

The Parry Factor

by

R. Allen Hackworth

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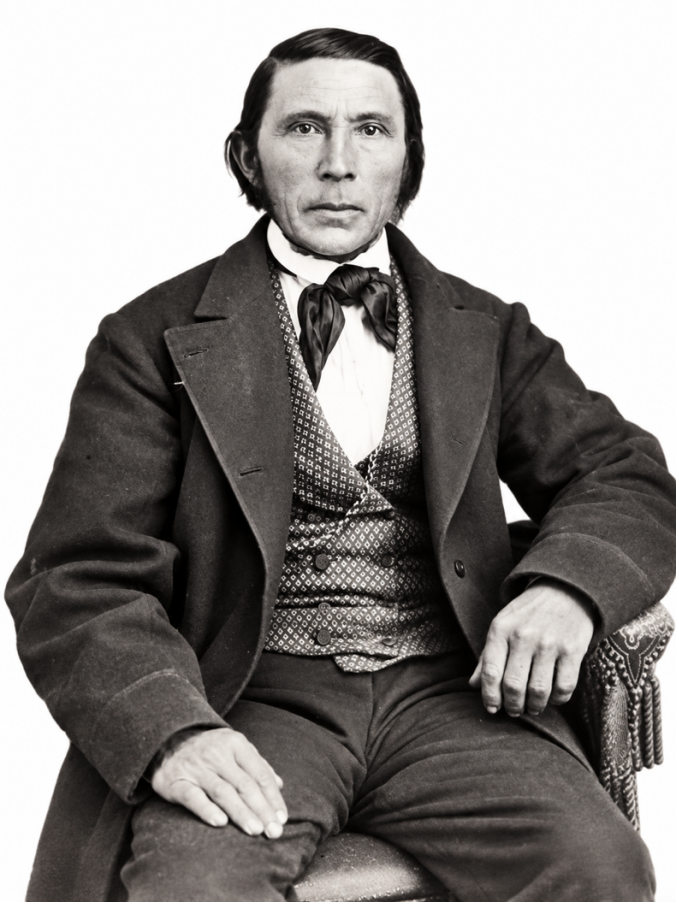


Figure 1 Edward Lloyd Parry. 1818-1906

This work is dedicated to Ronald D. Dennis in appreciation for his contributions to Welsh Mormon history.

Professor Dennis earned a PhD in Brazilian History and Portuguese and taught Portuguese at Brigham Young University. In addition to his achievements in Spanish and Portuguese, Dr. Dennis, through intense, sustained study, became one of the world's leading scholars in Welsh Mormon history.

