

LIFE OF THOMAS WRIGHT (11-22-1830 to 12-7-1909)

(Version 1, March 29, 2008, by Greg Jones [compiled from “They Came From England: The Wrights of Coalville, Utah 1850 – 1972” by Norman Jean Wright Trietsch])

Preface

In 1972 Norma Jean Wright Trietsch published “They Came From England: The Wrights of Coalville, Utah 1850 – 1972” (referred to hereinafter as “TWOC”). Norma Jean is a granddaughter of Thomas Wright, and a cousin to my paternal grandfather, John Clive Jones; in other words, Thomas Wright is the grandfather of Norma Jean, he is my great-great-grandfather, his daughter Annie Lydia Wright Jones is my great-grandmother. As I grew up I had several opportunities to interact with Norma Jean, as we knew her, and she led a fascinating life herself. I recall when TWOC arrived in our home - - it was a thick, bound volume, somewhat impenetrable to me when it arrived. My parents entrusted a copy or two of the book to me some time ago, I had skimmed through it a few times, but had never actually read the book. I could see that it contained a wealth of information, but it was hard for me to “get my arms around it.” It occurred to me that the book might become more meaningful to me were I to focus on one ancestor, and that other family members might benefit were I to actually write a brief biography of an ancestor by drawing on the information in TWOC. TWOC covers so much territory and so many people, that while it has passages that are biographies of specific individuals, those biographies depend on an overall context for the person's life that is found in various other passages of the book. I have attempted to synthesize the most significant information in TWOC that sheds light on the life of Thomas Wright. I chose Thomas Wright not because I had any special foreknowledge or interest in him, but merely because that is where Norma Jean starts her history. I have been pleasantly surprised by the benefits of having made that choice and invite you to learn of this great man. I have also come to a greater appreciation of the nature of the work Norma Jean did in creating TWOC - - I have spent many hours working on this biography, a project that in every way pales in comparison to the magnitude of what Norma Jean did, and she did it without the benefit of even a word processor. I could sense as I read TWOC how it truly was a labor of love on her part.

Finally, this document could use polishing, but I think it is to the point that its rough edges will not unduly distract the reader. Also, if anyone finds inaccuracies in this biography, I encourage you to contact me so I can make corrections (you may do so by sending an e-mail to me at gsjones@byu.net).

Unless otherwise noted, page citations appearing in the text are to TWOC.

Introduction

Thomas Wright was born in 1830 in England. Missionaries of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints taught the gospel to Thomas, his parents, and siblings, with the result that Thomas and his family joined the LDS Church - - Thomas was baptized in 1849. Annie Dale joined the His first wife Lydia Kay passed away, and he subsequently married Annie Dale in 1866; Annie was baptized in to the LDS Church in 1868. In 1868 Thomas, Annie, and other relatives emigrated to Utah, settling in Coalville. In their early years they had little wealth, but over the years their financial situation improved. He initially worked briefly on construction of the Union Pacific Railroad, then established a farm and became superintendent of a coal mine. Thomas and Annie had 11 children, 4 of whom died in infancy. Thomas was a leader in his community, and beloved by his children and grandchildren, for whom he left a great legacy. In TWOC, Norma Jean was able to collect insights from many of his descendants, all of which should help perpetuate that legacy.

Family of Origin

Thomas Wright was the oldest of the ten children of Joseph Wright and Martha Rippon. Joseph Wright was born in 1807 in Gleadless, Yorkshire, England; Martha Rippon was born in 1810 in Handsworth, Yorkshire, England. Joseph and Martha were married on May 11, 1829. In 1830 Thomas Wright was born in Gleadless, Yorkshire England. (41, 45, 51) "There were ten children and all grew to adulthood except Mary Ann who died in infancy in England." (47, 48)



Martha Rippon (34)



Handsworth, Woodhouse, England (40)



Handsworth, Woodhouse, England (40)

Early Life

"[Joseph Wright] owned considerable property in Handsworth, houses he rented to the coal miners. He was a coal miner himself and considered 'well-fixed' in his day." (46)

A granddaughter of Joseph Wright wrote that his children ". . . all must have learned to work at an early age. I remember father (William James) telling us that his brother Joseph when he was but seven years old worked at the coal pit opening and closing the doors for coal to pass through, and the mine caught fire and Joseph was severely burned. My father just five years of age, saw the accident as he worked alongside brother Joseph at the mine doing the same work." (48)

