



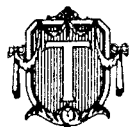
DAUGHTERS OF UTAH PIONEERS
LESSON FOR APRIL, 1995

Welsh Emigrants

From Wales, Great Britain to Wales, Sanpete County, Utah

Compiled by Jean S. Greenwood

INTRODUCTION



The first missionaries assigned to Wales were Henry Royle and Frederick Cook, who began to proselyte in North Wales in October 1840. William Henshaw was the first missionary assigned to cosmopolitan Merthyr Tydfil. He could not speak the Welsh language.

In December 1845 Captain Dan Jones was called to preside over all the Welsh Mormons. For the next decade this feisty and somewhat flamboyant mariner, having exchanged a ship's deck for a preacher's pulpit, would be the central figure of Welsh Mormondom.

Brigham Young started a new plan of emigration in 1856—that of using handcarts rather than wagons and oxen. He figured they could travel much cheaper and faster. The first three companies arrived on time and in good shape. The fourth and fifth companies (Martin and Willie) suffered greatly, however, and were saved only by the arrival of wagons and supplies from the Salt Lake Valley. President Young thereafter issued an injunction and placed a penalty to be suffered by any elder or elders who started the emigration after a given time; the penalty was that they would be severed from the Church.

A HERITAGE OF HARDY PIONEERS

By Albert Antrei, Manti, Utah

Deseret News, February 7, 1980

To get to Wales from where I live, you must drive to the

north through an area overrun in history by Anglo-Saxons; from there you pass through country later settled by Danes; and then, after fifteen miles you turn at Chester, and Wales lies there before your eyes, against the green of the mountain. A British friend may say, "Well, and what is so darned unusual about that? A glance at any map of Great Britain will surely affirm that that is so." And I reply, "But I do not live in Great Britain, but the state of Utah."

Here I am in Sanpete County, the center of which was settled first at Manti in 1849 by people with names such as Morley, Taft, Allred, Cox, Smith, Bradley, and Higgins—assuredly English, Anglo-Saxon.

In 1852, just seven miles to the north, the English surnames were joined by Hansens, Christensens, Jensens, Petersens, and Madsens—just as assuredly Danish. It is not surprising that the Anglo-Saxons hereabouts nicknamed a few places north of them "Little Denmark" or "Cozy Copenhagen."

But then in 1859 people named Rees, Thomas, Davis, Edmunds, and Price came to settle just west of a tree-sheltered spot in the sagebrush called Chester, and the new community of fifteen families west of there was informally, aptly, and promptly dubbed Wales.

Even before 1859 a few Welshmen had filtered into this land, which was then isolated, almost desert wilderness. One hundred twenty-five miles south of the Great Salt Lake Valley they had stopped with the old first ones at Manti, to join the Anglo-Saxons and Danes. Thomas Lewis, John Lewis, R. W. Glenn, and Dan Jones added their names on the militia roster of the settlement called Manti between 1850 and 1853. Dan Jones was especially prominent. Referred to sometimes as the "Welsh Prophet," Dan was elected to be the first mayor of Manti on April 7, 1851. Although Manti never became a metropolis, in 1851 Dan was the mayor of a significant outpost which became a nucleus for the settlement of many other rural communities in remote central and southern Deseret.

An enthusiastic early convert to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Dan had returned to his native South Wales as a missionary. He and some companions are said to have persuaded several thousand of their countrymen to join them in the faith. In doing so, hundreds of them emigrated to America. Glamorganshire was the home of most, particularly Merthyr Tydfil.

It happened quite suddenly. An Indian named Tabinaw showed John E. Rees a vein of coal cropping out of the mountains eighteen miles northwest of Manti in 1854. John showed samples to Brigham Young, and what followed was surely as Welsh as Aneurin Bevan or old Lloyd George. John E. (Red) Rees located the site of Wales in the Territory of Deseret [Utah] in 1857, hard by those coal mines, and this became home to those fifteen coal-mining families in 1859.

For many years they hauled their coal one hundred miles to Salt Lake City by ox- and horse-drawn wagons, for the hot coal of Wales was considered then the best blacksmithing coal in the Territory. It was not as good for stoves, which came later, and this seems to have doomed it eventually, especially when a cooler-burning coal was found in veins in the Wasatch Plateau. Wales coal burned out many a grate.

Some of those 1859 Welshmen had been in Utah since 1856. Nathaniel Edmunds, Nephi Rees, and Thomas Rees, for instance, pushed handcarts for a thousand miles in 1856 with their families across the vast American plains. Members of Captain Edward Bunker's third handcart company (almost entirely Welsh), crossed the Atlantic in the ship *S. Curling*.

