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*Church's Road
Harrison Road*

HISTORY OF JOHN SOLOMON FULLMER

The story of the life of John Solomon Fullmer is most interesting. His was a life spent in devotion to his religious beliefs and he never faltered in his faith. He possessed a great dignity and a great pride in doing everything as nearly perfect as possible.

He came from a good religious family whose means of livelihood for many years was that of farming. He spent his youth and early manhood on his father's farm in Pennsylvania.

His ancestors were among the very early settlers of Pennsylvania, those of the Fullmer family coming from Germany on board the ship *Friendship* in 1738, those of the Zerfass family also came from Germany.

John Solomon Fullmer was born in Huntington, Luzerne County, Pennsylvania, July 21, 1807, a son of Peter and Susanna Zerfass Fullmer. He was their third child and one of seven children. He had two brothers and four sisters.

He received what was considered an *average* education. In those days an education considered as *liberal* would be to us but a grade school education. However, John S. possessed a driving ambition to better himself in every way and he never ceased to study and improve himself. He acquired a knowledge of law by taking a correspondence course while working in a newspaper office in Nashville, Tennessee, and although he never practiced as a lawyer professionally, this knowledge served him greatly throughout his life.

In 1830, his father's family moved from Pennsylvania to Ohio. In the spring of 1832, John S. left the family to go to Nashville, Tennessee where he intended to study for the ministry of the Baptist Church. He later changed his mind about becoming a minister as he felt himself incapable of filling such a position.

When he arrived in Nashville he had barely a five dollar bill in his pocket, was without friends or acquaintances and had no training in a trade. He first worked at the *Banner* newspaper office and within five years time, had become so well known and highly regarded that he received the financial backing of a wealthy merchant to establish himself with a partner in the mercantile business, which was known as "Fullmer and Mitchell."

It was while in Nashville that he met and fell in love with Mary Ann Price, a daughter of a wealthy planter. Mary Ann had known none of the hardships of life and had her own mind and a private tutor. Her father was very much opposed to her association with John S. and she was forbidden to see him.

Describing their romance in a letter to his parents, John said, "I always thought I would be better pleased for having a little romance in my courtship. In this I was fully gratified. She was prevented from having any association with me for a long time, and when we did have any, it was clandestinely conducted. She was not permitted to visit a neighbor's house alone or even go to church without someone to attend her, lest I should intrude and take advantage of the circumstance. We at length,

however, corresponded daily; and when we thought we were about to be discovered, we consummated the business to our liking, and to the utter astonishment and surprise of everybody.

"On the morning of the 24th of May, 1837, she put on her morning gown as usual, and instead of walking among the flowers in the garden as usual, she skipped it across the street, through an alley and met me at the place of appointment. At 9 o'clock, we were at the parson's house and had the ceremony completed and wrote a joint note to her mother (her father being at the time in Texas) informing her of what was done, and hoped also that it was well done."

After the marriage her father did become reconciled as to what had been done in that he was friendly toward the newly weds. However, he did disinherit Mary Ann. Some years later, after her parents died and their estate was probated, Mary Ann did receive some settlement. (This was after she came to Utah.)

Being entirely on their own, the young couple found it less expensive to board and room than to maintain their own home and so, for about three years, this is what they did.

It was while John S. was away from his parent's home that they heard the Gospel preached and accepted it. He was bitterly opposed to their joining what he called some *new fangled* religion when it meant moving from their home to a new place and the breaking up of the family unit. Theirs had been a closely knit family with John being the only one to leave the home. His three sisters had not joined this new church and were to be left behind in Ohio while the remainder were contemplating moving to Missouri. "Wasn't the old religion they had lived for so many years satisfactory any more?" he asked. Finally, in a letter to his brother David, he says, "And as regards your religion, I have not another word to say in opposition, for I don't think you so lost in foolishness as to advocate any cause so zealously, without, to say the least, the appearance for it. I shall therefore cease the effort to laugh you out of your belief; neither will I debate the question, but will at once become your pupil, and will hear what you have to say, and if you can, by deed or doctrine, commend my reason, I will make the acknowledgment."

