

THE FOUR SIBLINGS OF BEAVER COUNTY (UTAH) AND THEIR COUSIN

Ronald D. Dennis
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On 1 July 1822 in the little village of Llanarth in the county of Cardiganshire, Wales, Evan Griffiths married Eleanor Jones. Four of their approximately ten children would eventually gather in the Rocky Mountains because of their conversion to Mormonism. More precisely, they settled in Beaver County, located about 180 miles to the south of Salt Lake City, Utah.

Here are the four children of Evan and Eleanor Jones Griffiths who converted to Mormonism and eventually became Utahns, living in little towns such as Beaver, Adamsville, and Greenville:

1. Catherine (born 1825) married Evan John Jones (1820), son of John and Lucretia Jenkins Jones
2. Rees (born 1830) married Catherine Prosser (1833)
3. John Evan (born 1833) married Margaret Jones, daughter of John and Margaret Thomas Jones
4. Sarah (born 1835) married John J. Jones (1836), son of John and Margaret Thomas Jones

The marriage of Catherine to Evan John Jones took place in 1843 in Dowlais, a town about two miles to the north of Merthyr Tydfil in the county of Glamorganshire. It is highly unlikely that young Catherine would have gone from Llanarth to Dowlais on her own, and thus one would conclude that the entire family relocated in this industrialized area in South Wales in the early 1840s. The attraction was most likely a job in the iron industry, a job that would allow the breadwinner Evan to make three or four times the amount he was able to earn in Llanarth – and even a bit more if he were to take his young sons down in the mines with him, a fairly common practice in those days. It appears that they all lived in Pengarnddu, a village adjacent to Dowlais in the greater Merthyr Tydfil area.

When Evan Griffiths died in 1858 he left a widow (Eleanor) and four married children:

1. Catherine, age 33, married to Evan John Jones, with 8 children and one on the way
2. Rees, age 28, married to Catherine Prosser, with one child
3. John, age 25, married to Margaret Jones, with one child
4. Sarah, age 23, married to John J. Jones, with one child and one on the way

It is not clear at what point Catherine, Rees, John, Sarah and their spouses converted to Mormonism. Whether their parents converted is not known. That their mother Eleanor elected to remain in Wales until her death in 1878 in Dowlais suggests that either she did not convert or that she was not physically able to bear the journey to America. Or perhaps she had other children who elected not to emigrate with whom she could stay. Whatever her reasons for staying behind, it must have been very difficult for her to bid farewell to four of her children, their spouses, and 21 of her grandchildren during the period from about 1862 to 1866. Such farewells were generally considered permanent, causing untold emotional anguish for those leaving and those left behind.

On 30 April 1866 the *John Bright* left Liverpool with 747 Mormon emigrants on board headed for New York. Among that number were Catherine Griffiths Jones with her husband and their 11 children, John Griffiths with his wife and their 3 children, and Sarah Griffiths Jones with her husband and their 4 children.

Nearly three years earlier on 4 June 1863 Catherine Prosser Griffiths, wife of Rees Griffiths, had left from London on board the *Amazon* along with 894 other Mormon emigrants. Traveling with her were her three children: Jane, age 7, Mary Ann, age 2, and baby Evan.

It appears that Rees Griffiths did not come to America on the *Amazon* with his wife and children in 1863, since his name does not appear on the shipping list. Nor does it appear on the lists for any other ships contracted by the LDS Church between 1862 and 1865. Rees could not have come earlier than 1862 since his infant son Evan was on the 4 June 1863 crossing of the *Amazon* and since another child was born

to him and his wife on 20 December 1865 at Greenville, Beaver County, Utah.

It was not uncommon for a man to travel to America on an earlier crossing to make preparations for his wife and children in the new country. And in Rees's case he may have come on a ship that did not carry Mormon emigrants, thus making it the more difficult to identify his ship.

Yet another Griffiths family was in Beaver County during the late 1860s and early 1870s – the family of John Jenkin and Eleanor Lloyd Griffiths. John Jenkin Griffiths was born in 1837 in Aberaeron, a seaside village just four miles northeast of Llanarth. He also resided with his wife and children in Pengarnddu for a time. On 21 May 1864 John put his wife and two children on board the *General McClellan* in Liverpool. Just under one year later on 29 April 1865 John left the Liverpool harbor on the *Belle Wood*. He met his wife and children in Adamsville, Utah. Their next child was born on 23 July 1866 in Greenville, Beaver County, Utah.

The father of John Jenkin Griffiths is Jenkin Griffiths, whose brother is Evan Griffiths, the father of the four siblings – Catherine, Rees, John Evan, and Sarah. Consequently, John Jenkin Griffiths is a first cousin to the four siblings. This relationship explains their moves at similar times from Cardiganshire to Dowlais and then to Beaver County. And the ties between the family of John Jenkin Griffiths and the family of his cousin Sarah Griffiths Jones would grow even stronger when three children of the former married three children of the latter. Here are the unions:

Griffiths, John Jenkin and Eleanor Lloyd (Parents)

Griffiths, Mary Ann (1860) married Jones, John G. (1856) in 1877

Griffiths, James Lloyd (1863) married Jones, Sarah Ellen (1867) in 1886

Griffiths, Catherine Hannah (1873) married Jones, Evan D. (1860) in 1891

Jones, John J. and Sarah Griffiths (Parents)

Jones, John G. (1856) married Griffiths, Mary Ann (1860) in 1877

Jones, Sarah Ellen (1867) married Griffiths, James Lloyd (1863) in 1886

Jones, Evan D. (1860) married Griffiths, Catherine Hannah (1873) in 1891

The practice of siblings marrying siblings had been established one generation earlier when Sarah Griffiths Jones, the mother of the three Jones siblings, and her brother John Evan Griffiths both married into the John Jones family. Here are the unions:

Griffiths, Evan and Eleanor Jones (Parents)

Griffiths, John Evan (1833) married Jones, Margaret (1834) in 1853

Griffiths, Sarah (1835) married Jones, John J. (1836) in 1855

Jones, John and Margaret Thomas (Parents)

Jones, Margaret (1834) married Griffiths, John Evan (1833)

Jones, John J. (1836) married Griffiths, Sarah (1835) in 1855

Knowing which Griffiths belonged to which Jones posed no small challenge to the people of Beaver County – especially in light of the ongoing recycling of first names for which the Welsh are famous. Using family names down through the generations is certainly a way of honoring our forebears, but the occasional use of names such as Tiffany, Stacie, Brock, and Todd makes things much less challenging for the struggling family historian.

Further details of these families can be found online at:

www.familysearch.org