

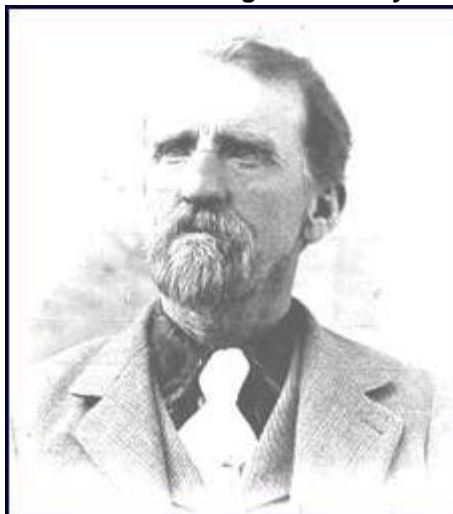
Thomas Edwards, the 2nd

(Ead = prosperity + weard = guard)

Born: January 1793 ; Christened: 7 DEC 1794

Place: Ystradyfodwy, Glamorgan, Wales

Edwards is an old English Patronymic name that became popular after the Norman invasion.



Thomas Edwards

Thomas Edwards, Jr. was the first child born to Thomas and Mary (Davis) Edwards. He was born in Ystradfodwy, a hamlet, which is only a few miles northwest of Aberdare. He was almost 4 years old when his parents married on December 23, 1797.^[1] Many times couples had to wait until they could afford a church wedding or have their children christened. Thomas and his sister Gwenllian were both christened at Ystradfodwy Parish.

His Father

When Thomas Edwards, Sr. was a boy, his village of Penderyn (7 miles west of Merthyr Tydfil) was surrounded by green fertile land. He became a collier (miner). When it was discovered that coke could be used for smelting iron, the industrial revolution took over and changed all five of the peaceful valleys of South Wales.

His father was very influential in the hamlet. On May 10, 1797, the parish records stated, "paid to Thomas Edwards his expense in stopping married men to serve in the militia."^[2]

Thomas and Mary Edwards Children

All of their children were born in Ystradyfodwy except for the last two.

1. Thomas Edwards January 1793
2. Gwenllian Edwards 19 Sep 1802
3. Howell Edwards 1803
4. David Edwards 20 Dec 1804
5. Edward Edwards 1807
6. Mary Edwards 1816

Wales Counties

In 1800, there was major unrest in Glamorgan over the low wages,



scarcity of provisions and the threat of Press Gangs.^[3] Rioting began in April of that year in Merthyr Tydfil and in 1801 women and children demonstrated at Swansea regarding the price of food. Edward Edwards, the youngest brother was baptized in the Llanwonno^[4] Parish in 1807. (Llanwonno Parish is adjacent to Aberdare parish.) Mary Edwards the youngest sister was



christened in Penderyn in 1816.

Wales is described as rolling moorlands, glacial mountains with spectacular cliffs on the West Coast, and old mining towns. It is surrounded by sea on three sides and borders England to the east where Offa's Dyke, a giant earthwork was constructed in the 8th century and still stands. The rainfall in Wales is so high that grass is green year round.

In 1801 (50 years after the mining and manufacturing of iron had started) Merthyr had a population of 7,705 and by 1871, it had risen to 96,891. The Edwards family was caught up in this massive growth of the mining industry. Thomas Sr. moved to a different ironworks as a collier (miner of iron ore) within the Merthyr district (from Ystradfodwy to Llanwonno).

The following description aptly describes any of the mining areas in Wales: "The Valley of Aberdare had become a trough full of human beings, as its bottom, deep underground is full of superior steam coal. At certain hours, the "pits", all but bottomless, belch out their myriads of grimy, blackened human forms, each with a Davy lamp in hand, who hasten to their humble homes to wash, feed and rest."^[5]

This description summed up the life of Thomas Sr. and his sons who became slaves to the mines. By 1784, there were four large ironworks within a two-mile radius of Merthyr.

