chamois is mentioned as fugitives from the neighborhood of St. Maixent in the province of Poitou, France, at the time of the Edict of Nantes.

It will be remembered that in France under Louis XIII the Catholic faith experienced a rebirth of vigor and devotion. Old Monastic orders returned to their rules; nunneries reformed themselves and in general Catholic piety returned. The young King Louis caught in the fervor of the age solemnly placed France under the protection of the Virgin Mary, 'in order, that all his loyal subjects might be received into Paradise'. The edict of

Nantes was first issued by King Henry in 1598. The edict authorized the full exercise of the Protestant faith, and freedom of the Protestant Press, in all of the eight hundred towns of France except seventeen, in which Catholicism was overwhelmingly predominant. The eligibility of Huguenots to public offices was confirmed. In 1620 when Louis XIII visited Pau he was shocked to find not one Catholic Church in which to perform his devotion. He searched anxiously amid his court, for a man with enough iron in his blood to transform this chaos of creeds and once again unite the nation. This man was Richelieu who, with an organized army, laid siege to the Huguenot strongholds. Thus in time the Edict of Nantes was revoked.

The immediate ancestors of Charles Shumway came from England. The Shumways in America are all descendents of Peter Shumway II. Peter Shumway father of seven sons, moved to Oxford Massachusetts in 1714. Peter Shumway II was the son of Peter Shumway Peter Shumway I, moved to Massachusetts as early as 1660. Because of his services in the King Philip War his son petitioned for a grant of land. Peter Shumway lived for some time at Salem and married a woman by the name of Francis. They had three children. He was often called Peter the Soldier. He was in many wars and fought against the Indians.

Parley Shumway was a son of Peter Shumway II and was born 12 November 1775. Charles Shumway was his second child. Charles married Julia Ann Hooker while they lived in Massachusetts. Later their family moved to Wisconsin. In 1841 Charles became identified with Mormonism. He probably did not realize until later that he was a second cousin to the founder of the Church, Joseph Smith.

The story is told after his baptism a gang of men caught him and beat him until he was almost dead. It is reported that upon regaining consciousness he said. "This is the time for us to move." Thus they loaded all their belongings on a raft and floated down the Mississippi to Nauvoo.

While the family lived in Nauvoo, Charles, according to the book Exodus to Greatness, listened to the inspired teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, and labored diligently in helping to build the Nauvoo Temple. He received his endowments in that sacred structure before departing for the Great Basin. It was while he lived in Nauvoo that he became a close associate of the Prophet Joseph Smith. In fact he was a guard to the Prophet and it was his duty to protect him from his enemies. (It is reported that he once, by himself saved the life of the Prophet Joseph Smith.)

On 7 April 1842 Joseph Smith received a revelation which commanded the organization of the Council of Fifty. This council was to be made up of practical men skilled in all trades. They were to be loyal men of good judgment and those who had frontier experience and could help build the new Zion. John D. Lee records in his diary

that such men as George Miller, Benjamin F. Johnson, Charles Shumway Alpheus Edward Hunter and others were called to this council. According to Juanita Brooks the Council of Fifty was characterized as follows. "A basic teaching of the early Church was that the second coming of Christ was imminent, and the Saints should prepare for it by building temples in which to purify themselves. They must also establish the Kingdom of God, an actual physical kingdom of homes and industries, of culture and beauty and righteousness. To implement this the Council of Fifty was organized of practical men of the earth, skilled, educated, superior men who were not direct the spiritual affairs, but were to help make, interpret, and execute the laws and plan for the general welfare."

Before his death, Joseph Smith talked of a move to the west, where the kingdom would be planted in the tops of the mountains. On 11 March 1844, both the Prophet and Brigham Young wrote of the organization of the Council of Fifty. Every man was selected for two qualifications: his skills or abilities and his complete loyalty to the Church. Every man sensed the honor and responsibility of his position; each felt that he had been especially called by the highest authority of God upon the earth.

