

# History of Nahum Curtis

by Dora M Curtis Taylor

Contributed By: Alta Fae Shammo1 · 30 January 2014 ·

Nahum Curtis was born in New Salem, Franklin, Massachusetts, 7 July 1784, to Mary (Molly) Meacham and Moses Curtis. He was the sixth child in a family of nine children. He had blue eyes, dark hair and was about five feet and seven inches tall. He was slow of speech and had a mild disposition.

On 29 October 1809 Nahum married Millicent Waite in the First Congregational Church of New Salem. Three children were born to them while living in New Salem.

[Added in 1996 by Terry Brown: Joseph Curtis, their 5th child, tells of their family hearing about a "Gold Bible" when they lived near Pontiac, Michigan. He says his father, Nahum, bought one (The Book of Mormon) for \$1.25. Martin Harris' brother, Seville, and his sister (wife of Ezekial Kellogg) lived near and the Curtis family felt they had a good chance to learn the truth about the "Gold Bible", and the family was soon converted. We think Martin Harris' sister was Naomi. A Naomi Harris Kellogg was later married to Samuel Bent, who was a good friend of the Curtis family].

The following was dictated by George Curtis (son of Nahum) to his grand daughter Irene Colvin: in December 1832, the Prophet Joseph Smith and Jared Carter came to our place preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Meeting was held in my father's house. That night after retiring, the parents were conversing upon the principles they had just listened to for the first time, when they noticed the room begin to grow light. It grew lighter and lighter until it was as bright as noonday. Then they heard a voice say, Nahum, the Book of Mormon is a true record of the people that lived on this continent.. They were converted and soon every member of the family joined the Church.

## The Saints Come to Michigan,

by John and Audrey Cumming,

P.B.A. #1319 states: A non-Mormon resident of Oakland County recalled in later years the enthusiastic reception of this religion in 1832. . . . This early resident recalled that more than fifty persons in and around Pontiac abandoned their homes and moved off to join the Mormons. Some of the names he recalled were Thaddeus, Alvord, Ezekial Kellogg, Seville Harris (Brother of Martin Harris), Jeremiah Curtis, Nahum Curtis, Joseph Bent, Edward Stevenson and Temperance and Almira Mack. . . Falling stars, sacred dreams, and strange sounds all took on deep meaning. In the school house near Silver Lake where the Mormons held their meetings, one Mary Curtis (Nahum's daughter) a young girl of twelve years rose to testify of her feelings about God. Suddenly her voice became unintelligible and she was "speaking in tongues." [This was the 1st instance ever recorded in Church History].

About two years after the Saints were driven from Jackson County Missouri in 1833 an effort was made to purchase the land from which they had been driven, that the Saints might return and make permanent homes. Money was needed for it. Nahum had sold his homestead in Michigan for \$800 which represented the entire wealth of the family, but of this sum he gave \$325 to aid in the purchase, a sacrifice the family feel had been richly returned. After three years in Missouri they were driven into Warsaw by the mob.

On 13 November 1833 the Saints were driven from Jackson County Missouri and that same night a shower of stars fell all over the United States. That marvelous event was remembered by many people. They went to Clay County and commenced to build up a city and took farms on Log Creek.

Nahum bought a farm from Mr. Fletcher which they farmed for two years. It lay seven miles east of Far West at the mouth of Log Creek, where emptied

into Shoal Creek.

While Nahum was on this farm, his wife Millicent died 3 September 1838. Two days later Nahum and his sons, Lyman, Moses and Joseph were called to stand guard to keep the mob from burning and stealing.

29 October 1839 Nahum married a widow lady, Mrs. Delia Byam Reed, who had seven children. She was loved and appreciated by Nahum's children. When the Saints were driven from Missouri they went to Illinois, to the swampy and uninhabitable regions where they were soon reclaimed and Commerce (later Nauvoo) became a thriving and prosperous and beautiful commonwealth. Nahum built a two room log house, which was about three fourths of a mile north and a little east of the Temple Block in Nauvoo. Next on the east side was the Davis home.

19 Jan 1841 the Prophet Joseph Smith received a revelation, commanding the Saints to erect a Temple for the purpose of revealing Keys and Powers of the Priesthood and for the salvation of the living and the dead. By 8 Nov 1841 the baptismal font was ready for dedication in the Temple, baptisms in the river having been discontinued. On Sunday 21 Nov 1841, the first baptisms for the dead in the Font in the Lord's house were done.

Nahum and his sons helped build the temple. They helped with polishing the stones; sometimes it took days to polish a single one. Sand was poured on a cut stone, then another large flat one was laid on and ground back and forth until the under stone was polished.

Patriarch Hyrum Smith gave Nahum a Patriarchal Blessing, 28 Mar 1843. He was promised that his name and acts would be remembered by the generations that follow. He received his endowments in the Nauvoo Temple 18 Dec 1845.

