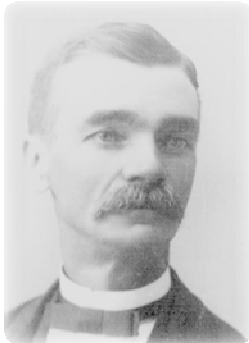


## David Richard Gill, Sr. (1838-1906)

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"More than 80,000 converts came from Europe between 1840 and 1900 in what one historian called "the largest and most successful group immigration in United States history."<sup>1</sup>



"The Church had great missionary success in Wales during the 1840's and 1850's, and many thousands of Welsh converts immigrated to America, heading West with Brigham Young as a part of the great Mormon Migration, which began in 1847. Today it is estimated that approximately twenty percent of the population of Utah is of Welsh descent."<sup>2</sup>

**David Richard Gill** was born in Ebbw Vale, Monmouthshire, Wales, to Henry S Gill and Ruth Whittock on 01 June 1838.<sup>3</sup>

The once insignificant hamlet of Ebbw Vale was transformed by the industrial revolution. Welshmen built canals to move coal to steelworks where the world's first steel rail was rolled in 1857.<sup>4</sup> Every working man listed in the 1841 census in Monmouthshire was a collier (miner) or mill worker.

The 1841 Wales Census lists father Henry Gill, 25, a miner; mother Ruth, 30; Thomas, 5; David, 3; and Martha 11 months, living in Aberystroth parish, Ebbw Vale, Monmouthshire. Young Martha, about 2 years old, dies August 30, 1842, in Penycae, Ebbw Vale, Wales.

The 1851 Wales Census lists David, 13, and his brother Thomas, 15, as colliers; birthplace Aberis Lyth (poor quality copy, probably Aberystroth), Monmouthshire, Wales, living in Llanwonno, Glamorgan.<sup>5</sup>

The 1861 Wales Census lists David as 22, coal miner, born in Aberystroth, Monmouthshire, Wales; living in Glyntaff parish, Pontypridd, Glamorgan, with his father, Henry, mother, "Jane," and 8 boarders at 260 Taff Street.<sup>6</sup>

1862 Marriage: David Richard Gill marries Sarah Ann Hodges (1842-1917) on February 23, 1862, at Glamorgan, South Wales.<sup>7</sup> Sarah Ann was born June 7 1842, in Kilmerstone, Radstock, Somerset, England, and immigrated to Wales with her parents and four siblings around 1860.

1871 Census Wales lists David R Gill, Head, 32, collier; wife Sarrah A, 28, born in Kilmerstone, England; adopted son (nephew?) Henry Hodges Gill, 14, collier, born in Tredegar, Monmouth; and son David R, 5, scholar, born in Mountain Ash, Glamorgan, living at 106 Bridge Street, Llanwonno, Pontypridd, Wales.<sup>8</sup>

1878 Immigration: The Gill family sailed from Liverpool on June 29, 1878, aboard the steamship Nevada, and arrived at New York on July 10, 1878.<sup>9</sup>

## David Richard Gill, Sr. (1838-1906)

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"DEPARTURE. -- The third company of the season sailed on the S. S. Nevada, at 7 p.m. on the 29th instant. ... The English section numbered 74, making a total of 569 souls."<sup>10</sup>

The English section included 23 people from Wales. The handwritten ship's manifest lists "D R Gill, 40, male, father; Sarah Gill, 36, female, wife; Henry Gill, 24, male, laborer; D R Gill, 11, male child; Thos. Gill, 9, male child; Eda Gill, 7 female child; Elija Gill, 4 male child; Emily Gill, 2, female child; and Albert Gill 9/12, male infant;" as passengers 597 through 605. The Mormon Immigration Index (1840-1890), page 135, lists David R. Gill, 40, Welsh; Sarah Ann Gill, 36, Henry H Gill, 21, David R Gill, Thos G, 9, Eda L, 7, Eljah, 4, Emily J, 2; and Albert, infant; with a cost of 23 English pounds.

It was an easy voyage, "Everything bespeaks a pleasant and agreeable voyage; the weather is delightful."<sup>11</sup>

Ellis Island was not in operation in 1878, so the Gill family was probably processed through Castle Gardens, although no record has been found. An account by Louisa Sarah Swinyard who crossed the Atlantic on the SS Minnesota in July 1869: "We had nothing with us except the feather bed grandmother insisted on bringing over. In Castle Gardens she spread the bed out on the floor and we all slept around it. We stayed there two days. There were several hundred that came over in the company."<sup>12</sup>

The completion of the transcontinental railroad in 1869 ended Utah's isolation and greatly improved both comfort and time for the journey from New York to Utah. The Gill family arrived in New York on July 10 and were in Salt Lake on July 18, so they probably traveled by train with the guidance of church elders.

