

A Mormon Testimony —
The Journal of Edward Roberts, 1845–1865

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kindest regards,

David

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Gladstone's description of Wales as a 'nation of nonconformists' was well exemplified in the county of Montgomeryshire. Denominational allegiances according to the 1851 Census of Religious Worship show clearly how dissent had triumphed at the expense of the Established Church.² Differences of belief marked out divergent paths in the same way that differing interpretations over points of theological doctrine and practice gave rise to sundry minority sects. Although the absence of Quakers and Unitarians set a limit to the sectarian diversity in Montgomeryshire, small groups of Primitive Methodists, Arminian and Campbellite Baptists struggled to maintain their distinctive identity. So too did members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, or Mormons as they were more commonly known, who are credited as having one congregation at Machynlleth in the official returns of 1851. Whereas Anglicans accounted for almost 20 per cent of those who attended a place of worship in the county, the Mormons, ostensibly, amounted to a mere 0.3 per cent of adherents in a single parish. That so few a number should have maintained a peripheral presence in the face of innumerable difficulties underlines the tenacity of their basic religious convictions. Yet, as is too often the case, they command but minor historical interest and are usually overlooked in standard works that devoutly chronicle seemingly greater causes.

For the most part, Mormonism was synonymous with Merthyr Tydfil and Captain Dan Jones. Until very recently the only specialised work on the history of the Mormons in Wales came from the pen of T.H. Lewis.³ By now we are much better served. During the last few years Professor Ronald D. Dennis has produced scrupulously researched studies that have opened a new window on the subject.⁴ Every major aspect of Welsh Mormonism has been explored, with special emphasis paid to emigration and the compilation of Mormon literary output in the Welsh language. Tracing the vicissitudes of the Mormon cause at grass-roots level in rural Wales, nevertheless, remains severely restricted as no local records have survived this side of the Atlantic. Mormon activists who emigrated to Salt Lake City took great care to include church records among their few belongings. Within this context, the journal kept by Edward Roberts deserves attention.

Edward Roberts came from a humble working class background. Along with other members of his family he was one of the earliest Welsh converts to Mormonism. Indeed, the Roberts family *in toto* was to provide a devoted nucleus of believers for the faith in mid-Wales. Edward Roberts did not figure prominently, yet he fulfilled an invaluable local role. A list of 94 Mormon meeting houses in Wales in 1857 appended to T.H. Lewis's account includes Dinas Mawddwy and the name of 'Ed. Roberts'.⁵ In accordance with a church directive in 1855, instructing members to keep written records, he began compiling — in Welsh, and in a fair hand — what was essentially a work of personal piety. Prefaced with a genealogical root and

¹Môn-Fyrddin, 3 The Dell, Tonteg, Pontypridd, Mid Glamorgan, CF38 1TG.

²I. Gwynedd Jones, Patterns of Religious Worship, in Montgomeryshire in the mid-Nineteenth Century, *Montgomeryshire Collections* 68, 1980.

³T.H. Lewis, *Y Mormoniaid yng Nghymru* (Cardiff, 1956).

⁴See especially Ronald D. Dennis, The Welsh and the Gospel, in V. Ben Bloxham, James R. Moss and Larry C. Porter (eds) *Truth Will Prevail* (Solihull, 1987); *The Call of Zion, The Story of the First Welsh Mormon Emigration* (Provo, 1987); *Welsh Mormon Writings From 1844 to 1862. A Historical Bibliography* (Provo, 1988).

⁵T.H. Lewis, *op. cit.* (note 3), 126.

branch family history dating back to the mid-eighteenth century, the compact 70-page journal gives an unadorned account of his life and labour on behalf of the Saints over a twenty year period between 1845 and 1865.⁶ (As almost half the journal was written retrospectively, the precise dating of events in the first decade points to the existence of an earlier version.) Also included are details of baptisms, names of branch members, and a mundane record of payments. Unfortunately, the journal offers little opportunity for insight into his personality or private life. Unlike a revelatory diary it contains few expressions of personal thoughts and attitudes. All that can be said with confidence is that Edward Roberts was a devoted family man who lived for his faith. And to this end he showed remarkable energy and dedication. Neither does the journal comment on contemporary events or issues of the day; the one exception deemed worthy of mention was Edward Roberts's first train journey in 1863 which brought him to Cemmaes Road.

