

The following account was transcribed from two legal-sized typewritten pages in my possession that were mailed to Rachel from my father (Vern R. Thomas) in an envelope dated 7 Apr 1997. William Jones Thomas is my great great grandfather. Written in my father's handwriting was the following notation at the end of the second page. "Received in a letter from a Mr. Malcom (sic) 10820 Collins St., N. Hollywood, California 3 June 1954, addressed to Mr. V. R. Thomas"

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE LIFE OF WILLIAM JONES THOMAS

A brief history of the life of William Jones Thomas and the family experience, taken from information furnished Edelbert Pascoe Thomas by his father Edward Phillip Thomas, January 24, 1910 at Palmyra, Utah and added to from additional information gleaned from other sources since that date.

William Jones Thomas was the eldest son of Edward Thomas and was born on the Mascadlaur farm in Glamorganshire, South Wales, on November 11, 1811. He died October 26, 1866 in Salt Lake City, Utah from cancer of the stomach. He was buried in the Salt Lake City Cemetery. After the death of his wife, his children decided to remove his remains and bury them at her side.

Father, Wm. J. Thomas, married Margaret Phillips and they had born to them eight children. One daughter died at birth, the rest grew to maturity.

Mother, Margaret Phillips, was born at Monk Nash, Glamorganshire, South Wales on February 28, 1813. She died June 9, 1889 in Spanish Fork, Utah and was buried in the Spanish Fork Cemetery.

Following are the children's names in their order:

Ann Thomas, eldest child, was born January 16, 1842, at Masteg, Glamorganshire, South Wales. Died September 8, 1924, in Spanish Fork, Utah and buried Spanish Fork.

Edward Phillip Thomas was born June 22, 1843, at Marcross, Glamorganshire, South Wales. Died December 13, 1922, in Spanish Fork, Utah, buried in Spanish Fork.

William Thomas born November 28, 1846 at Eagle Bush, Glamorganshire, South Wales. Died July 4, 1909 in Spanish Fork, Utah, buried in Spanish Fork.

Margaret Thomas born March 6, 1849 at Swansea, Glamorganshire, South Wales. Died August 13, 1879 in Spanish Fork, Utah of Brights disease. Buried in Spanish Fork.

Elizabeth Thomas born December 10, 1851. Died at birth and buried at Swansea, Glamorganshire, South Wales.

Father also buried a former wife named Elizabeth Thomas and their daughter Margret (sic) in Castell, Llangynard, Wales in the year 1839.

Llewellyn Thomas born December 23, 1852 at Swansea, Glamorganshire, South Wales. Died October 18, 1912 at Spanish Fork, Utah, buried at Spanish Fork.

John Thomas (KEITH THOMAS NOTE – MY GREAT GREAT GRANDFATHER) born May 8, 1854 at Swansea, Glamorganshire, South Wales. Died October 13, 1905 at Spanish Fork, Utah, buried Spanish Fork.

William Jones Thomas joined The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in 1855. He was very sincere in his religious belief. His wife never took any interest in religion and did not want to leave Wales.

Edward Phillip Thomas was baptized in 1856.

We left Wales in 1857 and came West as far as Saint Louis, Missouri. In July of that year father and I went to work in the coal mines near St. Louis. We worked until the following May, when father, mother and the family took a steamboat up the Missouri river to Florence, where we stopped a short time. From here we started West, but did not have teams enough to travel. Father rented a farm and we tried farming. Soon we all took sick with Fever and Ague and there was not one able to wait on another.

Father was very sick for thirteen months and we had a difficult time. We had no cow, we simply had nothing. We children worked for the neighboring farmers for potatoes, corn and wheat. When father got well he took up 160 acres of land. We built a house with no windows and a door of common lumber. The roof was covered with grass laid on willows then dirt spread over them.

One day in November, a great flock of wild chickens came flying South, it was like a cloud in the sky. They flew against the trees and the house, then fell stunned to the ground. We were able to hit them with sticks and kill a great a number. We dressed them and hung them to freeze in the trees and on the side of the house. This as a Godsend to us and saved us from suffering with hunger.