"...Thanks to Church organizational skills and resource, most immigrants avoided many hardship and mistakes that usually plagued inexperienced travelers. Liverpool, England, served a departure point for Latter-day Saint British and European immigrant (75 percent of whom traveled as families. After 1854, to avoid river diseases, Latter-day Saint companies from Liverpool docked at Boston, New York, or Philadelphia, where Church agent arranged for railroads to take the immigrant to frontier outfitting points."<sup>13</sup>

Fillmore, Millard County, Utah, is a community named by an act of the Utah Territorial Legislature signed by Brigham Young in 1851, honoring President Millard Fillmore. Fillmore was considered the "last frontier" for growth in the state of Utah and recent immigrants started their new lives there.

1880 US Census of Fillmore, Millard, Utah; lists David (gardner), Sarah A, Henry, David, Thomas, Eda (Edith), Elijah, Emily J, Albert J, and Joseph J (first child born in USA).



Elijah, David, Independencia Ruth, Albert, Joseph  
Sarah Ann, **David R. Gill**, Edith, Thomas  
Photo from Amber McKean family collection

## David Richard Gill, Sr. (1838-1906)

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David Sr. married Jacobina Mary Christensen (1860-1946) on April 10, 1884, in Salt Lake City, Utah.<sup>14</sup>

Jacobina Mary Christensen was born on May 8, 1860 in Aalborg, Aalborg, Denmark. She immigrated with her parents, Oliver Peter Christensen and Metta Margretha Larsdatter. The family left Liverpool on July 15, 1869, aboard the *Minnesota*, and arrived in New York on July 28, 1869.<sup>15</sup>

These late pioneers traveled by steam ship and steam railroad. They had electricity and indoor plumbing, but they didn't have penicillin, and many died of illnesses that are easily cured with antibiotics. David and Jacobina Mary had three daughters, two (Martha Caroline Gill [1886-1887] and Josephine [1887-1888; pneumonia] died in infancy.<sup>16</sup> The third, Violet Lois (1892-?) survived to adulthood. David and Sarah's infant son, Lorenzo Fred, died November 25, 1887; 15-year-old Emily Jane died July 3, 1890; and 10-year-old son, Hyrum Samuel, died December 20, 1890.

Although there are no Utah records of the 1890 Federal Census, which was partially destroyed by a fire at the Commerce Department in Washington, DC in 1921, Salt Lake City directories list "Gill, David R, binder Geo Q Cannon & Sons, res 104 S Third West." Also listed are sons Elijah, compositor Geo Q Cannon & Sons, and Thomas G, painter. The family lived at 104 S Third West until 1897, when they moved to 37 Jeremy Street. City directories for years 1890–1903 list David R Gill as binder, agent, and laborer.

Verbatim entries from Salt Lake City directories:

- 1888 David R, lab res 104 S Third West
- 1890 David R, binder Geo Q Cannon & Sons<sup>17</sup>, res 104 S Third West
- 1892 David R, agt *Juvenile Instructor*, res 104 S Third West
- 1893: David R, res 104 S 3d West
- 1897 David R, lab, res 37 Jeremy
- 1898 David R, lab, res 37 Jeremy
- 1899 David R, lab, res 37 Jeremy
- 1900 David R, solicitor, res 37 Jeremy
- 1901 David R, agt, res 49 Jeremy
- 1902 David R, lab, res 49 Jeremy
- 1903 David R, lab, res 1044 W 2nd South

David Richard Gill, Sr. (1838-1906)

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Sarah Ann Hodges Gill  
32 Jeremy Street  
Salt Lake City, circa 1900.  
Photo from Sheryn Berghout collection

## David Richard Gill, Sr. (1838-1906)

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David Richard Gill died in Salt Lake City on November 5, 1906. The Salt Lake Tribune and the Ogden Standard ran his obituary. By today's standards, the language is flowery and overwrought, but it characterizes the life of an immigrant made good – from coalmines to life of books.

The Standard: Ogden, Utah, Monday Evening, November 5, 1906. David R. Gill, Sr., Dies.  
Salt Lake, Nov. 6 – David R. Gill, Sr., an old resident of Salt Lake, died at 6:40 o'clock yesterday morning.