1. Dowlais (pronounced Dallas) which was the first iron mine near Merthyr that was started in 1748 by John Guest. By 1830, Dowlais Ironworks was the largest in the world. (17 furnaces)

Dowlais Ironworks

2. Richard Forman became Mr. Homfreys partner in 1786 at the Pen y Darren Ironworks.
3. In 1786, Richard Crawshay took control of Cyfarthfa Ironworks. (11 furnaces)

4. In 1786 Richard Hill took over Anthony Bacon's Plymouth Ironworks.

I am not sure which mines the family worked, it could have been any of the giant dynasties but there were also many other smaller mines. Peace in Europe in 1815 caused a depression in Wales, which had supplied munitions for the long wars against Napoleon. The **Corn Laws** were passed in Parliament, which kept the price of bread artificially high to benefit wealthy farmers. Unions began to form in the Valleys of Glamorgan.

A reproduction of a Welsh village from "How Green Was My Valley", a movie from 1941, made from Richard Llewellyn's book of the same title.

When Thomas Jr. was 22, he had been working as a collier with his father. At age 50 his father died in 1816 near Aberdare. His mother was pregnant at the time. After his father's burial, Thomas moved the family to Penderyn. Thomas Jr. had to fill his father's shoes as head of the household; his younger brothers were only 13 and 9. His youngest sister Mary was born in Penderyn. In 1818, when his sister Gwenllian turned 18, she married Richard Williams in Merthyr.

Thomas Edwards 1st Wife



Times were hard and Thomas was in his thirties before he married Elizabeth Emphouse. In 1828, they had their first son whom they named David.^[6] In 1829, a depression set in that lasted for three years. During these depression years, Thomas Edwards first wife died and in 1830, his sister Gwenllian Edwards Williams died. Edward Edwards married Ann Edwards and moved to Ferndail, where they both lived the rest of their lives. Edward was buried there in 1877 and Ann in 1886. Mary Edwards the youngest sister married John Young in 1832 staying in the Penderyn Parish in Brecon County.

Thomas Edwards 2nd Wife

Elizabeth Lewis Edwards

On December 31, 1836, Thomas married Elizabeth Lewis by banns^[7] at the Aberdare^[8] parish. The family lived in Aberaman, which is a village at the influx of the Aman Rivalet to the Cynon River and is two miles southeast of Aberdare^[9]. See page 4 for a map.

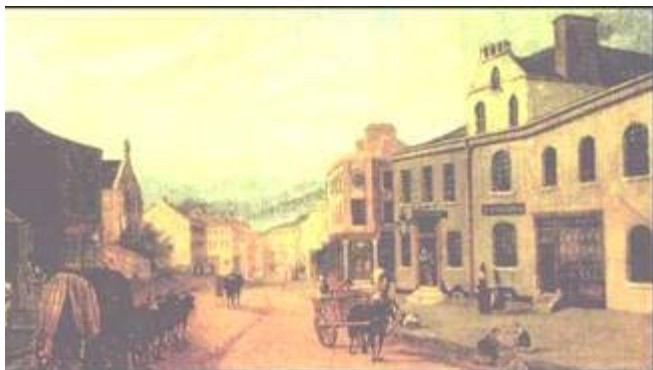


Their first child was born the year before they married. Most of their children were born while they lived in Aberaman at Heol y Felin (meaning mill street or a road that lead to a mill).

1. Rees Edwards 17 Nov 1835
2. David Edwards 17 Sep 1836
3. Elizabeth Edwards 26 Jun 1837
4. Margaret Edwards 26 Jun 1837
5. Mary Edwards 12 Oct 1839
6. Margaret Edwards 1840
7. Janet Edwards 20 Feb 1844
8. Elizabeth Edwards 1846
9. Thomas Edwards 15 Mar 1849
10. Sarah Edwards 8 Jan 1852

Their son David died at the age of two. Scarlet fever raged and their twin daughters died at age two. Just after they moved to Merthyr Tydfil in 1844, Janet was born. The true center of the “black country” of Glamorganshire was Merthyr Tydfil, which was described as a congenial home for the mines, smelters and industrial revolution. “Nature seems to have sacrificed all her external ornaments to lay up wealth for the ages to come in her deep subterranean coffers. The surface soil is lean and clayey, pinching the life out of plant and animal, and making one wonder what kind of inhabitants these regions nurtured before the days of mining and manufacturing came round.”

