

# WAR HERO

## SAMUEL LEWIS

*compiled by Lucy Brown Archer*

# MORMON BATTALION

Born: October 27, 1829 at Simpson County, Kentucky

Died: August 31, 1911 at Phoenix, Maricopa, Arizona

Buried at Thatcher, Graham, Arizona

### **The Life of Samuel Lewis**

*As Told by Several of his Children & Cited Sources*

*Assembled by Laura McBride Smith, his granddaughter*

*Reassembled/ typed by Maria Helena Sala Johnson, his 3rd great granddaughter*

Samuel Lewis, the oldest son of Tarlton Lewis and Malinda Gimlin Lewis, was born in Simpson County, Kentucky on October 27, 1829. Nothing is known of his life as a child. It is so bad to think as long as we, his grandchildren, have lived around him and all the chances we have had, we were thoughtless as to not ask him more about his childhood. What did he do? Did he go to school? Did he work on a far? How old was he when he let his whiskers grow long? What color was his hair when he was young? Did he ever go with another girl but Grandma? Was he good to help his mother in the home? Did he learn to use the spinning well and work in the wool? And a dozen

other questions. But most of the answers are buried in the grave with their earthly remains and the rest is in another sphere that doesn't give us much information.

We will try to assemble all we can get and hope it will be of interest to his future posterity. Tarlton Lewis moved with his family from Kentucky to Macoupin County after their first girl, Mary, was the baby, and in 1836 he was baptized into the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints by his brother, Benjamin Lewis.

He became one of the great builders of the city of Nauvoo, where the family located. Before they located there, they settled at a place called Haun's Mill where they went through the terrible massacre which is written in the lives of Samuel's father and uncle's histories. He remembered well the bullets flying around his head like peas. That's all, only he wondered why he escaped. He might have ran to the woods with Johanna and her children and stayed in the forest until morning, coming back to witness the death and burial of her husband.

Anyway, Grandfather came out whole and well and went with his parents to Commerce, Illinois,



later Nauvoo, where his father worked on the great temple from start to finish. Although Samuel was only 11 years old, he commenced ruttng stone for the Nauvoo Temple. Tarlton had a good home in Nauvoo, but after all the mobbing and terrible Idllings and whippings they endured, they prepared to leave. They were asked not to retaliate when whipped as that would gtvе their enemies a reason to do more, but to take their punishment with trust in the Lord and after the Temple had been dedicated, they, with many more Mormons, received their baptisms, endowments, and sealings. I make this dear as it has been said their might have been no sealings done in that Temple, but Tartton and Malinda had all their work done in that Temple, according to the record we find on them.

Samuel left the beautiful city with his parents and camped with them on the prairies of Council Bluffs (so one account records) they endured hardships in the cold Tile next morning, after they crossed the

river, Tarlton and his son, Samuel crossed back and went through the temple, climbing stairs and looldng over the city and taking a last look at the dear home and Temple. It is said; several men went there the next day, were caught and beaten by the mobs. The terrible beatings, burnings, whippings, and attacks on women can't be realized by us after all these years, only those who experienced it can appreciate the freedom they found in the west a long time later.

## MORMON BATTAUON

It was while the Lewis family was camped in Winter Quarters that Samuel volunteered to enlist in the Mormon Battalion, under the command of Corp. St. George Cook, for the United States Government. Samuel was too young for such a career and he signed up as 18 years and he wouldn't be 18 years old until 1847. He signed up July 16, 1846, so he lacked more than three months of being 17 when he enlisted. It is said his father was so worried about it that his hair turned gray almost overnight. They were asking for men from 18-45. It was such a blow to these Saints to sacrifice so much after being driven from all they had in the world and in such hard circumstances. Why should they go fight for their country when their country had denounced them? This was supposed to be a free country and thousands of people from Europe had sailed for America for religious liberty and found it, but these poor Mormons; what was their future? It looked very black. Still they loved their government, and would fight for it and even with the awful state of existence they volunteered. Grandpa marched off on a trip that was worse than what he had just experienced. Brigham Young promised the men, if they obeyed orders and lived the Gospel of Jesus Christ, as they had been taught, keeping out of bad company and say their prayers, they would not have to fire a gun and would come home safely. So there were 500 men volunteered, leaving their families to the mercy of heaven and earth and themselves, and

they suffered much, but the trek across the plains began and we find that in another history.