In March, 1905, Mr. Gill underwent an operation. He had been so weakened by his tireless activity in earlier days that he was unable to recover from the effects of both the operation and his former illness. He has been confined to a bed of great suffering since that time, and has been constantly attended, day and night, by his wife, Sarah A. Gill.

The funeral will be held Wednesday, the exact place and hour for the services being left for later announcement. It is probable that they will be held in the Fifteenth ward meeting house. Mr. Gill and his family having lived in that ecclesiastical subdivision for more than twenty-five years.

David R. Gill, Sr., was born at Penycae, Ebbow Vale, Monmouthshire, South Wales, Great Britain, on June 1, 1838. He became a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, March 17, 1865, and during the forty-one years since that time he has been one of the most active workers in the church, serving as traveling elder and presiding elder in his native land, and as a home and foreign missionary here. He filled a mission in Wales, Great Britain, and one in the eastern states' mission in the United States. For twenty-two years he has held the office of a seventy<sup>18</sup> in the church.

Surviving him are his wife, Sarah A. Gill, and their sons and daughters. David R. Jr., Thomas G, Elijah, Albert J., Joseph J., Mrs. William J. Backman and Mrs. Joseph Kirkman; and his second wife (whom he married in 1884) Mary Gill, and their daughter, Violet, aged 19 years; twenty-one grandchildren, and an adopted son (nephew of Sarah A. Gill), Henry Hodges.



Burial: David is buried in the Salt Lake City Cemetery; plot L-13-1, along with many members of the extended Gill family. His Find A Grave Memorial # 23259135.

## David Richard Gill, Sr. (1838-1906)

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### Date Register

- 1841:** Gill family in Aberystruth parish, Ebbw Vale, Monmouthshire, Wales.
- 1842:** Daughter Martha Gill dies August 30, in Penycae, Ebbw Vale, Wales.
- 1851:** Wales Census lists family in Llanwonno, Glamorgan; Registration District Merthyr Tydfil, Gelligaer.
- 1861:** Wales Census lists David living in Glyntaff parish, Pontypridd, Glamorgan.
- 1862:** David marries Sarah Ann Hodges (1842-1917) on February 23, at Glamorgan, South Wales.
- 1869:** Completion of the transcontinental railroad.
- 1871:** Wales Census lists family in Llanwonno, Pontypridd, Wales.
- 1878:** Immigration - sailed from Liverpool on June 29, aboard the SS Nevada, arrived New York July 10.
- 1880:** US Census: Family in Fillmore, Millard, Utah, USA.
- 1884:** David marries Jacobina Mary Christensen (1860-1946) on April 10 in Salt Lake City, Utah, USA.
- 1886:** Martha Caroline Gill (1886-1887).
- 1887:** Infant son Lorenzo Fred dies November 25, in Salt Lake City.
- 1887:** Josephine Gill born December 20, 1887.
- 1888:** Josephine Gill dies January 11, 1888.
- 1890:** 15-year-old Emily Jane dies July 3; 10-year-old son Hyrum Samuel dies December 20.
- 1892:** Violet Lois Gill born.
- 1896:** President Cleveland proclaimed Utah a state on January 4.
- 1906:** David R. Gill, Sr., dies.

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<sup>1</sup> Maldwyn A. Jone, *American Immigration*, Chicago, 1960, p.126.

<sup>2</sup> 2012 Center for Family History and Genealogy at Bridham Young University. <http://welshmormon.byu.edu/>.

<sup>3</sup> 1871 Wales Census. [http://search.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/sse.dll?db=uki1871wales&h=26819482&ti=0&indiv=try&gss=pt&ssrc=pt\\_t63570848\\_p46109290086\\_kpidz0q3d46109290086\\_z0q26pgz0q3d32768z0q26pgplz0q3dpid](http://search.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/sse.dll?db=uki1871wales&h=26819482&ti=0&indiv=try&gss=pt&ssrc=pt_t63570848_p46109290086_kpidz0q3d46109290086_z0q26pgz0q3d32768z0q26pgplz0q3dpid)

<sup>4</sup> *The Welsh Academy Encyclopaedia of Wales*, Cardiff: University of Wales Press.

<sup>5</sup> 1851 Wales Census.