The main starting-point for Mormon missionary activity in Wales began with the arrival of Captain Dan Jones early in 1845. A native of Flintshire, he had emigrated to the United States where he converted to Mormonism a few months prior to meeting Joseph Smith, founder of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Previous proselytising forays along the Welsh border regions since 1840 had yielded modest results in Flintshire, Monmouth and Glamorgan, during which time the industrial conurbation of Merthyr Tydfil (with some 500 members) emerged as the dominant centre of Mormonism. In order to build on these foundations Captain Dan Jones published *Y farw wedi ei chyfodi yn fyw: neu'r hen grefydd newydd* (*The dead raised to life: or the old religion anew*), the first of his many religious writings. As 'President of the Mormon Church in Wales' Dan Jones radiated his message widely, braving direct physical threats as well as fierce denigration by Nonconformist ministers. A similar emphasis on adult baptism, and the consequent loss of their members, had turned the Baptist denomination into a formidable adversary. Given the level of opposition in the Nonconformist press, Dan Jones was obliged to counter the charges through the medium of a Mormon periodical, *Prophwyd Y Jubili*, introduced in July 1846 (and later renamed *Udgorn Seion*). While North Wales proved to be stubbornly barren territory, well over 3,000 new converts were attracted to the church in South Wales by the end of 1848.

During the course of his missionary work Captain Dan Jones had travelled in his carriage to Montgomeryshire in the summer of 1845 to preach the doctrines of the Latter-day Saints at Machynlleth. Over a period of two days, five meetings were held in a room under the town hall. Among those who heard him speak were Robert Roberts, his son David, and Thomas Ellis (a local shoemaker who was to serve as minister of the small congregation of 30–35 Mormons that met in a room at Graig Fach, Machynlleth).⁷ Robert Roberts purchased Dan Jones' treatise on *yr hen grefydd newydd*, as it was popularly known, and its impact was immediately felt within his family circle. Within a short time Captain Dan Jones returned to Machynlleth to preach a second time and consolidate the group of converts he had gained. It so happened that both these visits were missed by Robert Roberts's other son, Edward. But though he had been unable to hear Dan Jones preach, the message in his book struck a chord,

⁶The original journal remains with Mrs Lorraine Starkey, Nampa, Idaho, great-grand-daughter of Edward Roberts. A copy came to me for translation *via* my wife's cousin in Bonn, Germany, a course which led to further correspondence and acquaintance with Professor Ronald D. Dennis. I owe both a great debt of gratitude in the writing of this article.

⁷I. Gwynedd Jones (ed.), *The Religious Census of 1851. A Calendar of the Returns Relating to Wales. Vol. II, North Wales.* (Cardiff, 1981), 5.

<p> daeth yr hennwrind capten Dan Jones i fachynlleth drach efn i Pregelthun ond mi chef- ais i en clymed yr ailwaith trwy ff mod i Pabyllyn a Hamiaghel i Pregelthun clastrum adref erbyn 10 or gloch deyddd hwn - gwllais y capten Jones yn basio ein tŷ yn en cerbyd bychan - a en gwllais teimlais awyddd snewr i goshoddiad am yf ond yr yf yn myn ar frys yn en cerbyd twith tra s. i feirionydd - daeth Robert Evans i ff fachynlleth yn ol cyfarwyddad capten Jones ond mid oeddwn y sul hwn githwaith oblegd yr oeddwn yn Pabyllyn a Hamiaghel yn lle Thomas Hughes </p>	<p> yr Evans Maesthant y fock yn host yr hall Machynlleth ond mid yf y sul hwn yn dala en ffachyd - a methodd ffyned a fachynlleth - a hwn Robert Evans Pregelthun canblaid ond yn awr yn Pregelthun gyda saint oym Pregelthun yn lle Evans Maesthant yn yr hall - a chapod rym am os nad comedd o wran clawr yn Machynlleth - hwn Robert Evans trwy trwy - Corris - a Pabyllyn a Hamiaghel - Hamelryn - a Pthangyn - - cepais cyfleistria - i ddall heth or Athramiaeth gyda Robert Evans - wrth ffyned gydag yf i Pthangyn a cyfarfod snewr - darllenas ^{ffyned} oeddwn capten Jones at Robert Evans yr hwn aedd yn frys bys i am wra or saint aedd medd </p>
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Fig. 1.