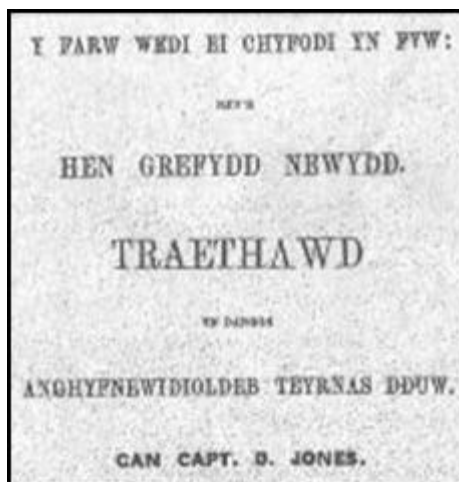
A sharp contrast of beauty lies just north of Merthyr Tydfil called the chilly heights of Hirwaun (the long moorland) toward the Vale of Neath – a valley scarcely surpassed by any in Wales for the lovely and picturesque scenery.



During the early 1800s there were many strikes and riots in south Wales because of the poor living conditions and cuts in wages. In 1839 the Rebecca Riots began. Again, in 1842 there were Rebecca Riots in West Wales. The men involved in these riots disguised themselves by dressing as women, therefore, being known as Rebecca. In 1842 the Mines Act was passed in Parliament banning women and (boys under the age of 10) from working in the underground mines.

Early Merthyr Tidfil

In 1843 a branch of the Church of Latter Day Saints was established in Merthyr Tydfil. Most of the miners in the area spoke only Welsh. Very few people living there spoke English. By 1844 the church had published a pamphlet in the Welsh language on the first principles of the gospel. The earliest surviving LDS publication in Welsh is a 48-page pamphlet by Elder Dan Jones, printed in 1845 called *The Dead Raised to Life*. [\[10\]](#)

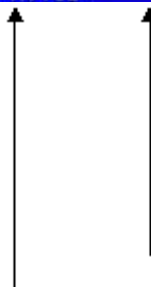
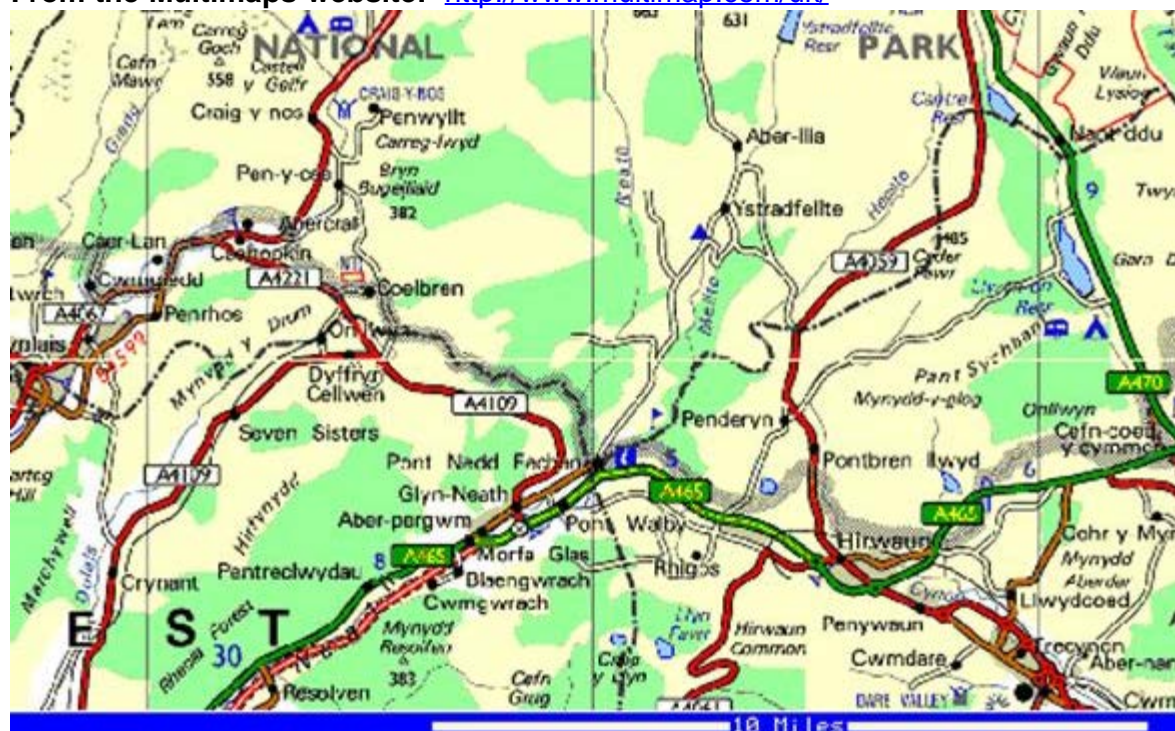