[http://trees.ancestry.com/tree/63570848/person/46109290136/mergefamily?pg=32768&pgpl=pid&dbid=8861&rpil=15448554&seet=Record&sest=Trees&seet=savTree&sesubt=Image&ssrc=pt\\_t63570848\\_p46109290086\\_kpidz0q3d46109290086z0q26pgz0q3d32768z0q26pgplz0q3dpid](http://trees.ancestry.com/tree/63570848/person/46109290136/mergefamily?pg=32768&pgpl=pid&dbid=8861&rpil=15448554&seet=Record&sest=Trees&seet=savTree&sesubt=Image&ssrc=pt_t63570848_p46109290086_kpidz0q3d46109290086z0q26pgz0q3d32768z0q26pgplz0q3dpid)

<sup>6</sup> 1861 Wales Census. [http://search.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/sse.dll?db=uki1861wales&h=13604826&ti=0&indiv=try&gss=pt&ssrc=pt\\_t63570848\\_p46109290086\\_kpidz0q3d46109290086\\_z0q26pgz0q3d32768z0q26pgplz0q3dpid](http://search.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/sse.dll?db=uki1861wales&h=13604826&ti=0&indiv=try&gss=pt&ssrc=pt_t63570848_p46109290086_kpidz0q3d46109290086_z0q26pgz0q3d32768z0q26pgplz0q3dpid).

## David Richard Gill, Sr. (1838-1906)

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<sup>7</sup> England & Wales, FreeBMD Marriage Index, 1837-1919; Jan-Feb-Mar 1862. [http://search.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/sse.dll?db=freebmdmarriage&h=14014819&ti=0&indiv=try&gss=pt&ssrc=pt\\_t63570848\\_p46109290085\\_kpidz0q3d4610929085z0q26pgz0q3d32768z0q26pgplz0q3dpid](http://search.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/sse.dll?db=freebmdmarriage&h=14014819&ti=0&indiv=try&gss=pt&ssrc=pt_t63570848_p46109290085_kpidz0q3d4610929085z0q26pgz0q3d32768z0q26pgplz0q3dpid)

<sup>8</sup> 1871 Wales Census. [http://search.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/sse.dll?db=uki1871wales&h=26819482&ti=0&indiv=try&gss=pt&ssrc=pt\\_t63570848\\_p46109290086\\_kpidz0q3d46109290086z0q26pgz0q3d32768z0q26pgplz0q3dpid](http://search.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/sse.dll?db=uki1871wales&h=26819482&ti=0&indiv=try&gss=pt&ssrc=pt_t63570848_p46109290086_kpidz0q3d46109290086z0q26pgz0q3d32768z0q26pgplz0q3dpid).

<sup>9</sup> Liverpool to New York on the *Nevada* (29 Jun 1878 - 10 Jul 1878). [http://mormonmigration.lib.byu.edu/Search/showDetails/db:MM\\_MII/t:voyage/id:273/keywords:david+gill](http://mormonmigration.lib.byu.edu/Search/showDetails/db:MM_MII/t:voyage/id:273/keywords:david+gill).

<sup>10</sup> Letter from John Cook et al. - June 30, 1878.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Notes by Louisa Sarah Swinyard [http://homepages.rootsweb.com/~lgillins/rehnstrom/JARehnstrom\\_America.htm](http://homepages.rootsweb.com/~lgillins/rehnstrom/JARehnstrom_America.htm)

<sup>13</sup> Coming to Zion: Saga of the Gathering, William G. Hartley, July 1975.

<sup>14</sup> <https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.2.1/3331-CCW>

<sup>15</sup> [http://homepages.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~lgillins/rehnstrom/JARehnstrom\\_America.htm](http://homepages.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~lgillins/rehnstrom/JARehnstrom_America.htm);

[http://welshmormon.byu.edu/Immigrant\\_View.aspx?id=6052](http://welshmormon.byu.edu/Immigrant_View.aspx?id=6052)

<sup>16</sup> Ancestry.com. *Utah Death Registers, 1847-1966* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2010. Find A Grave memorial #122037912.

<sup>17</sup> Bookstore owned and operated by George Q Cannon, an immigrant from England who became a church leader and later Utah senator. His bookstore sold the *Juvenile Instructor* and other books of an uplifting nature.

<sup>18</sup> Seventy is a priesthood office in the Melchizedek priesthood of several denominations in LDS Church. Traditionally, a Latter Day Saint holding this priesthood office is a "traveling minister" and an "especial witness" of Jesus Christ, charged with the mission of preaching the gospel to the entire world under the direction of the Twelve Apostles. Latter Day Saints teach that the office of seventy was anciently conferred upon the seventy disciples mentioned in the Gospel of Luke 10:1-2. Multiple individuals holding the office of seventy are referred to collectively as "seventies." [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seventy\\_\(Latter\\_Day\\_Saints\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seventy_(Latter_Day_Saints)).