

Dinah Davies Vaughan Jones

(NOTE: It is unclear who wrote this Biography or when it was written. Due to the Large Number of errors and inaccuracies, it is doubtful that it came directly from Dinah. Corrections and additions are in Bold Print.)

Dinah Davies was born in 1813 in Carmarthen, South Wales, the seventh of eight children born to Samuel and Dinah Simon Davies. Her younger sister Ruth Elizabeth, was born in 1815, and Dinah named her own daughter Elizabeth after this sister. Her parents were married 1 April 1800 by banns at St. Peters, Llanllawddog Parish, and each of their children was baptized (or christened) in this parish. Samuel was a cooper by trade, making barrels and kegs of all sizes for sale. He died at the age of 41 and was buried in St. Peters on 1 December 1818 when Dinah was five years old. Dinah's brother David was one of Queen Victoria's guards.

(St. Peter's Parish and Llanllawddog Parish are 2 separate Parishes. St. Peter's Parish is located in the town of Carmarthen, Wales. Llanllawddog is about 8 miles from Carmarthen. Samuel Davies is interred at Llanllawddog Parish, and the burial record lists his place of residence as St. Peter's. It appears that our Davies Family had association with both Parishes. Many of Dinah's relatives, as listed in the back of William Ellis Jones' Journal in the Family History Library, SLC, Ut., are interred at St. Peter's Parish.)

Later in the city of Merthyr Tydfil Dinah met and married William Vaughan. She had heard that the Vaughan men were generally noted for their princely bearing and mental superiority, and the Vaughan women were famously handsome. After meeting William's family she agreed with the description. William Vaughan was a grandson of Major Vaughan of Revolutionary fame. William was born 20 December 1812 in Hay, Breconshire, Wales. His father was John Vaughan and his mother's name was Catherine. Both William and Dinah came from wealthy families and were well educated, Dinah being a graduate doctor.

(Records for William Vaughan, including Official LDS Church Records from 1887 when Dinah was present, indicate that he was born in 1809 in Pembroke County, Wales. While there was a Vaughan Family living in Hay, Breconshire, Wales, Census Documents seem to indicate that it is a Different Family. Dinah's second Husband, William Ellis Jones, was born to parents named John and Catherine. It is possible William Vaughan's parents have the exact same names, but based on the names of his children, it seems unlikely. It is uncertain who William Vaughan's parents were. There was a British General named John Vaughan during the American Revolutionary War. "Major General" Vaughan burned the town of Kingston, New York and participated in the Battle of Brooklyn.

He was later promoted to Lieutenant General and is sometimes referred to as Sir John Vaughan. Major General John Vaughan was a Welshman, and he may be William's Grandfather as the timing and reference to the "Revolution" works well. One of our relatives hired a genealogist to explore this option, but no familial connection could be determined. There is some question as to how much education William and Dinah actually received. On birth and/or death certificates for their children, they both placed an "X" as their Mark rather than writing out their signatures in the space provided. Neither William nor Dinah is known to have written anything; it is unclear if either of them could write.)

William and Dinah's first home was located in the section of Merthyr known as Penydarren. Their marriage had been by banns rather than by license. When they notified the Vicar of their desire to marry he announced their intentions at church on March 2nd, 9th, and 16th. No one came forth with objections, so they were married on 17 March 1834. Thomas Jones, Curate, performed the marriage in the parish of MerthyrTydfil, County of Glamorgan, with William Rowland and Daniel A. Lewis, witnesses.

(According to the Glamorgan Family History Society—Marriage Indexes for Merthyr Tydfil, Wales, the marriage of Dinah Davies and William Vaughan took place on May 17, 1834. See Microfiche 6120955, Family History Library, SLC, Ut.)

William worked in the coalmines where working conditions were very poor. The mines were damp with the ceilings too low for a man to stand. The coal was hauled out in small wagons usually by children, because they were able to walk upright in the tunnels, and the men were compelled to walk in a stooping position.

