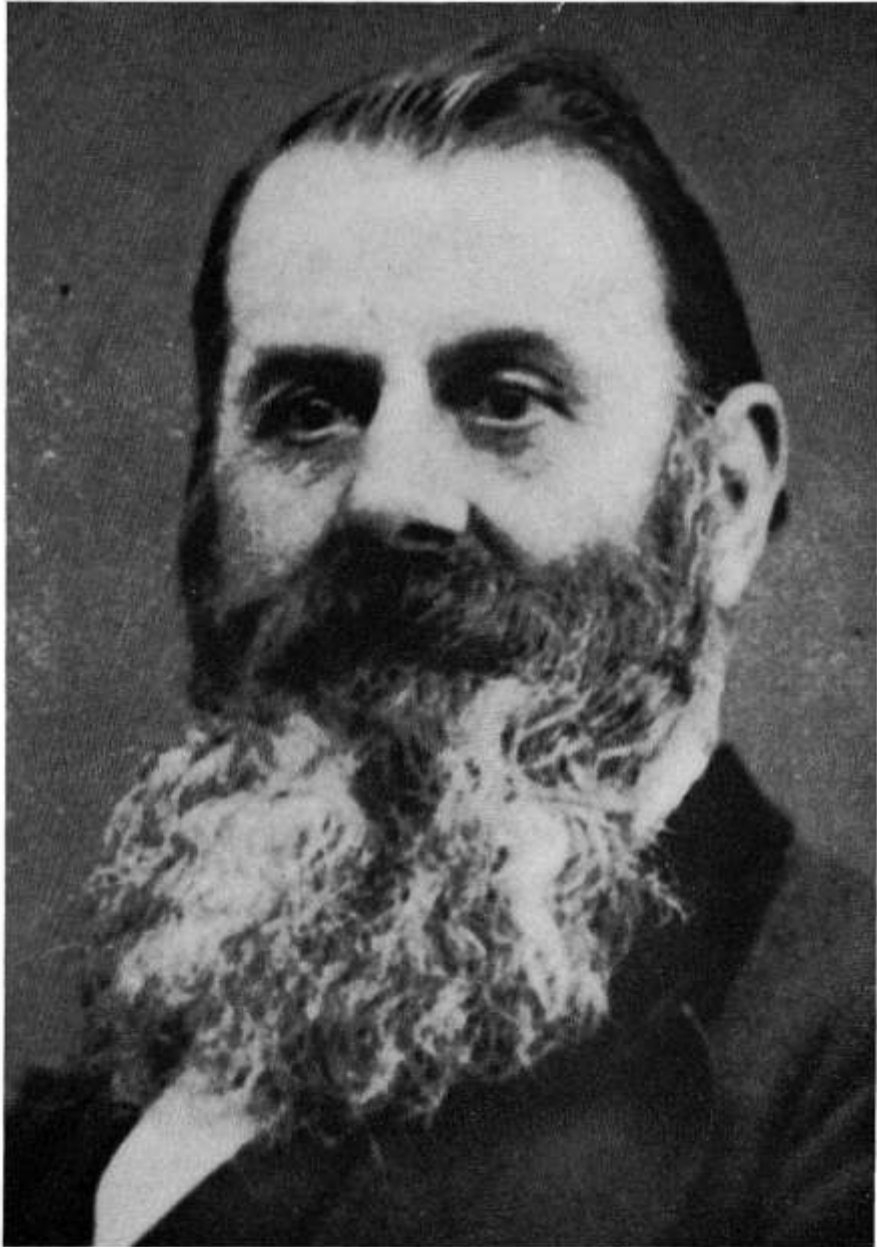




JOHN

DAVIS REES



JOHN DAVIS REES

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

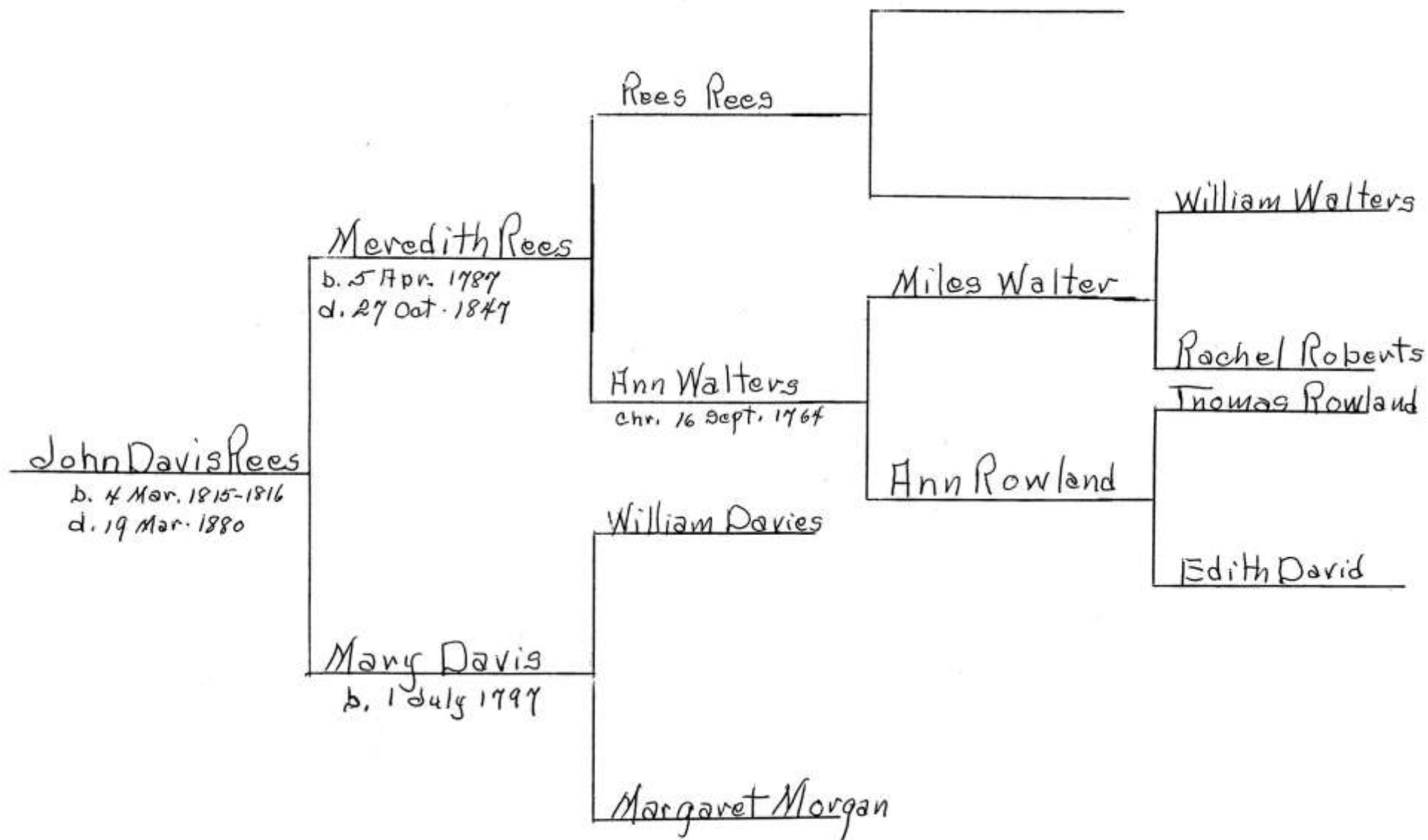
I wish to express my appreciation to the various members of the family, descendants of John Davis Rees, for the generous help they have given me in this project, and to Church and civic offices which have responded to my requests for records in their files.

It is my hope that this sketch of the life of John Davis Rees may help his posterity to know him as a person and not merely as a name on a pedigree chart.

February 1963

Leah Woolley

The Pedigree Chart ~ Rees Line



February 1963

Rees Rees - Ann Walters

b.

b. 1764

Meredith - Mary Davis

b. 1787

d. 1847

b. 1797

d.

Ann (Evans)

b. 1812

Margaret

d. 1914

John Davis

b. 185-16

David

b. 1818

William

b. 1820

d. 1868

Sarah

b. 1822

Mary (Hollis)

b. 1827

Edmund

b. 1827

Jane

b. 1829

Jane

b. 1831

Ann (Evans)

b. 1833

A possible Hannah

February 1963

JOHN DAVIS REES

John Davis Rees was born March 4, 1815-16 (1) in Merthyr Tydfil, Glamorganshire, South Wales. He was the third child and first son of Meredith and Mary Davis Rees. His two older sisters were Ann and Margaret (Peg). He had younger brothers and sisters ---David, William, and Edward; Sarah, Mary, two Janes, a second Ann, and a possible Hannah. (2)

Family tradition says he went to Quaker Yard, about six miles southeast of Merthyr Tydfil, to learn the blacksmithing trade. This probably accounts for his not being listed at home with the family in the 1841 census. He would have been approximately twenty-six years of age at that time.

A marriage certificate in the files of a granddaughter, Mrs. Pearl Thomas Parry, states that on July 4, 1842, he married Mary Morgan, daughter of William and Elizabeth Davis Morgan of Merthyr Tydfil (3). She was one of several girls in the family, so went out to work to help mothers in their homes. Abbie Rees Madsen has furnished a sketch of Mary's life in which she says that after the marriage "Mary continued her work for a very fine lady. Mary didn't tell her she was married for fear of losing her job while her husband was away. One day the pastor was there for dinner and asked, "Isn't this the young lady I married some time ago?" Her mistress asked was it so and where was her ring. She admitted she was married and showed her ring; she had been wearing it around her neck on a string. The lady was nice about it, and she continued working for her. (4)

On May 21, 1843, a daughter was born to them at Cardiff, Glamorganshire, South Wales, and was named Mary Jane. (5) Two years later, July 27, 1845, a son, David Morgan Rees, was born in Kidderminster, Worcestershire, England. (6) This indicates that sometime between 1843 and 1845 they left Wales for England, probably for better opportunities for his trade. Joseph was born, and died, May 4, 1847, in Birmingham, Warwickshire, England, and Elizabeth was born and died May 8, 1848, in Derby, Derbyshire, England, (7) indicating that they were in England some three or more years, not in Wales.

