

Life Story of John Davis Jones

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And

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John Davis Jones was born 2 November 1831 at a place called "Yetgoch" (or "Ietgoch", which is Red Gate in Welsh), in the Parish of Llanllwni, County of Carmarthen, Wales.¹ "Ietgoch" was a cottage on Llanybyther Mountain, but is now in ruin.

John was the oldest child of Benjamin Morris Jones, a wool weaver, and his wife Elizabeth Evans. His brothers and sisters were Evan,² Rachel,³ Mary, Morris, Thomas, David,⁴ another Morris, Elizabeth and Sarah.⁵

It is believed that John's father, Benjamin Morris Jones, was raised by his maternal grandfather, Evan Jones, a weaver, thereby taking his grandfather's name and trade. Benjamin's parents were Morris David (Davies) and Rachel Evans.

John's first recollection was that he lived at a place called "Waingron" in the Parish of Llanybyther, Carmarthenshire. The family moved to "Blaenllain" in Llanllwni when he was seven. John herded stock for David Evans at a place called "Penywern" in Llanllwni, and lived there most every summer until 10 September 1846. On that day he embraced the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and was baptized by Thomas E. Jeremy in the River Teifi. He was confirmed by Thomas Harris. His father then hired him to Evan James who owned the farm "Cornel" in Llanllwni, receiving in payment 21 shillings. "Cornel" is still in existence and the family living there is still named James. This place was a long distance from the Saints' meetings. John prayed continually for the Lord to open the way so that he could be nearer; although far away he never missed a meeting. When his year of employment for Mr. James was up, the Lord answered his prayers, for his father and Thomas Jeremy came, and Brother Jeremy hired him another year at four times the amount received before. All the branch meetings were held at the Jeremy home. That was the last year that John lived in Wales.

He left his family and most of his friends and went to Llanybyther, traveled on to Swansea in a cart, where he boarded the steamer "Kubadore" ("Troubadour") with other Welsh Saints. This was the first emigration of Latter-day Saints from Wales to Salt Lake City. They sailed to Liverpool where the Saints stayed two weeks, then boarded the ship "Buena Vista." They left the Waterloo Dock on Monday, 26 February 1849 at about 2:00 PM with 249 Saints on board. As the ship departed those on deck sang "The Saints' Farewell", many wondering if they would ever see some of their loved ones again. They began their journey to America under the direction of Dan Jones, the great Welsh missionary. The ship eventually ran out of oatmeal and they had to eat hardtack and drink water called "ropey water", full of slime. Many of the Saints were very sick. John and two other young persons were hired to help the Jeremy family, thereby earning their passage over, and were under the care of Brother Jeremy during the voyage. Also on board was a young woman, Mary Jones, with her family, who was later to become John's first wife. Whether they became acquainted then is not known.

The "Buena Vista" was known to leak, and it was heard of some of the English, before sailing from Liverpool, to say, "Let them have it and it will go down with all the d---

¹ Life Sketch of John D. Jones, taken from his journal, now lost.

² Tombstone, Parish Church of Llanllwni, Carmarthenshire, Wales, noted in correspondence from Korinne Giles, second great-granddaughter of John Davis Jones, dated Aug. 8, 1971, to Beverly B. Hill.

³ Census of 1841, Llanllwni, Carmarthenshire, Wales (GS ser no 464307).

⁴ Census of 1851, Llanllwni, Caramarthenshire, Wales (GS no 14527, pt 64).

⁵ Birth Certificates.

- Mormons on board." However, Dan Jones, having some knowledge of ships, made repairs, and with prayers each day for safety, after seven weeks and three days they arrived in New Orleans 18 April 1849.⁶ Two boats came and towed the ship in, everything was unloaded upon the dock, much of it water-soaked and spoiled, and the ship then sank in the harbor.

With their wealth of melody and song the Welsh had come ashore carrying some of their crude harps with strings of hair or leather; even though they knew space would be limited they couldn't leave their instruments behind. John was also musically inclined. He played the violin and sang and taught several of his children to play, namely William and Hyrum.

From New Orleans they traveled up the Mississippi in the steamer "The Highland Mary" to St. Louis. John was taken ill at this time. They lost 62 of their brothers and sisters with cholera morbis. Thomas and Sarah Jeremy lost three of their little girls in one night from this dreaded disease. The power of the Lord and the exercising of faith saved John and many others. Though they had many troubles they were permitted to journey to Council Bluffs, Iowa, where they stayed six weeks preparing for their crossing the plains by ox team and wagon. A group of 113 Welsh Mormons was left behind for a time, among them were Mary Jones and her family.⁷

The company in which John and the Jeremy family journeyed across the plains was commanded by George A. Smith.⁸ John took turns with the other men standing guard every night. Many things transpired on the trek. They had considerable trouble with the Indians on the Platte River, four feet of snow in Quakenasp Hollow, and a great loss of cattle.

