JOHN DAVIS REES

John Davis Rees was born March 4, 1815-16 (1) in Merthyr Tydfil, Glamorganshire, South Wales. He was the third child and first son of Meredith and Mary Davis Rees. His two older sisters were Ann and Margaret (Peg). He had younger brothers and sisters ---David, William, and Edward; Sarah, Mary, two Janes, a second Ann, and a possible Hannah. (2)

Family tradition says he went to Quaker Yard, about six miles southeast of Merthyr Tydfil, to learn the blacksmithing trade. This probably accounts for his not being listed at home with the family in the 1841 census. He would have been approximately twenty-six years of age at that time.

A marriage certificate in the files of a granddaughter, Mrs. Pearl Thomas Parry, states that on July 4, 1842, he married Mary Morgan, daughter of William and Elizabeth Davis Morgan of Merthyr Tydfil (3). She was one of several girls in the family, so went out to work to help mothers in their homes. Abbie Rees Madsen has furnished a sketch of Mary's life in which she says that after the marriage "Mary continued her work for a very fine lady. Mary didn't tell her she was married for fear of losing her job while her husband was away. One day the pastor was there for dinner and asked, "Isn't this the young lady I married some time ago?" Her mistress asked was it so and where was her ring. She admitted she was married and showed her ring; she had been wearing it around her neck on a string. The lady was nice about it, and she continued working for her. (4)

On May 21, 1843, a daughter was born to them at Cardiff, Glamorganshire, South Wales, and was named Mary Jane. (5) Two years later, July 27, 1845, a son, David Morgan Rees, was born in Kidderminster, Worcestershire, England.(6) This indicates that sometime between 1843 and 1845 they left Wales for England, probably for better opportunities for his trade. Joseph was born, and died, May 4, 1847, in Birmingham, Warwickshire, England, and Elizabeth was born and died May 8, 1848, in Derby, Derbyshire, England, (7) indicating that they were in England some three or more years, not in Wales.

(1) John's baptismal record gives March 4, 1815, as his birth date. Three patriarchal blessings give Mar. 4, 1816; one gives birthplace as Pontygwaith Endowment record of Nov. 2, 1852, gives Mar. 4, 1815 Sealing record (to Mary) Nov. 2, 1852, gives Mar. 4, 1815 Sealing record (to Jane) Dec. 28, 1852, gives Mar. 4, 1816 Tombstone in Brigham City Cemetery gives March 4, 1815 To date (January 1963) we have not been able to obtain a birth certificate (2) Family group sheet in files of Daniel M. Rees (grandson of John Davis Rees) (3) Marriage certificate lists John Rees of Newbridge, South Wales and Mary Morgan of the Parish of Newbridge as married by license in St. Mary's Church. The lower edge is badly worn, so the pastor's name is unintelligible and there are no witnesses or other data which are usually found on a certificate. Efforts to date (1963) have failed to secure a marriage certificate for verification. (4) Sketch of the life of Mary Morgan Rees furnished by Abbie Rees Madsen, granddaughter (5) Birth certificate for Mary Jane Rees (in files of Daniel M. Rees) born 21 May 1843 Charlotte Street, Cardiff, Galms., Wales father: John Rees blacksmith mother: Mary Rees, formerly Morgan x mark of John Rees, father (6) Birth certificate in files of Daniel M. Rees, son of David Morgan Rees (7) Family record sheet in files of Daniel M. Rees
When or where they first heard the Gospel preached by Latter-day Saint missionaries we do not know. The Index of Early L.D.S. Records in the Genealogical Library in Salt Lake City shows that John Davis Rees was baptized in September 1846 William Jenkins. (8) Mary was baptized on the 6th of September 1847. (9)

In 1849 they joined the first emigration of L.D.S. Saints from Wales to America, under the leadership of Captain Dan Jones (10). It is presumed they did not leave with the group that sailed for Liverpool from Swansea, South Wales, on February 14, but joined the group in Liverpool, since that city is nearer their last known address, in Derby.

We are indebted to T.H. Lewis for an account of this emigration, which appeared in The Improvement Era for April 1961 under the title, "The First Welsh Emigration to Utah (1949)." Here in part is his account:

"All the Welsh emigrants were housed in one large six-storeyed building in Liverpool where they spent six days at a cost of one shilling and sixpence a day for each person. Due to the efforts of Captain Dan Jones, advantageous terms were secured for the voyage—namely, three pounds twelve shillings and sixpence (including food) for all over fourteen, and three pounds for the under-fourteeners, as against the sum of five pounds (without food) which was charged in other ships.