Welsh Pamphlet, 1845

William Jones baptized Elizabeth into the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints in December of 1850. Thomas investigated the church quite a bit longer before he committed to baptism. Miles Williams baptized and confirmed Thomas a member on August 17, 1851.

Thomas became a stalwart member of the church and began saving his money to leave Wales so that his family could live with the Saints in America. The family attended the LDS Glamorgan East Conference and Thomas was a witness in 1852 to the misconduct of another member. [11]

From the Multimaps website: <http://www.multimap.com/uk/>



Penderyn & Hirwaun



Ferndale Aberdare Aberaman

David Edwards (Thomas Edwards first son from his first marriage) married Mary (surname unknown) and moved to Brynmawr, Wales where he lived until he died.

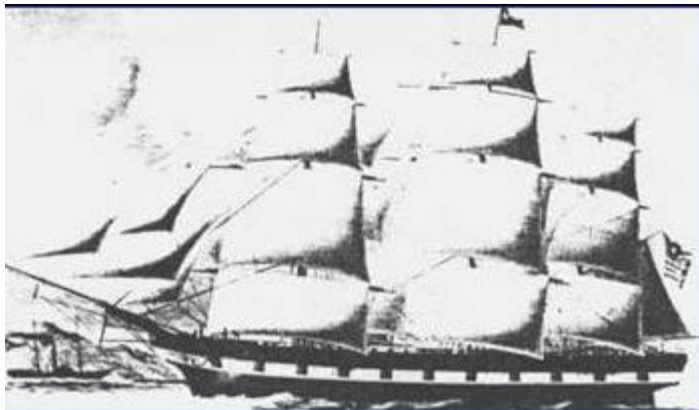
Sailing to America

The family booked passage on the ship *Clara Wheeler*, which was a three-decker ship with a square stern and a billethead at the bow. ^[12] Captain J. F. Nelson reported that there were 422 LDS passengers. Elder Henry E. Phelps and his two counselors, Elders John Parsons and James Crossley presided over the Saints. They boarded the ship at Liverpool, England on Thursday November 23 and the next day the ship left dock and lay out in the River Mersey. It continued to lie in the River for the next two days and finally on Monday November 27, 1854, they set sail at 3 PM. They had not been able to clear the Irish Channel because of the incessant head winds against

the ship and very rough weather. ^[13] All of the passengers suffered considerably from seasickness. They returned to port after three days. After taking on more provisions, they waited seven days for the wind to change. On December 6 the saints held a fast and prayed that their voyage could continue. The next day on December 7, at 1 PM a tugboat retrieved them and pulled them past all of the docks. The Captain of the ship finally returned to the ship and they sailed onward and cleared the Irish Channel in three days. One child was thrown overboard and lost at sea. Soon after leaving port, measles broke out among the passengers (20 children and two adults died at sea). It was very painful to watch as the children died how they were sewn up in a bag and tossed into the ocean for

burial. The journey was one of sickness and sorrow. Neither the president nor his counselors held meetings or gave instructions to cheer the passengers. Brother Franklin D. Richards said that every passenger would have three pounds of butter and two of cheese and when it was given out, the butter was 160 pounds short and the cheese was a quarter pound short to each adult. There were a total of 22 deaths, one birth and 8 marriages on board the ship. Upon arrival at New Orleans on January 12, 1855, one more child died. After finally setting sail, it had taken 5 weeks to get to New Orleans.