-
- (1) John's baptismal record gives March 4, 1815, as his birth date. Three patriarchal blessings give Mar. 4, 1816; one gives birthplace as Pontygwaith Endowment record of Nov. 2, 1852, gives Mar. 4, 1815
Sealing record (to Mary) Nov. 2, 1852, gives Mar. 4, 1815
Sealing record (to Jane) Dec. 28, 1852, gives Mar. 4, 1816
Tombstone in Brigham City Cemetery gives March 4, 1815
To date (January 1963) we have not been able to obtain a birth certificate
- (2) Family group sheet in files of Daniel M. Rees (grandson of John Davis Rees)
- (3) Marriage certificate lists John Rees of Newbridge, South Wales and Mary Morgan of the Parish of Newbridge as married by license in St. Mary's Church. The lower edge is badly worn, so the pastor's name is unintelligible and there are no witnesses or other data which are usually found on a certificate. Efforts to date (1963) have failed to secure a marriage certificate for verification.
- (4) Sketch of the life of Mary Morgan Rees furnished by Abbie Rees Madsen, granddaughter
- (5) Birth certificate for Mary Jane Rees (in files of Daniel M. Rees)
born 21 May 1843 Charlotte Street, Cardiff, Galms., Wales
father: John Rees blacksmith
mother: Mary Rees, formerly Morgan
x mark of John Rees, father
- (6) Birth certificate in files of Daniel M. Rees, son of David Morgan Rees
- (7) Family record sheet in files of Daniel M. Rees

When or where they first heard the Gospel preached by Latter-day Saint missionaries we do not know, The Index of Early L.D.S. Records in the Genealogical Library in Salt Lake City shows that John Davis Rees was baptized in September 1846 William Jenkins. (8) Mary was baptized on the 6th of September 1847. (9)

In 1849 they joined the first emigration of L.D.S. Saints from Wales to America, under the leadership of Captain Dan Jones (10). It is presumed they did not leave with the group that sailed for Liverpool from Swansea, South Wales, on February 14, but joined the group in Liverpool, since that city is nearer their last known address, in Derby.

We are indebted to T.H. Lewis for an account of this emigration, which appeared in The Improvement Era for April 1961 under the title, "The First Welsh Emigration to Utah (1949)." Here in part is his account:

"All the Welsh emigrants were housed in one large six-storeyed building in Liverpool where they spent six days at a cost of one shilling and sixpence a day for each person. Due to the efforts of Captain Dan Jones, advantageous terms were secured for the voyage --namely, three pounds twelve shillings and sixpence (including food) for all over fourteen, and three pounds for the under-fourteeners, as against the sum of five pounds (without food) which was charged in other ships.

"A service was held on board the Buena Vista on Sunday, the 25th day of February, under the direction of Captain Dan Jones. A branch of the Church was effected aboard ship. Permission was given to use the ship captain's deck for the choristers and 'orchestra' to render 'The Saints Farewell' for the last time.

"The Buena Vista left Liverpool on Monday, February 26. As the ship moved away .. 'we were followed by our dear brethern -- William Phillips (Merthyr), Abel Evans, Eliezer Edwards, and several other faithful Elders, together with David Jeremy, of Brechfa.' They ... 'brought oranges and threw them into the ship as long as they were within reach."

By the time the ship was passing the Isle of Anglesey, everybody on board was seasick except Captain Dan Jones and Daniel Daniels. As the land of Wales was disappearing from view, Dan Jones ruminated on his sojourn there since his arrival in August of 1845.

The route followed took them to the port of New Orleans, up the Mississippi River to St. Louis, then up the Missouri to Council Bluffs. Continuing the quotes from the Lewis article:

-
- (8) His endowment record gives his baptism as of Nov. 1847. See (15) below
- (9) Family record sheet in files of Daniel M. Rees
- (10) Statement in files of Leah Rees Reeder states that John Davis Rees was converted by Dan Jones; we have no verification of this and as far as we know Grandfather was in England and Dan Jones in Wales during this period. However, he did sail with the Dan Jones emigration party. See T.H. Lewis article in Improvement Era of April 1961.

"Cholera was prevalent at that time in New Orleans, as it was in many other places. These Welsh Saints had only one death from cholera there. Two others had died from other causes aboard ship.

"Dan Jones engaged a special steamboat to convey his company from St. Louis to Council Bluffs, Iowa, which was the usual starting point for the long trek westward. A quantity of iron was bought at Council Bluffs to make wagons.

"Before leaving Council Bluffs, Dan Jones arranged for some of the company to stay at that place for the time being and for a branch of the Church (known as Cambria's Camp) to be organized with William Morgans (of Rhymney, South Wales) in charge, A Welsh newspaper was published there."

(11)

The family record sheet in the files of Daniel Rees notes the birth and death of another son, Hyrum, on April 30, 1849, in St. Louis, the point where the company changed to the chartered boat which took them to Council Bluffs, John D. Rees was the only blacksmith there at the time, (12) and he remained with the group at Council Bluffs. Sometime later, he left his family while he went to St. Joseph where he worked to buy a fine set of blacksmith tools and other equipment with which to start to the Valley. (12) A son, Meredith, was born while they were at Council Bluffs, June 7, 1851. (13)

The trip west was begun in the spring or early summer of 1852, under the leadership of William Morgans. The company included some post-1849 emigrants.

"With them were fifty wagons and ten carts. In a letter to Wales, William Morgans stated that he was captain of the whole camp, Abel Evans was captain of the guards and William Beddoe (of Penydarren, Merthyr) the clerk of the camp. Among other officers named by him were Captain D. Evans (Llanelly, South Wales), John Rees (Merthyr Tydfil), N. Evans, the former president of the West Glamorgan Conference. One gathers from his letter that conditions on the western trek were less formidable than they had been in 1849. 'The Saints are in good health; everyone has his canvas tent as white as snow. Much milk in our camp being thrown away as casually as the bathwater used up by two or three Merthyr colliers. We have more milk than we can use.'

(14)

"When the group was within eighty miles of Salt Lake City, whom did they meet but Captain Dan Jones who was returning from Utah to Wales. When Mountain Creek was reached, some noise from a westerly direction was heard. That 'noise' marked the coming of three of the early Welsh emigrants who had traveled between thirty and forty miles from the Valley to meet the newcomers. Those three were Thomas Jones (Hirwaudm, Glamorgan), Morgan Hugh, (Pontyates Carmarthenshire), and William Jones (son of Evan Jones, Aberdare, Glamorgan.) With them was a load of fruit, including watermelons, potatoes, and onions. A little further on, the emigrants met another group of Welshmen who had likewise come to meet them and in that group were John Parry (Newmarket, North Wales), Daniel Leigh, Owen Roberts, Thomas Jones, and Cadwaladr Owen." (14)

(11) There is no record of Cambria's Camp in either the Genealogical Library or the Church Historian's Office (1962)

(12) Life sketches of John Davis Rees by Abbie Rees Madsen and Leah Rees Reeder

(13) Family record sheet in files of Daniel M. Rees

(14) Lewis article in Improvement Era of April 1961.

"This particular letter from William Morgans gave some further details of the journey across the plains. Hundreds of buffalo were seen coming to drink at the Platte River. The Indians were 'kindly' folk if approached in the right spirit. When William Morgans and his company happened to meet some hundreds of Sioux Indians, they were welcomed with the greeting, 'How do? Mormon good.' The Indians spread their blankets on the ground and invited the Welshmen to sit down with them to smoke 'the pipe of peace.' When these Welshmen reached the 'valley' they were surprised to find that the roads of Salt Lake City were 130 feet wide, and that there were trees between the carriage way and the pedestrian way. Alongside each road there was running water which could be turned on or off by the inhabitants." (14)

John Davis Rees and his wife and four children had one span of horses, two wagons, and eight head of oxen whose names were Lamb, Lion, Duke, Dine, Buck, Brandy, Laid, and Line. (12) They arrived in the valley in September (1852) and it is assumed they settled for the time being in Salt Lake City. Both Mary and John received their endowments and were sealed at the Endowment House, November 2, 1852. The record carries the following notation: "Tuesday: a cloudy day." (15)

On December 28 of the same year (1852), John was sealed to Jane Morgan, sister of Mary Morgan. (16) Family tradition states that when John was advised to take a second wife, Mary consented only if he marry her sister, who was twenty-eight and considered something of an old maid. When and where they were married we do not know at this time (1963). The following January (1853) Jane died (at the birth of her first child according to family tradition) and was buried in the Salt Lake City cemetery (17). It is assumed that Jane came to America in the Dan Jones party of 1849, though she may have come with some other party between 1849 and 1852. She is not listed with the Morgan family in the 1851 census in Wales, and unfortunately there seems to be no official passenger list for the 1849 voyage.

(15) Records of the Salt Lake Endowment House:

Endowed Tuesday 2 Nov. 1852

John Rees: born Merthyr Tydfil, Clams., South Wales, 4 Mar. 1815 parents:
Meredith and Mary
baptized: Nov. 1857
priesthood: elder
Samuel L. Sprague and James W. Cumming officiating

Endowment House Sealings:

#895 John Rees born 4 Mar. 1815 at Merthyr Tydfil, Clams., S. Wales
Mary Morgan born 15 Nov. 1822 at Merthyr Tydfil, Clams., S. Wales
The above were sealed by B. Young on 2 Nov. 1852, 11:00 A.M,

(16) Endowment House Sealings:

#968 John Rees born 4 Mar. 1816 Merthyr Tydfil, Clams., So. Wales
Jane Morgan born Good Friday 1824 Cardiff, Clams., So. Wales
The above were sealed by E. T. Benson 28 Dec. 1852, 7:50 P.M.