An extract from Edward Roberts's account of events in 1845 when Captain Dan Jones revisited Machynlleth to preach. Having missed him a second time, he saw the Captain's carriage pass his house but was unable to engage in a conversation. Robert Evans, a former Campbellite, preaches in the loft of the hall at Machynlleth, and attracts 'scores if not hundreds' of hearers. While accompanying Robert Evans on a journey to Towyn, Edward Roberts becomes more familiar with Mormon doctrines.

Copy by courtesy of Mrs Lorraine Starkey, Nampa, Idaho, USA.

to the extent that Edward Roberts felt sufficiently confident to publicly defend Mormon doctrines against its detractors. As he wrote: 'although they thought I was getting more foolish I thought I was becoming wiser'. Further scriptural study and a greater understanding of the doctrines of the Saints strengthened his beliefs; for the first time in his life he had gained true spiritual revelation.

Edward Roberts was born in Machynlleth on 8 December 1823, the second of seven children. His father came originally from Mallwyd; his mother Jane (née Giles) had been born in the same house as they currently lived at Penyrallt Street, Machynlleth. Three years later, the family moved to Penbont y felin gerrig, a mile away in the parish of Penegoes with its scattered population of weavers and agricultural labourers. Here his father found employment as a skinner.⁸ The family attended the parish church; Edward went to the local Anglican elementary school and was brought up in the teachings of the Established Church. Upon returning to Machynlleth in 1844, however, Edward joined the Campbellites, a strict radical offshoot of the Baptist denomination which had begun to make a very limited headway in Wales. Within a week of being baptised into his new church, he became a preacher, writing 26 sermons, and journeying as far afield as Towyn, Cardigan and Llanidloes. Driven by an intense personal faith Edward Roberts also experienced deep anguish inasmuch as neither the teachings of the Church of England nor the Campbellite Baptists provided him with a complete theological certainty. His spiritual pilgrimage had only started.

Edward Roberts's enthusiasm to embrace the doctrines of the Church of Latter-day Saints received a further impetus with the visit of other Mormon preachers following Captain Dan Jones. Robert Evans, a former Campbellite preacher, was reported to have attracted 'scores if not hundreds' of hearers at Machynlleth. Accompanying him to a similarly successful meeting at Towyn, Edward Roberts learnt about the Mormon emphasis on anointment with oil and the laying of hands. Then, in February 1846, Abel Evans came to Machynlleth to preach on the theme of faith, repentance and baptism as a means of gaining forgiveness of sins. As one of the most ardent Mormon leaders to leave Merthyr Tydfil, Abel Evans soon justified his appointment as missionary in North Wales with the number of new churches opened and converts baptised. On the occasion of his second visit in April, Edward Roberts indicated his willingness to be baptised. Thus, on 18 April 1846, along with his brother David,⁹ and William Morris, he was baptised in Llyn Craig y Bwlch and subsequently accepted as a full member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. News of their baptism aroused some derision locally, with children of the town shouting 'saints of the prophets' and 'deceivers'. Undaunted, Edward Roberts was ordained a priest by Captain Dan Jones in July, whereupon he began to preach in the former Campbellite chapel. With the inauguration of the Machynlleth branch, the Campbellite cause, to all appearances, was completely supplanted. Altogether, Abel Evans could claim some 40 new converts in Montgomeryshire within a matter of months.¹⁰

Upon ordination Edward Roberts proceeded to proclaim the Mormon creed within the counties of Montgomery and Merioneth. During his first year he preached the gospel to 'hundreds' at Machynlleth, Aberhosan, Melinbyrhedyn, Cwmlline, Pennal, Bryn-crug,

⁸1841 Census Returns, Parish of Penegoes.