Clara Wheeler



From the Deseret News dated April 4, 1868, the following article was written:

“When the Edwards family came across the ocean in 1854, they booked passage on November 18. They set sail for the New World November 27, 1854. Those included in the company were Thomas Edwards, who was a collier (worked in the coalmines), age 56. [\[14\]](#)

| | <u>age</u> |
|-------------------|------------|
| Elizabeth Edwards | 47 |
| Reece Edwards | 19 |
| Mary Edwards | 13 |
| Janet Edwards | 10 |
| Elizabeth Edwards | 8 |
| Thomas Edwards | 5 |
| Sarah Edwards | 2 |

In this company, there were 294 adults, 107 children under 14 and 19 infants under 1, this making 421 souls in the company. Henry E. Phelps was President of the company. Bal. Paid November 20, 1854: 28 s. 10 do
The *Clara Wheeler* was the name of the ship in which they made the voyage.

On January 13, the day after their arrival in New Orleans, the Edwards family boarded the steamer *Oceana* heading up the Mississippi to St. Louis, Missouri, which was a distance of 1200 miles. The fare was \$3.50 for each adult and children were half fare.

“Nearly one-half of the company had not the means wherewith to pay their passage to St. Louis; but the more well-to-do Saints who had more money than they needed themselves, were influenced to lend to those who had none, and thus all who desired to continue the journey were enabled to do so.” [\[15\]](#)

The steamer worked hard to get through the ice on the Mississippi River. They arrived in St. Louis without any mishaps and were met by Apostle Erastus Snow on January 22, 1855. The Edwards family remained in St. Louis, found work and saved money to buy supplies for their trip to cross the plains. Their 8 year old daughter Elizabeth died in 1855 (it is possible that she died of the measles after reaching New Orleans). Many of the saints were taken to Gravois where they were able to work in a coal mine to save money for their trips west. It is not known if Thomas worked there or not but it is very possible since many other passengers from the same ship were taken there to work.

Their daughter Marries

Mary Edwards married John James and their first child, Kathryn James was born in December of 1859. Mary became a widow sometime between 1859 and 1861. She married her second husband William Alfred Hymas in May of 1861 in Omaha, Nebraska. I am not sure when the family moved to Nebraska but Thomas Edwards is listed on the 1860 Nebraska census so it was probably some time in 1859.

Crossing the Plains

When Thomas Edwards (age 68) left Florence, Nebraska in 1861, his wife was 57, Reece was 26, Janet was 17, Thomas Jr. was 12 and Sarah was 9 years old. They traveled with Job Pingree ^[16] and arrived in Salt Lake on August 24, 1861.

“An independent company of emigrating saints in Captain Job Pingree’s charge arrived in Salt Lake City. This company had left Florence, Nebraska on June 7, 1861. Among the names given from memory by Job Pingree in 1916 were Thomas Edwards and family.

Our company was a St. Louis Company of Saints mostly. There were 33 wagons and 3 carriages. No deaths occurred in our company while crossing the plains, but there was one birth and taking it all together, our trip was very pleasant. No accident to speak of occurred and there was but little loss of cattle. It was an ox tram though three of our rigs were drawn by horses.”^[17]

His Daughter Mary

Mary Edwards Hymas had her first pair of twin girls in April of 1862 in Omaha, but they did not survive. In July of 1862, William and Mary joined the James Wareham Company. They traveled in a covered wagon pulled by oxen and arrived in Utah on September 26, 1862. They left Utah in 1864 and settled in the southeast corner of Idaho near Wyoming. Mary had two more sets of twins except these twins were a boy and a girl from each set. The boy from the first set died at age 5 but the other twins lived to adulthood. Mary had 11 children total, 8 lived to be adults, and out of the 11, she had 3 sets of twins. Now this is quite an accomplishment in itself, but the Hymas family was the third family to move into the tiny village of Liberty, Idaho. Being pioneer times, there were no doctors in most of the settlements, so Mary was asked to become a mid-wife. She was given a special blessing in the Logan Temple in Utah to become a midwife and was promised that she would be given strength to accomplish this task. She successfully delivered more than 700 babies in Bear Lake County while raising 8 children of her own.

