

Daniel Williams and Ruth Jones

Isaiah 40:29-31

Daniel Williams and Ruth Jones are the central characters in the story of my Welsh Williams family. Their parents are my earliest known ancestors in Brecknockshire. Five (or six) of their eight children immigrated to America. Daniel's brother, William Williams, represents the branch of the family that remained in Wales.

The lives of Daniel and Ruth Jones Williams can be divided into four distinct phases: First, their childhood and youth. Second, their wedding and the growth of their family. Third, the reduction of their family as their children left home. Fourth, their old age in America.

1780-1805 Growing up

Ruth Jones was born in March 1780, possibly in Tirabad, Brecknockshire, a daughter of William and Margaret David Jones. Ruth probably had brothers named Thomas, Daniel and William Jones. By 1805 Ruth moved to Llywel, Brecknockshire.

In the meantime, Daniel Williams was born August 23, 1783 in Llandeilo'r-fân, Brecknockshire. Llandeilo'r-fân lies just south of Tirabad and just north of Llywel. If Daniel was christened, no record survives. Daniel grew up with his father, Roderick Williams; his mother, Elizabeth Evans Williams; his brother, William Williams, who was four years older; and probably some sisters.

On January 11, 1805 Roderick Williams was buried. The death of his father marked a new phase in the life of Daniel Williams.

1805-1829 Forming a Family

On April 16, 1805, four months after his father's death, Daniel Williams, yeoman, went to Llywel, Brecknockshire, and married Ruth Jones. The groom was age 21, and the bride was age 25.

On January 26, 1806, nine months after the wedding, Roderick Williams was christened in Llandeilo'r-fân. Complying with the traditional Welsh pattern of naming children, the firstborn son was named after his paternal grandfather.

Other children followed. Daniel and Ruth had six boys and two girls, all born in Llandeilo'r-fân parish:

	<u>born</u>	<u>christened</u>
Roderick Williams		26 Jan 1806
William Williams		10 Apr 1808
Rees Williams	20 Jun 1811	30 Jun 1811
Daniel Jones Williams		5 Sep 1813
Ruth Williams		7 Apr 1816
Mary Williams		28 Jan 1820
John Jones Williams	12 Aug 1824	
Samuel Daniel Williams	10 Aug 1826	

The Parish Registers tell us a little about Daniel Williams and his family. In 1805 Daniel was a yeoman, a status not as high as the gentry, but not as low as the laborers. He might have been a landholder or an employee. In 1813 Daniel was a laborer living at Brunant farm. In 1816 Daniel was a farmer, still living at Brunant. In 1820 Daniel was a farmer living at Nant-y-gwrdu.

With a family of ten, the home of Daniel and Ruth Williams was full of life. One by one, however, the children left. This process marked a new phase in their life.

1829-1853 Emptying the Nest

Seven of the eight children married. Only Rees Williams remained single until his untimely death at age eighteen. Each child was married in Llandeilo'r-fân parish, with the exception of John Jones Williams. I don't know where he married Jane Emma Merrifield, but it might have been in Somerset, England; he married Mary Jones in Salt lake City, Utah.

3 Jun 1829	William Williams	married	Ann Williams
18 Sep 1829	Rees Williams	buried, age 18	
11 May 1836	Daniel Williams	married	Margaret Evans
7 Feb 1840	Roderick Williams	married	Anne Price
28 May 1841	Ruth Williams	married	John Evan Price
25 Nov 1847	Mary Williams	married	David Davies
5 Dec 1851	Samuel Williams	married 1	Ann Price
14 Feb 1852	John Williams	married 1	Jane Emma Merrifield
27 Feb 1857	John Williams	married 2	Mary Jones
27 Nov 1866	Samuel Williams	married 2	Elizabeth Powel

Between 1820 and 1839 the house at Nant-y-gwrdu was apparently removed. Nant-y-gwrdu, as a field, was annexed to Bryn-melyn. According to the marriage records, Daniel Williams was a farmer at Bryn-melyn in 1840, 1841, and 1847. Bryn-melyn means *Yellow Hill*.

In the meantime, Daniel's older brother William Williams lived at Drain-duon, which means *Black Thorn*. Their mother, Elizabeth Evans Williams, lived at Drain-duon until her death at age 93. She was buried in Llandeilo'r-fân on August 28, 1832.