⁹David (Giles) Roberts also kept a journal for the years 1845–1857, but not with as much detail. I am indebted to Ronald D. Dennis for a copy of the journal.

¹⁰*Prophwyd y Jubili*, Rhagfyr 1846, 162.



Edward Roberts 1823–1894

Photograph by courtesy of Mrs Lorraine Starkey

Llanegryn and Dinas Mawddwy. A shortage of work in the area forced him to leave Machynlleth in February 1847. Taking Abel Evans's advice, and his gift of 3 shillings, he made his way to the South Wales coalfield to seek employment. Rather than travel direct, he followed a route that brought him into contact with an established Mormon network, starting in Aberystwyth. Arriving at Llanybydder he was persuaded by Thomas Jeremy (a confidant of Dan Jones and one of the first Welsh emigrants to leave for Utah on the *Buena Vista* in 1849) to preach in their meeting house. Elder Benjamin Jones, a tailor who hailed originally from Merthyr Tydfil, welcomed him to Carmarthen, and together they baptised and confirmed three new members: the son of a local blacksmith and two apprentice weavers. The next stop brought Edward Roberts to the house of Joseph Mathews at Tre-boeth, outside Swansea. Reaching Merthyr, he stayed at the house of the Rev. John Jones (Llangollen), brother of Captain Dan Jones, before settling into the close-knit Mormon community around Dowlais and receiving their financial sustenance.

Having secured work in a mine at Pengarnddu, Edward Roberts went on to play his full part within the local Mormon church. Although he felt extremely happy in their midst, he was to return to Machynlleth after only three months in the South. Back home he resumed his preaching activities with renewed vigour, concentrating his efforts on the numerous villages between Machynlleth and Llanbrynmair but coupled with visits as far north as Dolgellau and Llanelltud. By the summer of 1848 he had settled in Llanbrynmair, then a flourishing centre for the woollen manufacturing industry. At the Llawr-y-coed flannel factory he found employment as a weaver, along with his brother David and sister Susan. While retaining their membership of Machynlleth branch both brothers became instrumental in establishing a branch at Llanbrynmair in April 1849. All this time Edward Roberts had preached wherever he could find hearers. Not all went smoothly. Trouble arose when he baptised Mary Paul, Pandy, Rhiwsaeson, the daughter of an agricultural labourer. Her mother responded to the news of the baptism by arriving outside the door of his house to swear, curse and throw stones. According to the membership list for May 1849 four members of the Roberts family constituted half the branch. Soon after, three were excommunicated including Mary Paul. Whatever problems that presented themselves, Edward Roberts continued to preach extensively across a wide area to the east of Llanbrynmair, taking in Garthbeibio, Llanwnnog and Staylittle. In all, thirty different locations were recorded.

For organisational purposes Machynlleth and Llanbrynmair branches were placed alongside Blaenau Ffestiniog, Harlech and Towyn under the aegis of the Merionethshire Assembly. By the beginning of 1850 total membership had risen from 63 to 76.¹¹ In March 1850 its president, Eliezer Edwards, insisted that the Llanbrynmair branch be transferred to Dinas Mawddwy. This time, five of the seven members came from the Roberts family, with Edward Roberts serving as president. By the time of the 1851 census, all had settled at 2 High Street, Dinas Mawddwy: the father, now a widower, worked as a glover, John as a spinner, with Edward, David, Margaret and Susan as hand-loom weavers. (John, it should be noted, did not become a member of the Mormon church until October 1852.) Also listed as a 'visitor' on that census Sunday was John Evans, a Mormon minister from Henllan Amgoed, Carmarthenshire. Curiously, Dinas Mawddwy branch did not figure at all in the collateral Religious Census.