Samuel marched with his company to Fort Leavenworth, where he was equipped with clothes and a sword. He marched on in his company with captain James B. Brown in command, ninety in each company. He was in Company C. It was a company of noble men, according to his history and most all the Mormon men obeyed orders and went through all the sorrows and hardships of that long march.

Dr. Ryder Ridgway loaned a book to me about the Mormon Battalion. It is hard to get. This book is valued at \$100.00. There is so much in this book about the Battalion and is so interesting. My Grandfather, Samuel Lewis was one of these men. He is only mentioned two times in the book, but I have heard him tell of the terrible things he suffered. They ate meat for many days with nothing else, not even salt, so grandfather got used to it that way and he never did care for salt all the rest of his life. If I had only asked grandfather more when he was here. I liked to read this book because it told so many experiences that surely my own grandfather experienced, and it tells just why the Battalion was organized and what it accomplished. It has strengthened my testimony of the truthfulness of the Gospel, and to read the talks given by President Young, J.M. Grant, Heber C. Kimball, William Hyde, James Stephens Brown, Samuel? Thompson and others at a big banquet given all the Battalion they could get together in Salt Lake in 1880.

Now when you read this, please pay attention to the last two pages of comment. I have written from a book written by Mr. Taylor about the necessity of the Mormon Battalion, as told by Brigham Young, a Prophet of God. He was inspired to carry on that group for a very special purpose, of which I didn't understand before reading that book. So, I copied some of the important paragraphs and wanted it

printed. Please do read these statements made by members of the Mormon Battalion, taken from a book written by Sgt. Daniel Tyler [probably Daniel Tyler's "The Mormon Battalion in the Mexican War"], a member of this famous group.

In this book, President J.M. Grant says this: "I have read many narratives of the valor of men and the service to their country; but I here see a set of men that rendered service to their country- not such services was rendered by the men who first raised the axe to break up wild timber and clear the ground for cultivating; neither do I see that class of men who labored and fought to remove the obstacles that once existed in the United States, but I see men who moved the obstacles, have stood in defense of their country under the heart rendering circumstances that human beings could be placed in; men who have family and friends to leave in the open prairie, and as our forefathers fought under General Washington and saved the country from the enemy, so did the Mormon Battalion save a large tract of land from being taken by the enemy, and they saved this people from being pounced upon by the militia of several states, for heartless villains had concocted plans to have all this people murdered while upon the Western Frontier.

You will know that I want to Washington and I know from what I learned there that the Honorable Thomas H. Benton advocated the necessity of raising troops and cutting off all the Mormons from the earth. Notwithstanding, you have rendered your services and offered your names to go and render service in the war with Mexico, yet while you were doing this, one of the senators and one of the principal men in the Senate, too, did endeavor to induce the Senate, The Cabinet, and the House of Representatives, to raise a force sufficiently strong to go out against the defenseless Mormon women and children who were left upon the wild prairies unprotected. Yes, Mr. Thomas H. Benton wanted to take troops and pounce upon your

children and women when you were on the banks of the Missouri River and sweep them out of existence. When the case was argued, the question was asked, "Supposing you cut off the men, what shall be done with the women and children?" "Oh," said Benton "if you argue the case, and want to know what shall be done with the women, I say, wipe them off too." Then it was asked, "What shall be done with the children?" "Why," said Benton, "Wipe them off too, all of them, for the earth should drink of their blood." The feeling was so strong upon the question that it came a little too close to magnetizing the whole nation.

