

A SKETCH OF THE LIVES OF MY PARENTS
NATHANIEL EDMUNDS AND JANE JONES EDMUNDS

By Charlotte Ann Edmunds Parry

Nathaniel Edmunds, son of Nathaniel Edmunds and Charlotte Jones Edmunds was born at Dowlais, Merthyr Tydfil, Glamorganshire, South Wales, September 6, 1827.

Jane Jones Edmunds, daughter of David Jones and Mary Rowlands Jones, was born March 29, 1832 at Merthyr Tydfil, Galmorganshire, South Wales.

They were married December 6, 1851.

They grew to manhood and womanhood in Merthyr and joined the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in their native land. They immigrated to America, leaving Wales on April 19, 1856. They came across the Atlantic Ocean in a sailing vessel, arriving at Boston, March 23, 1856. The vessel was named Samuel Curling. It took nearly six weeks to cross. There were 707 souls in the company. They went by rail to Iowa City and left there June 23, 1856. Daniel Jones was captain of the company while crossing the ocean. Edward Bunker was captain of the hand cart company. They arrived in Salt Lake City, October 2, 1856.

Father and Mother were the first of their families to join the Church in its early introduction into Wales. Mother's parents took it very hard when they found their daughter had joined what they thought was a low-down sect and tried to persuade her to leave it, but Mother had such a strong testimony of the divinity of its truth that she could not give it up. So they drove her from home, feeling she had disgraced the family. The other Saints, knowing of this condition, sympathized with her and William Philips (Sister Dangerfield's grandfather), president of the little colony of Saints took her in to live with his family. After some time her mother was taken sick and sent for her to come home. Mary Rowlands Jones died the 20th or 30th of April, 1851.

On December 6, 1851 she and father were married and on November 10, 1852 a son was born to them. They named him David, after Mother's father. He died when he was six weeks old. On the 17th or 20th of May, 1855 another son was born to them and they called him John.

On the 19th of April, 1856, they sailed for America.

Mother said that when her father came to bid them good-bye and saw the steamer trunk on the floor with their belongings in it, he wept and said, "Jane, I just as well see your coffin lying

there for I will never see you again." And he never did.

After their voyage across the Atlantic they landed in Boston and took a train as far as it went which was Iowa City. They unloaded their belongings and camped there for three weeks to rig up hand carts and then started the long trek for Utah. They suffered many hardships along the way and they were hungry. The provisions gave out and they were rationed to one pint of flour a day for each person. This, Mother would stir up with a pinch of salt and a little water and make into a pancake. So they had one pancake for each meal, as they were allowed one pint of flour also for the baby John, making three pints in all. The baby had his first birthday on the sea.

I often heard Mother tell of a scare they had on the plains. They saw a big herd of buffalo and the men thought they would try to kill one for meat. So they followed the herd and when they did not return before dark the company thought sure the buffalo had stampeded and killed them. They watched and waited until the wee small hours when the men returned to camp. They were tired out but safe. They had followed the buffalo farther than they had any idea until they were returning, footsore and tired.

Another incident was one morning in mid-summer when Father and Mother awoke and found the baby missing. They thought Indians had taken him. But on going around the tent they found Johnny fast asleep. He had rolled out of bed and under the tent.

It was a long hard walk across the plains. Their shoes wore out and their feet became sore. They waded the small rivers and streams. In fact they waded the Platte River. I often wondered how they could do it, for in our geography it tells how wide it is in places. In August the water is very low. I visited in Davenport, Iowa that time of year, so I can understand how they were able to wade it.

While coming to one of the villages along the way, a woman seeing the company walking along pulling the carts, took pity on them and brought a basket of ripe tomatoes to treat them. The Saints had never seen tomatoes in the old country and expected them to taste like red plums. Father said when he tasted it he thought sure he had been poisoned. Tomatoes were a great disappointment to them.

The year 1856 saw the largest company of Saints that ever left Wales. Some stayed in the states to earn enough to buy teams and wagons and come later. Father was offered a good job in Newton, Iowa at five dollars a day, but he refused. He was determined to stay with the company

until it should arrive in Utah.

When they reached what they called the Big Mountain, just before arriving at Salt Lake Valley, they were all weak and hungry and it looked almost impossible to pull the carts up to the top. As many as could get around one would pull and push until they got to the top and then come back for another one. While they were thus engaged a man came along with a wagon and two span of mules. He asked them where they were going and when they explained that they were "Mormons" on their way to Utah, he ripped out an oath and said, "Brigham Young ought to have the carts tied to his coat-tail and made to pull them to the top!" But he turned his team around and fastened as many carts as he could together and pulled them to the top. Then he had the women and children get into the wagon and hauled them up too, but all the time he was cussing Brigham Young. One can imagine the gratitude of those tired people when they landed on the top.