Acting once again on instruction, Edward Roberts travelled to Llanidloes in May 1851 to

¹¹*Udgorn Seion*, Tachwedd 1849, 233; Mawrth 1850, 88.

E. mwan S aint G anghen		A ugst 7 1853 or d d i n n u g J o h n	
Dinas Mawddwy Yonaws 1-1853		R o b e r t s y n a p p l i c a t i o n o d a n d o n g l a n	
1 Edward Roberts	2 David Roberts	W i l l i a m R i c h a r d s a c E d w a r d R o b e r t s	
3 John Roberts	4 Robert Roberts	y n M a c k y n i l l e t h a d i n d r e f a l d u g n	
5 Elizabeth Roberts	6 Susan Roberts	Y H y n g d o l i a e t h a i	
7 Marged Jones		W i l l i a m R i c h a r d s a m o c w a r t e r	
	Y H y n g d o l i a e t h a i W i l l i a m	y n P e r f o r m M e d i 11-1853-3-	
	R i c h a r d s a m o c w a r t e r y n	P r y s o r f a y n f u d a l - - - - - 3-	
	P e r f o r m M a w r t h 12 - - - - - 4-0	P r y s o r f a y n y m b r y d - - - - - 6-	
	P r y s o r f a y n f u d a l a m o c w a r t e r - - - - - 3-	A ugst 7- W i l l i a m R i c h a r d s e o g i d i a m - 1 - - -	
	P r y s o r f a y n y m b r y d - - - - - 6-	M e h e p n 22 W i l l i a m R i c h a r d s - - - - - 3-	
	W i l l i a m R i c h a r d s d i l l a d - 1 - -	22 D a n i a l D a m i a l s - - - - - 3-	
	M a w r t h - 12 J o h n P a r y - - - - - 6-	M e h e 11 c a p t a n D a n J o n e s - - - - - 6	
	12 d a r l i n o c P r i f H y n g d o l i a e t h a i - - - - - 6-	a m h y f r a m - - - - - 1-8i	
	Y H y n g d o l i a e t h a i	Y H y n g d o l i a e t h a i	
	W i l l i a m R i c h a r d s a m o c w a r t e r	W i l l i a m R i c h a r d s a m o c w a r t e r y n	
	y n P e r f o r m M e h e p n 12-1853 3- - -	P e r f o r m P h a g p n 11-1853 - - 2- - -	
	P r y s o r f a y n f u d a l - - - - - 6-	P r y s o r f a y n f u d a l - - - - - 3-	
	P r y s o r f a y n y m b r y d - - - - - 6-	P r y s o r f a y n y m b r y d - - - - - 6-	
	M a y 3 W i l l i a m R i c h a r d s d i l l a d - 1 - -	P h a g p n 10 D e m t - - - - - 1-6-	
	19 u d g u r n s - - - - - 1- - -	J o h n D a n e s e o g i d i a m - - - - - 3-	
	12 W i l l i a m R i c h a r d s P h e n t - 6	11 J o h n E v a n s - - - - - 1- - -	
	12 g a n g h a n a n s y n d o l e g i a m - - - - 2	20 J o h n D a n e s - - - - - 10	
		- d i m e d d 1853 h y f r a m - - - - 2-9-	

Fig. 2.

Entries for 1853 listing the seven members of the Dinas Mawddwy branch, accounts of payments to various funds (Temple, Fasting, Emigration), contributions to individuals to buy clothes and shoes, payments for books ('udgurns' = Udgorn Seion) and a donation to Captain Dan Jones.

Copy by courtesy of Mrs Lorraine Starkey, Nampa, Idaho, USA.

help form a branch. At one stage he was accompanied by three others and together they preached four times a week under the market hall. He returned to Dinas Mawddwy in October and in November of the following year married Elisabeth Lewis from Towyn. Two daughters were to be born — Jane (1854) and Margaret (1857) — and subsequently baptised into the Mormon faith.

