



# HISTORY OF JOHN EVAN PRICE

(1817 - 1878)

By Edith Evans

John Evan Price, Samaria's First settler, was born March 32, 1817, in the Parish of Llandilorfan, Brecknockshire, South Wales. He was a son of Evan Price and Esther Price who were cousins. His grandfathers were Roger Price and Reese Price and his grandmothers were Elizabeth Williams and Margaret Davies. He was one of a family of eight children: Evan, Esther, John Evan, Jeffery, Roderick, David, Isaac and Ann.

His entire family life was devoted to religion. He belonged to the Methodist Church until he was 20 years of age. He then joined the Calvin Baptist. When he was 30 years of age he heard the Mormon Elders preaching and was convinced of the truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and was baptized a member of that Church by John Griffiths. Of his childhood we know very little, only that he worked hard and had little opportunity for schooling or pleasure. He was married to Ruth Williams, daughter of Daniel Williams and Ruth Jones, the last Friday in May 1841. They lived in Abergyr Parish, where their first child was born, a daughter, on October 30, 1842. Their first son, Isaac, was born May 7, 1845 and died in 1846. They then moved to Llanelly, Breconshire where David was born. He died the same year.

For many years grandfather spent most of his time as a missionary for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, moving from place to place preaching the Gospel and baptizing many. During this time he and his family suffered hardships and much persecution because of their religion. He labored as a lumberman, miner and farmer. Because of religious persecution, many times he was unable to obtain employment and his family suffered greatly. They lived sometimes for months on barley bread and water. One time he took his coat from his back to pay his rent. Another time he paid his rent and his church obligations with a pig, the only meat his family had. During that winter they never tasted meat.

On April 16, 1848, Ruth was born and on June 1, 1850, another daughter, Mary, was born. At this time grandmother was confined to her bed for many months and grandfather had to do all the housework and care for his wife and the new baby. No women in the neighborhood would help them because of their religion, but through all of their hardships,

their faith never faltered. Though they lived in poverty, they answered every call of their Church and shared of what they had, as did the poor widow in the Bible.

Two sons were born to them, Daniel, 17 Nov. 1852, and John, 18 Jan. 1855. As soon as they were big enough to help they worked with their father sawing timber and they saved every penny possible for passage to America. Ann Maria was born June 14, 1859. It took many years to save enough for all the family to come. In 1864, he sent Ruth, age 16, and Mary, age 14, to Salt Lake City at a cost of thirty pounds. The same year the eldest son, Daniel, broke his leg in a coal pit and for some time was unable to work. By May 1865, the rest of the family was able to come to America and join the girls who had come the previous year.

*(The following is quoted from the diary of John Price.)*

"May, 1865, the rest of the family was able to come to America and join the girls who had come in the previous year. We left Liverpool, England on the ship, Bridge Water. We were five weeks and two days sailing from Liverpool to New York. We went from there to Pittsburgh with the Welsh and they found me work. We were there 11 months. I worked seven months and two weeks and in that time I gathered about fifty Mormons. With the permission of President Miles of New York, I established a Branch of the Church in Saw Mill Run. About the first of July, I, and 45 others, were counseled by President Miles to meet the emigrants at Detroit and go with them to Salt Lake City, which counsel we obeyed."

"On the 18th of July we left Wyoming, Nebraska for the prairies with ox teams in Captain Holiday's Company. On September 25, 1866, we reached Salt Lake City. The next morning President Brigham Young, with several others, visited us in the tithing office yard and shook hands with us. Bishop Hunter ordered food. All the people were very liberal toward us."

"We left Salt Lake in a few days and went to Brigham City where my wife and myself were stricken with mountain fever and were sick for two months. In February 1867, we moved from Brigham City to Malad and lived with our daughter Ruth, who was married to Fredrick Thomas."

"Brother Peck gave me two lots on which to build a house. On February 10, 1868, I took up 160 acres of land eight miles west of Malad. I went with my sons and built a dugout on the claim. I sold our place in Malad for a wagon and a yoke of oxen. On April 16, 1868, I moved my family here and we were the only white residents. The country was covered with sage brush and inhabited with only the American Indians and the wild beasts that wandered to and fro." (end of diary)

Two months later other noted pioneers came there to make their home. They were James Thomas, Thomas Roberts, David W. Davis, Taleasen Hughes and their families. They immediately began to build houses. Other noted pioneers came later. Grandfather dug what was known as a sawpit or hand sawmill. He and his sons sawed the lumber and logs

that were used in many of the first homes. Grandfather would get in the pit and his sons on top and saw the logs that were laid across on other logs. It was Samaria's first sawmill. Grandfather always delighted in being first in anything he did. When he went to Church he was generally the first there. He always was the first in the canyon when logging, leaving home in the dark. People who remembered him always related this as his main characteristic.

In the spring of 1869 a canal was surveyed and constructed and water brought in for irrigation. Later, a town site was surveyed and laid out. Grandfather helped in both of these undertakings. In 1869, a church house was erected of logs. Grandfather and his sons helped to get the logs and build the building, which was used for church and school. The first trustees were John E. Price, Thomas S. Thomas and Richard Morse.

On July 12, 1869, Lorenzo Snow, then one of the members of the Council of Twelve Apostles, visited the place and gave it a name of Samaria, in memory of the Samaria of Biblical history. The people had become known as the good Samaritans because of their good will and kindness toward all they came in contact with, including the Indians with whom they had many interesting experiences.

One time Grandfather had killed a calf. Some Indians came and wanted it. He offered them many other things but they would not go until he gave them half of the calf. The settlers used to give them many animals and much food. They knew that it was better to feed the Indians than to fight them. The early pioneers walked to Logan, Malad, Brigham City and even as far as Salt Lake City. One time when Grandfather was walking from Brigham City, darkness over took him and wolves attacked him. There was a wagonload of cedar posts someone had left because of a broken wheel. He climbed on this load with the wolves jumping at him. He grabbed a post and fought off the wolves the entire night. When daylight came the wolves left. He was exhausted but gave thanks that his life was spared.

Grandmother died September 20, 1873, after a long illness of many years and was buried the next day. Grandfather married Mary Deer Davis and to this union two daughters, Margaret Ann and Elizabeth were born. He died June 22, 1878 in Samaria. It was said that he was truly a good Samaritan, a forceful speaker, and a man of upright character. All the offices of trust he held were done with honesty and credit.

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**John Evan Price, Sr.**

Born: 3 Mar 1817

Married: Ruth Williams, 22 May 1841  
She was born 14 Apr 1816

Their seventh child was

**John Evan Price, Jr.**

Born: 18 Jan 1855

Married: Emma Morse, 15 Mar 1883  
She was born 17 June 1865

Their second child was **John Morse Price**

Born: 1 Nov 1886

Married: Ruth Williams, 9 Feb 1907  
She was born 27 Mar 1889