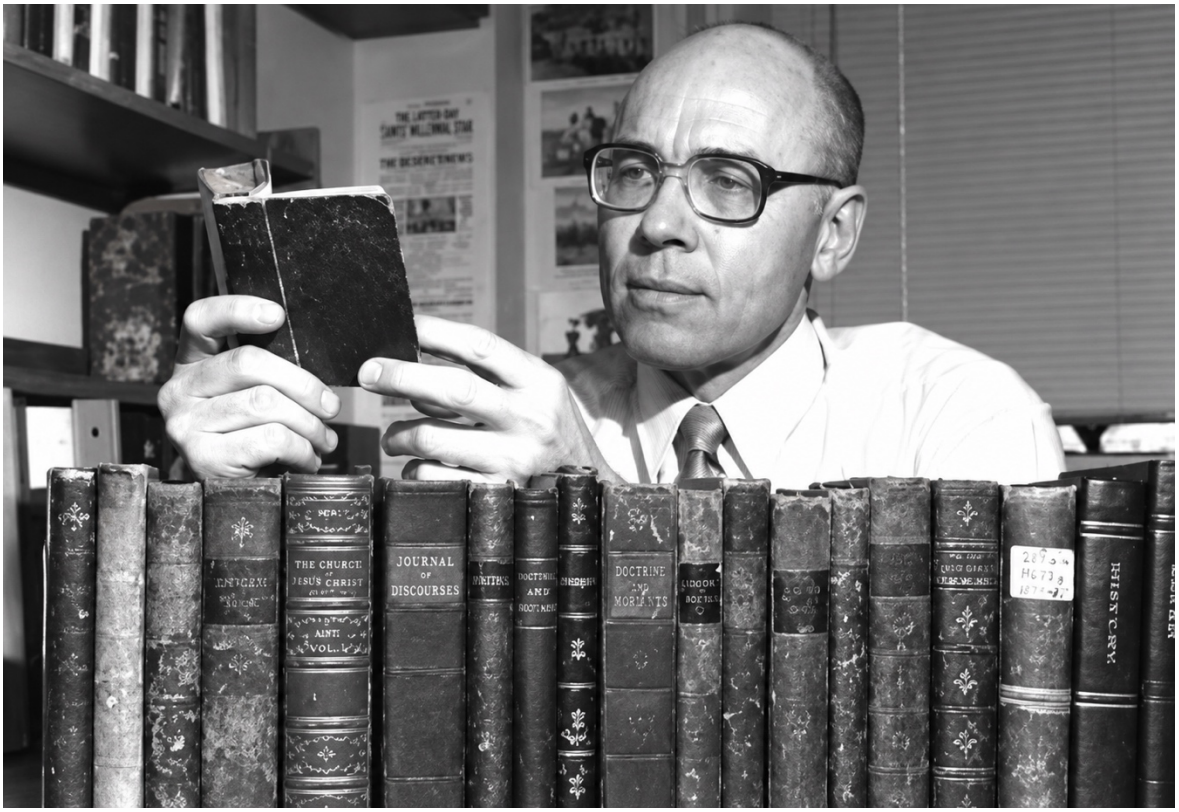


Figure 2 Ronald D. Dennis

When Ron Dennis started doing research on an ancestor named Dan Jones, he wanted to read documents written by Jones, but the documents were in Welsh. Struggling to find a translation or translator, Dr. Dennis decided he must learn Welsh on his own. To do this, he took classes, obtained a sabbatical leave from BYU, and lived and studied in Wales. Later he made many return trips to Wales.

He studied vigorously. Once Professor Dennis mastered Welsh, he started translating documents associated with 19th century Mormons in Wales. Ron Dennis also served as president of the Brazil Fortaleza Mission.

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For Edward Lloyd Parry and his family, Northern Wales provided a perfect environment for learning to be stone masons. Stone masonry surrounded the family from one generation to the next. And these people were well-trained. The above picture shows a castle in Abergele, Wales.

Introduction

It is fascinating how way leads on to way. After moving with my wife to St. George, Utah in 2005, I felt drawn to the stories of endurance and sacrifice which described the lives of the early settlers of this region. They struggled with little lumber, limited yet tainted water, ubiquitous weeds and insects, excessive heat, cold winters, and depressing isolation.

Yet in spite of their deprived conditions, the Saints, members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, fought to create a refined society laced with culture and beauty. The pioneers labored to create Zion, a Christ-centered community where their children could learn, thrive and enjoy a life which was less severe than their own.

In Southern Utah, some prominent monuments of their achievements are the St. George Tabernacle, the St. George Temple, and the Manti and Logan Temples. When learning stories about the building construction, I figuratively met Edward Lloyd Parry, the chief mason for the St. George Temple.

And again as way led on to way, as I learned more about this honest man and some of his friends and relatives, I was impressed and this led to . . . well, read on and learn what Paul Harvey would call "the rest of the story."



Figure 3 Author R. Allen Hackworth

Chapter 1: The Motherland

In Northern Wales in counties Denbighshire and Flintshire, before the founding of America, Parry families lived and raised children. The children matured and started families of their own and on and on. From early times, many of the Parry men became stone masons. Important knowledge and acquired skills passed from master to apprentice, passed from father to son for several generations.