Thomas became a "coal miner and farmer." (65)

Conversion to the LDS Church (1849)

"Joseph and Martha were baptized into the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints in 1848 in Sheffield . . ." (47) "[Thomas Wright] was baptized into the LDS Church by William Bellamy March 19, 1849 . . ." (65) ". . . In 1856 Joseph F. Smith and John Henry Smith, as missionaries of the Church, visited with them . . . [A granddaughter of Joseph Wright wrote:] 'Joseph F. Smith was instrumental in the conversion of the Joseph Wright family . . . All the members of the family joined the LDS Church in England . . .'" (47,48)



Joseph F. Smith as a young man (www.lightplanet.com)

Marriages

"[Thomas Wright] was first married to Lydia Kay who was born April 6, 1817 at Philly Green, Yorkshire, England. She died May 31, 1865, at Handsworth, Woodhouse . . . Lydia was thirteen years older than Thomas; they had no children." (65)

"Thomas Wright married Annie (Anne) DALE on January 7, 1866 in St. George's, Sheffield, Yorkshire . . . It was love at first sight [according to granddaughter Juanita Staples Moore]: 'Mother told me our Grandparents met at the funeral of Lydia Kay . . . ' " (67-68) "[Annie Dale] was born October 8, 1842 at Handworth; was baptized into the LDS Church at Sheffield on April 16, 1868, by Edwin Walker . . . [She] had four sisters, no brothers . . . Her parents were Charles Dale (1805-1871) a railway laborer and a servant, and Mary [Stanley] (1814-1875) . . . " (67-68) "None of [Annie Dale's] people became Latter-Day-Saints and were not in favor or her becoming a Mormon." (87)

"Thomas Wright and Annie Dale Wright had eleven children. Four died in infancy . . . The other seven grew to adulthood, married and raised families . . . Mary 1871-1945 [married] George Leopold JONES . . . Annie Lydia 1879-1945 [married] William Rodolph Jones . . . Note that Mary and Annie married brothers . . . " (71)



Thomas Wright as a Young Man (68)



Lydia Kay 1817 – 1865 (65)





Annie Dale Wright as a Young Woman (68)

Emigration to the United States (1868)

In 1860 George Wright, younger brother of Thomas, went to America. He was 25 years old; his young wife Mary Hobson had recently died in England. (See 10, 11)