Only a few of the company spoke no English at all, and just six of them could not speak Welsh out of a company of 300 men, women, and children. One of them had but one leg, one had just one arm, and two of them were blind. (One of the blind men, Thomas Giles, became well known in Utah in later years as the blind harpist. His harp may be seen in the museum of the Daughters of Utah Pioneers in Salt Lake City.) Such was their courage. Some of the 300 did not make it, sadly, and these included the wife and one child of Thomas Giles. They were buried along the Mormon Trail, somewhere in the great American West.

Brigham Young recognized the Welsh for more than their ability to push carts a long way. Under the direction of the Welsh chorister, John Parry, they were asked by Brother Brigham to sing for the first general conference of the Church after their arrival in Utah. The Anglo-Saxons and the Danes were happy to have the Welsh in their midst. "They gave a full share to their adopted land," they said of their Celtic brethren, "and from their land of song they came to enrich our lives with divine music."

The coal dug by the Welsh in the Sanpete Valley brought the railroad there in 1874 with the help of English capital and a Jewish salesman, Simon Bamberger. With the product in hand,

Bamberger journeyed to London to show and tell the financiers what the Welsh were doing in far-off Utah Territory; to Londoners that must have seemed quite natural for the Welsh to be up to such things.

With English capital, a narrow-gauge railway was built twenty-four miles from Nephi to Chester and Wales in 1875. Even today the mines at Wales are not exhausted, but their last load was hauled out in 1916.

Shortly after 1880 the Welsh in Sanpete began to turn their attention to agriculture, and of course they began by developing irrigation projects to grow grain and alfalfa and raise sheep and cattle. Out of their native, rainy, marine environment, the Welsh adjusted to the different demands of a climate which on average promises only twelve inches of annual precipitation. In effect, the Welsh in Utah became a desert people.

They also saw a need for a cooperative store to provide the necessities and the kinds of modest luxuries which they could not provide themselves. In 1893 they added a creamery to this enterprise.

The gradual development of a more sophisticated economy was bound to make the founding of Wales and all other frontier communities in the American West a matter of nostalgia. The discovery of coal at Wales and later at Morrison (near Sterling)—also under Welsh leadership, was of considerable significance in aiding the local energy needs of the day and improving the Sanpete economy by adding a cash commodity to the pioneer barter system then in general use.

By shipping their product to Salt Lake City, the Welsh also made a modest impression upon the whole territorial economy; and unquestionably they improved the opportunity for increased settlement in the Sanpete Valley by bringing in the railroad. Railroad tracks effectively broke the isolation, if not the remoteness of the valley. The discovery of coal at Morrison, at the mouth of 6-Mile Canyon near Sterling, by Henry Thomas and his father, also named Henry, along with partners Thomas Edmunds, Edmund Edmunds, and Harrison Edwards, drew the Sanpete Valley railroad twenty-four miles deeper into the valley in 1894.

In time the Welsh added their bloodlines to the Sanpete human melting-pot of north Europeans. By the 1890s a few German-speaking immigrants from both Germany and Switzerland, some Scots and Scots-Irish had also been absorbed into the population. But Welsh surnames are still prominent in the Sanpete

Valley, even where the mothers of families bore maiden names other than Welsh. Sadly, however, like the Scandinavian tongues and German, the language of Wales has disappeared as an effective means of communication. The Welsh spoken at Wales today often says things the descendants of the original Reeses and Thomases no longer understand, or if they can understand it, they cannot say it well or spell it in writing. It survives nostalgically, but not fluently, and usually only among the very oldest people.

It is a related historical fact that the Wales school is now closed. The few children ride a yellow bus to larger communities. But the late Loren Rees, who was a teacher in his young days, said that in his time Wales supported eight full grades. He remembered there were once 135 students. This makes no waves in modern metropolitan areas, but in any rural community that is a respectable number. It tells of large families and a closeness of spirit. Once, he told me, Wales produced more teachers and other educated people per capita than any other community in Utah. Whether this is literally true or not, the Welsh were never lovers of illiteracy. Still incorporated with less than one hundred people for population, the people of Wales are knowledgeable yet and effectively handle their affairs under the leadership of a mayor and town council. At this writing [1980] the mayor is Reed Thomas. Smallness, said Loren Rees, brings its own sort of problems, and he thought they had to do as much problem-wrestling as did any Big-Town.

The telephone book lists about thirty names as residents of Wales. Over 50 percent are still of Welsh origin. Wales recognized two kinds of Reeses: the so-called "red" ones are descendants of John E. Rees, and the "black" ones have descended from all the others. "Nothing personal," Loren told me, "but up till now the reds and the blacks have never intermarried." It was hair color, the red and black thing, but I have since heard that one red Rees did marry one black Rees. Loren has died since I talked with him, and I did not get a chance to break the news to him, a "black" Rees.