The Bible nourished the Parrys, a god-fearing people. The soil and villages of their green, fertile motherland also nourished them. The families lived and loved in the coastal villages of Abergele, New Market (now called Trelawnyd) and St. George. For many wage earners, because of disciplined work habits and masonry skills, the fathers and mothers maintained safe homes, a fire in the stove, and food on the table.

Shortly after the founding of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, missionaries sent to the British Isles made their way into Wales. As early as October 1840, Henry Royle and Frederick Cook preached in Northern Wales, but the work was slow.

In 1844 Abel Evans was baptized. He was the second Welshman to be baptized in Wales. Abel in turn taught some Parrys who joined the Church. The Parrys in turn taught and baptized more Welsh people. During this time, in 1845 church leaders called Dan Jones, a native Welshman, to work in the mission. After a few months, things started picking up and the hard work done by the earlier missionaries showed results.

Eventually, several Parrys sailed to America, traveled to the Salt Lake Valley, and helped build Zion. Although many Parrys helped build the West, this history highlights only three. All three were related, all were from Northern Wales, and all were converts to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; and they made contributions to Mormon / American society. The three men are Edward Lloyd Parry, chief mason of the St. George and Manti Temples; John Parry Jr., chief mason of the Logan Temple; and John Parry Sr., poet, musician and first conductor of a choir which later grew into the Mormon Tabernacle Choir.

Today, people enjoy the beauty of the long-standing pioneer temples as well as the rich voices and well-rehearsed skills of the Tabernacle Choir. The buildings and music touch our lives, and we can remember three Parry men, identified above, who helped lay foundations which continue to contribute to the enrichment of our lives.

Wales: A Land of Beauty

Around the second half of the 19th century, when families left their homes in the British Isles, they departed from places of beauty. Wood and stone provided building materials. Refreshing, palatable water was abundant for crops, animals, and people. Rain kept the plants green, and the plants sprang from fertile soil.

The next nine pictures, taken by the author, show Northern Wales today. These pictures help us imagine what the land was like when the Parrys were there.





The land shows vibrant greens with trees, bushes, flowers, and wide, grass-filled, healthy pastures. Natural rainfall regularly waters the fields. We are near St. George near Newmarket (now called Trelawnyd). Here stands a church completed by Bernard Parry and sons in 1724.



Above the church door their names show. The ages of the men in 1724 were: Robert (20), Edward (26), Thomas (25) and Bernard (53).

A gravestone at this site also shows the Parry presence. Bernard was Edward Lloyd Parry's third-great grandfather. In Edward's autobiography, Edward Lloyd Parry states that his father, grandfather, and on back, were all stone masons.





The above church was built by Bernard Parry and sons in 1724. The woman in the middle is a Parry descendant and attends church (near Abergele) in the Rhyl Ward Chapel (shown below). My wife is standing next to Sister Williams.



A Fun Coincidence

The author traveled to Wales with his wife to learn about the Parry family. The closest LDS chapel to St. George (Edward Lloyd Parry's hometown) was a building just a few miles away in Rhyl. Arriving at the chapel early, Allen and Loni entered the front door.

As they entered the building, Allen held the door for a lone woman who followed after. With no other people in the foyer, Allen and Loni began visiting with Sister Williams. One thing led to another. Allen explained why they picked this church to attend, and with joy and enthusiasm Sister Williams said, "Why, that's my ancestral line. I am a Parry."

The three new friends soon sat on the chapel bench together. The animated congregation continued to swell, and the saints happily greeted one another. Soon it was time for the meeting to start.

As the congregation became quiet in preparation for the worship service, Allen whispered to Sister Williams, "You should know how excited I am about meeting you."

Sister Williams whispered back, "Well, you don't think it was by accident do you?"

Many people attended that meeting in Wales. As it turned out, there were additional Parry descendants in the room. In fact, a member of the Bishopric was a son of Brother and Sister Williams. But Sister Williams was the great matriarch. She was the perfect contact.