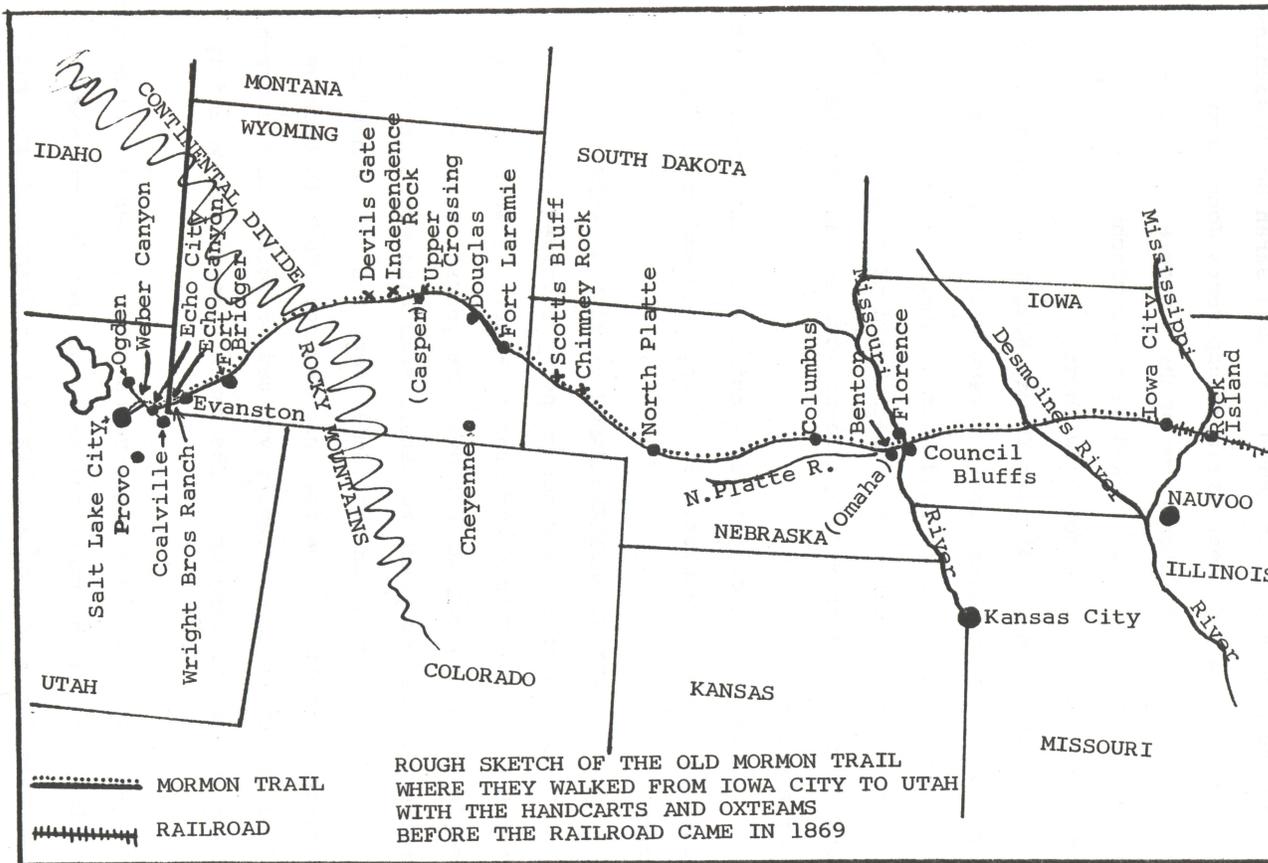
In 1868 Thomas and Annie, Thomas' brother Joseph, Thomas' sister Edith and her husband Andrew Hobson (together with their five children), emigrated to the United States. (18, 65)

"Annie Lydia Wright Jones [wrote that] her parents Thomas and Annie, 'Left Liverpool, England, on the S.S. COLORADO on July 14, 1868 with six hundred Saints under the direction of William B. Preston . . . This was the first steamship to carry LDS emigrants. They arrived in New York July 28, 1868, and arrived at Benton, the terminus of the Union Pacific Railroad on August 7th, where they camped at North Platte River about a week. They left Benton August 14, 1868, in Daniel McArthur's Ox Train of 61 wagons and 114 persons, arriving at Echo City, Utah Territory on September 14, 1868.'" (73-74) Daughter Mary Wright Jones wrote: "Mother walked most of the way across the plains getting very tired; and they were short of food." (87) "This was the last company of emigrants to travel west by [ox team,] because the following spring on May 10, 1869, the Union Pacific Railroad from the east linked up with the Central Pacific Railroad from the west at Promontory, Point, Utah." (73-74) Thomas Wright used \$53 from the Perpetual Emigrating Fund for him and his wife. (76)

It is worth noting that Thomas and Annie were greatly blessed to have traveled on a steamship. By comparison, TWOC includes an account of an emigrating mother, with her three children, who left Liverpool on a sailing vessel on June 20, 1868. She died at sea and was buried there. "The voyage took eight weeks during which a total of thirty-seven died. Those who survived lived on hardtack and ship's ballast. Some died in hospitals after reaching New York on August 14, 1868. The three young emigrants continued on to Utah with a group of Saints." (122)

Thomas' parents later emigrated to the United States as well. Martha Wright arrived in 1870, and Joseph Wright in 1874. They lived in Coalville, Utah until their deaths in 1894 and 1884, respectively (46, 47, 49) With the exception of John Wright, all the children of Joseph and Martha "came to Utah to make their home among the Saints." (47, 48) "Although [John] was baptized into the LDS Church in 1857, he chose not to come to Utah. Later, after John's death in England in 1914, his widow . . . Sarah Staniforth Wright came to Utah; also, four sons and one daughter, half of their ten children came." (11)