"A service was held on board the Buena Vista on Sunday, the 25th day of February, under the direction of Captain Dan Jones. A branch of the Church was effected aboard ship. Permission was given to use the ship captain's deck for the choristers and 'orchestra' to render 'The Saints Farewell' for the last time.

"The Buena Vista left Liverpool on Monday, February 26. As the ship moved away .. 'we were followed by our dear brethren -- William Phillips (Merthyr), Abel Evans, Eliezer Edwards, and several other faithful Elders, together with David Jeremy, of Brechfa.' They ... 'brought oranges and threw them into the ship as long as they were within reach.'"

By the time the ship was passing the Isle of Anglesey, everybody on board was seasick except Captain Dan Jones and Daniel Daniels. As the land of Wales was disappearing from view, Dan Jones ruminated on his sojourn there since his arrival in August of 1845.

The route followed took them to the port of New Orleans, up the Mississippi River to St. Louis, then up the Missouri to Council Bluffs. Continuing the quotes from the Lewis article:

(8) His endowment record gives his baptism as of Nov. 1847. See (15) below
(9) Family record sheet in files of Daniel M. Rees
(10) Statement in files of Leah Rees Reeder states that John Davis Rees was converted by Dan Jones; we have no verification of this and as far as we know Grandfather was in England and Dan Jones in Wales during this period. However, he did sail with the Dan Jones emigration party. See T.H. Lewis article in Improvement Era of April 1961.
"Cholera was prevalent at that time in New Orleans, as it was in many other places. These Welsh Saints had only one death from cholera there. Two others had died from other causes aboard ship.

"Dan Jones engaged a special steamboat to convey his company from St. Louis to Council Bluffs, Iowa, which was the usual starting point for the long trek westward. A quantity of iron was bought at Council Bluffs to make wagons.

"Before leaving Council Bluffs, Dan Jones arranged for some of the company to stay at that place for the time being and for a branch of the Church (known as Cambria's Camp) to be organized with William Morgans (of Rhymney, South Wales) in charge, A Welsh newspaper was published there."

The family record sheet in the files of Daniel Rees notes the birth and death of another son, Hyrum, on April 30, 1849, in St. Louis, the point where the company changed to the chartered boat which took them to Council Bluffs, John D. Rees was the only blacksmith there at the time, (12) and he remained with the group at Council Bluffs. Sometime later, he left his family while he went to St. Joseph where he worked to buy a fine set of blacksmith tools and other equipment with which to start to the Valley. (12) A son, Meredith, was born while they were at Council Bluffs, June 7, 1851. (13)

The trip west was begun in the spring or early summer of 1852, under the leadership of William Morgans. The company included some post-1849 emigrants.

"With them were fifty wagons and ten carts. In a letter to Wales, William Morgans stated that he was captain of the whole camp, Abel Evans was captain of the guards and William Beddoe (of Penydarren, Merthyr) the clerk of the camp. Among other officers named by him were Captain D. Evans (Llanelly, South Wales), John Rees (Merthyr Tydfil), N. Evans, the former president of the West Glamorgan Conference. One gathers from his letter that conditions on the western trek were less formidable than they had been in 1849. 'The Saints are in good health; everyone has his canvas tent as white as snow. Much milk in our camp being thrown away as casually as the bathwater used up by two or three Merthyr colliers. We have more milk than we can use.'

"When the group was within eighty miles of Salt Lake City, whom did they meet but Captain Dan Jones who was returning from Utah to Wales. When Mountain Creek was reached, some noise from a westerly direction was heard. That 'noise' marked the coming of three of the early Welsh emigrants who had traveled between thirty and forty miles from the Valley to meet the newcomers. Those three were Thomas Jones (Hirwaunm, Glamorgan), Morgan Hugh, (Pontyates Carmarthenshire), and William Jones (son of Evan Jones, Aberdare, Glamorgan.) With them was a load of fruit, including watermelons, potatoes, and onions. A little further on, the emigrants met another group of Welshmen who had likewise come to meet them and in that group were John Parry (Newmarket, North Wales), Daniel Leigh, Owen Roberts, Thomas Jones, and Cadwaladr Owen."