They entered the Great Salt Lake Valley 28 October 1849. John stayed in Salt Lake City for a few days. The Welsh Saints were located west of the Jordan River. He crossed over the river and worked for 50 cents a day in the canyon. He then went to hunt stock for Brother Jeremy. He found them after two weeks, in about two feet of snow nearly worn out, and he in his old country low shoes. When he returned, Brother Jeremy had left word with his wife that he didn't have any more work for John and he could go somewhere else to hunt work. He started out in the company of a man by the name of John Jones from Bawd Bach (Bedwbach). When they reached Salt Lake City, a distance of seven miles, it was dark. They were hungry and cold and neither one could speak English. They started for the Hot Springs, but had to crawl into a stack of hay near the Warm Springs, being without bedding, to keep warm. John asked his companion if he would pray with him before they crawled in, to which he received the reply, "No, who could pray with an empty stomach?" When this man called John the next day at daybreak, he asked him how he could sleep, and said that he couldn't sleep at all because he was so cold. John replied that the reason for that was that he would not pray before retiring. They then went north of Hot Springs where they found several of their Welsh brethren who were digging ditches for the Church. They had a good meal of corn codger and squash.

John stayed near Hot Springs about two weeks, then returned to Salt Lake City where he worked for Orson Spencer tending masons for \$1.25 a day. He paid Frank Puling (Francis Pullen) one dollar of this for board. He only worked five or six days there, at which time Brother Jeremy told him that there was a man named Joseph Holbrook who wanted to hire a boy. He worked for Mr. Holbrook for one year for the

⁶ U.S. Passenger List of the "Buena Vista" (GS ser no 26816, pt 33).

⁷ T.H. Lewis, "Letters from Welsh Pioneers", *The Ensign*, Vol. 1 (September 1971), p. 36; Federal Census of 1850, Pottawattamie County, Iowa (GS ser no 58039, pt 7).

⁸ Utah Immigration Card Index (GS ser no 38335, pt 11).

sum of \$130.00. In the 1850 census for Utah John M. Jones, age 19, was living with the Joseph Holbrook family in Davis County.⁹ He then went to South Mill Creek Canyon to haul logs to the mill. They were snowed in and had to live on rations for six weeks. The following spring he ditched in Bountiful, and in the summer made dobies in Salt Lake City. The following winter he went to school so he could learn the English language, working three months for brother Holbrook to pay for one month room and board.

John married Mary Jones, daughter of John Jones and Jane Treharne of Llangendeirne, Carmarthenshire, Wales, 28 January 1854. Apostle Wilford Woodruff performed the ceremony. They were sealed in the Endowment House 13 June 1856 by Brigham Young.¹⁰ He was married and sealed to Sarah James, daughter of David James and Catharine Bowen of the Parish of St. John near Swansea, Glamorganshire, Wales 10 February 1857 in the Council House in President Brigham Young's office by President Young.¹¹

John was later sealed to five other women in the Logan Temple, who had died previously. They were Jane Jones, (sister of his wife, Mary), who died about 1850, most likely in Pottawattamie County, Iowa, sealed 16 June 1886; Margaret Evans of Penywern, Llanllwni, who died most likely in the 1840's, sealed 16 June 1886; Mary Edwards, most likely a passenger on the "Buena Vista", who died in 1849, sealed 17 June 1886; Ester James, (sister of his wife, Sarah), who died 23 January 1852 in Wales, sealed 23 September 1886; and Margaret Evans, (probably the same Margaret sealed to previously), sealed 24 September 1886.¹² His two wives stood as proxies for these women. They, John, and their two oldest daughters, Mary Jane Jones Allen and Catherine Ann Jones Richards, did quite a bit of work for their dead in the Logan Temple.

John and his two wives lived many years in Willard, Box Elder County, Utah, where the first 15 of his 20 children were born, and the families were there when the 1860 census for Utah was taken, 20 July 1860.¹³ However, only he and Sarah and their children were recorded in the Willard Ward record of members.¹⁴ The ward record(s) where Mary and her family were recorded has not been located as yet.