The Danes and Swedes have complicated things even more with their own red blondness. You take your chances with things like that; and such things are not at all as simple anymore, not even in Sanpete. Some Gonzaleses, Raconses, and Lopezes have come to Sanpete recently.

There were a couple of prominent English names in Wales also. Dyes and Lambs were among the earliest settlers. Henry C. Lamb was a Yorkshireman who, born in 1843, could not have

been more than sixteen years old when he walked to Utah from the banks of the Missouri in Nebraska and joined the Welsh at Wales.

When I asked Loren Rees if they had a cemetery in Wales, he arched his black-grey eyebrows at the silly question. "Surely," he said, "where do you think we bury ourselves?" I put the question badly and got put in my place for it—with a wide grin and some sparkling blue eyes. Of course there is a cemetery in Wales! No Welshman from Wales town cares to be buried in his time in any other community nearby, Loren assured me, with a lot of Englishmen and Danes.

The Wales cemetery is a lonely, desert-like place, but it is almost as Welsh as the one at Merthyr Tydfil. There is only one tree in it, a single native Utah juniper. The rest is desert shrub and herb. But in June, mutely tender, there is the solitary stem of the sego lily here and there, the state flower of Utah. Mostly the place has desert grasses, burr plants, and the cactus they call the prickly pear. Among the obvious Welsh names there are Rees, Thomas, Davis, Llewellyn, Edmunds, Jones, and Price. One also notes, however, the Anglo-Saxon intrusions: Dye, Lamb, Potter, Greenwood, and Dyches. There are a few Scandinavians too—who joined the Welsh. In addition, there is someone named Paul. From Oregon and a veteran of the Second World War, possibly he came through marriage. The Welsh have their pride, but they are not inhospitable.

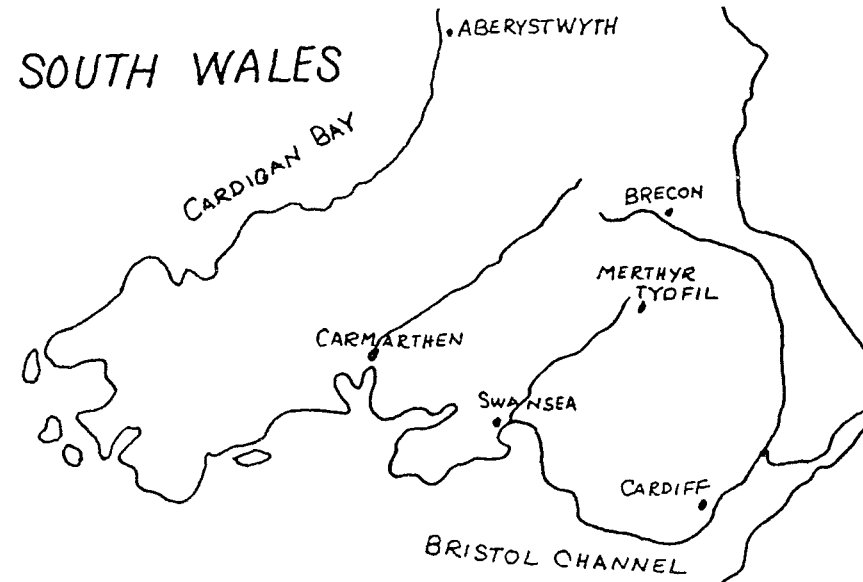
They can still give you a "good morning," a "good evening," and a "good health" in reasonable solid Welsh in Wales these days, but it seems to me they are not always sure which they are giving you. Sometimes somebody will say something in Welsh and refuse slyly to translate it for you, a clear sign it is something naughty, or the speaker thinks it is, so you do not press it.

In a wistful manner they still remember the homeland, not so much with knowledge as with tribal pride. In detail of face and form, the memory of old Wales is blurred indeed from too long a separation in both time and space. A man in his forties may say, "I am going back to see old Wales one of these days," but you do not really believe him. It is a long way, and he does not have the sharp motive to walk it in reverse. To fly there takes cash that he needs to carry on where he is.

Perhaps we in the New World have not made our feelings clear enough to the Old about all their children brought to us here. The Welsh in Sanpete's Wales are distinctly proud of their handcart pushers, their Welsh prophet, their red and black

Reeses, their blind harpist, and their entire heritage from old Wales.

GOING HOME: A SEARCH FOR ROOTS
(Article from the *Deseret News*, n.d., Jerry Johnston)



Everybody loves a homecoming story. And if the trip home involves a lot of heart, luck, and a trip across the sea, they like it even more. Mine has all that.

When Great-great-great-granddad William Rees buried his wife and daughter in Merthyr Tydfil, Wales, and joined the Mormons in Nauvoo, he thought he'd buried the "old country" for good. He hadn't. I came along to dig it up.