What should we have done if we could not have argued that we had 500 men upon the plains, engaged in the service of their country, and their wives and children left without protection? What, I say, would have been the consequences if we had not this ptea alter and if we could not have raised the complement of men? What would have been the fate of this people? Israel must have been put upon the altar, unless by the interference of High Heaven. "A ram had been found in the thicket." Yes, brethren, had it not been for the Battalion, a horrible massacre would have taken place on the bank of the Missouri River. So I say, not withstanding your hardships and the difficulties you passed through, you rendered services to God and his people that wlll ever be remembered and wlll be a blessing upon your heads for time and eternity. And If your friends fell by the wayside, and tf any of you lost your families, and you sustain the people of God, you can depend upon a reward for all you suffered, for you are the sons of God. This is the real relationship of the Battalion to the Lord Almighty. Our motto is to sustain the constitution of the United States, and not abuse it, and we intend to live by it.

Brigham Young said, "What gave rise to the brethren to be called into the services of their country? I will tell you. Suppose it had been shown to you in a vision, that there were men In Washington, and influential,

too who had plotted to massacre this people, white on the frontier of this country full of Indians. All we had to do was beat them at their own game, which we did successfully. I am fully persuaded that a senator from Missouri did actually apply for and receive pennission from Pres. Polk to call upon the militia of Iowa, Illinois, Missouri, and if he needed more, Kentucky, for enough to wipe out the Monnons from off the face of the earth, provided they refuse to give up 500 men to help the army being made ready to fight Mexico, and they were sure the Monnons would refuse, as they had just been driven from their homes and lost all they had and were surely hungry and in dire need, surely they would refuse to join up. Who wouldn't? Under such circumstances, but in this, they were mistaken.

President Young was inspired to raise the quota at all costs for the Lord was behind the move and directing our Prophet in his doings. Mr. Benton said the Mormons weren't loyal to the government, and should be wiped off the territory. President Young realized it in time to save the saints. These 500 men, single and married, signed up and made the march to R. Leavenworth and were given their needs for the trek and marched all the way to San Diego, a long terrible march, where they nearly choked to death for water, went barefoot through heat and cold, starving, nothing to eat many times, going hungry. Had to eat their old starved mules, a rabbit, or bark from trees and dig wells for water when the captain would get in a huny and rush the men without time to rest or get all the water they needed. They would kill buffalo, get it hatf jerked, then the command to march was given and the half of the meat was left lying on the ground to spoil the next day. The Battalion would have nothing to eat. The officers were hard to understand but the Mormons knew why some things were done that shouldn't be and that was because they were trying to heckle the Monnon men to make it as hard as possible for them to endure and they were worried at leaving their families about on the prairie with nothing to eat. They did what they were told.

They were promised officials from their own ranks, but alas!!~ They were men under bad commanders, all but a few officials who were good to them.

These men were under orders from Brigham Young to live the Gospel and do what is right. He promised them they wouldn't have to fire a shot or fight any one if this was fulfilled. They took over California and had headquarters at San Diego. Our Grandfathers had it hard. They had to scrape off the hair of cow hides, wash it good and boil it and eat the hide and drink the soup to keep life in them. The horses were so thin and weak the men were hitched to the wagons and helped pull them many miles over mountains. They were ill treated by the company doctor. Every man who got sick was given Calomel and Strychnine. It didn't matter what they had, they all took this medicine. At one time there was over 100 men sick, and no one to wait on them, and they took this prescribed medicine. One was so bad and he refused to take the stuff. The doctor got several men to hold him down and force the calomel down him and within 2 hours he was dead. The surgeon was called away for several days and while he was gone most all of the sick men were well again and ready to work.

It was true none of the officers took the doctors medicine. It was just another way to hurt the Monnons. It was Dr. Stevenson that did the best he could to kill off all the Mormons.

Heber C. Kimball said, "I want to tell you men that you will have times and seasons yet, and you will be brought closer quarters than you were in those occasions. I feel to warn you and forewarn you of these things. Don't sell your guns, but if you have not good ones, see and get them, and rub up your swords (this is the first and only time swords has ever been mentioned in this book, and grandfather had his sword all his life and gave it to my brother, Oyde, before his death. I have often wondered if they used swords, as guns and knives are all that they mentioned in this history.)