On the second of October they pulled into the valley. They hardly knew what to do or where to go. They had left their trunks filled with clothes at Iowa Camp. Father and Mother said it was quite a trial to leave their belongings on the prairies because they had been saving for a long time to stock up with clothing to last them for years. They knew they were coming to a new country and it would be hard to get clothing. They were told teams would be sent to bring the things later. The company piled boxes and trunks up on the open ground as high as they could and built a shed over them to protect them. Mother said it looked to her like the shed was blocks long, but they never did get any of their things.

When an emigration of Saints arrived in the valley they were always met by friends or countrymen who had come before. One of Father's and Mother's friends came to meet them. He was William R. Jones of Spanish Fork. He invited Father and Mother to go to Spanish Fork with him. They accepted the invitation and when they got there they hired themselves out to a family by the name of Bill McKee. They received room and board for their services. The board consisted mostly of corn bread and Johnny cake. They had never seen nor heard of corn bread before and it was hard to relish it as it tasted to them more like a mouthful of sand. Mrs. McKee was an invalid and they kept a little white bread for her. One day when Mother brought the tray back there was a piece of toast left on the plate and Mother ate it. But when Mother took the next tray in, Mrs. McKee asked for the toast she had left. Mother surely got a scolding for eating it.

In the spring following, Father got a lot and dug a cellar or dug-out. He fenced it and

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planted a garden. Later Father got work at Camp Floyd. There he had a good living, plenty of beef and substantial food. He was always thinking of Mother's fare. One day he asked the boss if he could take his allowance home with him to his wife and baby and he was given a nice piece of meat to take home.

In 1858 Mother and Sarah Williams decided to walk to Salt Lake to see if their trunks had arrived from Iowa. Mother was expecting the stork and needed clothing. They were very disappointed to find nothing there for them so they walked back home.

On March 11, 1858, a little son was born. They named him Thomas. This little son was born with a broken foot. When Mother was able she walked and carried the baby from Spanish Fork to Springville twice a week to Dr. Riggs, who made a very good job of it and Tommy did not limp. He grew to be a very fine looking man.

Later in 1859 my parents moved to Wales (in Utah), then called Coalbed. They built a log cabin. Father helped open the coal mines. It was not long until the Indians started to get on the war-path. They stole the cattle and did all kinds of deprivations.

On the 11th day of May, 1860, a little daughter brightened their home. They called her Mary Jane.

They struggled along farming and raising cattle and sheep and Father learned to dig coal. He had never dug coal in the old country. There he worked in the Gavarth Steel Works owned by Crowshaw. But it did not take him long until he could get as much coal as any of the miners. There was plenty of sale for it as it was very good blacksmith coal.

On the 17th of August, 1862 another little daughter blessed their home. They named her Charlotte Ann.

On the 6th day of January, 1865 another little girl arrived and they named her Sarah.

One day when Father and Mother were going to Salt Lake from Wales in the wagon, Father got out to walk along the railroad tracks at the Point of the mountain when he saw a rail with the name Crowshaw on it. He shook his head sadly and said, "Crowshaw."

The Indians continued to bother the people and many were killed. In May, 1866, President Brigham Young issued a warning for all the people living in the small settlements to move into larger ones. So all the people of Wales tore down their log huts and moved to Moroni, four miles away.

While at Moroni another little girl was born and they called her Hannah. She died the same day she was born in 1866.

On June 13, 1868 my baby sister Eliza was born.

After peace was restored with the Indians all the people moved back to Wales, but there would be an outbreak every once in awhile. I remember well when all women in Wales slept in the meeting house and across the street in Henry Lamb's two-roomed house. The men and boys slept across the street in John E. Rees's yard and they took turns guarding us. Mother's bed was on the east side of the door and we children slept on a trundle bed. Of course I was afraid we would be the first ones to be killed if Indians came. When they thought the Indians were near they would ring a big cow bell and everybody would run for the meeting house.

One day as Mother was going out to milk the cow she saw an Indian setting fire to the hay stack. She threw the milk bucket and screamed. The bucket hit the Indian on the head and he ran away yelling. The hay stack was saved.

Another time as Mother opened the door to come into the house, as she pushed the door back she saw dirty brown toes under it. An Indian was standing behind the door. As she came in he rushed out with her bread.

Our first home in Wales was built of logs but it was not many years until we all helped make adobes and Father built us a good six room home which is still in good repair and one of the grand children is living in it today.

Father owned the Morrison Coal Mine and operated it for many years. It is near Sterling in Sanpete County.

Mother would have been much happier if they could have lived in Spanish Fork instead of going to Wales. Utah County was much more fertile. And perhaps life would not have been as hard but she made the best of everything. She was a fine looking woman, very dignified, and carried herself so well.

After a short illness, she passed away December 12, 1891 at the age of fifty-nine years.