(17) Jane's part in the family was not generally known until 1961 when the sealing record was located after Rae Thomas Foulger told of her mother's relating Jane's story to her. Pearl Thomas Parry also remembers her mother's telling her substantially the same facts. Jane died 11 January 1853, though the cemetery record gives 1852, an easy mistake in recording at the beginning of a new year. She is listed as Jane Morgan in the cemetery record but the location of her grave is not given nor known. The cause of death is listed as canker.

On February 16, 1853, John was ordained a seventy by Alexander McRae and he received a patriarchal blessing under the hands of John Smith, March 16, 1853, both in Salt Lake City. (18)

In the October Conference held in Salt Lake City, 1853, Lorenzo Snow was called to go to Box Elder (later known as Brigham City) to aid the struggling Saints there. He was to select fifty families to accompany him (19). He chose men upon whose faithful devotion and manual skills future success would largely depend. John Davis Rees was one of those chosen. We do not know just when he and his family left for Box Elder, but their child Meredith (born at Council Bluffs) died November 20, 1853 (20) and family tradition says he was the second person to be buried in the Brigham City cemetery, though a search of the cemetery records does not confirm this nor is there any record of his burial in the Salt Lake City cemetery records.

Mary's father, William Morgan, with his wife and four children came to America, February 4, 1854, on the ship Galconda (21) and went to Box Elder to live.

In The Life of Lorenzo Snow by Dr. Thomas C. Romney, in the chapter entitled "Call to Brigham City", page 167, we find the following description of the conditions there when Elder Snow and his followers arrived, together with a brief discussion of its beginnings.

"The first ones to arrive at this settlement and who can rightly be termed its founders were William Davis, James Brooks and Thomas Pierce who came on March 11, 1851, and located one mile northwest of the present center of Brigham City. Several other families came a short time later. This same year (1851) a fort was built, the enclosure being circled by log huts in which eight or nine families lived. Immediately south of the fort a log schoolhouse was constructed which served the people for school and religious purposes. An ecclesiastical organization was effected with William Davis as presiding Elder, and later with the organization of a ward, he was sustained as Bishop.

"In 1852 the fort was deserted by the families moving onto their farms. However, the following year President Young instructed the people to return to the fort because of the threatening attitude of the Indians in that locality. Because of the unsanitary condition of the log houses at the fort, which were infested with bedbugs and other pestiferous insects, it was deemed advisable by the Saints to erect a new fort. This was built about three blocks north and west of the present Courthouse.

(18) Index to Early L.D.S. Records, Genealogical Library, Salt Lake City

(19) The Life of Lorenzo Snow by Dr. Thomas C. Romney, page 167

(20) Family record sheet in files of Daniel M. Rees

(21) Emigration Extracts: Book 1854-55, page 18 of Ship Galconda
Emigrated on ship Galconda, February 4, 1854

| | | |
|------------------|---------|----------------------------------|
| William Morgan | laborer | age 58 |
| Elizabeth Morgan | | age 60 |
| David | | age 23 |
| Hannah | | age 20 |
| Sarah | | age 16 |
| Susan | | age 12 (this age not very clear) |

"At the close of 1853 when Elder Snow was called to Brigham City, it had a population of two hundred and four souls. During the spring of 1854 nearly all the families called by Elder Snow had arrived, thus greatly augmenting the number there." (19)

"Descriptive of conditions existing in the country northward at the time of Lorenzo's call, he said: 'When I arrived at Box Elder county, I found the location where Brigham City now flourishes in a very unprosperous condition. Whether its change from the primitive state should be called improvement, e.g. whether it was better or worse for what had been done on the premises would puzzle an antiquarian. Even the big meeting house, with its ground floor and earth roof, was more extensively patronized as a receptical for bed bugs than for the assemblage of the Saints.' (22)

"Confirming the report of Elder Snow on the 'unprosperous conditions' of Brigham City when he first arrived, we have the testimony of Anders Christensen who in the summer of 1868 said: 'The land on which Brigham City stands was about as barren and desolate a place as a human eye ever looked upon, about fourteen years back. A very few families (perhaps a dozen) settled here and explored around but no flattering prospects for subsistence. We planted fruit trees in obedience to counsel given, but had no hopes of eating fruit from them, the ground being as hard as a rock, and without soil, scarcely a vestage of sand, even, to be seen among the rocks. We had the farthest place north where peaches and grapes succeeded.' (23)

"Elder Woodruff of the Council of the Twelve paid a visit to Brigham City the first year after the call of Elder Snow, and of the place he had this to say: (22)

'I rode to Box Elder (Brigham City) and preached that evening (Dec. 5, 1854) in the schoolhouse, 60 families are located here, the majority of them Welshmen and Danes, and mostly poor. Only a little wheat was raised. Bishop Davis had twenty tons of tithing hay and fifty bushels of wheat. The wall (to the fort) will inclose one hundred by two hundred rods and it is to be built of stone and is to be three and a half feet thick at the bottom, two feet at the top, and eight feet high. Its erection is now in progress. The people have a school this winter. Bro. Jonathan Wright taught school for them during the past winter." (24)

The fifty families, called by Elder Snow to come to strengthen the settlement at Box Elder, came a few at a time, and as they came, the fort was gradually extended to the south. The log schoolhouse was included in this extension. It is a matter of record that John D. Rees and family occupied cabin No. 2 and the William Morgan family, cabin No. 7 in the addition to the fort. (25)

The County was surveyed in 1851 by Jesse W. Fox when it was part of Weber County. (Box Elder News & Journal, 1951 Centennial Edition). Early in the spring of 1854, the townsite of Brigham City was platted, the survey being based on a meridian set for the Temple Block in Salt Lake City. This first survey, known as 'Plat A' extended from what is now Second North to Second South, four blocks east of Main Street and the same distance west. (26)

(22) Biography of Lorenzo Snow, page 168

(23) Deseret News Vol. 17: 193

(24) Deseret News, December 28, 1854, page 2

(25) Relic Room of Daughters of Utah Pioneers, Court House, Brigham City, Utah

(26) History of Box Elder County ed. by Lydia Forsgren, page 259-60

"The first lots consisted of one half acre, eight by ten rods. Anyone wishing to procure a lot in 'Plat A' was given a title to the lot of his choice after he had built four rods of the rock wall which was being built around the city. . . John Davis Rees built the first house on the surveyed lots. It was located on the southwest corner of Block Four, now Third East and Forest."
(26)

A LANDMARK BEING RAZED



First Adobe House Built in Brigham City

"The first adobe house built in Brigham City is now no more for a force of workmen are now tearing it down to make way for a modern cottage to be erected on the spot by Mr. C. W. Merrell, who acquired the property from David Rees.

"The house in question is the old Rees home located on the corner of Forest and Third East streets where it was erected by the late John D. Rees... in the fall of 1854. When (Mr.) Rees perfected the plans for the house, which consisted of two rooms and a leanto kitchen, the people of the community were still residing within the Old Fort which was located in that section of the city where the Third ward chapel now stands, and Mr. Rees states that his father and mother moved from the fort to the lot on east Forest street before the house was completed and the family lived out of doors and slept in wagon boxes, one of his sisters (27) being born just before the family moved into the new house."
(Brigham City, Box Elder County newspaper, June 3, 1919)

(26) The rock was laid up with sand and clay. The wall was about eight feet high three feet wide at the base, and two feet wide at the top. It was never completed except across the east side, and that ran from where Bott's Marble works is now located to Second South just west of the high school. Some parts of the wall were built on all sides of the city. (History of Box Elder County, page 259.)

(27) Family record sheet and sketches of life of John D. Rees by Abbie Rees Madsen and Leah Rees Reeder.

"In 1854-55, Main Street was only four blocks long. This distance on either side was occupied mainly by dwelling houses except for the open square which was comparable in width to the space occupied by the city ball and court house grounds, and extended west to First West Street. On this square were built the willow boweries in which conferences and celebrations were held. Here, too, the Indians gathered to receive government supplies and donations from townspeople." (27) During the summer and fall of 1855, the people began building their own homes on city lots. Lorenzo Snow located on Main Street in the fall of 1855. (28)

"On the east side of Main Street, south of what is now Forest Street, was the Court House, which was commenced in 1855, and dwelling houses which were owned in order by the following people: Harvey Pierce, James Pett, Porter Squires, Caleb Jones, George L. Grahel Sr., and James Christinsen, the canopian player.

"On the west side of Main Street and south of the square were the homes of the following: President Lorenzo Snow, Judge J.C. Wright, John D. Rees, Morris Rosenbaum, Andrew Jensen, Jeppa Jeppson, and Hans Peter Jensen.

"Morris Rosenbaum operated a store on what is now the southwest corner of Main Street and First South, and John D. Rees had a blacksmith shop on his lot.

"Very early in the history of Brigham City, streams of water flowed down either side of Main Street and shade trees were planted to make the boundary line between the street and the sidewalk, neither of which was graded." (29)

John earned his living as machinist and blacksmith and, as stated above, had his smithy located at Main and First South Streets, often taking gold dust and other commodities in payment for services rendered. (29) "From about 1853 until a few years after the railroad came in 1869, the blacksmithing trade was a very lucrative one, because of the thousands of emigrant trains, pack animals, etc. which kept the roads lined, at first enroute to the gold fields of California, later to the mines of Montana and Idaho. There were blacksmith shops at frequent intervals along the highway. At Brigham City, William Davis, John D. Rees, Reese Richards, John Williams (and nine others) operated blacksmith shops." (30)

(27) History of Box Elder County ed by Lydia Forsgren, page 261

(28) Romney: Life of Lorenzo Snow, page 170

(29) Life sketches of John D. Rees by Abbie Madsen and Leah Reeder

(30) History of Box Elder County ed. by Lydia Forsgren, page 94

John Davis Rees was also interested in a molasses mill and in a nail factory. (31)

"In the early fifties, John D. Rees and John Morgan built a small log cabin just across the creek east of Third North. Here they manufactured nails from scrap iron. The machinery was turned by water power. The iron was obtained along the trail to California and elsewhere.

