

Life Story of Sarah Williams

Written by Carol Jones Morgan, great granddaughter

Sarah Williams was born in Llanethy, Carmarthenshire, Wales on May 4, 1843. Her father was William Williams and her mother was Ann Williams. Sarah had two older sisters, Ann and Margaret, and a younger sister, Mary, and a younger brother, William.

When Sarah was five years old her father, who was a miner, was killed in a mining accident. She was baptized in 1852 in Wales and emigrated to America in April, 1856 when she was 12. Sarah's mother, Ann, was 43 years old and a widow with four children when she left Wales. They traveled to Liverpool, England and left there on April 19, 1856 on the ship S. Curling.¹ Records indicate Anne Williams (a widow 43), Margaret (15), Sarah (12), Mary (9) and William (5). They left with over 700 Welsh Saints never to see their homes again.

Elder Dan Jones, a Welsh missionary returning to Utah, was made captain of the emigrant company. The Saints were organized into eleven wards. During the voyage work details washed and cleaned the berths each morning. By 6:00 a.m. the cleaning and prayers were completed. Meals were served on a staggered basis for the various wards. Frequent meetings were held and evening prayers were over by 8:00 p.m. The passengers were remarkably clean.²

On May 23, 1856, after 34 days at sea the S. Curling arrived in Boston. The Saints were permitted to remain on board until arrangements could be made for them to ride railroad cars to Iowa City, Iowa, where they waited for several weeks for the handcarts to be completed for their trek.

Sarah's family joined the Edward Bunker handcart company and they left Iowa City on June 28, 1856. Almost all of the 320 people were from Wales and everyone except for six people spoke Welsh. There were 64 handcarts.³ Right after they left Iowa City there were heavy rain storms that blew tents down and washed away handcarts. Sarah walked the entire 1300 miles to Salt Lake City and had 25 cents with her. She waded through rivers, crossed deserts and climbed mountains.

Sarah's little brother, William, who was 5 years old was sickly most of the time and her mother had to carry him and pull the handcart at the same time. Little William died on the plains and was buried in a shallow grave by the side of the trail. His family never saw his grave again. In fact, they would be unable to even find it.

There wasn't much food on the trek. Each handcart had 100 pounds of flour to be divided up among the family. At first there was some coffee and bacon but that was soon gone. After a while the food was cut in half and many people were hungry. It was a hard time for everyone. They continued west passing through Laramie, Wyoming and over the continental divide to Fort

¹ LDS Passenger List of S. Curling Genealogy Society serial # 025,691

² Ships, Saints and Mariners by Conway B. Sonne, University of Utah Press, Salt Lake City, 1987. US & Can Ref Area Genealogy Society, 973 W 255, pg 178-179.

³ Handcarts to Zion by LeRoy Hafen and Ann Hafen, The Arthur H. Clark Co, Glendale, California, 1988, pg 82-83.

Bridger then into the Salt Lake Valley where they arrived on October 2, 1856, when Sarah was 13 years old.

She worked hard all her life. She married Lewis W. Jones in March, 1858 when she was almost 15 years old and had her first child, Lewis Davis Jones, on June 29, 1861, when she was 18. Seven years later she had another son, Hyrum William Jones, on October 25, 1868. Shortly after that, on October 11, 1870, she was sealed to her husband and two sons in the temple. Twelve years after Hyrum, on January 22, 1881, she had a little girl, Ann (Nancy) Jones, my father's mother.

All of her life Sarah was a hard worker and thrifty. She was always careful how she spent money, maybe because of that . \$25 she carried with her across the plains! She lived in Malad City, Idaho, the later years of her life and died there on November 29, 1915, and she is buried in the cemetery in Samaria, Idaho. Her life was well lived. She was 72 years old when she died.

Postscript: There are some discrepancies in the account of the emigration of Sarah Williams Jones as given in the record of my father's family. They recorded that Sarah left Liverpool, England on May 22, 1856 on the Packard ship "Horizon" with Captain Reed who was a Scandinavian and a gentleman. They also recorded that Sarah left Wales with her mother, four daughters and their brother William. This did not agree with the records I researched in the Genealogical Library as noted in footnote #1 where the oldest child, Ann, was not one of the passengers, and the departure date was April 19, 1856 from Liverpool, England on the ship "S Curling". I also found that the family arrived in Boston on May 23, 1856, and the family records indicate their arrival date in Boston on June 30th and going to Iowa City on the 4th of July. However, the Edward Bunker handcart company left Iowa City on June 28, 1856 and the family records do agree that Sarah's mother, Ann Williams, and her children were in that company.