

Charles Shumway

FEARLESSLY OBEDIENT



Family History StoryBooks

Charles Shumway was born on August 2, 1806 to a hardworking family in Massachusetts. His parents, Parley and Polly, taught him and his eight siblings to be faithful, obedient, and most of all, to love God.

When Charles grew older, he fell in love with a beautiful girl named Julia Ann. They were married and began raising a family together. Soon, they moved to Illinois where Charles worked as a carpenter and kept a farm with Julia and their children.







One day, missionaries visited the Shumways. Charles learned that his distant cousin, Joseph Smith, had been called as a prophet of God to restore Christ's church to the Earth. Because he loved God and recognized the Spirit testifying of truth, Charles and his family were soon baptized members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.



As a faithful follower of God's prophet, Charles loaded everything he owned onto a wooden raft and floated his family 200 miles down the Mississippi River to Nauvoo. He joined many other Saints in their efforts to build up Zion. Once he was there, he worked hard to build homes for other families and sawmills to help with construction. He even helped build the House of the Lord: the Nauvoo Temple.







Charles also worked as a policeman in Nauvoo. Joseph Smith often asked him to be his bodyguard when he needed to go somewhere dangerous. One time there was a group of angry, armed men insulting and slandering the Saints. After hearing all the mean things the mob was saying, Charles walked up to the leader, grabbed him by the nose, and told him to stop! He bravely stood up for God and the saints.



A few years later, Joseph Smith was martyred. Charles was devastated when he heard the news. He soon began to fear for his family's safety. With the Prophet gone, Nauvoo became increasingly dangerous for the Saints. Mobs of angry people would burn buildings and hurt anyone who tried to stop them. Eventually they even burned down the temple.







The Lord chose a new prophet, Brigham Young, to help His people find a new place to live. Charles was called to lead the first group of Saints out of Nauvoo on their journey West to the Salt Lake Valley. With faithful obedience, he packed up his family in the middle of winter and braved an icy crossing of the Mississippi River. He was the very first pioneer to leave Nauvoo.



After 260 miles of hiking through icy cold snow and mud, the pioneers rested for a while at a place called Winter Quarters. Charles and his family shared their supplies with others, but soon they began running out of food. With his family and friends hungry, Charles left the company of Saints and traveled ahead to a group of Pawnee Indians who were selling corn.







While Charles was gone, Brigham Young had a dream that he was in grave danger. The prophet sent a horse and rider to tell Charles he needed to leave. Even though it was the middle of the night, Charles immediately obeyed. He packed up everything he had and left the Indian village in the cold, dark night.

When the sun began to rise, he looked back and saw thick black smoke rising up into the sky. An enemy tribe of Sioux Indians had attacked the village. His obedience saved his life. Charles vowed to always obey the Prophet of God without question.



Charles trekked across the country with the Saints for almost a year and a half. Finally, Brigham Young commanded him to travel ahead with a small group of other men to prepare the valley for their arrival.

When his son, Andrew, found out Charles was going ahead, he desperately wanted to go too. After the Prophet gave him permission to go, Andrew excitedly packed his things and joined the advance group of men. He marched bravely ahead with his dad and his little dog at his side.







On July 22, they arrived in the Salt Lake Valley. Andrew was the very first child to enter the Valley! Charles was exhausted from the journey but he knew that the Prophet had given him a job to do and he was determined to do it. With obedience on his mind and the love of God in his heart, he began plowing land and planting crops like potatoes. Two days later, on July 24, 1847, Charles welcomed Brigham Young and the other Saints to the Valley.



It wasn't long before many other pioneers joined the Saints in Utah. Brigham Young knew he needed faithful, brave, and obedient people to help develop new towns for all the incoming people. Once again, the Prophet turned to Charles Shumway and asked him to settle a town called Manti.

Winters in Manti were supposed to be mild, but that year it snowed and snowed and snowed. Charles and his family nearly froze alongside the other Saints who had moved to Manti. Three feet of snow covered the town. Many of their animals died. They even lost some of their friends. Charles was sad and scared but he knew he needed to act. On snowshoes, he hiked all the way back to Salt Lake City and faithfully asked the Prophet for supplies. He was able to get enough food to help the people in Manti survive the rest of the winter.







Charles was so obedient, faithful, and strong, that the Prophet called him to help develop many other settlements, including Payson, Wellsville, and Mendon. Every time Brigham Young asked him to go, Charles went. He knew that Brigham Young spoke for the Lord and he loved the Lord. At each settlement, he built mills and worked hard to help the community grow.



One day, the Prophet asked him to come to his office in Salt Lake. After Charles went in and sat down, Brigham Young said, "If I hadn't asked so much of you I would request you to move to Arizona to help colonize there."

Without hesitation, Charles answered, "If you desire that I move to Arizona then I shall do so." Charles took his family and all 325 of their cattle down to Arizona where they settled Spring Valley—which was later renamed Shumway. He built a mill, planted orchards, and lived there with his family.





By the end of his life, Charles had served as a Seventy, as a member of the Council of Fifty, three times as a missionary, as a counselor in the Manti bishopric, as a High Councilman, and as a Patriarch.

When talking about Charles Shumway, Brigham Young once said, "There was never a more faithful man in the Church. He was a man who was not wed to his Gold. He would give everything he had to the Church, to the building of the Kingdom of God."



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Charles Shumway



**Charles and his first wife,
Julia Ann**



**Grist Mill, built by Charles in
Shumway, Arizona**



Shumway Valley, Arizona



**Charles Shumway's Headstone
Taylor Cemetary, Arizona**



Julia and her son, Andrew Shumway