If Granddad Rees pined for Wales, he never let on. Over time, Wales slowly became nothing more than a gauzy, soft-focus Emerald City in his mind. For five generations, his descendants have seen Wales the same way. This fall I returned and put flesh, bone, brick, and plaster to the dream. I went back to find the graves of my ancestors in Merthyr Tydfil.

Merthyr Tydfil is the hometown of Leslie Norris, Brigham Young University's poet-in-residence. It was the home of David O. McKay's mother. A good many Utahns come from Merthyr. In a way, I went back for all of them. I have this to report. We come from a town with a long, wonderful, bitter history.

If—as some claim—cities tend to be either masculine or feminine, Merthyr is a man's-man town. High, hard stone walls line many streets; mining has left the hillsides pocked and pocketed. There is a hard-bitten, sturdy feel to Merthyr that shows up in the rugged nature of its citizens. People, I've found, tend to mirror the landscape they live on.

The irony is that Tydfil herself was a tender, young girl, a woman killed for her religious faith. Tydfil the Martyr, the Anglicans call her. Or, in Welsh, Merthyr Tydfil. Last fall I saw her dressed in her best. I arrived in Merthyr at dusk. All through Wales I'd noticed scenes that reminded me of places near the old Rees homestead in Cache Valley; stands of Lombardy poplar, holstein cows stumbling home. The Welsh countryside has a tattered, lived-in feel—like so much of Utah. It cried for irrigation.

Merthyr, in fact, is a vision of Deseret itself. The harsh, unforgiving landscape could have been settled by Brigham Young, and the architecture was made of the quaint hodgepodge of styles Utahns cherish. I quickly hooked up with Eric Norris, Leslie's brother, and within minutes we were thumbing through old histories and town maps trying to put together this long-awaited "Rees reunion" of mine. Finding the graves themselves would be hard. Dozens of churches and churchyards had been razed in recent years to make room for office buildings. But finding out why Grandpa Rees left Merthyr for America was no problem at all. Two men were responsible: Captain Daniel Jones, a man of God, and Robert Thompson Crawshay, a man from hell.

In 1850, when William joined the Mormon Church, Merthyr was a hotbed of religious fervor—much like Joseph Smith's Palmyra. Irish, Scottish, and Spanish immigrants came to labor in the mines. Dozens of missionaries came to labor with the immigrants. One missionary was Captain Daniel Jones, a salty, old, riverboat pilot who was baptized and sent by Joseph Smith to Wales to "push the work along."

He almost pushed it to the stratosphere. When Jones arrived in 1845 there were 900 Mormons in Merthyr. Five years later, he'd added another 3,700 more—Granddad Rees among them. *The Welsh Star*, the Mormon newspaper Jones put together, had 12,000 subscribers, and people were clamoring to get to Zion. In 1850 the good Captain sent 249 Saints to Nauvoo. In 1856 he sent another 703. People fled Merthyr as if fleeing the plague.

There was a plague. His name was Robert Thompson Crawshay—the dreaded "Iron master" of Merthyr Tydfil. Crawshay's

greed was astounding. He'd pay miners a penny a day. If they lost limbs in an accident, he wrote the injured miners off as "damaged goods." When Crawshay died in 1869, the Merthyr miners laid a great slab of granite on his grave so he could never get out. Three words appear on the granite: "God forgive me." The most poignant moment of my trip was watching Eric Norris look down at the marker and mutter under his breath, "God never will."

Sadly, Crawshay's grave is one of the few left from the era. I spent two days checking through Merthyr for the Rees family plot. The good news is I found it. The bad news is it now lies beneath the Merthyr Tydfil Telephone Company. Still, the trip to Wales was meant to be more than a pilgrimage to a gravesite. It was a pilgrimage to a people. I saw the faces of Uncle Dode, Grandpa Jess T., and Aunt Kate in the faces there. I saw my eyes in—and through—the Welsh eyes and saw my basic, quiet, stoic nature in their personalities.

I came back to Utah with an inkling of who William Rees was. And with that inkling, a sense of who I am as well. As for Grandma Rees and Aunt Naomi, well, I suspect they'll have an easier time lifting that telephone company at the resurrection than Crawshay will have getting rid of his granite block.

William Rees, I know, is banking on it. He became a Mormon after hearing Captain Dan Jones and his boys sing a Mormon hymn fresh from the pen of William Clayton. The hymn was called "Oh Resurrection Day." Granddad Rees—like all the Reeses since—believed better days always lay ahead.

GATHER TO ZION

The first Mormon missionaries assigned to Wales were Henry Royle and Frederick Cook, who began to proselyte in North Wales in October 1840. Some months earlier, others had been preaching in the English counties which border Wales. These missionaries could well have gone into some of the Welsh villages for a street meeting or two.

