

Pioneer Moment, Thomas Jones of Penderyn, Wales

by Jay Jones, Great-great-grandson

I'd like to tell you a little bit about my ancestor Thomas Jones and some other people who were important in his journey to Cedar City, Utah.

In 1843, Dan Jones (not my relative) was a riverboat captain on the Mississippi River. He read in a newspaper some criticism of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. This led him to learn more about the church, which led to his conversion. He became a close friend of Joseph Smith. The night before the martyrdom of the prophet, Dan was with him in the Carthage Jail. The prophet made his last recorded prophecy, that Dan Jones would yet fulfill a mission to Wales, his homeland.

A few months later Elder Dan Jones was preaching the gospel in Wales. He met significant opposition, including slander in the press. To counter this, he started publishing his own periodicals and missionary information. One of his missionary tracts was read by William Howells, an assistant Baptist minister. William was convinced of the truth of what he read and sought baptism. He was called as a local missionary in Wales.

During the following year, William Howells was instrumental in the conversion of around 100 persons, including Thomas Jones of Penderyn. Thomas was a single young man of 21 years of age. Thomas' family opposed his conversion, but he knew what he wanted and moved forward.

William Howells emigrated to America, but did not make it to Utah. He died of illness in Council Bluffs, Iowa.

Thomas Jones emigrated and settled in Cedar City, where he worked in the early efforts to manufacture iron. He became a councilor in the bishopric. He died at the young age of 35 years, leaving behind a wife and six young children. (His wife, Sage Treharne Jones, was heroic in raising her children to become good citizens and strong church members.) I am grateful to Thomas Jones and to the others that helped him on his journey to this beautiful community.