On 28 May 1838 William and Dinah were blessed with their first daughter whom they named Martha. How sad they were nine months later when Martha contracted the dreaded disease smallpox and died on 5 March 1839. They had her such a short time and missed her so much that when their second daughter was born 18 June 1840 they decided to give her the same name. This was a custom often practiced in Wales at that time. On 8 April 1843 another daughter was born to them and given the name of Dinah for her mother and grandmother.

New mines were opening up that offered better working conditions, and the Vaughn's moved about twenty miles to the County of Monmouth and resided at Penmark, Bedwelty Parish.

They were delighted when their first son was born 30 September 1845 and given the name of William Samuel. A short time later they moved back to their old home in Merthyr Tydfil. All went well until the children were exposed to whooping cough. Martha was old enough to safely survive the disease, but the little son died on 31 May 1847. It was a sad father who registered the death of his 19-month-old son on 13 June 1847. Both parents grieved for the lost children, as their daughter Dinah also died, leaving only Martha living. They drew more comfort from their new religion than from any other source.

A little more than a year before the Vaughan's had been taught by Mormon missionaries the only true gospel on the face of the earth. Both had accepted the Church and were baptized Dinah on her birthday, 3 February 1846. Knowing the principles of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and the plan of salvation gave them comfort and hope. The Vaughan's spent as much time as possible attending church meetings and in trying to teach others.

(Based on Christening Records from Llanllawddog Parish, it appears that Dinah was born in January rather than February 1813. The Davies Surname was sometimes referred to as "David" on Parish Records. For example, Dinah's brother Simon is listed as Simon David in the Parish Record. There is a Christening Record for a Dinah David born to parents named Samuel and Dinah on 31 Jan. 1813. This appears to be Dinah's Christening Record. See Microfiche 6394310, Family History Library, SLC, Ut.)

They were mistreated because of their beliefs, and some of their family would have nothing to do with them. When the mission president was released and began making plans to return to the United States the Vaughan's decided to go with him and join with the Saints. Dinah was expecting a baby, so a trained nurse accompanied them. The group traveled to Pembrokeshire to bid farewell to the Vaughan family still living there. While en route Dinah became ill. They stopped at a farmhouse but were refused lodging when it was learned they were Mormons. At the next farmhouse they were refused room in the house but were allowed to use the barn. Here on a cold night during a raging snowstorm Elizabeth was born 14 November 1849. While Dinah was regaining enough strength to travel William and the mission president worked, and that included some missionary work. William Vaughan baptized several people from this area. As soon as Dinah was able they made their way to a seaport and sailed for Liverpool. Here many saints were preparing to sail for America. William, age 41, Dinah, 37, Martha almost 10 years old, and the infant Elizabeth sailed on the Josiah Bradlee leaving Liverpool on 5 February 1850 and arriving in New Orleans two months later. There were 263 passengers aboard, many of them saints with the same final destination as the Vaughan's to join the main body of the church in the Salt Lake Valley in the western United States. During the voyage Dinah cared for the sick passengers and gained the appreciation of Thomas Day, the president of the crossing.

(The Vaughan Family emigrated to the U.S. on the ship “Josiah Bradlee.” The Passenger Registry, located on Microfilm at the Family History Library, SLC, Ut., is dated December 1849. William Vaughan is listed with an age of 40, which seems to confirm the “1809” Birth Year. The ship left from Liverpool in Feb. 1850 arriving in New Orleans in April. William and Dinah went to “Pembroke County” to say Goodbye to the Vaughan Family “still living there.” We probably have a number of Vaughan Ancestors recorded on Pembroke County Records.)

The next lap of the trip was also by water up the Mississippi River to St. Louis, Missouri. Here William found work, and Dinah continued to care for the family as well as the sick. Another little daughter Emmeline was born. She was only ten months old when her father died in 1855. Perhaps the dampness of the mines in which he worked had weakened his lungs and his resistance causing his death in his early forties. Dinah, wanting to go west, made her way to St. Joseph and continued to earn a living by her medical work.