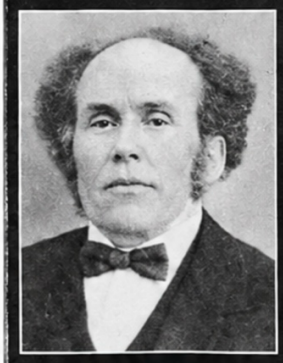


Figure 4 Brother and Sister Williams

Early Abergele Saints

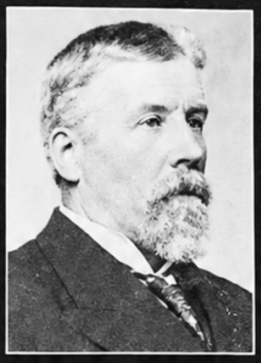
In the Abergele area in the 1840s, the Saints soon numbered about 60. They met in a building which still stands today in Abergele and is located next to the Bull Hotel on Chapel Street. Chief contractor for the chapel was Elias Morris.

During this period some significant friends were part of the Parrys' lives including Dan Jones and Elias Morris. Elias Morris (later a Salt Lake City businessman and Bishop) along with John Parry Jr. (later a Logan Temple Chief Mason) helped lead the church in Abergele. Today the owners of the Bull Hotel and old chapel allow a plaque to be placed on the wall inside the former chapel. The plaque, pictured below, shows John Parry Jr. and Elias Morris.



John Parry, Jr.





Elias Morris

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormon) was begun in 1830 in the state of New York in the United States. In 1837 missionaries began to proselytize in Great Britain, and in 1840 the message of Mormonism was first proclaimed in Wales.

In the latter part of 1848, John Parry, Jr., a convert from Newmarket, began to preach at the home of Jane Roberts, Crown Street, in the town of Abergele, Jane Roberts, Jane Parry, Elias Morris, and Barbara Morris were the first fruits of his labours, and over the years a number of others in and around the area of Abergele converted to Mormonism and were baptized.

On April 30, 1849, this appendage to the Bull Inn was registered by Elias Morris as a place of worship for the Abergele Branch of the LDS church. Its use by the Mormons discontinued in April 1856 after most of the members of the Church in Abergele had emigrated to Salt Lake City in the Rocky Mountains. In this sesquicentennial year of Mormonism in Wales, the descendants of John Parry, Jr., and Elias Morris place this plaque in memory of their ancestors and the other early converts in Abergele. (July 13, 1990)

COFFA DA AMDANYNT

With the picture on the next page, the smaller building attached to the larger one is the early Abergele Chapel. It is here that the plaque is located.



Regarding John Morris, the father of Elias, and the construction of the first LDS chapel in Abergele, Welsh historian Fred Roberts has written:

> John Morris, one of the first converts, who was a well-established building contractor employing some twenty men on building contracts throughout Denbighshire and Montgomeryshire for the County Surveyor, Thomas Penson. He almost certainly used Mormon masons to erect the building, thus keeping costs to a minimum.

Struggles for the Abergele Branch

The following document was translated from Welsh to English by Ron Dennis. The document entitled "A Letter from the North" was written by John Parry Jr. It tells about a challenge for the early Welsh saints. The document was published in the *Trumpet*, an LDS publication.

MR. EDITOR,

Be so good as to publish the following letter in the *TRUMPET*. Perhaps it will be of benefit to many to prompt them toward better behavior.

St. George, May 20, 1852.

Dear President W. S. Phillips,

I send this letter to you and let you know that I was in the Flintshire Conference last Sunday. We had a good conference in which two sisters were confirmed, and one priest was ordained. The officers are in better unity than I have ever before seen by far, and are determined to put all measures into action.

They are succeeding also better than they have for a long time. They were preaching out during the last fortnight near Wrexham; and the Methodists went there to sing to forestall them; and irreligious people went there also with rotten eggs to throw at the Saints. And upon throwing the rotten eggs, one of them struck the forehead of one of the Methodists, who took the others to court because of it.