(11) There is no record of Cambria's Camp in either the Genealogical Library or the Church Historian's Office (1962)
(12) Life sketches of John Davis Rees by Abbie Rees Madsen and Leah Rees Reeder
(13) Family record sheet in files of Daniel M. Rees
(14) Lewis article in Improvement Era of April 1961.
"This particular letter from William Morgans gave some further details of the journey across the plains. Hundreds of buffalo were seen coming to drink at the Platte River. The Indians were 'kindly' folk if approached in the right spirit. When William Morgans and his company happened to meet some hundreds of Sioux Indians, they were welcomed with the greeting, 'How do? Mormon good.' The Indians spread their blankets on the ground and invited the Welshmen to sit down with them to smoke 'the pipe of peace.' When these Welshmen reached the 'valley' they were surprised to find that the roads of Salt Lake City were 130 feet wide, and that there were trees between the carriage way and the pedestrian way. Alongside each road there was running water which could be turned on or off by the inhabitants." (14)

John Davis Rees and his wife and four children had one span of horses, two wagons, and eight head of oxen whose names were Lamb, Lion, Duke, Dine, Buck, Brandy, Laid, and Line. (12) They arrived in the valley in September (1852) and it is assumed they settled for the time being in Salt Lake City. Both Mary and John received their endowments and were sealed at the Endowment House, November 2, 1852. The record carries the following notation: "Tuesday: a cloudy day." (15)

On December 28 of the same year (1852), John was sealed to Jane Morgan, sister of Mary Morgan. (16) Family tradition states that when John was advised to take a second wife, Mary consented only if he marry her sister, who was twenty-eight and considered something of an old maid. When and where they were married we do not know at this time (1963). The following January (1853) Jane died (at the birth of her first child according to family tradition) and was buried in the Salt Lake City cemetery (17). It is assumed that Jane came to America in the Dan Jones party of 1849, though she may have come with some other party between 1849 and 1852. She is not listed with the Morgan family in the 1851 census in Wales, and unfortunately there seems to be no official passenger list for the 1849 voyage.

(15) Records of the Salt Lake Endowment House:

Endowed Tuesday 2 Nov. 1852
John Rees: born Merthyr Tydfil, Clams., South Wales, 4 Mar. 1815 parents:
  Meredith and Mary
  baptized: Nov. 1857
  priesthood: elder
  Samuel L. Sprague and James W. Cumming officiating
Endowment House Sealings:
  #895 John Rees born 4 Mar. 1815 at Merthyr Tydfil, Clams., S. Wales
  Mary Morgan born 15 Nov. 1822 at Merthyr Tydfil, Clams., S. Wales
  The above were sealed by B. Young on 2 Nov. 1852, 11:00 A.M,
(16) Endowment House Sealings:

  #968 John Rees born 4 Mar. 1816 Merthyr Tydfil, Clams., So. Wales
  Jane Morgan born Good Friday 1824 Cardiff, Clams., So. Wales
  The above were sealed by E. T. Benson 28 Dec. 1852, 7:50 P.M.

(17) Jane's part in the family was not generally known until 1961 when the sealing record was located after Rae Thomas Foulger told of her mother's relating Jane's story to her. Pearl Thomas Parry also remembers her mother's telling her substantially the same facts. Jane died 11 January 1853, though the cemetery record gives 1852, an easy mistake in recording at the beginning of a new year. She is listed as Jane Morgan in the cemetery record but the location of her grave is not given nor known. The cause of death is listed as canker.
On February 16, 1853, John was ordained a seventy by Alexander McRae and he received a patriarchal blessing under the hands of John Smith, March 16, 1853, both in Salt Lake City. (18)

In the October Conference held in Salt Lake City, 1853, Lorenzo Snow was called to go to Box Elder (later known as Brigham City) to aid the struggling Saints there. He was to select fifty families to accompany him (19). He chose men upon whose faithful devotion and manual skills future success would largely depend. John Davis Rees was one of those chosen. We do not know just when he and his family left for Box Elder, but their child Meredith (born at Council Bluffs) died November 20, 1853 (20) and family tradition says he was the second person to be buried in the Brigham City cemetery, though a search of the cemetery records does not confirm this nor is there any record of his burial in the Salt Lake City cemetery records.

Mary's father, William Morgan, with his wife and four children came to America, February 4, 1854, on the ship Galconda (21) and went to Box Elder to live.

In The Life of Lorenzo Snow by Dr. Thomas C. Romney, in the chapter entitled "Call to Brigham City", page 167, we find the following description of the conditions there when Elder Snow and his followers arrived, together with a brief discussion of its beginnings.