Thus began the conversion of John S. Fullmer. At the end of two more years he decided to go to Nauvoo to visit with the portion of his family living there and to see for himself the Prophet Joseph Smith. He made the journey from Nashville to Nauvoo on horseback in the spring of 1839 and before returning to Nashville was baptized into the Church. He was baptized by the Prophet, 29 July, 1839.

He then returned to Nashville and prepared to move his family to Nauvoo. He and Mary Ann and their two daughters moved into their first real home, in Nauvoo, in the spring of 1840. Here they were, as John S. said, "comfortably but not splendidly situated."

Mary Ann, who knew nothing about the religious beliefs of John's family at the time of their marriage was baptized after their arrival in Nauvoo however, the exact date is not known.

From the time of their arrival in Nauvoo until the death of the Prophet the Fullmer family was closely associated with him and his brother Hyrum and their families. Stories are told in the family of how, in the evenings the rigs of the Prophet's home would be rolled up and evenings would be spent in

dancing, and of the wrestling matches John S. and the Prophet would engage in. In the Fullmer family there is a sword and a watch which were given to John by the Prophet as tokens of his love and affection.

John S. served as secretary and clerk to the Prophet for almost a year, or until being sent to Kentucky on business for the Nauvoo House. He was active in all church activities and in some of his letters he relates the struggles required of the Saints in building the Nauvoo Temple, and many other of their hardships.

He received his Patriarchal Blessing May 29, 1841 at the hands of Hyrum Smith. In this blessing he was promised that he would never lose his clearness of mind, even in his old age. He never did.

John S. was one of those who accompanied Joseph and Hyrum Smith to Carthage Jail and spent the day and evening before the martyrdom with them there. On the morning of that eventful day, when he was sent on an errand by the Prophet, John left his gun with him. It was this gun that Hyrum used to defend himself with later that day. The story is told that all those wounded with the gun that day died a horrible death. When John S. returned to the jail that morning he was refused admission by the guards.

Later, while on a mission to England, he wrote a lengthy article covering the martyrdom of the Prophet and Hyrum. This was published in a forty page booklet entitled *The Assassination of Joseph and Hyrum Smith, The Prophet and Patriarch of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints*. He also wrote a condensed, *History of the Expulsion of the Saints from Nauvoo*.

He believed, as he later expressed in letters written to relatives, that at no time on earth were there two greater men at the same time. He compared them (Joseph and Hyrum) to Peter, James and John. To him there was no more wonderful thing on this earth than the association he had with the Prophet.

Desdemona, a sister of John S., was one of the first women to enter into the order of Celestial marriage. She became a wife to Joseph Smith in 1842.

In May, 1844, at the birth of his fourth daughter, John S. hired a girl to work as a housekeeper. Her name was Olive Amanda Smith Cook. Olive's father had died when she was very small and her mother married again. When she was about 17, Olive had fallen in love with a young man named Milton Cook. Her mother and step father refused to let her marry him as he was in the same line of business as her step father and business relations between the two were not pleasant.

During an absence of her parents, Olive and Milton went to another town and were secretly married. Not until several months later, when she discovered she was to become a mother, did she reveal her secret or wear her wedding ring.

Her parents refused to let her see her husband and finally sent her away to stay with friends. They intercepted her letters and after her son was born, she went to Nauvoo thinking she had been deserted by the only man she ever loved. He did seek her out however, but on finding her also found that she had joined the "Mormons" and as she would not give up her religion, he left and she never heard of

him again.