After going to the court, the Methodist was asked by the judge why he was disturbing the Saints. He added that it served him right to be hit by the egg, as the Saints had authority to preach and have peace as well as any other sect.

They together with other sects were a means of preventing us from getting rooms, even though Bro. William Parry had taken some to hold the Conference by their going to the Stewards; but after all this, we got a large empty house which served our needs very well, and we preached out to a large congregation of people.

I am your brother in the Gospel,
JOHN PARRY

Chapter 2 Two Friends

As we seek to understand a man's or woman's life and times, we gain insights by learning about some of the people who influenced their lives. As part of this study, consider biographical information about Elias Morris and Dan Jones. For a longer, well-written history of Dan Jones, read "Dan Jones, Welshman: Taking the Gospel Home" by Ron Dennis.[1] Another inspiring Dan Jones biography was written by Gordon B. Hinckley.[2] For Elias Morris, next read Andrew Jenson's Elias Morris biography. This comes from Jenson's LDS *Biographical Encyclopedia.*[3] Again, the lives of these two men, Morris and Jones, intertwined with the lives of our three Parry subjects.

Elias Morris[4]

The following four pages are copied from *Latter-day Saint Biographical Encyclopedia*, Vol. 1, pp. 637-639.

> MORRIS, Elias, seventh Bishop of the Fifteenth Ward, Salt Lake City, Utah, was born June 30, 1825, at Llanfair, Talhairne, Denbighshire, Wales, son of John Morris and Barbara Thomas. His parents were both natives of North Wales, and had seven sons and three daughters. His father was a builder and contractor, and was for many years engaged in building bridges and prisons for the counties of North Wales.

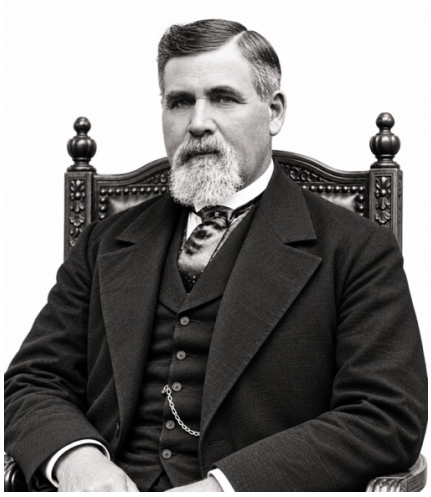


Figure 5 Elias Morris

> Elias served time under his father, and then, at the age of nineteen, he went to England to get more experience in the bricklaying line and furnace building. March 17, 1849, he joined the "Mormon" Church. He was the first man baptized in the town of

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[1] Ronald D. Dennis, "Dan Jones, Welshman: Taking the Gospel Home," Ensign, Apr 1987, 50.

[2] Gordon B. Hinckley, "The Thing of Most Worth," *Ensign*, Sept 1993, 2.

[3] Andrew Jenson, "Elias Morris," LDS Biographical Encyclopedia, Vol. 1, 636-639.

[4] Transcribed from *Latter-day Saint Biographical Encyclopedia*, Vol. 1, pp. 637-639

Abergele, in his native county, by John Parry Jr. John Junior some years afterwards, had charge of building the Logan Temple. The same summer his father, mother, his brother Hugh and sister Barbara, also joined the Church; and in less than a year he, in connection with others, raised up a branch of about sixty members, among whom was his brother Richard V. Morris, the late Bishop of the Nineteenth Ward.

The following spring he went to Manchester to visit his brother Price, and to Liverpool to visit his brothers William V. and John, all three of whom were baptized. In the year 1850 he was called to travel through the Flintshire conference as a traveling Elder, and was also appointed first counselor to William Parry, president of that conference. There he labored till the fall of 1851, when Apostle John Taylor visited that conference, having in view the organization of the sugar company to send to Utah.