"The first ones to arrive at this settlement and who can rightly be termed its founders were William Davis, James Brooks and Thomas Pierce who came on March 11, 1851, and located one mile northwest of the present center of Brigham City. Several other families came a short time later. This same year (1851) a fort was built, the enclosure being circled by log huts in which eight or nine families lived. Immediately south of the fort a log schoolhouse was constructed which served the people for school and religious purposes. An ecclesiastical organization was effected with William Davis as presiding Elder, and later with the organization of a ward, he was sustained as Bishop.

"In 1852 the fort was deserted by the families moving onto their farms. However, the following year President Young instructed the people to return to the fort because of the threatening attitude of the Indians in that locality. Because of the unsanitary condition of the log houses at the fort, which were infested with bedbugs and other pestiferous insects, it was deemed advisable by the Saints to erect a new fort. This was built about three blocks north and west of the present Courthouse.

(18) Index to Early L.D.S. Records, Genealogical Library, Salt Lake City
(19) The Life of Lorenzo Snow by Dr. Thomas C. Romney, page 167
(20) Family record sheet in files of Daniel M. Rees
(21) Emigration Extracts: Book 1854-55, page 18 of Ship Galconda

Emigrated on ship Galconda, February 4, 1854

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Age</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>William Morgan</td>
<td>laborer</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elizabeth Morgan</td>
<td></td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David</td>
<td></td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hannah</td>
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<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarah</td>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
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| Susan           |            | 12    (this age not very clear)
"At the close of 1853 when Elder Snow was called to Brigham City, it had a population of two hundred and four souls. During the spring of 1854 nearly all the families called by Elder Snow had arrived, thus greatly augmenting the number there." (19)

"Descriptive of conditions existing in the country northward at the time of Lorenzo's call, he said: 'When I arrived at Box Elder county, I found the location where Brigham City now flourishes in a very unprosperous condition. Whether its change from the primitive state should be called improvement, e.g. whether it was better or worse for what had been done on the premises would puzzle an antiquarian. Even the big meeting house, with its ground floor and earth roof, was more extensively patronized as a receptacle for bed bugs than for the assemblage of the Saints.' (22)

"Confirming the report of Elder Snow on the 'unprosperous conditions' of Brigham City when he first arrived, we have the testimony of Anders Christensen who in the summer of 1868 said: 'The land on which Brigham City stands was about as barren and desolate a place as a human eye ever looked upon, about fourteen years back. A very few families (perhaps a dozen) settled here and explored around but no flattering prospects for subsistence. We planted fruit trees in obedience to counsel given, but had no hopes of eating fruit from them, the ground being as hard as a rock, and without soil, scarcely a vestige of sand, even, to be seen among the rocks. We had the farthest place north where peaches and grapes succeeded.' (23)

"Elder Woodruff of the Council of the Twelve paid a visit to Brigham City the first year after the call of Elder Snow, and of the place he had this to say: (22)

'I rode to Box Elder (Brigham City) and preached that evening (Dec. 5, 1854) in the schoolhouse, 60 families are located here, the majority of them Welshmen and Danes, and mostly poor. Only a little wheat was raised. Bishop Davis had twenty tons of tithing hay and fifty bushels of wheat. The wall (to the fort) will inclose one hundred by two hundred rods and it is to be built of stone and is to be three and a half feet thick at the bottom, two feet at the top, and eight feet high. Its erection is now in progress. The people have a school this winter. Bro. Jonathan Wright taught school for them during the past winter." (24)

The fifty families, called by Elder Snow to come to strengthen the settlement at Box Elder, came a few at a time, and as they came, the fort was gradually extended to the south. The log schoolhouse was included in this extension. It is a matter of record that John D. Rees and family occupied cabin No. 2 and the William Morgan family, cabin No. 7 in the addition to the fort. (25)

The County was surveyed in 1851 by Jesse W. Fox when it was part of Weber County. (Box Elder News & Journal, 1951 Centennial Edition). Early in the spring of 1854, the townsite of Brigham City was platted, the survey being based on a meridian set for the Temple Block in Salt Lake City. This first survey, known as 'Flat A' extended from what is now Second North to Second South, four blocks east of Main Street and the same distance west. (26)
"The first lots consisted of one half acre, eight by ten rods. Anyone wishing to procure a lot in 'Plat A' was given a title to the lot of his choice after he had built four rods of the rock wall which was being built around the city... John Davis Rees built the first house on the surveyed lots. It was located on the southwest corner of Block Four, now Third East and Forest."

A LANDMARK BEING RAZED

"The first adobe house built in Brigham City is now no more for a force of workmen are now tearing it down to make way for a modern cottage to be erected on the spot by Mr. C. W. Merrell, who acquired the property from David Rees.