After working in the Fullmer home for about nine months, Mary Ann, the first wife, asked Olive if she would consent to become her husband's second wife. Thinking that she would not find a better man, she consented when he asked her several months later. They were sealed January 21, 1846, in the Nauvoo Temple. (Her son from her first marriage, Chauncey Harvey Cook, was sealed to John S. Fullmer, 25 January, 1911 in the Salt Lake Temple.)

In August, 1845, John S. and Henry G. Sherwood were sent on a mission to Vermillion, about 700 miles from Nauvoo. The journey was made on horseback through wild, dangerous country. Several times on this mission their lives were spared by the hand of the Lord. They returned to Nauvoo in October, 1845. (A full account of this mission is recorded in Volume 7, Documentary History of the Church.)

By this time it was fully realized by the leaders of the Church that the Saints would not be permitted to live much longer in Nauvoo and preparations were made for their departure. In a council meeting held by Brigham Young in the Temple in January, 1846, John S. was appointed as one of the three Trustees-in-Trust to care for and dispose of Church property.

John S. was paymaster of the Nauvoo Legion in which he held the rank of Colonel. He was a member of the "Spartan Band" that group of men who defended Nauvoo against the mob in September, 1846. He signed, much against his will, a peace treaty with the mob in order to spare the lives of the Saints and to save the Temple. He describes the treaty as "ignoble and cruel" in all its features.

His wife, Mary Ann and her children remained with him in Nauvoo throughout the struggles there. His wife, Olive Amanda left with the first Saints and lived in Council Bluffs where, in the wagon box she called home, her daughter, Mary Ann Smith Fullmer was born.

After about a year and a half of trying to dispose of the church property and, seeing that it was a useless task, the Trustees were told to leave what was left and move from Nauvoo. And so it was in the spring of 1848, John S. left on the journey that was to take him to the valley in the mountains.

At Council Bluffs he joined his wife, Olive Amanda, and others of his parent's family and started on the journey. John S. was made a captain of 10 in the Willard Richards Company. They arrived in the valley in October 1848.

Those who came with him were: Mary Ann Price Fullmer and her children; Lavina Elizabeth, Johanna Price, Ann Adalaide, Mary Ann Francis and John S. Jr., his wife Olive Amanda and her children; Chauncey Harvey Cook and Mary Ann Smith Fullmer. His parents, Peter and Susanna Zerfass Fullmer; his sister, Desdemona Fullmer Smith, a brother, David Fullmer and another brother, Almon L. Fullmer with his wife and their children remained in Council Bluffs until 1850.

In March, 1849, a convention was assembled in Salt Lake City to consider the political needs of the community. A committee was appointed to draft and report a constitution for the temporary "State of Deseret." This committee consisted of Albert Cherrington, Joseph L. Heywood, Wm. W. Phelps,

David Fullmer, John S. Fullmer, Charles C. Rich, John Taylor, Parley P. Pratt, John M. Bernheisel and Erastus Snow. The Convention adopted the constitution reported by this committee.

When the temporary "State of Deseret" was changed to the "Territory of Utah," John S. Fullmer was elected to the Council as representative from Davis County, his brother David was elected to the House of Representatives from Salt Lake County. His other brother, Almon L. was elected as Deputy Marshall of the State. While living in Davis County he served as Postmaster.

In the fall of 1852, he was called to fulfill a mission to England. He left his wives, who between them had twelve children all under fourteen years of age, the youngest but a tiny baby. It is said that Mary Ann taught school to help with the livelihood while he was away and the 6th Ward records show they received some help from the ward storehouse. It was a difficult time for these women and their children and Mary Ann had the added sorrow of losing her 8 year-old daughter, Mary Ann Francis by death.

While on his mission John S. was president over three large conferences in England, the Liverpool, Manchester and Preston. On 29 March, 1853, he and a companion were at Rochdale, England and while there administered to an 18 year-old boy by the name of Halsden Marsden, who had been born deaf and dumb. As they finished administering to him the boy spoke and indicated that he could hear.