(According to St. George LDS Temple Records from Feb. 1-2, 1887, William Vaughan died in 1852. Dinah’s second husband, William Ellis Jones, wrote a letter to LDS Church President John Taylor in 1886 requesting Family Sealing information. This letter is referenced in William Ellis Jones’ Journal. Within the text of this letter, it says that William Vaughan had a drinking problem and was abusive. According to the letter, he lost his LDS Church Membership while living in St. Joseph, Missouri. William left his family in St. Joseph and went to St. Louis, where he died. The letter does not say how he died. Dinah’s daughter, Emeline, was born in 1855. She married in 1870 as Emeline “Jones.” On St. George LDS Temple Records from 1887, her full name was listed as Emeline Davis Bray Huntsman. Unlike her sister, Elizabeth Vaughan Hunt, Emeline did not request to be sealed to William Vaughan. The 1886 letter to President Taylor was released upon request from the Church History/Archives Department.)

This is where she met William Ellis Jones. His wife Louisa Leavitt had died, leaving him to care for their small adopted daughter Martha Ann. [Martha Ann’s father was a French Canadian and the mother a Puncaw squaw.] Dinah was older than William, but they felt that with united efforts they might sooner come to Utah. So they were married 3 February 1856.

Martha did the housework and cared for the two small girls while Dinah and William worked. They moved many times trying to earn enough money to get a team and means to cross the plains. Finally in 1861 he got a wagon, cow and flour enough for the trip west. They still didn’t have a team, so they had to go with the Church teams. They started for the Valley in July 1861 in the Joseph W. Young company.

After arriving in Salt Lake Valley Dinah took up her medical practice and soon was recognized for her work among the sick. Being absent from home so much of the time and having been sealed to William Vaughn she consented to the plural marriage of her daughter Martha to William Ellis Jones. Thus both mother and daughter were married to William. In 1864 William and Martha moved to southern Utah as substitutes for the John Bennion family.

(Dinah Davies was never Sealed to William Vaughan in her lifetime. She was sealed to William Ellis Jones. William Ellis Jones married Martha Vaughan somewhere in the Midwest as they had children before arriving in the Salt Lake Valley. William Vaughan and Lucina Comstock were sealed by proxy in the St. George LDS Temple in 1887. Some current references suggest that William had the middle name of James. However, that name does not seem to appear on any formal or official documents including: LDS Branch Records, His Children's Birth and/or Death Certificates, Census Documents, and LDS Temple Records from 1887 when Dinah was present.)

Dinah continued practicing in Salt Lake City for many years, sending money home to her family when she could and coming to care for them when they needed her services.

On 9 February 1877 her daughter Martha died leaving five small children, the youngest fifteen months. The following year Dinah moved home to Gunlock but continued to travel about the area caring for women in childbirth. The mother often sent her husband to bring Dinah by horse and buggy to their home. She made trips to Santa Clara, Washington, Toquerville, Mountain Meadows, Thurber, Pine Valley, Pinto, Mesquite, Woods Ranch, Diamond Valley, Hamblin, Clover Valley, Hebron, and Modena as well as in Gunlock.

She was beginning to feel the effects of old age and decided to just care for the women of Gunlock, but it was hard to refuse anyone. On 30 September 1889 Benjamin Platt came from Hamblin pleading for her to come and help his wife, and Dinah went with him. Sister Platt had been in labor all night and no one had been able to deliver her. The people were very much alarmed by her condition. Dinah left Gunlock at nine in the morning and arrived around noon. By two o'clock she had delivered the baby, and all was well. Her fifty years of experience in this field had given her great skill.

Dinah died on 23 May 1895 at the age of 82. She had been in comparatively good health until about six weeks before her death and had continued to help bring babies into the world. She had a strong constitution, enduring without complaint her last illness.

She had lived a good life, given tremendous service to her fellowmen in easing suffering.
This great and good woman was laid to rest in the Gunlock cemetery.

A precious one from us has gone,
A voice we loved is stilled.
A place is vacant in our home,
Which never can be filled.
God in his wisdom has recalled,
The boon her love had given,
And though her body slumbers here,
The soul is safe in Heaven.

William died 26 August 1898 at age 81.

Dinah and William enjoyed their last years together in comfort and less poverty.