"The house in question is the old Rees home located on the corner of Forest and Third East streets where it was erected by the late John D. Rees... in the fall of 1854. When (Mr.) Rees perfected the plans for the house, which consisted of two rooms and a leanto kitchen, the people of the community were still residing within the Old Fort which was located in that section of the city where the Third ward chapel now stands, and Mr. Rees states that his father and mother moved from the fort to the lot on east Forest street before the house was completed and the family lived out of doors and slept in wagon boxes, one of his sisters (27) being born just before the family moved into the new house."

(26) The rock was laid up with sand and clay. The wall was about eight feet high three feet wide at the base, and two feet wide at the top. It was never completed except across the east side, and that ran from where Bott's Marble works is now located to Second South just west of the high school. Some parts of the wall were built on all sides of the city. (History of Box Elder County, page 259.)

(27) Family record sheet and sketches of life of John D. Rees by Abbie Rees Madsen and Leah Rees Reeder.
"In 1854-55, Main Street was only four blocks long. This distance on either side was occupied mainly by dwelling houses except for the open square which was comparable in width to the space occupied by the city ball and court house grounds, and extended west to First West Street. On this square were built the willow boweries in which conferences and celebrations were held. Here, too, the Indians gathered to receive government supplies and donations from townspeople." (27) During the summer and fall of 1855, the people began building their own homes on city lots. Lorenzo Snow located on Main Street in the fall of 1855. (28)

"On the east side of Main Street, south of what is now Forest Street, was the Court House, which was commenced in 1855, and dwelling houses which were owned in order by the following people: Harvey Pierce, James Pett, Porter Squires, Caleb Jones, George L. Grahel Sr., and James Christinsen, the canopian player.

"On the west side of Main Street and south of the square were the homes of the following: President Lorenzo Snow, Judge J.C. Wright, John D. Rees, Morris Rosenbaum, Andrew Jensen, Jeppa Jeppson, and Hans Peter Jensen.

"Morris Rosenbaum operated a store on what is now the southwest corner of Main Street and First South, and John D. Rees had a blacksmith shop on his lot.

"Very early in the history of Brigham City, streams of water flowed down either side of Main Street and shade trees were planted to make the boundary line between the street and the sidewalk, neither of which was graded." (29)

John earned his living as machinist and blacksmith and, as stated above, had his smithy located at Main and First South Streets, often taking gold dust and other commodities in payment for services rendered. (29) "From about 1853 until a few years after the railroad came in 1869, the blacksmithing trade was a very lucrative one, because of the thousands of emigrant trains, pack animals, etc. which kept the roads lined, at first enroute to the gold fields of California, later to the mines of Montana and Idaho. There were blacksmith shops at frequent intervals along the highway. At Brigham City, William Davis, John D. Rees, Reese Richards, John Williams (and nine others) operated blacksmith shops." (30)

(27) History of Box Elder County ed by Lydia Forsgren, page 261
(28) Romney: Life of Lorenzo Snow, page 170
(29) Life sketches of John D. Rees by Abbie Madsen and Leah Reeder
(30) History of Box Elder County ed. by Lydia Forsgren, page 94
John Davis Rees was also interested in a molasses mill and in a nail factory. (31)

"In the early fifties, John D. Rees and John Morgan built a small log cabin just across the creek east of Third North. Here they manufactured nails from scrap iron. The machinery was turned by water power. The iron was obtained along the trail to California and elsewhere.

"Martin L. Ensign states in his Journal that in 1854 he and Simon Dunn traveled three hundred miles by ox team to the Humbolt River to obtain iron left by the emigrants.

"The Indians often killed an entire train of emigrants, burned their wagons, took what plunder they wanted, and left the rest strewn along the trail --- a silent reminder of the hardships endured by the 'Pathfinders.' Many of the settlers traveled both east and west gathering the iron from such burned wagons.

"Mr. Ensign states further that they sold some of the iron and bought flour at ten dollars per hundred.

"Stories told by the old settlers lead us to think that Mr. Rees bought some of this iron and made it into square headed, four-sided nails of all dimensions," (32) some of which are on display in the Relic Room collection of the Daughters of the Utah Pioneers, in the Court House in Brigham City, Utah.