"Martin L. Ensign states in his Journal that in 1854 he and Simon Dunn traveled three hundred miles by ox team to the Humbolt River to obtain iron left by the emigrants.

"The Indians often killed an entire train of emigrants, burned their wagons, took what plunder they wanted, and left the rest strewn along the trail --- a silent reminder of the hardships endured by the 'Pathfinders.' Many of the settlers traveled both east and west gathering the iron from such burned wagons.

"Mr. Ensign states further that they sold some of the iron and bought flour at ten dollars per hundred.

"Stories told by the old settlers lead us to think that Mr. Rees bought some of this iron and made it into square headed, four-sided nails of all dimensions," (32) some of which are on display in the Relic Room collection of the Daughters of the Utah Pioneers, in the Court House in Brigham City, Utah.

"In the fall of 1863, Lewis Boothe said he hired Old Tope, an Indian, belonging to the Shoshone tribe, to go with him to Goose Creek to get some wagons which the Indians had taken from the emigrants. He said: 'I returned with the iron and sold it to John Rees, my father-in-law, for twenty-five cents a pound.'" (33)

John was advised to take a plural wife, but Mary disapproved, walking all the way to Salt Lake City to present her protest to President Brigham Young. Her granddaughter, Abbie Rees Madsen, tells the story that on the way, Mary overtook a farmer with a rig who offered her a ride. She thanked him but refused, saying she was "in a hurry."

What President Young told her we do not know, but in December of 1857, John married Zillah (Celia) Mathias (34) of Brigham City, daughter of Thomas and Margaret Williams Mathias. The family had come to America with the Dan Jones Company of 1849, remained at Council Bluffs for three years, then came to Utah in the summer of 1852 and to Box Elder the following spring. Zillah was eighteen, John, nearly forty-three. Brigham Young performed the ceremony in the Endowment House, December 13, 1857.

(31) Life sketches of John D. Rees by Abbie Madsen and Leah Rees Reeder

(32) History of Box Elder County by Lydia Forsgren

(33) History of Box Elder County edited by Lydia Forsgren, page 90-91

(34) Zillah's name appears in various forms in different records. Her birth certificate gives Silla. Celia is a variant given in early records; all are different forms of Cecelia, I am told by our Welsh genealogist.

With the threat of the approach of Johnston's Army in the spring of 1858, "thirty thousand Saints left their homes in Salt Lake City, Ogden, Brigham City, and other communities, and fled southward, taking with them their movable effects and leaving behind only a few men with instructions to apply the torch to their homes should the government soldiers attempt to possess them." (35)

James Bywater of Brigham City writes: "It was required of us to put a roof on our Public Hall. We finished the adobe work and put the roof on after most of the people had moved." (36) "A small company of horsemen under the command of Willis Boothe remained to guard Brigham City against the possible attack of six hundred Indians encamped in the neighborhood who, it was feared, might set fire to the settlement. Most terrifying of all was the fear that United States soldiers would invade the Territory. Should this occur, certain guards were instructed---as in other communities-- to burn the settlement to the ground. The first threat was removed when the entire band of Indians took their departure to the north, leaving most of the brethren who had been left in Brigham City free to join their families in the south." (37) James Bywater wrote: "We went as far south as Pond Town (Salem) in Utah County. I assisted my wife's folks to make a dugout, getting the timber from the mountains." (38) It is not known where the John D. Rees family stayed during their exile.

Subsequently, when peace had been restored between the government and the people of Utah (39) the exiles from Brigham City, as well as from other communities, began to return to their homes. "Toward the latter part of May," writes one of these, "seven of us started for Brigham City, the rear guard having left. The Indians were ugly. We arrived in Brigham City in about five days. We found every house broken up and its contents strewn about A few days later, families commenced to arrive from the south; ... the majority of the people returned, but a number sold out and never came back." (40) Among those to return were the families of Lorenzo Snow and John Davis Rees.

Zillah's first child, named Zillah Alvira, was born April 27, 1859, in a little log cabin located on a corner of the old homestead of Thomas Mathias at Third East and Second South Streets. Here Alvira spent her early childhood. (41) Later Zillah moved into the north rooms of the long adobe house which had been added to the smithy and wagon shop of John D. Rees on Main Street. (It was later called the Cooperative Blacksmith and Wagon Shop, operated as one of the Brigham City Cooperatives,) Here Zillah raised her family of seven girls and two boys until after her husband's death in 1880. (*)

(35) Romney: Life of Lorenzo Snow p. 190

(36) Box Elder Lore, p. 79

(37) Romney: Life of Lorenzo Snow p.191

(38) Box Elder Lore compiled by Sons of the Utah Pioneers, page 79

(39) June 7, 1858, the Peace Commission reached Salt Lake City

June 26, 1858, Johnston's Army entered the Valley of the Great Salt Lake After remaining for three days on the banks of the Jordon River, the troops were removed to Camp Floyd in Cedar Valley, situated between Salt Lake City and Provo. (Romney: Life of Lorenzo Snow, page 192)

(40) Box Elder Lore, page 79

(41) Autobiographical sketch by Alvira Rees Blackburn (courtesy of her daughter Mrs. Elva Blackburn Hansen.)

(*) For detailed description see Life of Zillah Mathias Rees (separate sketch).

Views of the John D. Rees Blacksmith Shop *



Front view from Main Street, looking West Among the sun-bonneted girls are Leah, Zina and possibly Rose May, Rees



Side view from First South looking north showing ox frame used in shoeing oxen with wagon shop on left

Lorenzo Snow had very strong convictions regarding the importance of the United Order in the plan of salvation, so when he was "called by President Young to build up Brigham City, he selected those to accompany him from among the Saints whom he felt would willingly join him in a cooperative movement." (42) Based on his father's diary, LeRoi Snow wrote: "It was a beautiful Sunday morning, September 21, 1862, in Round Valley (Scipio), returning from St. George (in company with Brigham Young). Here, Lorenzo Snow reported the progress made at Brigham City during the past six years, then discussed future plans and asked permission to establish the United Order. (Deseret News article, August 9, 1941). He knew from the beginning of this undertaking that he was not authorized nor could he hope, under the conditions, to establish at Brigham City the United Order in its entirety as it is set forth in the revelations of the Lord to the Prophet Joseph Smith. However, with the help of the Lord to the Prophet Joseph Smith. However, with the help of the Lord, he would incorporate in his plan as many of its principles as would be feasible and would tend to unite his colony in the bonds of commo brotherhood, both temporally and spiritually." (Romney: Life of Lorenzo Snow, page 305.)

In an article entitled "Named in Honor of Utah's Great Colonizer" in the Box Elder News and Journal, 1951 Centennial Edition, we find this said of the success of the enterprise. "Organized by Lorenzo Snow in 1863...the United Order encompassed virtually all the business and agricultural life of the new community for more than 13 years. According to existing reports of the order's operations, people lived within it happily and cooperatively, and it was notably successful.... It operated between 30 and 40 industrial branches, and the community was about five-sixths self-supporting, growing and manufacturing that percentage of all the various necessities and luxuries used in the lives of the people living there. In 1875, the Brigham City Merchantile and Manufacturing Association's products reached about \$260,000 in value." John D. Rees was one of the eight original directors under Lorenzo Snow of the Brigham City Cooperative Association and was superintendent of the Coop Blacksmith Shop for seven years.

At the April Conference held in the Salt Lake City Tabernacle, 1866, John was called on a mission to Wales. He was set apart and given a fine blessing under the hands of President John Taylor and F. D. Richards (43).

He left home on April 25th and traveled to the frontier with Capt. Thomas Ricks, who was going to Wales to bring back a company of emigrants. At this time there were not railroads, so they traveled with ox team. They took the northern route by way of Bear Lake, and broke the trail through the snow all the way. At night when they camped, they could look back and see where they had camped the night before. Every night they were wet and cold (44), but they finally reached the frontier and arrived in New York on the 19th of June. (45) He sailed in the steamer City of Paris on the 22nd of June, and after an unusually quick and pleasant voyage of nine days, arrived in Southampton * on the 2nd of July, "having enjoyed good health and spirits the journey through." (43)

(42) Article by LeRoi Snow, Deseret News, August 9, 1941

(43) Letter from John D. Rees to Mission President F. D. Richards at close of mission

(44) Sketches of John D. Rees' life by Abbie Rees Mdsen and Leah Rees Reeder

(45) John D. Rees kept a diary while on his mission, 1866-68, in the files of Daniel M. Rees. His diary says they reached New York on 19th of June, that he sailed on the 22nd, and that they landed in Southampton, * while his letter to President Richards says Liverpool.

In the absence of President Brigham Young, Jr., John was appointed by Apostle Orson Pratt to labor in Wales under the direction of Elder Abel Evans. In his report at the close of his mission in July 1868, he wrote: "I arrived at Merthyr on the 5th of July, and after a week or two's visit among my relatives and old acquaintances, I was appointed again to travel in the Merthyr Conference under the supervision of Elder John Parry, and continued my labors there until the death of our much lamented President and Brother, Abel Evans..... Elder Parry was called to preside over the Welsh district and Elder Elias Morris to take his place in the Merthyr Conference. I succeeded Elder Morris in the Swansea Conference." Later on in the letter he states that about one hundred and thirty souls had been baptized during the period of his service, "a few of those being my own relatives." (43) Who these were we do not know; there is no further record included, but based on his diary, we may list his niece Martha Jane and his cousin Thomas Davis.