The first missionary assigned to the heartland of Wales was William Henshaw. He went directly to cosmopolitan Merthyr Tydfil, a burgeoning town which had recently become the industrial center of Wales. With no knowledge of the Welsh language, Henshaw had to proclaim his message in English and hope some would understand. On 19 February 1843, he baptized his first converts, the William Davis family. During the following

three years, Henshaw established several branches in Glamorgan and Monmouth, branches with a membership totaling nearly five hundred members.

In December 1845 Captain Dan Jones was called to preside over all the Welsh Mormons. He went down to Merthyr Tydfil after having spent the previous year in an unproductive North Wales. For the next decade this feisty and somewhat flamboyant mariner, having exchanged a ship's deck for a preacher's pulpit, would be the central figure of Welsh Mormondom.

Born in North Wales in 1810, Dan Jones went to sea at age seventeen and for the following ten years spent most of his life away from Wales. Shortly after he married Jane Melling in 1837, he took her to America, where he became an American citizen and

operated a steamboat on the Mississippi River. It was while he was captain of the little steamer *Maid of Iowa* that he first heard of the Mormons. Incredulous at the scurrilous stories then being printed in the *Warsaw Signal* (Illinois) and elsewhere, Jones sought out the missionaries to obtain firsthand information. The result was his conversion, and in January of 1843 he accepted baptism in the icy waters of the Mississippi. He had not as yet met the Prophet Joseph Smith, but did so just a few months later in April after transporting a group of British immigrants from St. Louis to Nauvoo. The friendship that resulted between the Prophet and the captain continued right up to Joseph's martyrdom at the Carthage Jail in Illinois. Jones was the recipient of Joseph's last prophecy, which was that the Welshman would return to his native land and fulfill the mission to which he had been called some months earlier. After three narrow escapes from death during the next thirty-six hours, Jones proceeded to make preparations to journey back to Britain.

Jones and his wife, Jane, traveling in company with Wilford Woodruff and Hiram Clark, reached Liverpool in January of 1845. First assigned to North Wales, Jones labored nearly all of 1845 but baptized only two or three converts. His reassignment to South Wales, however, would bring forth more encouraging results. During 1846 there were nearly five hundred Welsh converts; in 1847 just under one thousand; and an astounding 1,700 during 1848, the last year of Jones's first mission.

One of Jones's principal tools in proselyting the Welsh



Dan Jones
converted some four
thousand souls.

nation was the printing press. Numerous pamphlets in support of Mormonism, together with a monthly periodical called *Prophwyd y Jubili* (Prophet of the Jubilee) and a 288-page scriptural commentary—all in Welsh—were published between 1845 and 1848 by this energetic Welshman.

Converting his compatriots, however, represented only one of his objectives. Getting them "home to Zion" was the ultimate goal. The location of "Zion" shifted from Nauvoo, Illinois, to the Rocky Mountains during Jones's first mission, but enthusiasm for emigrating continued undiminished.

The Perpetual Emigrating Fund, which would assist many British converts to emigrate, had not as yet been established, and the cost of the voyage was out of reach for most Welsh converts, inasmuch as most of them clung to the lowest rungs of the economic ladder. They were encouraged, however, to rely on faith and save what they could; and the Lord would provide. . . .

The official organ of the Welsh Mormons, *Prophwyd y Jubili*, appeared monthly between July 1846 and December 1848. In nearly every one of the thirty issues there was something about emigrating: such articles as "The Landing of Sam Brannan in California," "Description of California," "News from the Saints in the Wilderness," "Who is Ready to Start Homeward?" and a letter from Wilford Woodruff while crossing the plains—all these fanned the flames of emigrating fever. A three-page article entitled "Twenty-nine Welshmen Lose Their Jobs in Cymbychan Because They Are Mormons" added fuel.

In the February 1848 *Prophwyd y Jubili*, Jones announced that official approval had been given for the Welsh to begin making definite plans for emigrating in a year's time. All were encouraged to pay off their debts, and the wealthy were asked to be generous in assisting the poor to leave "Babylon" for the promised land.

In the June 1848 *Prophwyd y Jubili*, Jones printed Thomas Bullock's account of the trek from Council Bluffs to Utah so future emigrants would have a better idea of what lay in store for them. And in October Jones announced that he, himself, had been granted permission to go with the first shipload of Welsh Saints. Thus he would "get the pleasant company and heavenly teaching of the sons of Zion instead of defending the truth against the malicious tales, false assertions, and the poison and slime of this perverse and obstinate nation."

Also in the October issue appeared a new song, "Hail to California," to be sung by the Welsh as they sailed away. (No credit

is given to the composer of the song; consequently, one would suppose that the editor, Dan Jones, had written it.)

When pestilence is harvesting the countries—
 Harvesting man like the grass of the field;
 When its foul breeze blows
 Laying waste the green earth,
 California,
 Yonder across the distant seas, for me.
 When the sharp shining sword
 Is bathed in blood;
 Yes, blood—the warm blood of men,
 In the worst battles ever fought,
 California—
 Yonder to the Rocky Mountains I shall go.