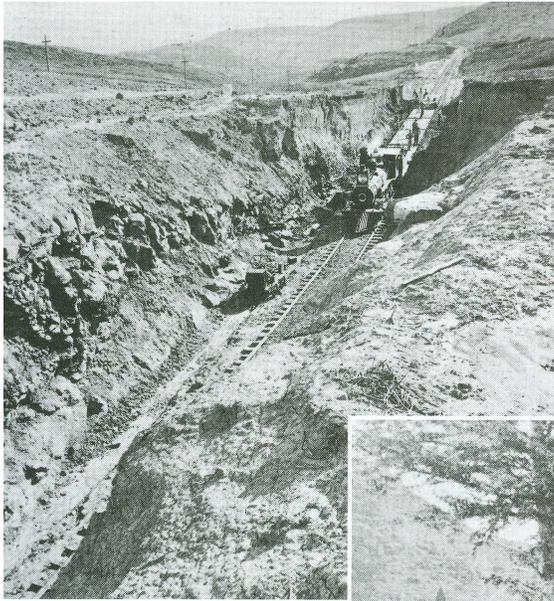
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Pioneer Trail Map (19)

Weber Canyon (Fall 1868)

Daughter Mary Wright Jones wrote: "In the fall of 1868 Father worked for W.W. Riter in Weber Canyon near Devil's Slide on the railroad which was being built. Here they shoveled the snow off the ground, pitched their tents and made their beds on the frozen ground where Mother caught cold in her back, from which she suffered all her life . . . Mother was never well after the exposure in Weber Canyon." (87)



A UP construction train passes through the cut at the head of Echo Canyon. The view is to the east.

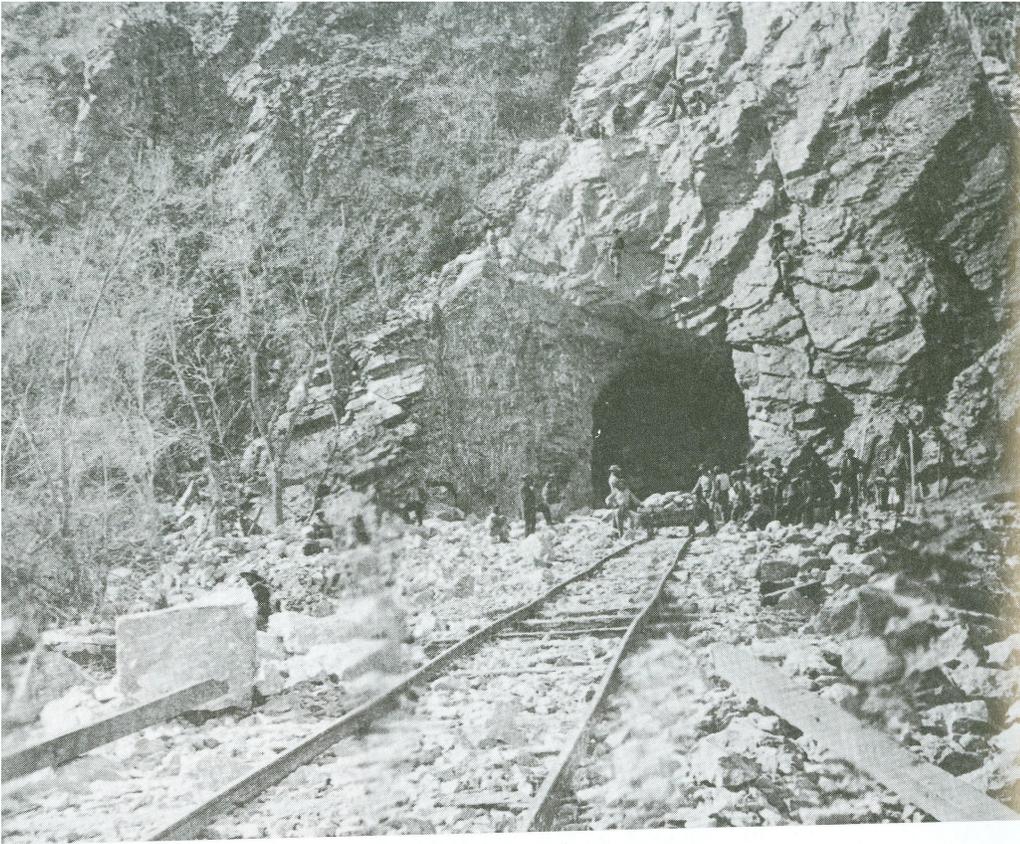


On January 9, 1869, the UP's track reached one thousand miles west of Omaha, in Weber Canyon, Utah. The railroad put up a sign to mark the achievement. The base of the tree became a picnic spot for tourists.