Scattered through the diary he kept, he tells of staying with or visiting the following relatives:

- 1867 27 April visited his brother Edmund Rees at Merthyr
- " 10 July went to Eley, visited his cousin David Rees
- " 6 Aug. went to Cross Roads and visited his cousin Daniel and Margaret
- 1868 9 Jan. went to Brymawr, visited brother William
- " 30 Jan. visited his siter Ann at Merthyr
- " 1 Feb. visited his cousin Edmund Rees and Sarah and Margaret Mar.
- " 14 Mar. baptized two relatives -- Martha Jone (or Jane) and Evan Wride
- " 19 Mar. brother William died
- " 30 June Martha Jane, his niece, and Evan Wride were married

Here are the concluding entries in his mission diary:

- 1868 July 2 Thursday went to bid farewell to my brother Edmond and sisters Ann, Margaret, and Sarah, and my sister-in-law Ann and Rees Evans; stayed with them all night.
- July 3 Friday went down to see my cousin Thomas Davis and his wife. We agreed to go together on the 14th of July on the Collorado steamer. His wife refuses to go with him. (44) I staid with them overnight.
- July 4 Came home to Swansea. Met Brother Morris, R. C. Thomas and John ? Lewis.
- July 5 Sunday morning we went to council to (meet?) Brothers Morris, William C. Thomas, newly arrived from the Valley, and J. S. Lewis All those present ? the day in ????. had very good time and delivered my farewell sermon to the Saints.

On July 14, 1868, the steamship Colorado left Liverpool for New York, carrying John Davis Rees as assistant to William W. Preston in charge of 600 emigrants. (45) He returned to Utah in company with Harvey Cluff, Moses Thatcher, Hyrum Spencer, and others. He brought home an organ he had purchased in New York -- a real luxury in those days. (46)

(43) Letter to President F. D. Richards

(44) The list of passengers of the Colorado which sailed from Liverpool, July 14, 1868, has this entry: Thomas Davis -- adult -- own conveyance -- arrival New York July 28

(45) Journal of Church History, Deseret News Aug. 3, 1868, Church Historian's Office Salt Lake City,

(46) Sketches of life of John D. Rees by Abbie Rees Madsen and Leah Rees Reeder

In this party of Welsh emigrants was Cecelia Howe Griffith. She had lost her husband, Lewis Griffith, and twin sons in death, and John Rees told her he "could get work for her at the home of Lorenzo Snow in Brigham City. She came to America with one small son, Lorenzo, and after a time she was married to John D. Rees." (47) They were sealed for time only in the Salt Lake Temple, December 20, 1869, Cecelia having first been endowed and sealed to her first husband for eternity. (48)

John D. Rees was very active in all the early history of Brigham City, giving liberally of his means and time in service to his Church and to the community. He and William Box were the only visiting teachers in Brigham City for several years, faithfully making their visits to every house. (49) He donated one hundred dollars at one time to help Welsh emigrants to this country, and there are receipts which tell of his paying his tithing in full. He held a life membership certificate in the Deseret Agriculture and Manufacturing Society, dated July 1864 and signed by Robert Cambell and Wilford Woodruff. (50)

John D. Rees held many civic positions. In 1856, the Territorial Legislature organized and defined the boundaries of Box Elder County which had formerly been part of Weber County, (51) and the "following county officers were selected at a special meeting held February 14, 1856: Jonathan C. Wright, probate judge; John D. Reese, Dwight Harding, Alvin Nichols, selectmen." (52)

"The County Courthouse, the first public building erected in Box Elder county, was commenced in 1855 and completed in about 1861. It was a two story, adoby building. During the first year the walls were laid up and covered with a temporary roof. At this stage of construction, the building was partially demolished by a terrific wind. When the county was organized and tax money was available, reconstruction was commenced. Since this early date, the building has been entirely remodeled." (53)

Brigham City was incorporated January 12, 1867, during the absence of John D. Rees in Wales. The following officers were appointed: Chester Loveland, Mayor; Alvin Nichols, Hans Peter Jensen, Adolph Madsen, councilmen; William Watkins, recorder. (54) In the February election of 1869, six months after his return from Wales, John D. Rees was elected to the city council, and again in 1873.

(47) Sketches of the life of Cecelia Howe Rees by LaVon Rees Carlson.

(48) Temple Records

(49) "From 1852-1855, William Davis was bishop of Box Elder... He was assisted by ward teachers (Simon Carter was the first teacher in Box Elder) whose duty was to administer to the sick and see that no evil doers were to be found in their midst." (History of Box Elder County ed by Lydia Forsgren, page 331) Just when John D. Rees and William Box served we do not know, probably after the arrival of Lorenzo Snow.

(50) Life sketches of John D. Rees by Abbie Rees Madsen and Leah Rees Reeder

(51) Box Elder Lore by Sons of the Utah Pioneers, page 76

(52) History of Box Elder County, ed by Lydia Forsgren, page 356

(53) History of Box Elder County, page 366

(54) History of Box Elder County, page 262

Recorder's Office
Brigham City March 5th 1873

J. D. Rees, Esq

Dear Sir

I hereby Certify that at an
Election held in Brigham City on Monday
March 3rd 1873 You were duly Elected
to the Office of Counselor for said City by a
Majority of 250 votes Poll'd at said Election

Given under my hand and
Corporate Seal the date
above specified
Wm Watkins City Recorder

Please call and subscribe Oath of Office

Wm

Brigham City March 1st 1869
John D. Rees Esq

This is to certify that you
have rec^d a majority of 65 votes as City Councillor
in and for the City of Brigham, and thereby
duly Elected to that Office

John Burd Ck. of Election.

It was during his second term as councilman that he participated in a ceremony at South Willard on February 5, 1874, which celebrated the completion of the Utah Northern Railroad line between Ogden and Brigham City which had been begun in 1871, and which finally brought rail service to Brigham City. "The last spike, which had been made by John D. Rees, was driven in place by Judge Samuel Smith." (55)

In 1875, John D. Rees was elected Brigham City's second mayor, succeeding Chester Loveland. During his term of office as mayor, "some of the civic accomplishments were the organization of a fire department, fencing the cemetery, parking and planting locust trees from the Courthouse to the West Depot. He set aside parking grounds and gave the city Pioneer Park grounds, specifying that it was to be used as a public park." (56) As a mark of respect for the gift it was officially named Rees Park. (This in later years was changed to Pioneer Park, and still later, about 1934, to Rees Pioneer Park.)

He was elected for a second term as mayor, but was unable to finish it out as he was called in August of 1877 to go to Malad, Idaho, to become a counselor to Bishop Dunford of the Malad City Ward. (57)

"At the time Elder Snow was appointed by President Brigham Young to lead a group of Saints to Brigham City, he became the immediate directing head, but there was no stake organization effected until later. It was in 1856 that Box Elder County was made a stake and Lorenzo Snow was installed as president, with Johnathan C. Wright as first counselor and Samuel Smith as second counselor. This position he held until 1877 when he was released that he might devote more of his time to the general interest of the Church throughout the world." (58)

The reorganization was effected at a Quarterly Conference held in Brigham City, August 19, 1877. This was a red letter day in Brigham City. "Box Elder Stake extended into southern Idaho as well as all of Box Elder County, and a yearly visit to all the outlying wards required weeks of traveling time and quite a caravan of Auxiliary officers to complete the party. No building large enough for the large audience was available. In 1874 a bowery had been constructed on the public square on West Forest Street. It was 60 x 90 feet and was covered with poles and green willows. The program was held in the shade of this bowery. A great crowd gathered to participate in the services." (59) This bowery conference is remembered as a great occasion. A hot day and a good supply of ice-cold lemonade is remembered by Mark L. Nichols, who was in attendance. (59)

"At the reorganization of the Box Elder Stake, Oliver C. Snow (son of Apostle Snow) was sustained as President with Elijah Box as First Counselor and Isaac Smith as Second Counselor. William Box was sustained as Patriarch." (59) This proved to be the last time President Brigham Young was to make a public address. Although he appeared to be in excellent health at the time, he was taken ill on the night of August 23, three days later, and died on the 29th. (60)

(55) History of Box Elder County ed by Lydia Forsgren, page 31

(56) History of Box Elder County ed by Lydia Forsgren, page 262

(57) Life Sketches of John D. Rees by Abbie Rees Madsen and Leah Rees Reeder

(58) Romney: Life of Lorenzo Snow page 349

(59) Box Elder Lore ed by Sons of the Utah Pioneers, Page 134

(60) Romney: Life of Lorenzo Snow page 350

It was at this reorganization conference that John D. Rees was called to go to Malad. George Dunford of the Salt Lake Stake was chosen to be bishop of the Malad City Ward with Daniel Daniels as first counselor and John Davis Rees as second counselor. (61)

"This call was a hard trial for John D. Rees, as his families were in Brigham City, also his civic and private interests; but true to his trust and the religion he loved, he went willingly, taking Cecelia and family with him; the other two families remained in Brigham City. He drove back and forth, as there were no railroads in that direction, making trips as often as possible." (62)

During the winter of 1879-80, there was an epidemic of typhoid fever in Brigham City, and seven of his children were down with it. On February 7, 1880, Zillah's son, Thomas, a boy of fifteen, was stricken and died. Through the anxiety and exposure of coming and going, John D. Rees contracted the disease, and on the 19th of March, 1880, he died in Malad, Idaho. His body was brought to Brigham City for burial.

"He was the father of twenty-seven children. They all remember him as always kind, cheerful, and thoughtful, often bringing them candy and gifts when he had been away. John D. Rees was five feet nine inches in height; had a broad, well-proportioned body; dark hair, laughing brown eyes, regular features, and such a genial disposition that all pronounced him a handsome man." (62)

(61) Church Historian's Office, Salt Lake City, Utah (Letter of 15 Jan. 1963) Church Chronology 1877

A Record of Important Events, page 100:

Brigham City was divided into four wards

Bishops were also appointed for the smaller settlements, namely---George Dunford for Malad City.