And be ready, but fear not, for the Lord will prepare a ram in the thicket, and he will save his people, and overthrow the wicked, if it takes every one of these boys and the Battalion to do it. Brother Grant was in Zion's camp and it was said in a revelation given to the Prophet Joseph that we then offered a sacrifice equal to the sacrifice Abraham offered when he put Isaac on the altar, and Isaac's blessings will be upon you. He said that everyone that lifts a hand against you shall fall, every nation, every president, every king who lifts a hand against you shall fall, the curse of the almighty will rest upon them. The Battalion had the respect of all the people who came in contact with them. One officer said he could take 1000 men like them and do more in war with Mexico than could be done with the whole United States Army. These men lived the Gospel while in the service of their country the same

as at home and didn't grumble at the wicked way they were treated in the service. They kept themselves dean. There were a few too weak to refrain, but it is hard for all to live perfectly, as we all have weaknesses."

The Battalion was a model of righteousness in all their doings and my grandfather I am sure, was one of the best. He was next to the youngest man there. It mentioned Henry G. Boyle who lived just a mile from where I live and he is buried out there in our cemetery. Christopher Layton was our Stake President. Grandfather was buried in Thatcher Cemetery. Levi Hancock has a lot of descendents here in the Gila Valley. He was quite a poet.

The first part of this book tells of the destruction of Nauvoo and how the saints were driven from their homes by mobs and all kinds of wicked men and were beaten and killed and women ravaged and children hurt. Tells of losing all they had and driven out on the prairies to die and it was then that 500 of their needed men were asked to go help fight the Mexicans. Of course, we have all this history, but it gives so much in detail here and is very interesting to read.

When I was a child, Grandfather heard me complaining because there wasn't anything in the house to eat but some dry bread (we always had bread and milk for supper but this night the cows didn't come home and we had only bread to eat) and he repeated this little verse to me:

“Never throw upon the floor, the crusts you cannot eat; For willful waste makes woeful want, and sometime you may say; Oh, how I wish I had that crust that I once threw away.”

Then he told me of how he suffered for food on that march. How he boiled his boot tops, to get a little nourishment. How he strained water to drink when they were suffering for thirst. How they were nearly killed by a herd of wild bulls, and of the way some of the Mormons were treated, because they were Mormons. How they were all made to take a dose of calomel and Strychnine whether they needed it or not and how some of them died from its effect. How some held it in their mouths until this crazy doctor left and then spit it out. This doctor had dozens of them right down in bed, sick. He had to leave for several days and when he got back they were up and well. (Strychnine is a strong poison; only a small amount is needed to produce severe effects in people. Strychnine poisoning can cause extremely serious adverse health effects, including death. In the past, strychnine was available in a pill form and was used to treat many human ailments. (Today, strychnine is used primarily as a pesticide, particularly to kill rats.)

The devil was right there among our men trying to destroy them at every opportunity, and although they suffered much, they were true to their teachings and returned home safely, all but a few who were weak and couldn't take it. It couldn't be a perfect plan with human beings, but the Mormon men did an excellent job, and preached the Gospel by their action and the rest of the men couldn't help but see it.

There were many men besides the Mormons on this march and some of them watched these Mormons and marveled at the courage they showed with the treatment they received from their supervisors. They had the spirit of the Lord with them and he sustained them. It is my understanding that these men walked this long distance from Fort Leavenworth to San Diego on foot, 2000 miles, over rough country, no road down steep canyons, pulled up the wagons, which held their supplies where it was too steep for horses to climb, by windless, and let them down canyons the same way. There were several women accompanied this trek as laundry women, but we want our children to understand these Mormon men walked every step of the way, 2000 miles and that is further than the Saints traveled by handcarts across the plains, in the early days of the church.