Two months later in *Seren Gomer* (Star of Gomer), a Baptist periodical, appeared a lengthy parody of “Hail to California” entitled “An Invitation to California.” The following two verses are typical of the scornful tone throughout:

We can get corn without sowing or harrowing,
 Everyone believe, everyone believe.
 And bread without baking it,
 Everyone believe.
 Houses will grow for us from the earth
 Lovely and attractive palaces,
 Oh, this is an alluring place,
 Everyone believe, everyone believe.
 A place where pain or sorrow will not come,
 Everyone believe.

There are fat oxen there,
 This is heaven, this is heaven,
 And thousands of fat pigs,
 This is heaven,
 Are waiting by the doors,

With the knives in their throats,
 Ready, morning and night,
 This is heaven, this is heaven.
 There is no one with a sparse table,
 This is heaven.

The Reverend H. W. Jones, publisher of *Seren Gomer* and former employer of John Davis, was not enthusiastic at the prospect of so many Welsh men and women—many former Baptists—turning their backs on their homeland. In his periodical he warned the Welsh Mormons with an ominous prophecy: “After receiving enough money to get a ship or ships to voyage to California, their Chief-President (Dan Jones) will sail them to Cuba, or some place like it, and will sell them as slaves, every jack one of them. It would serve them right for having such little respect for the book of Christ and giving it up for the books of Mormon.”

Through *Prophwd y Jubili* a call was made for the names and ages of all who intended to emigrate. A deposit of one pound sterling per person had to be paid no later than 31 December to secure passage. Detailed instruction concerning essentials such as food, clothing, trunks, and tools were printed. The itinerary was described and final counsel concerning indebtedness was given. Over three hundred Welsh Saints declared themselves candidates for the first emigrating party.

The opponents of Mormonism in Wales were incensed at these enticements and claimed that their compatriots were victims of a grand and wicked scheme. Anti-Mormon publications, articles, lectures, and campaigns grew in number and intensity. Over a year before emigration, Dan Jones assessed the situation in the Merthyr area in a 29 September 1847 letter to Orson Spencer, president of the missionary effort in Great Britain:

They have exhausted all their ammunition at poor Joseph and have of late beset poor Captain Jones, “his imp,” and “arch imposter of Wales”; and it is truly amusing to witness the exertions of these Nothingarians in ransacking the vocabulary of Billingsgate itself for titles with which to crown me! Some say they have proven me even worse than Joe Smith! Others say, “He is not quite so bad, but soon will be!” The scenes here are very like the continental rabbles of Missouri, etc., and still raging worse and hotter daily. You need not be surprised should you hear of Carthage tragedies

in Wales ere long. The whole towns and works hereabouts, containing over 60,000 people, are actually drunken with infatuation and rage for or against Mormonism. (*Millennial Star*, 15 October 1847, 318-19)

The plan for emigrating called for all Welsh Saints to meet in Liverpool by 15 February 1849. Those who lived in North Wales would go as individuals or in small groups; those from South Wales would meet in Swansea on the thirteenth and would make the thirty-four-hour voyage together by steamer. The gathering in Swansea caused a great sensation among the residents and was even described in considerable detail in the local newspaper, the *Cambrian*. The tone is one of amazement intermixed with pity:

Emigration to California—The Latter-day Saints: On Tuesday last, Swansea was quite enlivened in consequence of the arrival of several wagons loaded with luggage, attended by some scores of the “bold peasantry” of Carmarthen-shire, and almost an equal number of the inhabitants of Merthyr and the surrounding districts, together with their families. The formidable party were nearly all “Latter-day Saints,” and came to this town for the purpose of proceeding to Liverpool in the *Troubador*, a steamer which is in readiness to transport them next week to the glittering regions of California. This goodly company is under the command of Captain Dan Jones, a hardy traveller, and a brother of the well-known John Jones, Llangollen, the able disputant on the subject of “Baptism.” He arrived in the town on Tuesday evening, and seems to enjoy the respect and confidence of his faithful band. He entered the town amidst the gaze of hundreds of spectators, and in the evening he delivered his valedictory address at the Trades' Hall to a numerous audience, the majority of whom were led by curiosity to hear his doctrines, which are quite novel in this town. Amongst the group were many substantial farmers from the neighborhoods of Brechfa in Llangollen, Carmarthen-shire; and although they were well to do, they disposed of their possessions to get to California, their New Jerusalem as they deem it, where their fanaticism teaches them to believe they will escape from the general destruction and conflagration that is shortly to envelop this earth. It is due to them, however, to state that they are far from being smitten by that mania for gold, the discovery of which has imported to the modern El