(62) From Sketch furnished to writer, Dec. 7, 1932, by Leah Rees Reeder.

APPENDIX A

Sketch of the Life of Mary Morgan Rees by Abbie Rees Madsen

Mary Morgan Rees was born in Merthyr Tydfil, Wales, on 5th November, 1821, the daughter of William and Betsy Davis Morgan.

Her brothers and sisters were -- Ann, born 1819; Jane, born 23 April 1823, died January 1851 (1); Betsy, born 1825, died 1851; David, born 1827; Sarah, born 1829; William, born 1831, died 1833; William, born 1833, died 1834; Hannah, born 1833, died 1855; Susan M. Neeley, born 1837, died 1877; all were born in Wales; work done for them in the Logan Temple in February and March 1885.

Mary's father worked in the coal mines in Wales where he met with an accident to his knee, and all his life he was troubled from the effects of the injury. Mary went out part of the time and helped mothers in their homes to earn extra money and with such a crowd of girls they were not needed at home. Her parents met the L.D.S. missionaries and were converted, but before that time Mary had been converted and had also met and married John Davis Rees, July 4, 1842.

Her husband had been apprenticed out to learn the trade of machinist and blacksmith at Quaker Yard, some miles away, continuing in the work for seven years, and Mary continued in her work for a very fine lady. She didn't tell that she was married for fear of losing her job. One day the Pastor was there to dinner and asked, "Isn't this the young lady I married some time ago?" Her mistress asked

was it so and where was her ring. She admitted she was married and showed her ring which she had been wearing around her neck on a string. The lady was nice about it and she continued working for a short time longer. Her marriage certificate states she was married in St. Mary's Church.

They were sealed by Heber C. Kimball, in September, 1852, (2) soon after they arrived in the valley.

Her parents came to Utah in about 1856 (3) with other members of the family.

Her children were William, born 1 May 1843 (4), in Wales, died 1905; Mary Jane, born May 24, 1844 (5), married Lewis Boothe, died January 16, 1869; David Morgan, born 13 July 1846 (6), Kinderminster, England, married Laura Burbank 13 December 1870, sealed by Joseph F. Smith; Joseph, born 4 May 1847, England, died

4 May 1847; Elizabeth, born 8 May 1848, England, died 8 May 1848; Hyrum, born 30 April 1849, St. Louis, Mo., died 30 April 1849; Meredith, born 7 January 1851 (7) Council Bluffs, Iowa; died 20 November 1853 at Brigham City, Utah, the second person buried in the Brigham City Cemetery; (The first person buried there was a man killed in a runaway, named Ettleman) Agnes, born 13 Oct. 1854, married William Morgan. She was born in a wagon box while they were waiting for the new home to be built (8); Martha Ann, born 31 March 1856 married David Thomas (9); John, born

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- (1) Family sheet gives January 1852. Salt Lake City cemetery record, 11 Jan. 1853.
 - (2) Sealing record gives B. Young not Heber C. Kimball, Nov. 2, 1852
 - (3) Ship listing gives January 1854
 - (4) Birth Certificate gives 7 January 1841
 - (5) Birth Certificate gives 21 May 1843
 - (6) Birth Certificate gives 27 July 1845; died 20 January 1940
 - (7) 7 June 1851
 - (8) Died 23 December 1904
 - (9) Died

November 1862, died 5 Oct. 1865; Edmund, born 1 July 1864, died 30 September 1865; Rachel, born 1 May 1866, married Thomas Moroni Thomas 3 January 1884, died 1 Apr. 1946.

Mary, her husband and three children set sail from Liverpool for their new home in the west, finally arriving in Council Bluffs, Iowa, in 1849. There she remained with her children while her husband went to St. Joseph, Missouri, to work as a blacksmith to earn the equipment for the trip across the plains.

While at Council Bluffs, Mary thought she would sell some of her things to get more necessities for the trip. She went to the home of George Albert Smith, and she didn't say if Sister Smith bought anything, but Sister Smith gave her some corn meal. Mary thanked her and took it home. Pretty soon she came back and said they weren't hungry enough to eat saw dust. Sister Smith laughed and told her how to make it into mush and bread.

It was years later at conference in the Box Elder Stake Tabernacle, when George A. Smith was the visiting speaker, that he asked if Mary Rees was in the congregation, and as she came to the stand, he went down to meet her, then told about the corn meal incident, and they all, along with Mary and Brother Smith, had a good laugh; he said he was proud to shake hands with such a good woman.

In Church history it tells of Brigham Young's coming to Brigham City with a number of the authorities where a banquet was prepared in their honor. When about to eat, President Young asked for Mary Rees. When she came, he asked her to go home and cook him a big bowl of corn meal mush. Then he turned to the ladies in charge of the banquet and told them to go out and bring in all the poor and needy and to serve them the banquet. It is said the ladies were not too happy about it, and neither were the visiting brothers, because if corn meal mush was good enough for their President, it would have to be good enough for them. Mary must have learned very well how to make corn meal mush.

While she was still in Council Bluffs getting ready for the trip west, her husband returned from St. Joseph with a fine set of blacksmithing tools, one span of horses, two wagons, and eight head of oxen whose names were Lamb and Lion, Duke and Dine, Buck and Brandy, and Laid and Line. They started west in the Edward Morgan company (10), arriving in the Salt Lake Valley in September 1852.

Mary was a hard worker indoors as well as outdoors. She would scrub her kitchen floor and porch with sand and ashes until they were spotless and shiny. She milked cows, worked in her kitchen garden, made her candles, her family's home knit stockings, and all those pioneer labors.

Father (David Morgan Rees) would tell of Grandmother's walking to their farm in Perry (three miles south) with him holding to her skirt when he was just a little fellow. She would glean the wheat after the mowers had finished, all day, and with one sheet filled with heads held on her head and one under her arm, she would walk back to Brigham, my father holding fast to her skirt so he wouldn't be left behind.

(10) William Morgans was his name (see Lewis article)

Mary Morgan Rees 3

One day while she was cooking some scones over her fireplace, a large painted, strange Indian came to the door, through the porch and kitchen, and stepped up into the living room. He surveyed the scene, then walked over to the fireplace, took the lid off the skillet Grandmother was holding and took the scones in his hands, and walked out. No words were spoken; no one had heard him come in, but Mary said she was frozen with fear and was willing to go hungry rather than irritate an Indian. An Indian was a commonplace and we knew them all; but a strange, painted one was something extra.

Before Aunt Martha and Uncle John built a house on the lot, but yards and yards north of the porch door, Grandfather had a blacksmith shop just back of their house. Mother said Grandfather never whipped any of his children that she ever heard of, but one of the boys had done something and Grandfather took him into the blacksmith shop and shut the door. Everyone was as quiet as a mouse, thinking someone was going to get a whipping; but after about fifteen minutes, they walked out and nobody said anything. No spanking!

They moved from the Fort in 1854, which was where the Lincoln School now stands, to their new adobe house outside the Fort, the first home built outside the Fort, on Third East and Forest Street. It consisted of three rooms, a good sized porch, with a nice cellar of adobe.

Mary was an alert, small, energetic woman, ambitious and hardworking, and few could keep up with her in walking. She seldom missed her Sacrament meetings in the Tabernacle or ward. Folks remember her at church with her little hat and pretty paisley shawl.

When returning from the move south, the best crop of wheat they ever raised on the Perry farm was ready to harvest, and they found their old gray cat waiting for them at home.