Elias Morris was called as one of its mechanics, and at a conference, held at Holywell, Sept. 28, 1851, he was released to emigrate with the sugar company in the spring. Meantime he returned to his trade to provide an outfit; and, while thus engaged as a mason, on a three-story building at Abergele, Nov. 20, 1851, pointing the front of a building on a hanging scaffold, on the third story window, the scaffold gave way and he fell down into the street, alighting on his thigh; with presence of mind, as he touched the ground, he put his hand on a course of rock, under the large shop window, and leaped inside of the building, barely escaping death from the scaffold, which was falling after him.

Strange to say, he was uninjured by the fall; and, after he got over the fright, he assisted in putting up a new scaffold. In the spring of 1852, Elder Morris met the sugar company at Liverpool, and was put in charge of it. There were among them experts in the manufacturing of sugar, several of whom were selected in Liverpool. While waiting in that city for sugar machinery, Elder Morris sent on his betrothed wife, Mary Parry of New Market, on board the ship "Ellen Maria."

On the 28th of March his own company sailed from Liverpool, on board the ship "Rockaway," and, after a tedious voyage of eight weeks, they arrived at New Orleans, where Pres. John Taylor met the company. Having discharged the machinery at Leavenworth, the president requested Elder Morris to accompany him to Council Bluffs, to fetch the wagons down. At Council Bluffs he met his betrothed, and they were married there by Apostle Orson Hyde, at the house of the bride's uncle, Joseph Parry, May 23, 1852. In due time the sugar company proceeded on their journey, and reached Salt Lake City in the latter part of November.

Elder Morris immediately proceeded to Provo, and there the company turned over the sugar machinery to the Church, the enterprise having resulted in a failure. He remained at Provo during the winter; and, in the spring of 1853 he walked to Salt Lake City to attend the April conference, to see the laying of the foundation stone of the Salt Lake Temple. While at this conference he was requested by the authorities of the Church to go to Cedar City, Iron county, to take charge of the masonry and the iron works and blast furnaces. There he labored for seven years, off and on, till the failure of those works, when he returned to Salt Lake City in the spring of 1860.

After his return from the south, Elder Morris went to work on the temple block. He took a contract with Henry Eccles to cut the flagging of the foundation of the Temple. Feb. 7, 1864, Elias Morris and his men commenced work on the Eagle Emporium; in June he commenced Wm. S. Godbe's Exchange Buildings, and in July Ransahoff's store, south of Jennings'.

It was at this date that Main street began to assume fully the imposing appearance of a merchant street. On these buildings Elder Morris paid to his masons from five to seven dollars per day; but, at that time, flour was selling in Salt Lake City at from $25 to $30 per hundred.

At the April conference, 1865, Elias Morris was called to take a mission to Wales. There he stayed four years and one month, during which time he was a conference president and the last year was president of the Welsh mission. He again left his native land in May, 1869, in charge of a company of Saints (365 souls), who were mostly helped by the Church and their friends in Utah. This was the first company that came through after the completion of the railroad in the year 1869.

After his return from this mission, Elias Morris, in the spring of 1870, entered into partnership with Samuel L. Evans. This partnership, which existed for eleven years, was of a very peculiar and unique kind. They entered into an agreement that all their earnings should be left in their business, each family being allowed to draw out what they severally needed. Donations, etc., were paid in like manner by the firm, neither of the partners questioning the doings of the other.

Thus they went on for eleven years, in the conduct of their business, in their private buildings and improvements for their families; in the supplies and money for their families; in pocket money for themselves; in donation, taxes, etc., indeed, in every other private or public draw on their united finances. This they did to the last, when death ended their partnership, without disagreement or a question ever being raised as to which family had received the least or the most.

In this respect they never even so much as investigated their accounts. Their method from first to last was upon the pure United Order principle—each partner simply drawing or building according to his personal or family needs. Samuel L. Evans was the bookkeeper and cashier of the firm; and Elias Morris the superintendent of the practical work and of their men employed. Elder Evans died March 12, 1881.