"In the fall of 1863, Lewis Boothe said he hired Old Tope, an Indian belonging to the Shoshone tribe, to go with him to Goose Creek to get some wagons which the Indians had taken from the emigrants. He said: 'I returned with the iron and sold it to John Rees, my father-in-law, for twenty-five cents a pound.' (33)

John was advised to take a plural wife, but Mary disapproved, walking all the way to Salt Lake City to present her protest to President Brigham Young. Her granddaughter, Abbie Rees Madsen, tells the story that on the way, Mary overtook a farmer with a rig who offered her a ride. She thanked him but refused, saying she was "in a hurry."

What President Young told her we do not know, but in December of 1857, John married Zillah (Celia) Mathias (34) of Brigham City, daughter of Thomas and Margaret Williams Mathias. The family had come to America with the Dan Jones Company of 1849, remained at Council Bluffs for three years, then came to Utah in the summer of 1852 and to Box Elder the following spring. Zillah was eighteen, John, nearly forty-three. Brigham Young performed the ceremony in the Endowment House, December 13, 1857.

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(31) Life sketches of John D. Rees by Abbie Madsen and Leah Rees Reeder
(32) History of Box Elder County by Lydia Forsgren
(33) History of Box Elder County edited by Lydia Forsgren, page 90-91
(34) Zillah's name appears in various forms in different records. Her birth certificate gives Silla. Celia is a variant given in early records; all are different forms of Cecelia, I am told by our Welsh genealogist.
With the threat of the approach of Johnston's Army in the spring of 1858, "thirty thousand Saints left their homes in Salt Lake City, Ogden, Brigham City, and other communities, and fled southward, taking with them their movable effects and leaving behind only a few men with instructions to apply the torch to their homes should the government soldiers attempt to possess them." (35)

James Bywater of Brigham City writes: "It was required of us to put a roof on our Public Hall. We finished the adobe work and put the roof on after most of the people had moved." (36) "A small company of horsemen under the command of Willis Boothe remained to guard Brigham City against the possible attack of six hundred Indians encamped in the neighborhood who, it was feared, might set fire to the settlement. Most terrifying of all was the fear that United States soldiers would invade the Territory. Should this occur, certain guards were instructed---as in other communities--to burn the settlement to the ground. The first threat was removed when the entire band of Indians took their departure to the north, leaving most of the brethren who had been left in Brigham City free to join their families in the south." (37) James Bywater wrote: "We went as far south as Pond Town (Salem) in Utah County. I assisted my wife's folks to make a dugout, getting the timber from the mountains." (38) It is not known where the John D. Rees family stayed during their exile.

Subsequently, when peace had been restored between the government and the people of Utah (39) the exiles from Brigham City, as well as from other communities, began to return to their homes. "Toward the latter part of May," writes one of these, "seven of us started for Brigham City, the rear guard having left. The Indians were ugly. We arrived in Brigham City in about five days. We found every house broken up and its contents strewn about .... A few days later, families commenced to arrive from the south; ... the majority of the people returned, but a number sold out and never came back." (40) Among those to return were the families of Lorenzo Snow and John Davis Rees.

Zillah's first child, named Zillah Alvira, was born April 27, 1859, in a little log cabin located on a corner of the old homestead of Thomas Mathias at Third East and Second South Streets. Here Alvira spent her early childhood. (41) Later Zillah moved into the north rooms of the long adobe house which had been added to the smithy and wagon shop of John D. Rees on Main Street. (It was later called the Cooperative Blacksmith and Wagon Shop, operated as one of the Brigham City Cooperatives,) Here Zillah raised her family of seven girls and two boys until after her husband's death in 1880. (*)

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(35) Romney: Life of Lorenzo Snow p. 190
(36) Box Elder Lore, p. 79
(37) Romney: Life of Lorenzo Snow p. 191
(38) Box Elder Lore compiled by Sons of the Utah Pioneers, page 79
(39) June 7, 1858, the Peace Commission reached Salt Lake City June 26, 1858, Johnston's Army entered the Valley of the Great Salt Lake After remaining for three days on the banks of the Jordon River, the troops were removed to Camp Floyd in Cedar Valley, situated between Salt Lake City and Provo. (Romney: Life of Lorenzo Snow, page 192)
(40) Box Elder Lore, page 79
(41) Autobiographical sketch by Alvira Rees Blackburn (courtesy of her daughter Mrs. Elva Blackburn Hansen.)
(*) For detailed description see Life of Zillah Mathias Rees (separate sketch).
Front view from Main Street, looking West. Among the sun-bonneted girls are Leah, Zina and possibly Rose May, Rees.

Side view from First South looking north showing ox frame used in shoeing oxen with wagon shop on left.