There was some confusion between these men and their leaders, some shortcomings and ignorance. At one time when they had been on starvation rations, had even killed dogs to eat, one man had killed a crow, some had boiled their shoe soles and drank the soup if you could call it soup, when one of the men killed a poor old cow and someone killed a deer. They had plenty of meat, and after satisfying their hunger, they proceeded to cut up the rest of the meat in strips to dry it as they knew they would need it later, but right in the middle of this process, the captain gave orders to move on and most of the meat had to be left to spoil, but orders were orders.

The company finally reached Tucson and they weren't made very welcome. They succeeded to find a tall pole nearly 150 feet high, sat it up and displayed the United States Stars and Stripes, over that small town, making it U.S. Territory. It took about 6 months to reach their western destination of San Diego. After serving a year in the service, he was discharged and he with other of his comrades, walked back to Salt Lake. Think of that. Walked all the way, he was discharged at Los Angeles July 16, 1847.

Samuel Lewis enlisted in the Mormon Battalion on July 16, 1846. The Battalion made its infantry march of 2000 miles from Missouri River to the Pacific coast. The chart was made by Colonel Cook's engineers, was placed on file in Washington D.C. and later formed the basis for the construction of the Pacific Southern Railroad. They participated in the conflict which made California, Utah, Idaho, Nevada, Colorado, New Mexico and Arizona part of the United States. Samuel Lewis was the youngest man in the Mormon Battalion, except one, and that was Lot Smith, who was two months younger. (Noted in Improvement Era January 1920)

Clyde McBride still has the sword of grandfathers and is planning to have it on display in the museum in Pima. can't find anything about swords being used by

the Battalion in history, but surely they carried them. Don't suppose they ever had to use them, as they never had to fight anyone.

Grandfather Lewis was a true Latter-day Saint. Although he was not a public speaker, he was true to the Gospel and all its teachings. Grandfather was a tall, slender man, well built, and he loved to walk. In fact, he was built just right for walking. It is said by one of his grandsons, Edward Moody, that Grandpa told him that the Prophet Joseph Smith wanted someone to take a message down to Joseph City about 250 miles down the river. Samuel volunteered to do the job. He said he took a bag of parched corn and some jerky (dried beef) and left on his errand. He made it there and back to Nauvoo in 9 days. Some folks say it could not be done in that length of time but they didn't know Grandpa. He was a great walker and that was his hobby. He said that trip was just a prelude and preparation for the long trek of 2000 miles he took to the Pacific Coast. He also told Edward he made a trip from Gila Valley up to the Alpine, from Clifton, only 50 mile distance, but it was the worst and hardest trip he ever took. It was worse than the trip to California

or the one to Joseph City. It was down in a box canyon and they had to cross the river several hundred times. He was going there to see his daughter, Mary Judd, who lived there in Alpine.

Samuel Lewis was the first white man to carry the mail from Utah to San Francisco. He was the first Sheriff of Beaver County, Utah. He owned and operated the first cutting machine that ever cut grain in Beaver or Iron Counties, Utah. He worked on the Nauvoo Temple until the walls were completed, on the St. George Temple 18 months, on the Salt Lake Temple 14 months and on the Manti Temple for 4 months.

The oldest daughter of James William Huntsman and wife, Hannah Davis Huntsman, was Sarah Jane Huntsman. Samuel had been home for several years

from his trip to California after an honorable discharge. He came all the way home on foot to join his folks in Parowan, where they had built a home in southern Utah. Sarah Jane fell in love with Samuel Lewis and they were married on January 1, 1854 in Parowan, Utah. Soon after they moved to Minersville with his folks. There they build another home and Tarlton Lewis became Bishop of that town, and they all lived there for 14 years.

The material this conversion story was taken from the "Huntsman Annuals", Family Search histories but the bulk of the story was written by Laura McBride Smith, granddaughter of Samuel Lewis. I met Laura when she was very old and I was very young. Seeing me as the "Keeper of the Records" she gave me many priceless stories, biographies and photos of the Lewis family which I have used in my family history books.