In April of the following year we were greatly blessed. A man rode into our yard and spoke to mother in Welsh, he had recognized mother as being Welsh by her dress. Mother answered him in Welsh, he then said, "I presume by the looks of your place that you folks are very poor." He told here that he had been obliged to leave a good cow that had lost her calf, and that we might have her. Father was very weak but was very glad to go look for the cow. He took a rope and a cup and went to the ferry where cattle were being ferried across the Missouri river. There were so many cattle there he thought it would be impossible to find the cow and her calf. Something seemed to tell father to ask the captain of the ferry boat, which he did. The captain said, "Yes, I saw them not an hour ago." While father was sitting on a log wondering which way to go, the Captain shouted "there's your heifer now." It seemed like an act of Providence that the cow should come right to where he was. Father drank freely of the milk on the way home and was much stronger. Our health was greatly improved after getting the cow. In the three years at this place we gained a great deal in a financial way. We now had three yoke of oxen and a yoke of cattle and an old wagon. We again started for Utah.

On our way across the plains a man also by the name of Thomas, who was traveling with us, had considerable trouble getting his ox team to go. One day they balked and father left his own team in charge of brother Lew, with instructions not to move until he returned. Lew had been begging father for days to let him drive, se he started the oxen. He seemed to have a spell over them because they performed better than they ever had before. Instead of father scolding Lew for going on and disobeying orders, he said, "Lew, Brother Thomas has need of you." From then on Llewellyn was in demand as a teamster.

This same summer we met a party of the Johnson's Army, coming back from Utah. We were at the Sweetwater in Wyoming when they took their bayonets to our cattle and drove them into the tall sage brush. At Devils Fate one yoke of oxen became so tender footed, we could hardly get them to move. We arrived in Salt Lake in October 1861 and settled in the 11th ward.

That first winter I lived with my Uncle Samuel David on the Weber River below Ogden, Utah. While we lived in Salt Lake City I made three trips back to the Missouri River for immigrants. Former Church President Joseph F. Smith was captain of one of the companies.

After arriving in Utah father received some money from his father's estate under the terms of a will dated January 24, 1863 and executed on November 28, 1863. He willed each of his five children two hundred pounds (about one thousand dollars). When father received this money he went to Bishop Thurber and asked him what to do with it. He was told to buy a threshing machine. He went back to Omaha to get it and trailed it by mule teams to Spanish Fork, Utah. This was the first threshing machine south of Salt Lake County.

I went by team and wagon to meet my father. Soon after leaving Salt Lake I overtook two men, who stopped me and climbed into my wagon, making themselves quite at home. They rode with me and ate my food until I was afraid we would be without food. One of them took my rifle and shot some rabbits and the other stole some vegetables along the road. These men rode with me to Fort Bridger, Wyoming. We arrived there in the early evening; they got out and went over to the Fort. I fed my team, then hitched them up again, and went on, leaving the men behind.

When I came near the place where I was to meet my father, the sun was just coming up and I could see an object in the distance, up on the ridge moving toward me. I could not make it out at first but as it came into view I recognized father's walk. I ran to meet him. When we met neither of us could speak. We walked some distance, then father said to me, "my boy, how is mother and the folks." I could not speak yet and soon I began to cry, then I could tell him about mother.

When the Saints were colonizing both north and south of Salt Lake City, father was called to captain a number of Welsh families and settle in Malad, Idaho. We were all ready to move north when father was called into the church office and asked if he would go to Spanish Fork with several Welsh families, which he did.

This first home was a two roomed adobe house on the corner where Ed William's now stands. Later father made the adobes for a three room house with a basement (called cellar) and built that home on main street. Mother lived there until her death.

Father took a number of Welsh families into his home to help them get located. Some of them remained with him for months. He even helped them to make adobes and build their houses. Among the families taken in was the John P. Jones family. Mr. Jones was so crippled with rheumatism that he had to be lifted into and out of the wagon and remained in that condition for two or three months. Marantha Jones Milner was born the day after they arrived with us and Wren Jones was born while they were still there. This was about two years.