In April of 1869 John and Mary and their children went north to homestead in the company of Richard J. Davis and family, and Moses Dudley and his son. They took with them cattle, sheep and chickens. They settled in Cherry Creek, Idaho which was then 160 acres of desolate sage brush flat with any number of snakes, coyotes, and wolves. He cleared the sage for farming and he also raised stock. He also engaged in merchandising for a number of years in Cherry Creek. John, Mary and seven children were recorded in the 1870 census of Idaho, Oneida Territory, 16 August 1870.¹⁵ Several months previous to this date, 31 June 1870, John and Sarah and five children are recorded in the 1870 census of Utah, Box Elder County.¹⁶ It is recorded in the Willard Ward records that their daughter Catherine Ann was baptized 5 June 1872, their son William Henry was baptized 5 July 1873, their daughter Esther Jane was born in Willard 26 November 1873, their daughter Hannah was born in Willard 11 June 1876, and their daughter Rachel was baptized 17 June 1876. Therefore, it is believed by these writers

⁹ Federal Census of 1850, Davis County, Utah (GS ser no 6154).

¹⁰ Endowment House Sealings, Book C (GS ser no 25165, pt 15).

¹¹ Nauvoo Sealings and Adoptions, Book A-B (GS ser no 25163, pt 4).

¹² Logan Temple Archives, Sealings for the Dead, Book B.

¹³ Federal Census of 1860, Box Elder County, Utah (GS ser no 6155).

¹⁴ Willard Ward Records of Members (GS ser no 6571, pt 1 and GS ser no 33553, pt 345).

¹⁵ Federal Census of 1870, Oneida Territory, Idaho (GS ser no 2398).

¹⁶ Federal Census of 1870, Box Elder County, Utah (GS ser no 6156).

that John did not move his second family from Willard to Cherry Creek until after the latter date. However, in the 1880 census for Idaho, Oneida County, Ester (Esther) and Anna (Hannah) are recorded as having been born in Idaho.¹⁷ In other records also they are recorded as having been born in Willow Springs (Cherry Creek), Idaho.

John built a rock house for each of his wives with the help of others. Sarah's home is still standing. He also helped build the rock church house which still stands with a modern addition.

To John's marriage to Mary Jones were born six daughters and four sons, namely, Mary Jane, Elizabeth, John Morris, Sarah Ann, David Davis "W", Morris Henry, Brigham, Rose Anna (Rosana), Margaret Ellen, and Charlotte.

To John's marriage to Sarah James were born ten children, five sons and five daughters. They were Benjamin David, Catherine Ann, William Henry, Evan George, Rachel, Joseph Alonzo, Esther Jane, Hannah, Annie Elizabeth and Hyrum John.

John received a patriarchal blessing 15 June 1855 at North Willow Creek (Willard) given by Patriarch Charles W. Hyde. He received a second blessing 7 December 1881 at Cherry Creek from Patriarch John Smith.¹⁸ On 18 January 1856 he was ordained a seventy by J.M. Grant.¹⁹ In 1873 he was called to the office of presiding elder of Cherry Creek Branch until 31 October 1880, when the branch was organized into a ward. On that date he was ordained a high priest and bishop by Lorenzo Snow. He was released as bishop in 1885. When Malad Stake was organized in 1888 he was called as a member of the stake high council. In 1891 when the ward organization was discontinued, he was again appointed to take charge as a presiding elder.²⁰ He died in this office 28 October 1900, and was buried 30 October in the Cherry Creek Cemetery. His tombstone reads, "John Jones Davis, not lost, but gone before". John was a musician. He played the violin and also sang very much for the public. He with his sons and daughters furnished music for the Malad Valley in early days. He left a numerous posterity, all of which should be proud to have as their ancestor this outstanding pioneer.

Note by Carol Jones Morgan: Any changes or additions to the original transcript are the result of additional information given by the life story of John Davis Jones as recorded by his son, Joseph Alonzo Jones, my grandfather. The only significant change is that the original transcript indicates that Sarah James had twelve children and the sex of two of them was unknown, and my grandfather indicates that there were only ten children born.

¹⁷ Federal Census of 1880, Oneida County, Idaho (GS ser no 38077)..

¹⁸ Card Index to Patriarchal Blessings (GS ser no 50673, pt 34).

¹⁹ Seventies Quorum Records, 18th Quorum (GS ser no 24740).

²⁰ Andrew Jenson, "Encyclopedic History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints". Salt Lake City: Deseret News Publishing Co., 1941, p. 133; Andrew Jenson, "Latter-day Saint Biographical Encyclopedia". Salt lake City: The Andrew Jenson History Co., 1901-1936, Vol. 4, p. 521; Box Elder County Daughters of the Pioneers, "History of Box Elder County", p. 341.