Having completed a successful mission he sailed for home 27 February, 1855, on board the ship *Siddons* being made president of the company of 430 Saints who were emigrating to the Valley. After seeing this company of Saints to the destination at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, he returned to New York to meet another ship load of Saints and saw them to their outfitting place.

Feeling a "little weary" he went to Iowa to visit with his two sisters, Mary Elizabeth Fellows and Charlotte Ferris before returning to the valley. He arrived back in Salt Lake City in the fall of 1855.

After arriving in Salt Lake he moved his families to Springville, Utah, where for the most part he lived for the remainder of his life. Olive Amanda later moved her family to Mapleton on a homestead but she was unable to endure the severe winters there long enough to complete the terms of the homestead rights so moved back to Springville, thus losing the homestead.

While on his mission, John S. met the family of James Stevenson whose home was a stopping place for the Elders. In this family there was a young woman by the name of Sarah Ann. She took great pleasure in helping the missionaries distribute tracts and in singing with them the songs of Zion as she had a beautiful voice. While still in England she had promised to come to America and become the third wife of John S. Fullmer.

Her entire family came to America on the ship *Siddons* in February, 1855, however, only Sarah Ann and her brother Charles came to the valley that season. Her parents and the other children remained in Pennsylvania where her father operated a tailoring shop. Sarah Ann was also a professional seamstress.

Finding the families of John S. in such poor circumstances upon her arrival here she postponed her

marriage to him for an entire year during which time she almost decided to marry John Taylor. However, she finally kept her promise and was married to John S. on 12 October, 1856 in the Endowment House. For six years they maintained a home in Spanish Fork, Utah and then moved to Springville near his other families.

John S. and Mary Ann both taught school in Springville and in Provo. Sarah Ann worked in her father's tailoring shop as he had, by this time, brought his family to the valley.

For about twenty years all three families made their homes in Springville, then as the children became older, they began to branch out. A new settlement called Orangeville was settled in 1881 and Sarah Ann took her family there to live. It was a desolate place located about forty miles west of Price, [actually south of Price] Emery County. Here Sarah Ann made her home for the remainder of her life. She died 7 September, 1901.

Olive Amanda and some of her children also moved to Orangeville and here she died 17 November, 1885. She and Sarah Ann are buried side by side in the Orangeville Cemetery.

John S. was stricken with paralysis on 21st of September, 1882. The first attack was followed by two more and he never recovered the use of his left arm and leg. However, as was promised in his patriarchal blessing, his mind remained clear until the time of his death, which came peacefully. In all his illness his last year, he had had no bodily pain.

When he knew his end was approaching, he called all his family that were present together. He blessed them and admonished them to be true to their covenants and stand firm in the church and kingdom of God. Among his last words to them were. "I cannot remain any longer with you, I am going on a great mission."

He died on the 8th of October, 1883, at Springville, Utah.

After his death, Mary Ann lived with her children in Springville and in Mapleton until about one month before her death when she went to stay with her daughter in Marysvale, Utah. She died at Marysvale 29 November, 1897.

Both John S. and Mary Ann were buried first in the cemetery lot on the old Fullmer home which was just east of Springville on Mapleton bench. Some years later their remains were moved to the Evergreen Cemetery in Springville.

John S. and Mary Ann were the parents of 8 children, seven of whom grew to maturity. He and Olive Amanda were the parents of 10 children, nine of whom grew to maturity, and he and Sarah Ann were the parents of 12 children having the good fortune of having them all grow to maturity.

