

EARLY HISTORY OF THE REES FAMILY

By La Rita Rees Hancock

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It all started in Wales!

It was 1781 when Isaac was born to a David Jones and an Ann Davies. He went to live with a family by the name of Rees. They were very good to him. Isaac thought so much of them he changed his name to Rees.

Searching the Bedwelty Parish records of 1795-1827 an entry is found of an Ann Davies from Trevethin--the 7th of May 1827--aged 76 years. This could be Isaac's mother as she would have been born in 1750 as Moroni writes of his genealogy.

Some of Moroni's descendants remember him saying that Isaac was born illegitimately. This could explain why he went to live with the Rees family, and why Ann's last name is still Davies and not Jones.

On March 26, 1809, Isaac was married to Gwenllian Haskins at the Bedwelty Parish, Monmouthshire, then Wales. Monmouthshire is now England. They were both of that Parish. Gwenllian was the daughter of James Haskins and Lydia Morgan and was born in Llangynydd Parish, Brecknockshire, Wales in the year 1780.

Their first child Abel was born 3 Jan 1811 at Rhymey, Bedwelty Parish. Gwenllian and Isaac had four other children born to them, a son Thomas, a daughter Eleanor, and sons David and Isaac.

At the time of the big Methodist movement in Wales Isaac joined that church. He was a faithful member of that church for 27 years and maintained a membership until his death.

Isaac passed away on 25 Dec 1837 at Abersychan, Monmouth. He was buried at the Methodist Wesleyan Chapel graveyard, Varteg, Monmouthshire.

After her husband's death Gwenllian went to live with her son, Thomas.

In 1846 missionaries from The Church of Jesus Christ of

Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints moved into Wales and converted a great many people. Most of the Rees Family joined the Church at that time. Gwenllian was baptized in Nov. of that year at the Nanty-glo Branch, Monmouth. She passed away 3 June, 1853 at Blaenavon, Monmouth. She was 73 years old.

Thomas and David were very active in the Church. At one time David was Branch President of the Ebbwvale Branch. On 3 Mar 1856, the disorganization of the Nanty-go Branch, the Blaenau and Cwm Cely Branches took place in a council meeting held in the Blaenau Inn Assembly room. Also the organization of the Coal Brook Vale Branch took place on this date. Elder Evan Rees was made President. His Councilors were Thomas Rees and Henry Phillips. David Rees was appointed Clerk.

David Rees met and married Mary Ann Phillips. Their first child was a daughter, Elinor. A few years later they had another daughter. Searching Parish records we find her name listed as Susannah. A few years later a son, Moroni, was born to them. Then another daughter, Emily. When Susannah was seven years old tragedy struck this family when she was drowned.

When his children were ready for baptism David baptized them. He blessed little Emily. Soon after baptizing Moroni, for some unknown reason David deserted his family and came to America. It is believed he went to Pennsylvania.

From a census taken earlier in David's married life we found that his wife, Mary Ann's brother, his wife and children were living with them. This may have caused friction between them. My grand-father, David, has told us that Mary Ann was a very cross woman. She would frequently get him in trouble with his father. We don't know the real reason David left his family. We can only guess. It was a terrible blow to them.

Moroni had to go to work in the coal mines to help support the family, at the early age of eight. He claimed that for several months he seldom saw daylight as he went to work before

daylight and returned home after dark carrying a lump of coal on his back for his mother's stove. Moroni's son, Gomer, tells us that as he was running through the tunnel, carrying a light, he ran into a hanging branch or twig putting out one eye. The children of most Welsh families had to work at a very early age to help their families exist.

Moroni, his mother and two sisters moved around from town to town quite frequently to earn a living.

Moroni left Wales when he was 19 years old taking along a nephew, George Roper, who was seven years old. His mother, Elinor had remarried.

They sailed from Liverpool on a Danish ship, "The John Bright", on 4 June 1868. They arrived in New York on 23 of July, 5 weeks and 3 days later. Moroni worked on the railroad all the way to Fort Laramie. There he joined a mule train and walked the rest of the distance stopping to work on the railroad at Echo Canyon. He worked there all that winter and went to Salt Lake in May of 1869.

When Moroni reached Salt Lake he began to inquire around as to where he might meet another Welsh family. He was determined to marry a Welsh girl and when he got to Provo I'm sure he was delighted to meet the lovely Emily Vaughan. She was nearly 17 years old at the time. It certainly didn't take him long to make up his mind about making her his bride. Less than two months later he took her to the Salt Lake Endowment House and were married. The date was 28 June 1869.