Dorado such notoriety of late. They seem animated only with the most devout feelings and aspirations, which seem to follow from no other source (judging from their conversations) than a sincere belief that the End of the World is at hand. . . . It is their intention, we are informed, not to visit the gold regions, but the agricultural districts, where they intend, they say, by helping one another, to reside in peace and harmony, and to exemplify the truth of “brotherly love,” not in name but in practice. Amongst the number who came here were several aged men, varying from 70 to 90 years of age, and “whose hoary locks” not only proclaimed their “lengthened years,” but render it very improbable they will live to see America; yet so deluded are the poor and simple Saints, that they believe that every one amongst them, however infirm and old they may be, will as surely land in California safely, as they started from Wales. Their faith is extraordinary. On Wednesday morning, after being addressed by their leader, all repaired on board in admirable order and with extraordinary resignation. Their departure was witnessed by hundreds of spectators and whilst the steamer gaily passed down the river, the Saints commenced singing a favourite hymn. On entering the piers, however, they abruptly stopped singing, and lustily responded to the cheering with which they were greeted by the inhabitants. (*The Cambrian*, 16 February 1849)¹

THE NEW PLAN

Many of the Welsh Saints were so poor that even after liquidating all their meager assets they did not have sufficient money to pay the fare of 3 pounds, 12 shillings, 6 pence for each member of their families. This amount is equivalent to about \$18 or perhaps \$100 by today's standards. And although that might sound quite reasonable, one must bear in mind that over one-third of a laborer's annual wages was required to transport himself, his wife, and a few children across the Atlantic. Once he reached New Orleans he would have to pay another ten shillings per person to go by steamer upstream to St. Louis. Yet another one pound sterling each would be required for the steamer from St. Louis to Council Bluffs. And the immigrant would need to purchase food for his family while on the Mississippi and Missouri rivers. Once he arrived in Council Bluffs he would face the expense of buying a wagon and oxen plus more provisions for the thousand-mile, three-month journey to the

Great Salt Lake Valley. All these considerations, in addition to the prospect of about eight months with no income, made emigrating a sobering challenge.

The Perpetual Emigrating Fund was established later in 1849 and would be used by many Welsh Mormons. But those on board the *Buena Vista* and the *Hartley* had to use other means. Some intended from the outset to proceed only as far as Council Bluffs, where they would work and save until they could buy themselves a "fitout" to continue westward. Some had just enough to go the full distance. And some made arrangements to earn their way by going as a maid or servant to a family that could afford to pay for their services. Elizabeth Lewis, a wealthy convert from Kidwelly, states in a brief autobiographical sketch that she paid passage across the ocean of forty persons and provided expenses of thirty-two persons from Council Bluffs to Salt Lake City. . . . Not all of these were maids or servants; there appears to have been an agreement of eventual reimbursement with some. . . .

In 1855 the new arrivals found Zion in distress. A grasshopper plague had brought havoc to crops. Millions of pests had descended upon the fields and eaten up every green thing. All efforts to stay their destruction seemed futile. To add to the distress, the summer had been hot and dry; the irrigation water supply was diminished. As a result of the grasshoppers and the drought, the harvest of 1855 was reduced by from one-third to two-thirds, depending upon the locality.

With a diminished food supply, the large immigration of this year was not an asset, but instead an added burden upon the strained economy. Rigid rationing of food would be necessary through a severe winter.

The sharp decrease in food production, the unemployment and distress in 1855, caused marked falling-off in tithing receipts (the Church's revenue), and reduced donations to the Perpetual Emigrating Fund to a dribble. Faced with these conditions, some Mormons advised curtailing foreign immigration for 1856. But the leaders, in the General Epistle of October 29, 1855, announced that the emigration should not be reduced, because "the cry of our poor brethren in foreign lands for deliverance is great, the hand of the oppressor is heavy upon them, and they have no other prospect on earth through which they can hope for assistance." Despite heroic efforts heretofore to assist emigration, the Mormons had been able to bring to Utah only one out of twenty of those who wanted to come. In view of this situation and the economic conditions prevailing, a cheaper mode of transportation was urgently needed. Under these cir-



cumstances was born a unique plan for overland migration—by handcart.

Walking across the plains and mountains of western America was no novelty in the days before the coming of the railroad. Bullwackers regularly tramped beside their yoked cattle on the Santa Fe Trail; and the covered wagon emigrants, who first rutted the Oregon Trail, often trudged beside their monotonous rolling wagons. Gold seekers to California, and to other El Dorados, sometimes carried their worldly goods flung over their shoulders. The Mormons who pioneered the route to the Salt Lake Valley, and those who trekked after them, walked much of the way beside the ox-drawn trains.

But never had *handcarts* been employed as a means of transport for an entire emigrant company. Now this humble vehicle was to be adopted and put to the test.