JOHN SOLOMON FULLMER

BORN JULY 21, 1807

Born and raised in Pennsylvania

AT AGE: EVENT:

- | | |
|----|--|
| 23 | His family moved to Ohio |
| 25 | He left his family and went to Nashville, Tennessee
(wrote for <i>The Banner</i> .) |
| 30 | Secretly married first wife, Mary Ann Price
(They had 8 children) |
| 32 | He was baptized into the Church |
| 33 | Moved his family to Nauvoo |
| 34 | Received his patriarchal blessing |
| 38 | Mission to Vermillion
Trustee in Nauvoo |
| 39 | Married second wife, Olive Amanda Smith
(They had 10 children) |
| 41 | Journey to Salt Lake City
Constitutional committee for temporary
State of Deseret
Elected Representative for Davis County |
| 45 | Mission to England
(Left two wives and 12 children) |
| 48 | Arrived back in Salt Lake City from mission |
| 49 | Married third wife, Sarah Ann Stevenson
(They had 12 children) |
| 75 | Had a stroke (lost use of left arm & leg) |
| 76 | He died. |

wife #3

FROM LAUGHBOROUGH TO ORANGEVILLE

[History of Sarah Ann Stevenson by Zinnia F. Humphrey]

Born 31 July, 1835, in Laughborough, England to a couple, James Stevenson, a tailor by trade, and Martha Charles, a genteel woman whose parents considered themselves too well bred to marry tradespeople. Because of this, the young couple incurred the displeasure of Martha's parents John and Martha Forman Charles. Again her parents were humiliated when their daughter and her young husband along with their two oldest children joined in 1849, the low sect Mormon Church.

In early 1855, the couple and two children, Sarah Ann, 19, and another five children prepared to join a group of 430 emigrants on a voyage to Zion. They set sail on the *Siddons* that year. The vessel was so old and rickety after 27 trips across the Atlantic that the captain refused to ever cross her again after this time. Leaks were a common occurrence during the time at sea and storms battered her unmercifully. One particularly bad storm caught them just out of Liverpool about 8 p.m. in the evening. Everyone was ordered below deck immediately and the hatch secured. The scene was one of confusion, terrorizing the young children badly. The dishes in the kitchen rolled with the ship from side to side as she was tossed in the foaming waves. Luggage clattered and banged as it hit first one side then the other. People tied each other in their beds to stay put. The old hulk tossed all the night through.

As the sun made its appearance the next morning, these converts stood in soaked clothing, singing praise to God for his goodness in saving "Guide Us, Oh Thou Great Jehova." As they sang, the captain came to them to say, "My good people, you must have a God who thinks a great deal of you, or you would have been at the bottom of the sea this morning."

There was a great deal of seasickness and other sickness aboard the ship. The passengers had to spend so much time below deck because of the unsafe conditions on deck. It wasn't very conducive to good health. The saints prayed for good weather each and every day because then they and the children could play on the deck in the sunshine.

Before the Stevenson family had left England, their home had been a stopping place for Mormon missionaries. Sarah Ann took pleasure in helping these elders as much as she could. She had a beautiful voice so was in great demand at their mission activities. One of these missionaries was John Solomon Fullmer, a young man who had left two wives at home to answer his mission call to England.

In 1841, Joseph Smith revealed to John Taylor the vision he had concerning plural marriage and celestial sealings. This practice was to cause the saints great unsurmountable problems before its end.

John S. Fullmer, being a faithful Mormon, attempted to live this principle as did many others.

He left his first wife, Mary Ann Price Fullmer, and his second wife, Olive Amanda Smith Fullmer, and 12 children at home, but Sarah Ann promised to become John's third wife when they reached America. He had lived in Nashville where he was a writer for the newspaper *The Banner*. He did a number of books later on the persecution of the Mormons.

He then moved to Nauvoo where he became closely associated with the Prophet Joseph Smith and Hyrum Smith families. John S. served as a secretary and clerk to Joseph for a year before the martyrdom..

He accompanied Joseph and Hyrum to the Carthage jail and spent the day and night before in the prison with the prophet. That morning John was sent on an errand for the prophet and when he returned, he was refused admittance inside.

On the voyage of the *Siddons*, he accompanied the saints home. It was his responsibility to be the president of the company of saints, the position of responsibility for their safety and well being.