In November they moved to Malad, Idaho, to try to make a living at freighting and farming. They endured many hardships trying to make a living on the dry farms there. They settled at Cherry Creek, or a little south of there known as "the bottoms". The family later moved to the big stone house on Cherry Creek, about three miles away.

Moroni and Emily raised nine children at Cherry Creek. They all worked very hard, the children right along with their parents. He was also very thrifty.

One of the highlights I'm sure in Moroni's life at this time was his trip back to Wales, his homeland.

He had a dream to retire from the farm and he did before he reached the age of sixty. It was 1904 when Moroni, Emily, and their two youngest children, Thomas and Gwennie, moved from the farm and into Ogden, Utah.

In 1906 Moroni was rebaptized into the Church. We find many rebaptisms in the early days of the church. Record keeping wasn't like it is today. Each place you moved you had to be baptized again for the record. Today your records follow you wherever you go. Also members were rebaptized if they felt a desire to change their life--after repentance. Moroni had left the church early in their marriage. Some day because of a quarrel with a Bishop up there who was a neighbor, who he reported kept stealing his water. Whether he left of his own free will or not he did leave the church for many years. Some say he wasn't in agreement with the General Authorities. He did become active again, paid his tithing and he and Emily went to the temple and performed baptisms and endowments and sealings for his ancestors.

In the Salt Lake Temple on 13 Sept 1910 the following Baptisms for the Dead were done.

Ann Davies-- by Pearl Thatcher  
Lydia Morgan-- " "

David Jones --by Moroni Rees  
Isaac Rees " "  
James Haskins " "

On 14 Sept 1910 the following Endowments were performed.  
David Jones-- Moroni Rees  
Isaac Rees--- James Holder for(Moroni Rees)

On 15 Sept 1910 these endowments were done.  
Abel Rees (David Rees's brother)--Edrick Savage (for Moroni)  
Thomas Rees (David's brother)--Milford B Shipp (for Moroni)

On 14 Sept 1910 the following sealings were done.  
David Jones---Moroni Rees was proxy  
Ann Davies----Mary Thatcher was proxy

Isaac Rees---Moroni Rees was proxy  
Gwenllian Haskins--- Mary Thatcher was proxy

On 15 Sept 1910 these Sealing were performed.  
 James Haskins-----Moroni was proxy  
 Lydia Morgan-----Mary Thatcher was proxy

Abel Rees----Moroni was proxy  
 Eliza Griffiths----Mary was proxy

During the winter Moroni and Emily went down to St. George to do some Temple Work. The 31 Jan 1911 the following Baptisms for the dead was performed.

David Rees----by Moroni  
 John Morgan--- " " (he was Elinor's second husband)

Elinor(Moroni's sister) by Emily

On the 9th of Feb. 1911, the following Endowments were done.  
 David Rees-----by Moroni

14 Feb 1911  
 Elinor Rees----by Emily

These are but a few of the names they did. They performed this work for many of the Phillips--his Mother's family.

Moroni and Emily made many trips to Malad to see their children. Emily went up to help them when they had their babies. They also made many trips to Provo to see Mary Ellen. A few days after one of Moroni's trips to Provo and soon after returning home his Beloved wife took very sick and died suddenly. It must have been one of the saddest days of his life. This was 19 Jan 1919.

After several very lonely years Moroni moved to Salt Lake City. My father, Dee Rees, remembers visiting Moroni, his grandfather, with his father, David. He says he was there when He shaved his beard off for the first time. At least in many years. Uncle Gome said he shaved it off once when he was a child. When he came home none of the children recognized him. In his later years it was very hard for him to take care of it. It was a beautiful white beard. Emily Despain, a granddaughter, said that when he would visit them when she was a little girl, he would bring them candy. Their friends used to think they must be special to have Santa Claus visit them so often.

Moroni's eyes failed him the last few years. He loved to

read. The following is a letter he wrote to one of his children.

"Dear Son and Daughter I received the letter and the check you sent yesterday Teddy was here and took dinner with us and done a little reading for me we are still having very cold weather and snowing every night, we have lots of it now I am very tired of this winter it has been hard on me I don't go out but very little I cant see hardly a thing so must close love to you all from your loving Father M Rees feb 27 th"

October 2, 1931, Moroni passed away in Salt Lake City and was laid to rest at the side of his wife, Emily, in the Ogden Cemetary.