The ultimate purpose of this council was to assist in locating the Saints in the West and to determine the policy to pursue in maintaining the individual rights of the Mormons. Ultimately this council was to be the legislature of the Kingdom of God. Its primary responsibility was to be political. But it is obvious that the Apostles, the High Council and the Council of Fifty during the early Utah period considered religious and political matters. The Council of Fifty had not exclusive Jurisdiction over political matters. Even though the Council of Fifty might have non-Church members on it, Parley P. Pratt pointed out in an address in the valley on 10 October 1847, the council included the Twelve without which it was powerless. (See Melville, Keith J., "Theory and Practice of Church and State during the Brigham Young Era," Brigham Young University Studies, Autumn 1960). It was an honor for him to be called as a member of this council.

On 11 October 1845 Brigham Young appointed Charles Shumway captain of a company of ten. His group was to be the sixth ten in crossing the plains. On 4 February 1846 Grandpa Shumway was the first to cross the Mississippi River on the trek West. He, together with his family, was ferried across the Mississippi River. It was not until later that the river froze over so that some saints could cross on the ice. Grandpa Shumway at this time was 39 years of age. On 15 Nov. 1846 his wife Julia Ann, then 38 years of age, died leaving him with a son fourteen years of age.

With the departure west Grandpa became a pioneer. He probably did not know that he would remain a pioneer during the subsequent years of his life. Never again would he spend much time in a city as large as Nauvoo. His was to be a life of moving, settling and building. He helped build cities for others to inhabit. Little did he realize when converted by Elisha Groves to the restored church that his would be a life spent

struggling against the forces of nature in a land that taxed the best men. As he crossed the river he could look back on five years filled with good memories. He had been a member of the Nauvoo city police force, had helped on the temple and had filled two short term missions -- one to the Cherokee nation as a companion of Phineas Young, and the other to Massachusetts with Daniel Spencer.

But he was not one to look back for extended periods of time. On 27 April 1846 he was asked, along with George W. Langley, to leave for Fort Leavenworth, Kansas to notify Lewis Dana to meet the Twelve at Council Bluffs without delay to act as Indian interpreter. Nine days later Charles Shumway and George Langley rode into Mt. Pisgah, having been without food most of the time.

Another honor came to Grandpa as the trek across the plains was about to commence. Brigham Young called him to be a minute man. Minute men were those who were to be ever ready to obey the orders of those in authority over them. He was also asked by the President to be a member of the first band of pioneers that were to cross the plains, It was shortly after his first wife had died so he asked President Young if he could take his fourteen year old boy along with him. His request was granted and the boy was allowed to make the historic journey. Perhaps it should be mentioned that Louisa Minnerly, daughter of John and Catherine Minnerly, became the Wife of Charles Shumway in 1845. Grandpa was sealed to Julia and married to Louisa in the Nauvoo Temple by Brigham Young. Grandpa was a seventy at this time having been ordained to this office on 9 February 1840 by Joseph Young. He received his patriarchal blessing 11 April 1845 while living in Nauvoo. His blessing was given by John Smith and he was told that he was a descendent of the House of Israel through the lineage of Dan.

Little is known about his trip across the plains. John D. Lee records that the members of the Council of Fifty met at various times dressed in full temple clothing as the migration progressed. The purpose of these meetings was to decide policy and important matters relative to the Saints. Grandpa must have met with this group and we can only guess how he felt as he attended those important conferences. We can only conjecture as to his feelings as he drove and walked day after day across the great expanse of America.

We do know that he entered the Valley 22 July 1847. He was appointed a member of the committee of three who were to supervise the plowing and harrowing of the ground., This committee was to call to their assistance such men as they would need in planting in the crops. These men fulfilled their duties and were there in the Valley to greet Brigham Young and the others when they arrived on 24 July 1847. They had been faithful and President Young found that potatoes and some corn had been planted and irrigated.

We also know that Grandpa was a member of one of the groups that had a contest to see

who could kill the most destroyers. Destroyers were listed as wolves, wild cats, polecats, minks, bears, panthers, catamounts, coyotes, eagles, hawks, crows, and ravens.