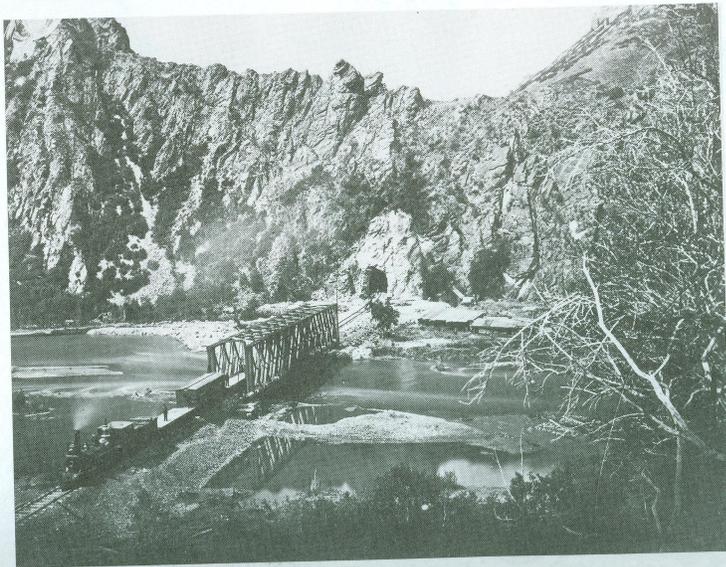
The UP telegraph corps at work in Weber Canyon. The telegraph line, required by the Pacific Railroad, ran parallel to the road and was critical to keeping New York informed and essential to keeping supplies coming.

Railroad Construction in Weber Canyon, January 1869 ('Nothing Like It In The World,' Stephen E. Ambrose)



Mormons dig out the East Tunnel—the second of four. It was 772 feet long and consumed 1,064 kegs of black powder. As it was being dug, the UP built a flimsy eight-mile temporary track over a ridge. Photo taken 1869.

A UP train crosses the Weber River, having just gone through Tunnel 3.
Photo taken 1869.



Railroad Construction in Weber Canyon, January 1869 ('Nothing Like It In The World,' Stephen E. Ambrose)

Main Street in Coalville (1868 – 1872)

“Coalville `was' a farming and mining town . . . one of the many communities outside of Salt Lake City set up by Brigham Young for expanding the settlement and industrial development of `the valley.' ” (25) “The first Mormon settlers of Coalville came on June 8, 1859 . . . The men worked the mines during winter months and tilled their fields in summer.” (26)

“When winter set in they moved to Coalville and lived in a house on the Main Street just down from the present Summit County Court House.” (89 [Granddaughter Juanita Staples Moore]) “There were many hardships. No log huts or houses with roofs on. Cedar posts to lay their bedding on for a bed. No coal. They burned sagebrush all year around. Food was scarce. What they did get was high priced. Flour was \$13.00 per hundred; potatoes about the same; one spool of thread 25 [cents]; bar of soap 25 [cents]. [Annie] made lye from wood ashes and made soap when she could get grease. Sorghum molasses and dried potatoes were what they lived on for some time . . . ” (73-74 [daughter Mary Wright Jones]) ”They stayed there three or four years . . . ” (89 [Juanita Staples Moore]) Daughter Mary wrote: “I was born in Coalville in 1871 in [a] one-room log house with a dirt roof, in a bedstead made of quaking aspen poles. Our table was a packing box and pieces cut from trees were our chairs. Father built the Rock House up Spring Hollow later.” (88)

Old Rock House in Spring Hollow (1872 - 1884)

”[The Wright family] moved to the Old Rock House which [Thomas] built just east of Coalville. When they moved in, it was built just to the square and they laid planks over the top the top to protect them from the weather while they slept . . . [One] night [Annie] was frightened because the wind and rain and lightning carried on so bad she was afraid the planks would fall down and kill someone.” (89 [Juanita Staples Moore]) Thomas later completed the house. Clarence Wright wrote: “I was born July 23, 1895 in the Old Rock House on my Grandfather's farm, built like the Rock of Gibraltar [sic] by my Grandfather's brother Thomas Wright.” (12, 303) Norma Jean wrote “In September 1970 I visited Grandfather's old home in Spring Hollow near Coalville. He built it in 1884, eighty-eight years ago, in the same way my Father always built everything - - to last.” (49)