Throughout the ensuing years the dinas Mawddwy branch maintained a well-ordered existence, with the Roberts family as its solid kernel. The names of the Saints as listed on 1 January 1853 were Edward, David, John, Robert, Elisabeth and Susan Roberts, plus Marged Jones. Apart from Susan Roberts, the membership remained unchanged three years later, although two other names had come and gone in the meantime. Besides directing effort towards missionary activity, there remained the day-to-day work of the branch. Particular emphasis was placed on the need to contribute regularly towards various causes associated with the Mormon church. Chief among them were the donations to church officials; contributions to various individuals in the form of maintenance money, clothes and shoes; the purchase of *Udgorn Seion* and other religious tracts; contributions to the Temple Fund (being erected in Salt Lake City), the Fasting Fund and the all-important Perpetual Emigration Fund. With the introduction of the new Tithe Law, a quarterly tithe was added to the outgoings in 1856. Indeed, president Benjamin Ashby from Salt Lake City arrived to address the Merionethshire Assembly on the matter in July.

For each Mormon convert the ultimate goal was emigration to the Kingdom of the Saints in Utah. In this respect those who had left Wales since 1849 were encouraged to sing the praises of the Great Salt Lake valleys in letters and press articles. According to a report in *Udgorn Seion*, 667 had emigrated from Wales in the seven month period between 30 November 1855 and 6 July 1856.¹² Thus it was only a matter of time before a member of the Roberts family would also respond to the ‘call of Zion’. First to leave was David Roberts. On 28 March 1857 he sailed from Liverpool aboard the *George Washington*, arriving at Boston some three weeks later with over 800 other Saints. Although the membership of the Merionethshire Assembly had remained almost unchanged during the first half of the decade — 6 branches and 75 members were listed in 1855¹³ — the constant stream of emigrants began to take its effect. This depletion in membership, in turn, induced organisational changes. In December 1857 the Merionethshire Assembly was dissolved and the branches at Machynlleth and Dinas Mawddwy transferred to the Cardiganshire Assembly. By the following summer Edward Roberts complained that he had not seen one travelling official during the previous eight months. Further rationalisation proved inevitable. With the dissolution of the Cardiganshire Assembly in June 1858 both branches became attached to the Caernarfonshire Assembly.

Following David Roberts’s departure, the remaining members of the Roberts family had continued to proclaim their faith with customary zeal. Edward Roberts was ordained an elder in April 1857; his father became an ordained teacher and John an ordained minister during the following month. But to add to the strain and frustrations of missionary work came the sorrow of Robert Roberts’s death in January 1859. In a moving account, Edward Roberts recalled the pain and anguish of his father’s final hours: the praying, the laying of hands and the anointment with oil. Robert Roberts had served as a loyal member of the Church of Jesus

¹²*Ibid.*, Awst 1856, 272.

¹³*Ibid.*, Awst 1855, 247.

Christ of Latter-day Saints for twelve and a half years, during which time he had reportedly testified to ‘hundreds if not thousands of persons’ of every religious sect. He was buried in the graveyard of Mallwyd Church.

Edward Roberts’s faith remained irresistible, unclouded by distress or doubt. Subsequent years saw a characteristically absolute commitment to the small gathering of believers at Dinas Mawddwy. In the 1861 Census returns he gave his occupation not only as ‘power loom woollen weaver’ but also ‘travelling Elder L.D. Saints’. Regular tithe payments and collections towards mission work and emigration attested to the continuing vitality of the group. In March 1864 Edward Roberts was appointed to preside over the branch at Machynlleth. A month later, following the emigration of the president of the Caernarfonshire Assembly he was invited by William H. Waylett, the mission president, to succeed him to the post. Though it was accepted that he would not be able to travel as widely as his predecessor, his duties still entailed extensive preaching work and exhortation to members to pay their tithes. Discipline remained strict, with transgressors excommunicated. Five members were banished from the Harlech branch in August for denying their faith, while a Caernarfonshire priest was dismissed for drunkenness. Above all else lay the goal of emigration to Utah and its inevitable consequences. When the four remaining Saints at Machynlleth set sail from Liverpool on the *Underwriter* in April 1865 the branch was finally dissolved. New baptisms at Bryncreg in the summer enabled Edward Roberts to restore the balance to some extent.

