

SHUNESBURG

Shunesburg is now situated on the boundary of Zion National Park, on the southeast fork of the Río Virgin River in Washington County, Utah. The land on the south side of the settlement along a small creek which was owned by an old Piede Indian, by the name of Shones, was purchased by Oliver DeMille, one of the first to discover this location in 1861, and here a town site was laid out and a settlement commenced by Oliver DeMille, George Petty, Albert Petty, Harden Whitlock, Hyrum Stevens, and George Cathn [Cottom], who got out an irrigation ditch, cleared land, planted orchards and vineyards, corn, cane and other crops; built dugways along the river as the way into this little burg was very narrow and steep, requiring much hard work and patience.

In 1862 the following years, this little group of pioneers was joined by Alma Millett, Artemus Millett, Jr., Samuel Gifford, and Amos H. Stevens, from whom this account was derived.

Later in 1863 came another immigration came, among whom were Artemus Millett, Sr., Walter Stringham, James Thaxton, John J. Allred, Hyrum Stevens, Barney Stevens, Elisha Stevens, Ezra and Franklin Stevens and their mother; also Elisha Everett and later Mrs. Mary Parker and sons, Samuel and William, and other Parkers; also John Alma Beal, Joseph Millett, Sr., son of Artemus Millett, Sr., Walter Renner, Walter Winsor, George Potter, Eliza Potter, Guard Potter and mother and sisters Sarah and Weltha; Joseph Scott and others.

The land was divided into small pieces to accommodate all. The soil being very fertile yielding abundantly. This little band of people lived in peace and prosperity, laboring together as one family until the Indian troubles of 1866 when frequent raids were made by Navajo and Piede bands, making it unsafe for this handful of people to remain in this isolated and secluded place. Up to that time they would have to go to Rockville, a settlement six miles from Shunesburg to attend religious services as there was no ward organization in Shunesburg up to that time.

Now, on account of the Indian troubles the people were advised to move from Shunesburg, Springdale and Grafton and move to Rockville for protection. This they did in the spring of 1866, leaving all their crops to mature behind them. But after all the families were safely settled in Rockville, the men would go in groups to their farms with whatever firearms they could muster up to protect themselves if attacked by the Indians. But they were unmolested in their secluded nooks; while on the outside: south, west, north and east, depredations or raids were frequently heard of and murders were committed in various places. The Berry boys and one woman were murdered three miles south of Short Creek, while on the road coming from Long Valley. A little later a man by the name of Whitmore and another by the name of MacKintire were killed near Pipe Springs. These places are now in Arizona. Elijah Everett was killed on the Pahrea while pursuing Indians with others trying to rescue the stolen horses and cattle.

In the summer of 1868 or 1869 the settlers of Shunesburg, Springdale, and Grafton returned to their homes as the Indian troubles had mostly subsided. In the spring of 1868 Alma Millett was called to take charge of the Church cattle at Desert Springs on the west side of the Escalante Desert and William Maxwell was taking care of sheep there. In 1869 they moved over into little Spring Valley, Nevada and a colony of Saints were called to settle there and also in Eagle Valley five miles below.

Joseph Millett, Sr. moved his family to Springdale and lived there one summer. He was called to Spring Valley in the fall of 1868. His son, Joseph Millett, Jr. was then ten years of age. They resided there for seven years and then returned to Shunesburg in the spring of 1875. Oliver DeMille was Presiding Elder there and John J. Allred was superintendent of the Sunday Schools.

Alma Millett and his father Aretemus Millett moved from Spring Valley, Nevada to Scipio, Millard, Utah and in 1875 he was called back to Shunesburg by President Brigham Young. Alma's father, Artemus, died in Scipio in 1874 at the age of eighty-four. Artemus Millett, Jr. remained in Springdale quite a number of years, then moved to Provo, Utah leaving several daughters behind. Joseph Millett, Sr. moved to Springdale to join the United Order and homesteaded a tract of land near the mouth of Oak Creek at what is now the entrance of Zion National Park. Here they got out water ditches, cleared and broke up land and farmed for two years. They were then called to Arizona. He sold his home to William Gifford and it now belongs to Zion National Park.

Shunesburg was later abandoned by all of its people. It is now 1931.

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