"I have been thinking how we should operate another year," wrote Brigham Young to the president of the European Mission in September, 1855. "We cannot afford to purchase wagons and teams as in times past. I am constantly thrown back upon my old plan": (From the General Epistle of October, 1851 in *Millennial Star*.) "Some of the children of the world have crossed the mountains and plains from Missouri to California with a pack on their back to worship their God—Gold! . . . Some of the Saints now in our midst came here with wagons or carts made of wood, without a particle of iron, hooping their wheels with hickory, rawhide, or ropes and had as good and safe a journey as any in the camps with their wrought iron wagons. And can you not do the same? Yes, start from the Missouri River with cows, handcarts, wheel-barrows, with a little flour and no unnecessary and come to this place quicker, and with less fatigue, than by following the heavy trains with their cumbersome herds which they are often obliged to drive miles to feed." The next

spring a handcart plan was presented to the General Conference in Salt Lake City, and 93 men volunteered to go east with teams and provisions to meet such walking immigrants. But the scheme was not put into operation at that time.

Continuing President Young's letter: "and let the emigration foot it, and draw upon them (the carts) the necessary supplies, having a cow or two for every ten. They can come just as quick, if not quicker, and much cheaper—can start earlier and escape the prevailing sickness which annually lays so many of our brethren in the dust. A great majority of them walk now, even with the teams which are provided, and have a great deal more care and perplexity than they would have if they came with them."

Getting down to specifics, Brigham Young continues: "They will only need 90 days' rations from time of their leaving the Missouri River, and as the settlements extend up the Platte, not that much. The carts can be made without a particle of iron, with wheels hooped, made strong and light, and one, or if the family be large, two of them will bring all that they will need upon the plains. . . ."

"I think we might as well begin another year as any time and save this enormous expense of purchasing wagons and teams—indeed, we will be obliged to pursue this course or suspend operations, for aught that I can see at the present. . . ."

"I think the emigration had better come the northern route from New York, Philadelphia, or Boston, direct to Iowa City. . . . Their passage through to Iowa City will not cost more than 8 or 9 dollars, and they will only have to be supplied with money for provisions and a few cows, which should be of the best quality. . . . Of course you will perceive the necessity of dispensing with all wooden chests, extra freight, luggage, etc. They should only bring a change of clothing. . . ."

The optimism of Brigham led him to simplify the vicissitudes: "Fifteen miles a day will bring them through in 70 days, and after they get accustomed to it, they will travel 20, 25, and even 30 with all ease, and no danger of giving out, but will continue to get stronger and stronger; the little ones and sick, if there are any, can be carried on the carts, but there will be none sick in a little time after they get started. There will have to be some few tents."

As president of the Perpetual Emigrating Fund, Brigham Young wrote a letter of instructions to President F. D. Richards at Liverpool: "In your elections of the Saints who shall be aided

by the Fund, those who have proven themselves by long continuance in the Church shall be helped first, whether they can raise any means of their own or not . . . if they have not a sixpence in the world. But be wary of assisting any of those who come into the Church now, during these troublesome times for Britain, whose chief aim and intention may be to get to America."

President Young's letter and announcement were published in the *Millennial Star* of December 22, 1855. In a long editorial in the same issue, Franklin D. Richards, who was editor of the paper as well as president of the European Mission, endorsed the project and amplified its advantages:

"The plan about to be adopted by the P. E. Fund Company, of substituting handcarts for ox-teams in crossing the plains, has been under consideration for several years. The plan proposed is novel, and when we allow our imaginations to wander into the future and paint the scenes that will transpire on the prairies next summer, they partake largely of the romantic. The plan is the device of inspiration, and the Lord will own and bless it.

"More speedy measures must be devised for strengthening Zion. The system of ox-trains is too slow and expensive, and must give way to the telegraph line of handcarts and wheelbarrows. It would be much more economical both in time, labor, and expense if, instead of spending several weeks to obtain and accustomed to the yoke a lot of wild ungovernable cattle, impairing the health of many of the brethren by excessive labor and fatigue, and bringing disease and death into the camps by long delays on the miasmatic banks of the Missouri River, on the arrival of a company of Saints on the frontier they could have the necessary handcarts ready and load them, and be 200 or 300 miles on their journey, with the same time and labor that would otherwise be expended in getting started.

"It is only to those who have traveled the plains with ox-teams, that the advantages of doing without them will appear in all their force. They alone can realize what it is to get up on a sultry morning, spend a hour or two in driving up and yoking unruly cattle; and while waiting impatiently to start on the dusty, wearisome road in order to accomplish the day in due time, hear the word passed around that some brother has an ox missing; then another hour, or perhaps half a day, is wasted and finally, when ready to start, the pleasantest time for travelling is past, during which a company with handcarts would have performed the greater part of an ordinary day's journey. There being few animals in a handcart company, there will be less to