April 23, 1855, Oh Happy Day!! These sea weary saints embarked in Philadelphia. John S. spent some time resting and visiting relatives back east so he, with his promised wife and her brother Charles in a company of saints made the trip to Zion.

When arriving in the valley, Sarah found John's families in poor circumstances so she postponed her marriage to him for a year. During this time, she almost decided to marry John Taylor. However, she finally kept her promise and married John S. in the Endowment House, October 12, 1856.

Meanwhile, in September 27, 1856, Sarah Ann met her folks when they arrived in Salt Lake City. They moved directly to Springville, Utah.

Six years after Sarah and John were married they lived in Spanish Fork, Utah after which John S. moved all three of his families to Springville, Utah.

There, Sarah Ann helped her father in his tailoring business. They sewed ladies dresses, men's suits, and also uniforms for the soldiers of Johnson's Army stationed at Camp Floyd nearby. (It is interesting to note that two of Sarah's sisters married two of Johnson's soldiers.)

By this time, persecution of the polygamists had become intense. The passage of the Edmunds Bill made polygamy a felony punishable by a \$300.00 fine and imprisonment for six months. No polygamists could vote or hold public office. United States deputies roamed the country descending on villages, breaking down doors of homes to find polygamists. There were many turncoat Mormons reporting on their fellow Mormons for bribes. A great protest arose from the brethren of unfair treatment on the part of the government, citing tyranny of federal officers, and for their punishing one class of people practicing their religion. They protested the breaking up of families, but it was useless against the government's merciless crusade. Many saints fled to Mexico and Canada. Many husbands took their wives into hiding underground.

Canada needed colonists and Mormons offered to colonize Canada if they were allowed to practice their religion as they had been instructed by their prophet, but Canada was afraid of jeopardizing their relations with the United States government so said it would be political suicide.

The Mormon leaders issued the Manifesto. Many people believe God has never rescinded the commandment. Something had to be done to stop the persecutions. President Roosevelt wielded a big stick over the Mormons' heads. Apostle Reed Smoot tried to mediate between the Saints and the government but was evicted from the Senate and charged with practicing polygamy. (President Joseph F. Smith later admitted to having 11 children after the Manifesto was issued.)

A new settlement called Orangeville was settled in 1881 and Sarah Ann took her family there to live. Olive Amanda and some of her children also moved to Orangeville. It was a desolate place located about 35 miles south of Price. Here Sarah Ann raised her 12 children to maturity. Thomas Fullmer, being the eldest child went to work for others at age 13 to help his mother provide for the family. She sewed for people, took in washings and any other services she could do to put food on the table and clothes on their backs. Much of the washings were done at night while the children slept, so they could have clean clothes for school the next day.

It was a hard life but she bore it and kept forth with her church. She became a counselor in the first Relief Society of the Orangeville Ward.

John S. Fullmer, was stricken with a stroke the 21st of September in 1882, and never regained the use of his left arm and leg. When he knew his end was near, he called his family altogether and bless them and admonished them to stand firm in the church of the Kingdom of God.

His last words to his posterity was "I cannot remain any longer with you. I am going on a great mission." He died October 8, 1882, at Springville, Utah, with a posterity of 30 children. Mary Ann had 8, and Olive Amanda had 10, and Sarah Ann had 12.

Sarah Ann died September 7, 1901, at age 66 in Orangeville, Utah. Olive had died November 17, 1885, and they were buried near each other in the Orangeville Cemetery as sisters, as they were in life.

Sarah kept her first estate and was sent to earth and, in my opinion, kept her second estate, and now I feel sure she has glory added upon her head forever and ever. Thank God for this stalwart pioneer.

By Zinnia Humphrey

[Retyped by Nancy Orgill, January 4, 2001. Some minor corrections in spelling were made, but it is Zinnia's work. She doesn't guarantee the dates are correct but the incidents are. Zinnia is the granddaughter of Sarah's son Thomas Fullmer.]