During the time that the Saints were being persecuted by the mob, Nahum's home and that settlement was a place of refuge. The floors were covered with beds. When he came home from guard duty, he fitted up a wagon and a teamster and sent them with a load to the Mississippi River. While they were gone he got things ready to move his family and two poor

families that were with him. They started in February (1846) and it was very cold and muddy, making it very difficult for them to walk. After crossing the river, they camped a little way from Quincy for two weeks while the team and wagon went back again to assist others that had to have help.

Through these persecutions, Nahum's death was hastened. He died 9 March 1846 in Nauvoo, Hancock, Illinois. His children came west with the saints; his oldest son Lyman came with Brigham Young's Company and was one of the first to enter the Valley. As a family the Curtis's were noted for their honesty, industry and independence of character. Their special line of work was to redeem the wilderness and to make the barren soil productive.

Nahum's father, Moses, served in the Revolutionary War in the same company with his wife's (Mary Meacham) brothers; Captain William Meacham, Jeremiah Meacham, John Meacham and Jonathan Meacham. Taken from the New England Historical and Genealogical Register - Vol. 49, pp 204/205.

Nahum's grandparents on his mother's side, Jeremiah and Rebecca Hawkins Meacham, were the first to settle New Salem, Franklin, Mass. in 1737. Taken from the History of Connecticut Valley by Louis H. Everts Vol. 2 p 666.

In Massachusetts Military Record of the War of 1812 page 95, Corporal Nahum Curtis served in Lieut. W. Whitaker's Co., Lieut. Col. Town's Regiment from Sept. 12 to Oct. 30 1814. Service at Boston. The family then moved to Conneautville, Erie (now Crawford) County Penns. This place was first settled on Conneaut Creek in 1815. Taken from the American Guide Series, cosponsored by the Penns. Historical Commission and the University of Penns. - Oxford University Press, New York.

Nahum and Mary must have been among the first settlers as they had a child, Moses Curtis, Born there 8 May 1816. Two more children were born here, then they moved to Silver Lake, Oakland County, Michigan. George was the first of four children born in Michigan.

## FOLLOWING IS A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THE CHILDREN OF NAHUM & MILLICENT

Sophronia, born 1810, married Patrick Norris who was drowned in the Illinois River in 1833 or 1834 when returning from an electioneering mission for Joseph Smith. She and her only child, Millicent, started for the Rocky Mountains in Utah in 1850, but both died of cholera about July 6 of that same year. Both were buried in the same grave, their coffins were made from the bark peeled from trees.

Lyman, born 1812, was a member of Zion's Camp and also of the Nauvoo Legion and passed through the mobbing at Far West. He was endowed in Nauvoo 7 Feb 1846. He was one of the original horsemen to enter the Salt Lake Valley in 1847. He had two wives, but was not a polygamist. He filled one mission in the southern part of Utah. He died in Salem, Utah at the age of 86.

Moses was born in 1816. He was a member of the 2nd Cohort of the Nauvoo Legion. He was endowed in the Nauvoo Temple 2 Feb 1846. He came to Utah in 1850. For years he made his home in Salem. About 1878 he was called by the authorities of the Church to go to Arizona (Brigham City, near Winslow) to live in the United Order. Shortly after this he and his entire family moved there. They lived in the Order three years. Then they were disorganized. Moses removed to Eden, Arizona.

Joseph born in 1818 came to Utah in 1848. Married Sarah Ann Reed. He filled two missions before leaving Nauvoo, and was endowed in the Nauvoo Temple 2 Feb 1846. He was counselor to Bishop Charles Hancock of Payson (Utah) about five years. Died in Payson August 1883.

Mary born 1821 married Calvin Reed. She was the first woman in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints blessed with the gift of tongues. She was endowed in the Nauvoo Temple 30 Jan 1846. The last two or three years of her life was devoted to work for the dead in the Logan

Temple, she died in Logan in 1888.

George born 1823 in Pontiac, Michigan. He was endowed in the Nauvoo Temple 7 Feb 1846, lived in Payson, Utah and died in 1911.

Foster born in 1826 married Clarissa Bemus. He was a stone cutter on the Nauvoo Temple: also a member of the Nauvoo Legion and one of the Mormon Battalion. He was endowed in the Nauvoo Temple 7 Feb 1846. He was one of the discoverers of gold in California. He returned to Utah about 1858. He lived in Payson, Salt Lake & Newton, Utah; died in 1880.

Leon born 1828 died at age 10.

Hyrum, born 1830 came to Utah in 1848. He was actively engaged in the early Indian Wars of Utah and also in the Echo Canyon war of 1857-58. He married Mary Haws and lived in Newton, Utah where he died in 1898.

*(I don't know where I got the above, I have collected these for years. I have fixed it up a bit by Highlighting, Underlining and Centering but have not changed the content. Alta Fae 2002)*