The census of June 7, 1841 shows the family at Bryn-melyn:

Daniel Williams	55	Farmer	born in Brecknockshire
Ruth Williams	60		born in Brecknockshire
Mary Williams	20		born in Brecknockshire
Samuel Williams	15		born in Brecknockshire
Roderick Williams	35		born in Brecknockshire
Ann Williams	30		born in Brecknockshire
John Williams	17		born in Brecknockshire
Ann Jones	15 months		born in Brecknockshire

Daniel Williams was age 57. Following the directions for the 1841 census, the enumerator rounded his age down to the nearest multiple of five. Ruth Jones Williams was age 61, so her age was rounded down to 60. Roderick, age 35, had married Anne Price four months before the census was taken, and the newlyweds lived at Bryn-melyn. William, Daniel and Ruth were married and living out of the household. Rees was dead. Mary was age 21, rounded down to 20. Samuel was two months from his 15th birthday. John was two months from his 17th birthday. Ann Jones might have been a relative of Ruth Jones Williams.

It was probably between February and April 1848 when John Evan Price, the husband of Ruth Williams Price, visited Llandeilo'r-fân. He brought a companion, David Williams. Their purpose was to preach and convince the Daniel Williams family that Mormonism was true. They spent a Monday in conversation. On Tuesday they baptized Ruth Jones Williams and her son Daniel Williams. Eventually, almost the entire family embraced Mormonism:

Daniel Williams	baptized 1849
Ruth Jones Williams	baptized 1848
Roderick Williams	baptized 1848
William Williams	baptized 1857
Rees Williams	not baptized: dead

Daniel Jones Williams	baptized 1848
Ruth Williams Price	baptized 1847
Mary Williams Davies	not baptized: refused
John Jones Williams	baptized 1850
Samuel Daniel Williams	baptized 1848

The last to be baptized was William Williams. The next to the last was my great- great-grandfather, John Jones Williams. He had been in England seven years as an apprentice horseshoer, and he was baptized in January 1850, upon his return to Wales. Daniel Williams, the head of the family, hesitated to be baptized. One biographer suggested that his livelihood would have suffered if he had joined the Church sooner. It's equally possible that he had difficulty believing the teachings of Mormonism, or that he was reluctant to forsake some worldly pleasure.

The census of April 7, 1851 shows the family at Bryn-melyn:

Daniel Williams	Head, mar.	68	Farmer of 94 acres	born in Llandeilo'r-fân
Ruth Williams	Wife, mar.	71	Farmer's wife	born in Llandeilo'r-fân
Samuel Williams	Son, unmd.	24	Laterday Saint Preacher	born in Llandeilo'r-fân
John Williams	grandson	9	Errand Boy	born in Llandeilo'r-fân
Esther Price	granddaur.	8	Errand Girl	born in Aberyscir

The census record is not entirely accurate. Daniel was age 67, not 68. Ruth, age 71, was not born in Llandeilo'r-fân. Samuel and John were the only unmarried children, but John had probably returned to England. The grandson John was a son of Daniel Williams, Jr. The granddaughter Esther was a child of John and Ruth Price.

The April 1851 census lists Daniel Williams as a farmer. The December 1851 marriage record of Samuel Williams claims that Daniel Williams was a laborer. Assuming these records are accurate, it appears that Daniel Williams stopped farming in 1851, but continued to work. A biography says that he was a farmer, gardener and basket weaver. He may have spent his last year in Wales weaving baskets and gardening. He may have worked as a laborer on another farm. He may have wound down his own farm in anticipation of his move to America.

1853-1871 Aging in America

I hope to thoroughly examine Daniel's American experience in the future. In the meantime, here is a quick synopsis taken from my 1990 book, *Azariah Franklin Williams: Ancestors and Descendants*:

At that time, the Mormons were encouraged to immigrate to the United States of America, and gather to Salt Lake City, Utah; so Daniel and Ruth set sail aboard the *Jersey* on 5 Feb 1853, arriving at New Orleans on 21 Mar 1853. From New Orleans, they traveled to Council Bluffs, Iowa, and crossed the plains with Captain Joseph W. Young's company, arriving in Salt Lake City on 22 Sep 1853. The 1860 census shows that by that time, Daniel and Ruth had moved to Brigham City, Box Elder County, Utah. Ruth Jones Williams died in 1868 or 1869 in Brigham City, and was buried in November in an unmarked grave at Brigham City Cemetery. Daniel went to Samaria, Oneida County, Idaho where he died in December of 1870 or 1871. His body was returned to the Brigham City Cemetery where he was buried in an unmarked grave on the first day of January of 1871 or 1872.