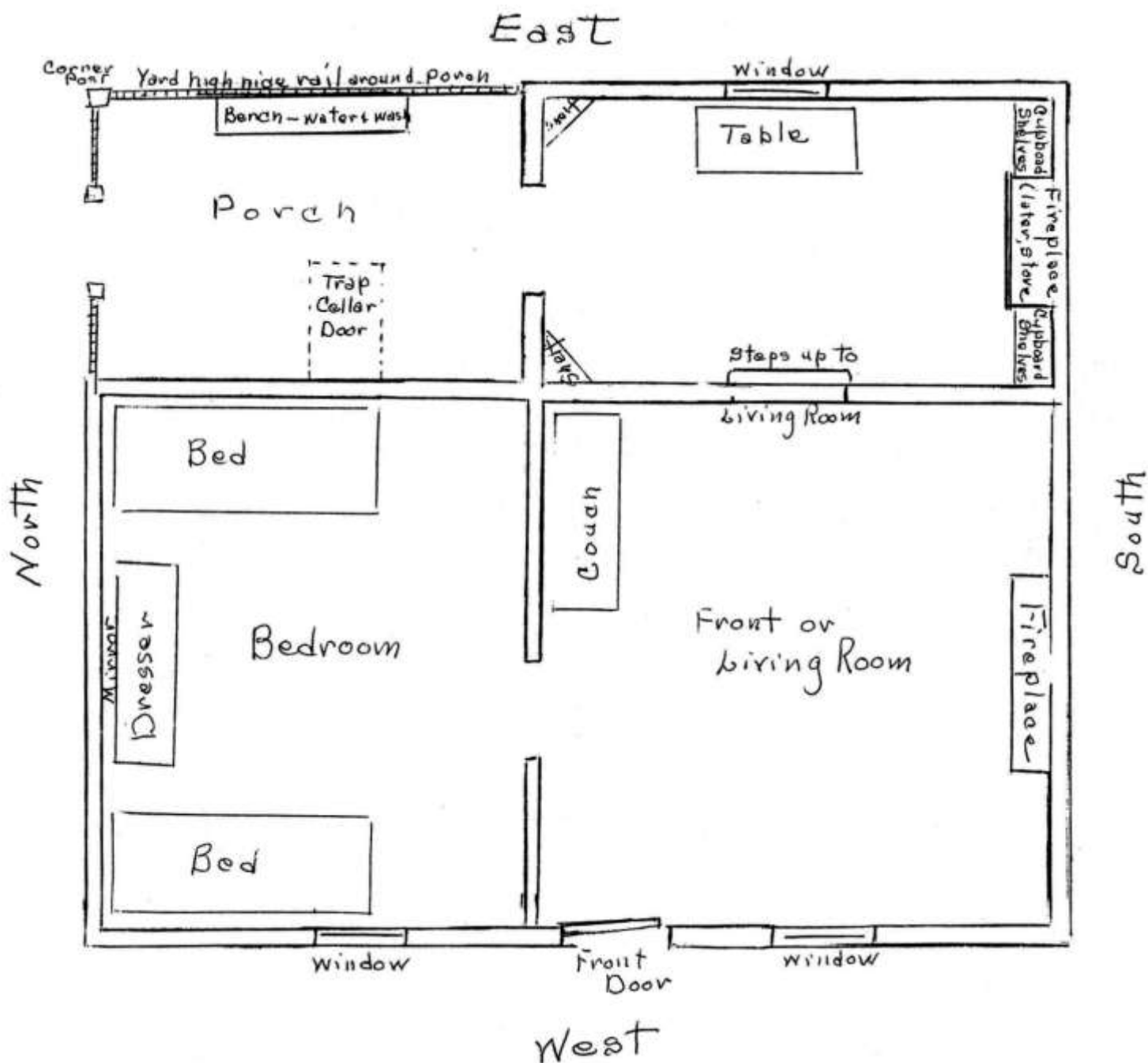
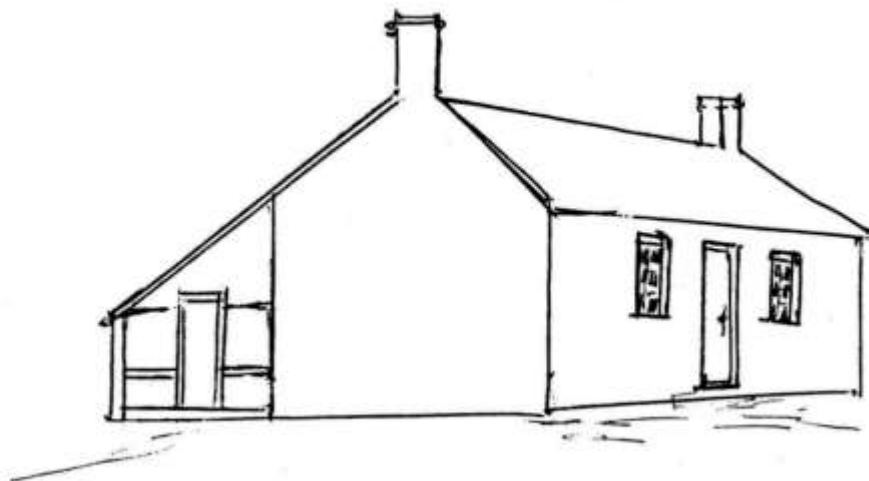
In 1866 when her husband went on a mission to Wales, she took care of her family and was delighted when he brought home an organ from New York, which was a special luxury. She also did her part while her husband was mayor of Brigham City for two terms and when he went to Malad where he was called into the bishopric.

She told me once of the time when Grandfather was in his second term as mayor and had been called to Malad, that she had a dream and saw a chain let down from heaven with two links missing, and she seemed to feel that she should fill one of the links; but she begged to stay a little longer. A short time after, Grandfather wrote her to get his temple clothes ready, that he was going on a long journey.

Then a short time after, he and Thomas (your mother's brother) died, and Grandmother said she felt sorry she had begged to stay, because she felt the links must be filled and she could have been spared better than the other two.

She died in Brigham City, at the home of her son David, on 29 November, 1907.

The Old Rees Home on Corner of Third East and Forest



We are indebted to Abbie Rees Madsen, a granddaughter, for most of the details in our drawing and description of Mary Morgan Rees' home in Brigham City. Abbie spent many hours there as a little girl and as a young woman (her father's home was just across the street), and she says she combed her grandmother's hair for years before she died in 1904.

Margaret Morgan Parry also visited the old home as a child and also helped fill in our picture by adding some details and confirming those already given by Abbie. We also quote Hazel Rees Whitehead's contribution.

One entered the living room through a front door from the west. A fireplace in the south wall was used for heat and for cooking, There was a couch in one corner, and the long-handled brass warming pan hung on the wall above the couch head. (1) Abbie remembers a black chest belonging to Grandfather (John Davis Rees) which was in the corner by the fireplace. The organ (the one brought home on his return from his mission), as she remembers it, was on the east side of the room; Margaret Parry places it on the west side and a table on the east wall. (2)

The bedroom, opening to the north, had no fireplace (3). Both the living room and bedroom were plastered and later papered, and both floors were covered with homemade rag carpets. The bed inside the bedroom to the east was especially high, with rope lacing for springs. It had a shuck tick with a featherbed on top of it. "None of us", writes Abbie, "could get on it without a chair." It always had a white curtain around the bottom to the floor. Pearl Thomas Parry remembers the fun of sleeping "in Grandmother's bed" with her cousin Ruth, and the time they found the box of temple clothes under the bed, and, not knowing their full use, assumed they were Grandmother's burial clothes. The bed had light oak posts at the head and foot. (4) The dresser was the same color with three or four big drawers across and a square mirror at the top.

One went down two steps from the living room to the lean-to kitchen. Here the walls were plastered and whitewashed, and factory was tacked on the ceiling and whitewashed, so it seemed almost as hard as wood. The shelves in the north corners were right in the plaster and were high enough for a chair to sit under them. Those in the south corners were on each side of the fireplace and went straight across from wall to the jut-out of the fireplace. There was a long low window in the east slope of the kitchen.

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- (1) Margaret says Grandmother Mary gave them the warming pan; then when she became ill, they returned it to her. After her death, the pan was returned to Margaret by her Uncle Dave. The bottom had some holes in it, so they hung it in an upstairs bedroom. When Margaret's family moved some years later, they left some of their things temporarily, as the new occupants were in a hurry to move in. When the Parrys went back for their things, the warming pan was missing and the new occupants claimed they never saw it.
 - (2) Pearl Thomas Parry states that when her mother, Rachel Rees, was married, Grandmother Mary gave her the organ (she played and was the youngest child), and it was in their home for many years. What finally happened to it she does not know.
 - (3) The chimney on the outside of the house would indicate a fireplace or stove. It may be it was added by later tenants, as also the closed-in porch.
 - (4) Rae Thomas Foulger says that after Mary's death, the bed was given to her sister, Maggie Bowen, daughter of Martha Ann Rees Thomas.

A washbench for winter was inside the kitchen door to the right as you came in from the porch, below the shelves. (In summer, it was on the porch.) The front door had a regular knob, but the door from the porch to the kitchen had an old-fashioned latch.

The porch was on the north and east corner of the house and was open except for the yard high railing on the north and east sides. Margaret remembers it was cool and shady and says they often ate their meals there in warm weather. A trap door in the floor opened to steps down into the cellar, with rock lined walls and shelves along one side; the floor of dirt, thought to be cooler than wood.

"The willow garden was behind the house several yards and connected with the south street fence. It was made of willows woven in and out between posts. There was a big raspberry patch, a transparent apple tree, peach, and cherry. (I have a square bowl made from a limb of the cherry tree. Hazel's husband made it.) The outhouse was up in the far end of the willow garden and was made of adobe. The barns were up at the east end of the block with corrals opening out onto the back street to the east." (Abbie Rees Madsen.)

Such was Mary's home until her death, though she sometimes stayed with one or another of her children during periods of illness in her later life. She was eighty-three at the time of her death.

Hazel Rees Whitehead Remembers Her Grandmother

The first I remember Grandmother I was about six, starting to school. I remember she would cross the street to our house often, neat as a pin, her clothes mended, her hair done neatly, as my sister Abbie does hers, with never a hair out of place. Parley, Ruth, and I knew that when she said anything or corrected us, we minded. She was strict but kind.

We loved to go over to help her in summer cut those little seedling peaches to dry. That garden spot! I can see it now -- cherry tree (my husband made a pedestal stand for flowers out of the trunk, forty years later), then two apple trees --- little yellow sweet apples, a pear tree, seedling peaches, raspberries, gooseberries, pieplant (rhubarb). There was an adobe outhouse and a chicken coop --- all this inclosed with sticks pounded into the ground and willows, green and pliable, woven back and forth to make a fence. She did most of the work; kept it lovely. It was a fairyland to remember always.

Her house was neatness itself --- two rooms, a lean-to kitchen, and a small porch with a door in the floor which led down into the cellar. This had whitewashed rock walls and a dirt floor, smooth as a wood floor. There were no fruit jars but crocks of preserves and pickles.

You entered the kitchen from the porch by a big slab door. There was a heavy piece of iron on the inner side that you slid across it to lock it. One small window was in the east wall. There was a safe or cupboard with a tin front with little holes in it to let in air. It was so clean, and everything in its place inside. The best slices of bread and raspberry jam you ever tasted came out of there!

Up two steps and you were in the front room. The window and door faced the west and the front gate. There were no windows on the south or north walls. Fireplaces took up that space in the kitchen and front room.

The bedroom was off north from the front room and had a window on the west. There was a highposter bed and a dresser -- always orderly. I wonder what became of those pieces of furniture! Nearly fifty years ago I lived there for a couple of years as a bride. We had it fixed up so nice and I loved it.

I used to go evenings and read to Grandmother. I was only eight, but I remember reading to her (Parley and I) and listening to her wise counsel. A happy and contented spirit she always had, She was never afraid and would urge us, "Don't be afraid of the dark; say a prayer."

She was kind to and protected Indian women.

What people those Pioneers were! It's good to slow up and recall their lives!

