

Mary Deer



Mary Deer was born 18 Mar 1831 at Languiske, Glamorganshire, Wales to David Deer and Margaret Jones. Her father was a coal miner and ship builder. She was the oldest of eight children, John born 22 Jan 1833, Eynon 11 Nov 1834, Phillip 15 April 1837 Phillip 9 Mar 1839, Ann 16 May 1841, Eynon May 1844 and Catherine 1 Feb 1846. If a child died the Welsh often gave a later child the same name. The first Eynon died at age 5, and the first Phillip at eleven months. Mary's mother died 28 Aug 1849, Her father married Catherine Davis 7 Oct 1850.

About the time Mary's mother died, Mary became interested in the new religion brought to Wales by Mormon missionaries. She was 18 years old and was baptized 8 Dec 1849. Family and friends became unfriendly following her conversion so she left home, going first to Swansea, where she worked as a seamstress, and later to Merthyr Tydfil where she worked in a printing shop for John Davis. She helped him with the first translation of the Book of Mormon into the Welsh language. She also hoped to get enough money to pay her way to America.

The ship Golconda sailed from Liverpool, England 4 Feb 1854 with 464 Mormon converts. Mary was among the storage passengers. The family of John Davis, the printer age 31, his wife Elizabeth 28 and daughter Julia 2 years old were listed as 2nd class passengers. They arrived at New Orleans seven weeks later 18 March 1854.

The ship Old England left Liverpool, England Sunday, 5 Mar 1854 with 45 L.D.S. converts aboard. Among them was David Woodwell Davis age 33, a widower. He arrived in New Orleans 24 Apr 1854. When and where Mary and David met is not known.

Old letters gave conflicting stories. One stated that he was a missionary returning to America, that he and Mary had met on the ship Golconda and had been married by the ship captain. Research proved this false when Davids name was not on the passenger list of the Golconda, that is on film at the Genealogical Library in Salt Lake City. About a year later our genealogy class went to the library and Larry was happy to find David's name on the passenger list of the Old England.

Another letter stated David had joined the L.D.S. church in 1847 and for 7 years he travelled as a missionary in England, Wales, and Scotland. This could be true according to the time he came to America in 1854. His first wife Elizabeth Hopkins had died in July 1852 at Aaby, Scotland (Ayshire Co) where a daughter Alice had been born in 1852. It didn't state that she died, too. David's parents were Thomas Woodwell Davis, and Elizabeth Bowen. He was born at Cowbridge, Glamorganshire, Wales 30 Apr 1821

Another letter stated Mary and David were married in Kansas City and remained there a year before crossing the plains in 1855. No record of their marriage could be found by writing to New Orleans, Kansas City, Independence Mo. or Salt Lake City. David was also sealed to Elizabeth Barry the same day.

Mary and David were the parents of six sons, David Thomas born 4 March 1856, Woodwell abt. 1857, Samuel Deer 22 July 1859, Hyrum Eynon and Joseph twins, 16 Aug 1862. Septimus Eynon 29 May after his father's death 20 Mar. 1864. Woodwell died as a child, Joseph the day he was born and Septimus at three months 30 July 1864

David was a glazier by trade and a member of the 9 quorum [sic] of the First Council of the Seventies. After David's death, Mary married George McLaughlin. The date is not known. Five children were born to them, Mary Ellen who died as a child and George born in 1867. Mr. McLaughlin went away leaving Mary with four small boys.

She was a good seamstress and made a living for her little family by sewing. She had brought a beautiful black shawl with her from Wales. She sold the strands of silk fringe around it for five cents each.

She became very ill at one time and thinking she may die she let James Walker and his wife adopt the baby George. She recovered but was not able to get her baby back. I have a small autograph album that belonged to my mother Elizabeth Jane Price. It had verses and notes written in 1888. The last one in fancy writing, "To Lizzie Price" and his name signed George McLaughlin Samaria Idaho. The fancy writing covered the page, with a heart in the center; so he must have come to Samaria to see his mother after she came there to live. He died 23 Feb 1889.

John Evan Price, this first settler of Samaria in 1868 had a wife and eight children when he and Mary were married. He was 57, she 39 years old. In his record he wrote, "On the 26 December 1870, Elizabeth Bowen of Malad was sealed to me for time and eternity, and Mary Deer Davis of the 2nd ward, Salt Lake City was sealed to me for time." His record also stated, "9

of January 1872 Mary gave birth to a daughter which was named Margaret Ann. Elizabeth Bown Price went to live with her son in Ogden Hall and was taken sick and died 20 Sep 1873 and on the 22 of Sep 1873 my first wife Ruth died after a long illness of many years. She was buried 23 Sep 1873. March 17, 1875 Mary had her second daughter who was named Elizabeth Jane.”

John Evans Price made a good home for Mary and her new family, He died 25 Jun 1876. After his death Mary used her Davis name.

Mary's father David Deer, his second wife Catherine their four children, and Mary's sister Catherine came to America 14 April 1865, the day President Lincoln was assassinated. The children were William born 27 Aug 1873, David 18 May 1855, Margaret 17 Nov 1856 and Janet 4 Apr 1858. A son Joseph born 26 June 1852 had died age one month. Catherine was 19 years old.

David had come to America hoping to go to Utah to see his daughter Mary and perhaps to see for himself what the Mormon's religion was like. He was 64 years old and not feeling very well when they arrived in America. They went to Colebranch a town north of Alton, Ill, where they made their home, hoping his health would improve so they could cross the plains; but he did not get well enough to travel. He died 21 July 1868 and is buried in Alton, Illinois. The family remained in the east. Catherine married Elias Clarkson. They had four children, one little boy died. She left her husband but it was 1877 before she came west with her three children Mary Margaret, Agnes Ann, and David George; three years old.

Mary and her son Samuel Deer met them at Ogden. It was a touching reunion when the two sisters met after 23 years. Weeping and embracing each other Mary repeated, “My dear little sister, my dear little sister.” She took them to Samaria with her where they lived with Mary for a few months.

Mary and Catherine went to Brigham City to Conference where Catherine met Jonah Evans. His wife Florence had died six months before leaving him with a family of seven boys. They were married 7 June 1877 by Lorenzo Snow. Mary returned to Samaria to tell Catherine's children they had a new “papa” and they would soon come for them. They came to Samaria later to live in 1880 when Jonah was sent there to be Samaria's first bishop.

Mary was active in the church, always ready to give service and help to those in need. She was President of the Young Women's organization for a few years, being released 5 May 1878. When the Samaria Relief Society was organized 27 June 1875 she was the secretary. On 5

May 1878 she was set apart by Eliza R. Snow and Elizabeth Davis of Salt Lake City as President of the Relief Society, a position she held for 19 years, until her death.

The general Relief Society officers including Emmeline B. Wels, Eliza R. Snow, Elizabeth Davis and others stayed at her home in Samaria when they came there to conference.

Mary was appointed Samarian first Postmistress 21 Mar 1881 until 27 Jan 1891.

Her daughter Margaret Ann married Alma Thorpe They had [missing text]

They were divorced and she married Delbert Potter.

Elizabeth Jane at 17 married Isaac Bowen Evans, a son of Bishop Jonah Evans. She was a school teacher. Mary died at their home at the age of 66 years. She is buried in the Samaria Cemetery, but not by her husband John Evans Price.