Daniel Williams turned seventy years old when he walked across the plains. Ruth Jones Williams was seventy-three. I admire not only their physical endurance, but also their strength of character. They could not have completed such an arduous journey without a strong devotion to their cause.

NOTES

Parents of Ruth Jones: That Ruth was a daughter of William and Margaret Jones is well established. That her mother's maiden name is Margaret David is questionable.

(1) The endowment records of 14 Sep 1861 provide solid evidence that Ruth Williams was a daughter of William and Margaret Jones. The information must have been supplied by Ruth Jones Williams herself (FHL 183,404; Page 35, No. 5).

(2) *Cemetery Records of Brigham City and Perry, Box elder County, Utah* published in 1933 (FHL US/Canada 979.242 V3b) shows, "WILLIAMS ... Ruth Jones, dau. of William Jones, b. 1779, Brechnockshire, Wales, d. 1869."

(3) Various Family Group Records and Pedigree Charts show the mother's maiden name as Margaret David. I do not have primary evidence for this assertion.

Birth of Ruth Jones: There can be little doubt that Ruth Jones was born in March 1780 in Brecknockshire, Wales. I cannot confidently assert that she was born in Tirabad.

(1) The best evidence is the endowment record of 14 Sep 1861, in which Ruth Jones Williams reported her own birth as March 1780 in Brecknock County, South Wales (FHL 183,404; Page 35, No. 5).

(2) The 1841 Census of Llandeilo'r-fân, ED 15, Page 5 (FHL 464,300), shows Ruth Williams as born between 1776 and 1781 in Brecknockshire.

(3) The 1851 Census of Llandeilo'r-fân, ED 1b, #20 (FHL 104,249), shows Ruth Williams born 1779-1780 in Llandeilo'r-fân, Brecknockshire. The date supports her birth in March 1780, but the place of birth is probably mistaken.

(4) The 1860 Census of Brigham City, Box elder, Utah (National Archives M-653, roll #1313), page 526, shows Ruth Williams born 1778-1779 in Wales.

(5) The *Jersey* passenger list (FHL 025,690) shows Ruth Williams born 1779-1780.

(6) *Cemetery Records of Brigham City and Perry, Box elder County, Utah* published in 1933 (FHL US/Canada 979.242 V3b) shows, "WILLIAMS ... Ruth Jones, dau. of William Jones, b. 1779, Brechnockshire, Wales, d. 1869." Both dates are close. However, the birth date is inaccurate, and the death date may also be inaccurate.

(7) Various Family Group Records and Pedigree Charts show the birth of Ruth Jones as March 1780, and some as March 1779. One Family Group Record, with "Book of Rem. in possession of Alverda W. Parker" as a source of information, shows the birth of Ruth Jones as "Mar 1780" in "Lladnadrnymid, Parish, South Wales." I have been unable to locate such a place.

Parents of Daniel Williams: There can be no doubt that Roderick Williams and Elizabeth Evans, who were married 28 Feb 1778 in Llandeilo'r-fân, Brecknockshire, Wales, were the parents of Daniel Williams. The proof is as follows:

(1) Endowment House records, Book D, Page 36, #658 (FHL 1,262,039), show that Daniel Williams, born 23 Aug 1783 in Brecknock County, South Wales, was a son of Roderick Williams & Elizabeth Evans. He was married in 1805 to Ruth Jones. The information was given in 1861 by Daniel Williams himself.

(2) Logan Temple records, Book B, Page 410, #14,551 (FHL 1,262,041), show that John Jones Williams was a great-grandson of Roderick Williams and Elizabeth Evans, married 28 Feb 1772. This information, given in 1886, is mistaken on two counts. The marriage date was 28 Feb 1778, and John Jones Williams was a grandson, not a great-grandson. Nevertheless, this record constitutes good supporting evidence for an already airtight case. See also, Logan Temple records of 1886, #15,836 (FHL 177,843); and Logan Temple records of 1886, #14,551 (FHL 177,956).