Children of Mary Morgan Rees

| | | |
|--------------|--|--|
| William | born 7 Jan. 1841 (B.C.) June 1905 (Tombstone) | married Martha Brandon Hiatt died 17 |
| Mary Jane | born 21 May, 1843 (B.C.) Jan. 1869 | married Lewis Nathaniel Boothe died 16 |
| David Morgan | born 27 July 1845 (B.C.) Jan. 1940 | married Laura B. Burbank died 20 |
| Joseph | born 4 May, 1847 died 4 May, 1847 | |
| Elizabeth | born 8 May 1848 died 8 May 1848 | |
| Hyrum | born 30 Apr. 1849 died 30 Apr. 1849 | |
| Meredith | born 7 June 1851 died 20 Nov. 1853 | |
| Agnes | born 13 Oct. 1854 died 23 Oct. 1904 | married William Morgan |
| Martha Ann | born 31 Mar. 1856 died ? | married David Burk Thomas |
| John Willard | born 5 May 1859 died 15 Oct. 1896 | married Martha Jensen |
| Lorenzo | born 5 Nov. 1862 died 5 Oct. 1865 | |
| Edmund | born 1 July 1864 died 30 Sept. 1865 | |
| Rachel Mae | born 1 May 1866 died 1 Apr. 1946 | married Thomas Moroni Thomas |

APPENDIX B

Life Sketch of Zillah Mathias Rees

Zillah Mathias Rees was born on December 14, 1839 (1) in Carmarthenshire, South Wales. She was the fourth child of Thomas and Margaret Williams Mathias who had a family of six, and at the age of nine years she was baptized by her father.

Shortly after this event, the family left their native land and sailed for America on February 25, 1849, in the ship Buena Vista. Dan Jones was captain of their company. They reached the state of Iowa and remained there with a number of the Saints for three years, gathering the necessary equipment and provisions with which to make the journey across the plains to Utah. Although she was only a child in years, Zillah mothered the younger children in the family and carried a nursing baby brother one mile each day to his mother who was employed that distance from home.

In the summer of 1852, they left Council Bluffs with a wagon, one yoke of oxen, one yoke of steers, two cows, and provisions enough to last the three months' journey across the plains. Zillah walked the entire distance.

They arrived in Farmington, Utah, in November, and remained there until the following March, 1853, when they were called with a company to settle farther north in the locality which was later designated as Brigham City. Through the untiring efforts and hardships endured by this sturdy and faithful company, the foundation for the future growth and development of a beautiful city was laid.

The ground was plowed and planted, and when the wheat crop was ready to harvest, the hungry grasshoppers came in swarms and began to devour it. It was Zillah's task to guard the wheat field and drive the swarms of grasshoppers from the grain, but her efforts proved to be futile when the great army of crickets appeared, clearing away everything before it. However, before the entire crop was eaten, Providence intervened, and the heaven-sent sea gulls came and devoured the crickets.

The following year the Indians became so hostile that the settlers were forced to build a fort and flee to it in times of danger, for protection. On many occasions feather beds were placed over the crevices in the logs. The bullets would lodge in the feathers, saving many of the inmates. Zillah was a participant in a number of these experiences. They soon made peace with the Indians and laid out the city, dividing it into city lots, and began building log cabins.

In December of 1857, Zillah became the plural wife of John D. Rees. The ceremony was performed in Salt Lake City by Brigham Young. Nine children were born to them, seven girls and two boys.

(1) Birth certificate gives:

Silla, girl born 27th December 1839, Cilywaien, Llanegwad, Carmarthen, Wales
Father: Thomas Matthias, laborer
Mother: Margaret Matthias, formerly Williams

The winter of 1880 was a severe one for this devoted mother. There was an epidemic of typhoid fever in the Community, and seven of the children were stricken with the disease. Through the mother's faith and tender tireless care and nursing, six of the children recovered, but one devoted son, Thomas, who was fifteen, was taken on February 7. Her cup of sorrow was filled to overflowing when on March 19, 1880, she was called upon to part with her husband, who died of typhoid fever.

She was left with five children under twelve years of age, to rear and educate, and with her needle and good management, she kept them in school. She was not left alone during her struggles, for on one occasion when she was in dire need, her husband came to her and gave her a comforting blessing. That same evening, William Box, a bosom friend of the family, came to the home with a considerable amount of flour, saying, "I have been told by your husband to bring you this flour."

Her interest and efforts were not confined to her own family; for wherever she could lend a helping hand, her heart and labor were freely given. Especially was she mindful of the sick and the afflicted. Her faith was stronger than her fear, and on several occasions she left her own little ones and assisted in homes stricken with serious contagious diseases. She, however, was wise, and would take every precaution, and on no occasion did any bad results come therefrom. No sacrifice was too great for her to make for her religion, and she was always actively engaged in some uplifting work.

She did honor to her calling as a Relief Society teacher, as she did in every other responsibility that was placed upon her in her other assignments in the Church. She acted as counsellor to Sister Emma Lee in the Third Ward Relief Society. For many years she was counselor to Sister Olive Widerborg of the Box Elder Stake Relief Society. She made and kept the Temple clothes for the Relief Society, also for burial.

Her great desire was to be active to the end, and it was almost granted her, for on her eightieth birthday, surrounded by all of her living children, six daughters, she danced a step dance for which she was famed in her youth; and there was still grace in her movements.

On January 12, 1923, she departed from this life, leaving a posterity that honors and reveres her memory and are striving to uphold her high ideal.

Mother was five feet five inches tall, rather stout in build, with light brown hair, gray blue eyes, and regular features, with a kind yet firm expression, and ambition manifested in all her movements. She was a fine type of womanhood, and was loved and respected by all.

Written by her daughter, Leah Rees Reeder, January 12, 1923.

A more comprehensive life sketch is in preparation and will be available to all those who are interested in having a copy.

February 1963

Zillah Mathias Rees - 3

Children of Zillah Mathias Rees

| | | |
|---------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Zillah Alvira | born 27 Apr. 1859 died 5 Apr. 1942 | married Thomas H. Blackburn |
| Margaret | born 7 Oct. 1860 died 26 June 1948 | married Charles Wight, Jr. |
| Phineas | born 7 May 1862 died 9 Oct. 1889 | married Hilda Stark |
| Thomas Wesley | born 17 July 1864 died 7 Feb. 1880 | |
| Adah | born 8 Dec. 1866 died 13 May 1945 | married George Louie Grahel |
| Leah | born 25 July 1869 died 8 Nov. 1952 | married Wilford Reeder |
| LuZina | born 28 Aug. 1871 died 23 May 1907 | married George Edwin Wooley |
| Rose May | born 4 Oct. 1873 | married John H. Horsley |
| Sarah Venice | born 5 Feb. 1878 died 25 Jan. 1938 | |

APPENDIX C

A Sketch of the Life Of Cecelia Howe Rees
by
LaVon Rees Carlson

"Grandmother Cecelia was born in Wick, South Wales, 24 September, 1841, to William Howe and Jane Jenkins. (I have a wonderful history of Great Grandmother Jane). Grandmother Cecelia was first married to a Louis Griffith. He died, and twin sons also died in Wales. Grandmother met Grandfather John Davis Rees when he was on a mission to Wales. He said he could get work for her at the home of Lorenzo Snow who lived in Brigham City at that time. Grandmother came here with one little son Lorenzo, and after a time married Grandfather. She was twenty-eight and he was twenty-six years older than she. She came to Utah before the time the Golden Spike was driven, and I haven't been able to find out if she came by train or across the plains. I am in the process of writing her history. I have no proof that Uncle Lorenzo was adopted by Grandfather, but he was sealed to him. They have always gone by the name of Rees. He has a really fine family. Grandmother was very happy to join the church and come to Utah because her mother and brother and one sister were already in Utah.

"When Grandfather was called to Malad in August 1877, he took Cecelia and her four living children with him (See page 2 following). About 1888 Cecelia moved to Logan and began to run a boarding house and work in the temple. She was an officiator for many years. She went to live with Jane Ann, where she was living when she took a stroke about 1916. She was working in the temple at the time. She lived with Jane Ann until her death 7 August 1932.

"Grandmother had a keen sense of humor which helped her very much to live through the hardships of her childhood and also through the hard years of a plural marriage. She and her children always spoke of Grandfather as being a wonderfully good and kind man." (1)

* * * * *

Under date of June 20, 1962, the writer of this history of John Davis Rees received the following information from the Genealogical Association in Salt Lake City in answer to an inquiry relating to Cecelia Howe Rees:

"Regarding Cecelia Howe:

She was born 22nd September 1841

Sealed to her first husband Lewis Griffith, deceased, for time and eternity on the 20th December 1869. On the same day she married for time only John Davis Rees. The record says she was baptized in March 1867, and endowed 20th December 1869.

It is noted that she did work for her grandmother, Mrs. Cecelia Howe of Newton, Glams., on the 19th January 1897. There may be other important entries in the baptism of the dead at Logan for the same date. It was also noted that George Crane did temple work on the 28th May 1895 in the Salt Lake Temple for a William Howe of Bridgend, his father-in-law."

(1) Venace Rees Merrell confirmed several items included in Mrs. Carlson's sketch.

Cecelia Howe Rees - 2

Children of Cecelia Howe Griffiths Rees

| | | |
|--------------------|--|--|
| Lorenzo Griffiths* | born 19 Mar. 1868 died 19 Feb. 1942 | married Elva Daniels |
| Howard | born 23 Dec. 1870 died 10 Nov. 1928 | married Martha Ann Toombs |
| Jane Ann (Janie) | born 13 Mar. 1873 died 5 June 1851 | married (1) Theodore Peterson (2) Joseph C. Jorgensen |
| Lily Cecelia | born 1878 died 1884 | |
| Emily | born 1879 died 1882 | |
| Robert | born 21 Mar. 1881 died 9 Jan. 1955 | married Beatrice McCan |

* By her first husband, Louis Griffiths