Administrators were appointed to appraise the property belonging to the firm, which paid all the debts of the deceased. Mr. Morris offered to buy or sell the half of the business and property, and the family of the deceased partner very properly sold out, Brother Morris purchasing for $10,000 in money and property, Evans' family being allowed their choice of property.

Of the history of their business it may be thus summarized: Morris & Evans opened up the first marble monumental yard in Salt Lake. Soon after this the mining operations opened throughout the Territory, and from Elder Morris' past experience

in furnace building their firm obtained the run of the business in building nearly all the furnaces throughout Utah and the adjacent Territories.

At about this time they bought a fire clay mine in Bingham, and commenced the manufacture of fire brick of every kind, and supplied Nevada, Montana, Idaho, Wyoming and Utah, giving great satisfaction. The firm took a contract for the Ontario mill, and Elder Morris did all the mason work of that company, including the Cornish pump in No. 3 shaft, which was considered by experts to be equal to anything in the Comstock mine, Nevada. He built two Stetefeldt furnaces at the Ontario, another for the Marsac on an improved plan, and another for the Bullionville Smelting Company; also two of the same kind at Butte, Montana, and the two White & Howell at the Alice mill, and one at the Moulton mill.

After the death of Elder Evans, Elias Morris carried on the former firm business in his own name and also took a great interest in establishing other industries, among which may be mentioned the Nineteenth Ward Tannery, the Salt Lake Foundry, a soap factory, a slate quarry, the Utah Sugar Factory, etc. In 1891, in partnership with Houlahan & Griffith, he contracted to lay the cut stone and brick work of the City and County Building, also to build the gravity sewer of Salt Lake City.

He served as a city councilor for four years and was a director in the Salt Lake Chamber of Commerce one term. Elder Morris filled the position of a High Councilor in the Salt Lake Stake of Zion for nearly twenty years, being set apart for that office April 17, 1878. After the death of Elias Smith, he was chosen president of the High Priests' quorum in the Salt Lake Stake. To this position he was set apart Sept. 12, 1888, and filled it until the time of his death.

On the reorganization of the 15th Ward Bishopric, May 11, 1890, he was chosen to succeed Joseph Pollard as Bishop of said Ward, which office he held the remainder of his days. In 1895 he was elected a member of the constitutional convention which drafted the organic law of the State of Utah. On the organization of the Utah Sugar Company, in 1889, he was made president of the same and held that office till his demise.

He was greatly interested in the Welsh population in Utah and was treasurer and director in the Eisteddfod organization. He had been attending a business meeting on Monday, March 14, 1898, when he accidentally fell down a shaft in the Co-operative Furniture Company's building, on Main Street, Salt Lake City, and was fatally hurt. From the effects of that accident he died three days later (March 17, 1898).

At the time of his death the *Deseret News* said of him editorially: "He was a man of great ability and resource, while his philanthropy was a proverb. Was there a scheme on foot to benefit the people? He was one of the leaders in it. Was there a struggling enterprise that promised to develop a home resource, or furnish employment for home labor? 'Go to Elias Morris, he will take stock in it and give it the benefit of his advice and influence,' was the encouraging assurance. Was there a poor man out of work with a large and suffering family? 'Go to Elias Morris, he will give you something to do,' is what the poor man heard.

Aside from large corporate enterprises, probably not a man has operated in this State during the past two decades who has furnished more employment to poor men than has Elias Morris. Probably no other could be named who has been more prominently identified with the development of home resources and the establishment of home enterprises than has he.

He was a man of tireless energy, unceasing industry, unbounded sympathy and incorruptible integrity, and he enjoyed the esteem and confidence of all classes of the community. Men who differed with him in respect to religion and politics did not hesitate to acknowledge his high merits as a man and a citizen. To any community such a member as he is ever worth a thousand of those who by their 'wits' or their wealth seek profit out of other people's distresses, ignorance and cupidity.