It was at this point that the journal came to a close. The choice which sooner or later preoccupied every Welsh Mormon now faced Edward Roberts. Inevitably, perhaps, it became his turn to decide upon emigration. In April 1866, Edward Roberts, his wife and two daughters embarked on their journey to Zion, leaving Liverpool aboard the *John Bright*.¹⁴ After a six weeks’ voyage the vessel docked at New York. Joining up with other Saints in Missouri, they became part of Captain Robert Chipman’s company for the trek westward across the Great Plains to Utah, a hazardous five month journey vividly recounted by both daughters, Jane (then aged 11) and Margaret (aged 9). The family now owned a wagon, horses and a few cows. As the spectre of danger and disease loomed, the company was attacked by Indians. But the horror created by the arrows that rained down on their camp circle soon gave way to relief once it became clear that the Indians were primarily intent on stealing their animals. Needless to say, the raid compounded their problems in that it forced most of the company to walk the remainder of the way, thus reducing progress to 15 miles a day. Salt Lake City was finally reached on 2 October 1866.

After a reunion with his brother David, Edward Roberts accompanied him to the Malad Valley, Idaho, a hundred miles north of Salt Lake City. Tradition has it that Brigham Young, who succeeded Joseph Smith as leader, had determined that this valley be settled by Welsh Mormons. At first, the family lived in a dugout prior to the construction of a two-room log house, while Edward Roberts resumed his trade as a weaver, producing materials for dresses, rugs and carpets. No memoir of his subsequent life at Malad exists, but in his adopted land he had the satisfaction of seeing both daughters marry and raise families of their own. True to character, he remained devoted to the faith which had governed and guided his early life in Wales. For twenty-seven years, until his death on 2 January 1894, he served as Sunday School Superintendent, missing only two meetings throughout this time. His brother David

¹⁴This subsequent information is based on the ‘Memoirs of Jane Lewis Roberts Thomas’ and the ‘History of Margaret Roberts Bolingbroke’, through the courtesy of Mrs Lorraine Starkey.

had died the previous May. Both were buried in the Malad City cemetery.

Many thousands of Welsh people had emigrated to the United States during the nineteenth century. Forced mainly by poverty and social deprivation they sought a better life overseas. For their part the Mormons were guided by an uniquely religious vision that presented Utah as the Promised Land. Edward Roberts's departure from Wales coincided with a catastrophic decline in Welsh Mormonism. Successive waves of migration had taken its toll. Local branches were deprived of their leaders; *Udgorn Seion* ceased publication in 1862; the decrease in convert baptisms meant that the movement was unable to renew itself. From a peak of almost 5,000 in mid-century, membership fell to 650 by 1868.¹⁵ In many ways, Edward Roberts's life and character encapsulated the heroic spirit of Mormonism. Inspired, fittingly enough, by Captain Dan Jones's writings, he had laboured for twenty years in a part of rural mid-Wales where Mormonism was invariably spurned, and with little result at the end of the day. Existing mainstream denominational allegiances were too firmly entrenched to accommodate what was in essence an American import, yet he took no easy retreat to apostasy. Edward Roberts's subsequent journey to the United States and ensuing struggle to start anew displayed similar fortitude. From the time of his baptism, at the age of 22, until his death forty-eight years later, his belief had remained unshaken. The success of the Mormon experiment in the valleys of the Great Salt Lake owed much to the faith, courage and commitment of such Welshmen.

¹⁵T.H. Lewis, *op. cit.* (note 3), 40, 112.