(3) Salt Lake Temple records, Book 6E, Page 758, #17510 (FHL 1,262,041), show that Roderick and Elizabeth Williams of Breckon County, Wales, were the grandparents of Samuel Williams. Samuel Williams gave this information in 1937. (See also #17510 on FHL 184,311).

(4) The Early Church Information Card Index (FHL 820,136) shows that Daniel Williams, born 1783 in Brecknockshire, South Wales, was a son of Roderick Williams and Elizabeth Evans.

(5) The Welsh tradition is to name a first son after his paternal grandfather. Daniel Williams named his first son Roderick.

Birth of Daniel Williams: That Daniel Williams was born 23 Aug 1783 in Llandeilo'r-fân, Brecknockshire, is proved by:

(1) In 1861 Daniel Williams stated that he was born 23 Aug 1783 in Brecknockshire, Wales. (See above, FHL 1,262,039. Also, FHL 298,442; FHL 183,404)

(2) The 1841 Census of Llandeilo'r-fân, ED 15, Page 5 (FHL 464,300), shows Daniel Williams as born between 1781 and 1786 in Brecknockshire.

(3) The 1851 Census of Llandeilo'r-fân, ED 1b, #20 (FHL 104,249), shows Daniel Williams born 1782-1783 Llandeilo'r-fân.

(4) The 1860 Census of Brigham City, Box elder, Utah (National Archives M-653, roll #1313), page 526, shows Daniel Williams born 1782-1783 in Wales.

(5) The *Jersey* passenger list (FHL 025,690) shows Daniel Williams born 1782-1783.

(6) *Cemetery Records of Brigham City and Perry, Box elder County, Utah* published in 1933 (FHL US/Canada 979.242 V3b) shows, "WILLIAMS ... Daniel, husb. Of Ruth Jones, b. 1781, Brechnockshire, Wales, d. 1872." Both dates are inaccurate.

Marriage Date and Place: That Daniel Williams and Ruth Jones were married 16 Apr 1805 in Llywel, Brecknockshire, Wales, is proved by the Parish Registers (National Library of Wales) and Bishop's Transcripts (FHL

104,486) of Llywel Parish.

Status: That Daniel Williams was a yeoman is indicated in his marriage record. The following is from the Encyclopædia Britannica, *Ultimate Reference Suite*, Chicago: Encyclopædia Britannica, 2008:

yeoman: in English history, a class intermediate between the gentry and the labourers; a yeoman was usually a landholder but could also be a retainer, guard, attendant, or subordinate official. The word appears in Middle English as *yemen*, or *yoman*, and is perhaps a contraction of *yeng man* or *yong man*, meaning young man, or attendant. Geoffrey Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* (late 14th century) depicts a yeoman who is a forester and a retainer. Most yeomen of the later Middle Ages were probably occupied in cultivating the land; Raphael Holinshed, in his *Chronicles* (1577), described them as having free land worth £6 (originally 40 shillings) annually and as not being entitled to bear arms.

The following is from pages 258-259 of *A History of Wales* by John Davies (1990, 1993, 2007; Penguin Books):

The substantial farmers were usually freeholders, although there were among them tenants who leased their farms on favourable terms. These were members of the yeomen class, men who could afford a degree of comfort, as can be seen from the eight-room houses built by Richard Love, who farmed fifty hectares of land at Penmark, Glamorgan. They, along with the craftsmen, were in many ways the backbone of Welsh society, and religious, cultural and educational movements were highly indebted to them. In about 1570, Glamorgan had perhaps a thousand yeomen, and they with their families constituted about 10 per cent of the population.

Other Sources of Information Used in This Report:

- (1) Parish Registers of Llandeilo'r-fân, Brecknockshire, Wales (available at the National Library of Wales).
- (2) Bishop's Transcripts of Llandeilo'r-fân, Brecknockshire, Wales (FHL 104,471, item 4).
- (3) The 1839 Apportionment of Tithes for Llandeilo'r-fân, Brecknockshire (available at the National Library of Wales).
- (4) Census of 1841 and 1851, cited above.
- (5) Various biographies available at <http://www.welshmormonhistory.org>.
- (6) *Azariah Franklin Williams: Ancestry and Descendants* by Kyle D Williams (1990; Ammon, Idaho).

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