Thomas and Elizabeth Edwards settled on a farm in Ogden, Utah. Their oldest son, Reese, never married and lived in Ogden until he died. He is buried in the Ogden cemetery next to his mother who died about 9 years before her husband.

They belonged to the First Ward in Ogden, Weber Stake. Robert McQuairce rebaptized both Thomas and Elizabeth when they arrived in the valley. The 1st Ward was organized in 1856. By 1891, Thomas Edwards had been ordained a High Priest. ^[18]

The following article was written in the Deseret News (17:79): ^[19]

Brother George D. Keaton, of this city (Salt Lake City) writing under date of April 4, 1868 says: “Thomas Edwards of Ogden city was born in Wales in the month of January 1793, and is therefore in his 76th year. He has lately had a new set of double teeth growing in his head, not having lost the front ones. He cut the new teeth about the same as children generally cut theirs, his gums swelling and being very painful during the

period of dentation. His hair still retains its natural color of jet black. Brother Edwards came to American about 14 years ago and has been in Utah nearly seven years. He is a man of regular habits of life. He works regularly in his farm, has general good health and is the father of 10 children. He walked from Ogden to this city last fall, a distance of 40 miles to attend General Conference. He is a praying man, and tries to live the life of a saint."

On April 13, 1879 his wife died and she was buried in the Ogden Cemetery. Thomas outlived his wife by 14 years. As he grew older and needed a little looking after his daughter Mary Edwards Hymas moved him to Liberty, Idaho. She took care of him until he died on April 7, 1893 at the grand old age of 100 years and 4 months.

There is no stone left in Liberty with his name on it but the burial site was confirmed by a cousin who lives in the area.

[1] Temple Index Bureau record, Book F, #603.

[2] Film 839,714 item 3, Ystradyfodwg Parish.

[3] Press gangs were groups of naval crews that came ashore when their ship docked and forcibly took you men into the navy.

[4] Llanwynno is the official Welsh spelling.

[5] Nicholas, Thomas 1874. *The History & Antiquities of Glamorganshire and its Families*. (FHL 942.97 H2n)

[6] A Welsh custom was to name the first born son after the grandfather.

[7] Banns were notices that were read weekly for three weeks in the Parish.

[8] Aberdare is a town, a parish and a sub-district in the district of Merthyr-Tydfil in Glamorgan Co.

[9] Aberdar is the official Welsh spelling.

[10] Manuscript History of the British Mission, 3 Sep 1844; Ensign Sep 2000, "Historic Milestone Achieved: More Non-English-Speaking Members Now than English-Speaking" by J. M. Todd, p.78.

[11] Film 104832, LDS Record 1851-1852 Glamorgan Branch.

[12] "*Saints on the Seas*".

[13] Mormon Immigration Index CD – Voyages. BMR, Book #1040, p. 172-89 (FHL #025,690); Customs #261 (FHL #200,181). Personal Accounts – Thomas Crowther, George Sant & William Stuart Brighton.

[14] Film 25,690 "Early Church Records", p. 181 lists passengers of the Clara Wheeler. There is a discrepancy in the mother's age (as in census records, sometimes the ages are incorrect).

[15] *Saints on the Seas*, p. 106 and the *Millennial Star*, 1855.

[16] *Pioneers & Prominent Men of Utah*, p. 953

[17] *Emigration*, Feb. 28, 1851 to Feb. 2, 1855, #1044 p. 181-189.

[18] Film 26,245 (1878-1889 Ogden First Ward Records), p. 13.

[19] General Church History 1848, p. 6.