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#### AS GOD RULES THIS EARTH

As God rules this earth and the souls of men,  
 You'll return to this earth and be born again,  
 Once you rebelled afore time against God,  
 You are doing it yet neath his chastening rod.

We are sent to this planet surrounded by space,  
 To try and prepare for a much better place.  
 Unless we improve our conduct as men,  
 We'll come back to this prison again, and again.

We choose to be led by old Satan for chief,  
 Which brought us much trouble and sorrow and grief.  
 Unless we serve Christ whose love is sublime,  
 We'll exist on this earth throughout aeons of time.

Crime is increasing, we are seething in sin,  
 We are foes in the field and traitors within.  
 No rest for the weary no peace for the soul,  
 The world has gone wild for dominion and gold.

Oh, why are we blind to salvation and life?  
 And a home with the gods without sorrow and strife?  
 And dwell in the heavens in peace as before,  
 We fell from God's grace, let us pardon implore.

Moroni Rees

A BRIEF SKETCH OF THE LIFE OF EMILY VAUGHAN REES  
1852-1919

I was born in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints in Cwmbach, Glamorganshire, South Wales, July 15, 1852. I was baptized when eight years old by John David. My father, brother and family came to America in a sailing vessel in 1860. Times were very dull owing to the war times. Father got work in about three months after arriving in America in the coal mines.

After working about one week he met with an accident which later caused his death. Father was very sickly and left to earn enough money to send for us. He saved enough and sent for us in 1861. We were six weeks on the sailing vessel. We stayed in New York about one month, then came to Minersville, Ohio, where we found Father.

Two of my sisters got a chance to come to Salt Lake with other families to help with the children. Mother worked with the sick all the time to help make a living for us. After staying in the East for two years, we came to Salt Lake in 1863 in Brother Bullock's train. I, my sister, and father walked all the way. We were instructed by the captain not to go too far from the train for fear of Indians attacking us. All our teams were made up of oxen. We had a sick sister and Mother rode all the way to take care of her. She died three months after we came to Utah. She was twenty three years of age. One sister married and made her home at Tooele County. They came to meet us at Salt Lake. We went home with them and stayed a few months through the winter.

Father went from Tooele to Lehi by way of Camp Floyd and was attacked by wolves. He had a lunch with him and he threw small pieces of bread to them and while they were fighting for it, made his way to safety. He soon met a team that frightened them away and saved his life. He was on his way to see an old friend named Alve Evans in Lehi. Brother Evans persuaded Father to bring the family to Lehi to live. We went to live in Lehi and he helped us out considerably.

One of my sisters married a teamster who brought us out across the plains. He was from Provo. Mother was a nurse and was out all the time with the sick. Our first home was built by Father and was composed of mud, with dirt floors and a hole with a piece of cloth over it for a window. The roof was the willows, straws and dirt. Mother made yeast to trade by the cupful for flour.

I was married to Moroni Rees on 28 June 1869 in Salt Lake Endowment House. We have nine children, six boys and three girls.

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A BRIEF SKETCH OF THE LIFE OF MORONI REES  
1848-1931

I was born in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints in Victoria, Monmouthshire, South Wales, October 20, 1848 and was baptized when I was eight years old.

I went to work in the coal mines when I was eight years old. I went to Utah when I was nearly twenty one years old. I sailed on the packet John Bright from Liverpool, Thursday June 4, 1868 under the directions of James Mc Gow. I arrived at New York on July 23rd. There were 732 Saints on board. 126 of them were Scandanavians.

I walked from Fort Laramie with Captain Mardoes mule train. I stopped to work on the railroad at Echo Canyon and arrived in Salt Lake in Sept. 1868. That same year I worked in Weber Canyon all that winter. I went to Provo in May.

I was married to Emily Vaughan in the Endowment House at Salt Lake City June 28, 1869.

In November we moved to Malad Idaho. There I followed freighting and farming. I returned in Sept. 1904 and came to Ogden, Utah. We have nine children. They are three girls and six boys. Emily Maria, born April 29, 1871; Moroni V. born June 14, 1873; David J, born Jan 29 1876; Mary Ellen, born Dec 29, 1877; Philip M., born May 16 1880; George A., born Feb 25 1882; Gomer V., born Nov 8 1883; Gwennie born Sept 17 1885; and Thomas R., born Dec 1, 1890.