As a Latter-day Saint, the life of Elias Morris was the practical application and living elucidation of the principles he professed. The members of the Fifteenth Ward, over which he presided as Bishop, weep at the news of his death as they would at being told that their own father was dead; and like brethren of the flesh with his associates in the Priesthood mourn his departure.

He lived by a standard of righteousness that was revealed from heaven, and he died with the absolute assurance that his works were pleasing unto God, and entitled him to a resurrection with the just.

Dan Jones

In Northern Wales, Dan Jones was born 4 August 1810. According to Rex L. Christensen,[5] "Dan had a college education designed to prepare him for the ministry, but he evidently spent time as a sailor."[6] He eventually married Jane Melling from Denbigh. (Jane gave birth to 10 children, but only two lived to adulthood.)[7]

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[5] Rex L. Christensen wrote his Master's Thesis on Dan Jones. Utah State University 1977.

[6] Rex L. Christensen, "I Have a Question," Ensign, Mar. 1982, 19–21.

[7] Christensen.

Looking for opportunities and adventure, the couple immigrated from Northern Wales to the United States. A few years after their arrival in the U.S., they lived in St. Louis, Missouri. While there Dan became a citizen of the United States, and he obtained a license to operate a steamboat, the *Ripple*, on the Mississippi River.

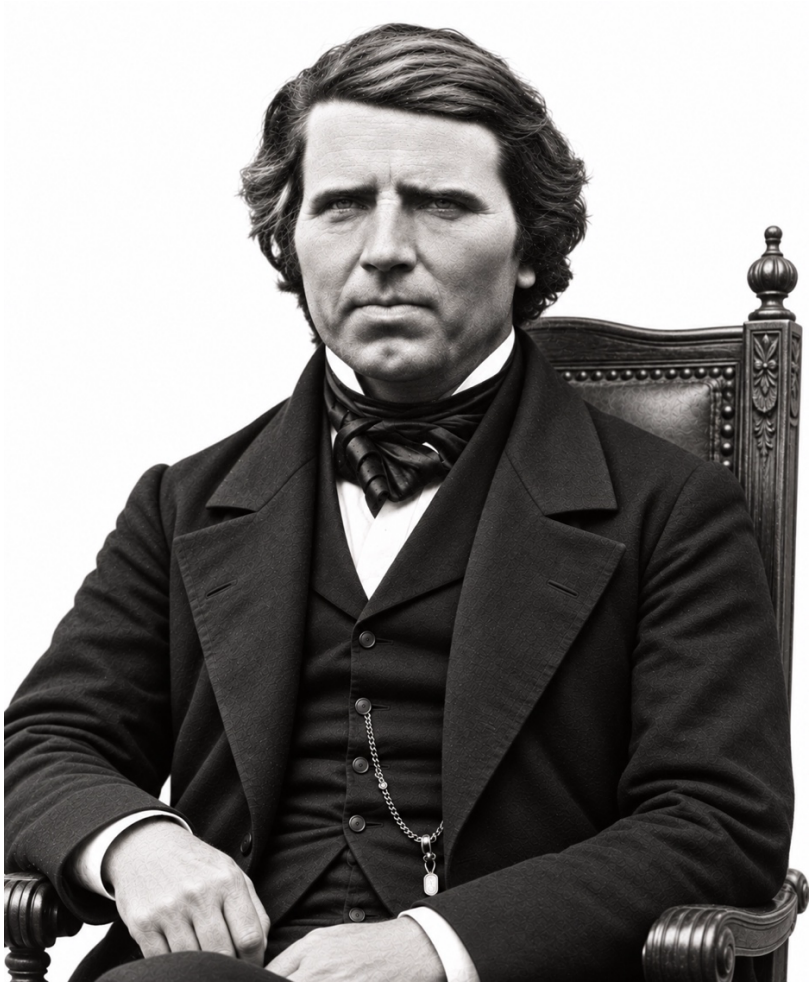


Figure 6 Dan Jones