Daughter Mary Wright Jones, born in 1871, wrote of her experiences while living in the Old Rock House: “Our house was in the northeast part of town. Father filed on land up Spring Hollow or Chalk Creek. He cleared it of sagebrush, cultivated it, raised wheat, oats, and hay. He built a two-room rock house on the land. [The family] lived on it one summer without a roof on so [the family] could take care of the land and keep cattle out. This is the house I remember living in. I learned to milk cows when I was about seven years old and do other work such as strain the milk in pans for the cream to raise, then skim it; feed calves and pigs with the skimmed milk. We had to go on the hills and get wood to burn. My brothers and I did that. There was coal washed down the big ditch from the coal mine. I would take buckets and pick up the coal in the ditch. This way we got all our fuel for the summer months. I remember rubbing clothes on a washboard when I had to stand on a little stool so I would be high enough to rub. We didn't have washers in those days.” (87 [Mary Wright Jones]) Mary also wrote: “We used to go fishing and berry picking for food. Those were good times for us. We had a very few clothes. I always went barefooted in the summer . . . My parents were not able to get things to use as there was no way for transportation only with oxtteams or horses. And they were few. It took three or four days to go to Salt Lake City to get provisions. They hauled coal to Salt Lake City and got provisions for it. Flour was \$13.00 per hundred pounds, butter \$1.00 per pound. Mother said the flour tasted like sun flowers. I supposed they did not have facilities to clean wheat in those days . . . There were no picture shows or entertainments. We had to make our own pleasures with work and play. ” (87, 88 [Mary])

Mary's account includes descriptions of her experiences in her first school and subsequently a new school in Spring Hollow: “In the winter we walked to Coalville to school. Many a time the snow was over the wire fences and it was noon before we got to school. I had to stay home a great deal to help Mother. I learned to crochet when I was going to school. My teacher Maggie Salmon taught me. I crocheted mittens and hoods.

I worked at recess instead of playing. My teacher was very good to me when I was willing to learn. This first school I attended was a Presbyterian school in one room taught by Miss Munson. She read a chapter from the Bible every morning before school started. I had to walk a mile and a half to school and it was real cold. I didn't have the privilege of going to school when I was six years old. I was ten when I started as there wasn't school buildings or facilities for schools before [that]. Father furnished the logs to build the first schoolhouse up Spring Hollow so we wouldn't have to walk so far to school. But I always had to stay out of school one day every week to help Mother on washday. I enjoyed going to school very much. Miss Munson was very nice to me. She gave me a little red purse for Christmas. It was the first purse I had; I surely enjoyed it and thought a lot of it." (88 [Mary])

During this period Thomas Francis Wright, a son born in 1873, at the age of nine started working "in the blacksmith shop at the coal mine." (12)



An early picture of
THOMAS WRIGHT & ANNIE DALE
with these five children
L. to R.:

George (standing)
Horace Charles (on gm's lap)
Thomas Francis (standing)
Martha Marantha (on gf's lap)
Mary (standing)

(Picture supplied by
Mary Jones Rigby)

Early Picture of Thomas Wright and Annie Dale with Children (53)



"THE OLD ROCK HOUSE" BUILT IN COALVILLE
BY THOMAS WRIGHT, SOON AFTER HE ARRIVED IN 1868

Shown in the picture from L. to R. are:
Thomas Francis (on horse); George (on horse);
Bertha Ann (holding gf's hand); Grandfather Thomas;
Grandmother Annie; Annie Lydia (holding gm's hand);
Martha Marantha (behind Annie Lydia); Mary.

(Picture supplied by Juanita Staples Moore)

The Old Rock House (53)

Old Brick House at Spring Hollow (1884 – 1909)

Juanita Staples Moore wrote: "In 1884 [the family] moved into the new brick house in Spring Hollow. Mother said the painter painted the walls and woodwork, using combs to rake the paint to create a grained wood effect . . . The brick home has two bedrooms, kitchen, pantry and front room on the main floor with a large hall and stairway. Upstairs there are two bedrooms on one side, and on the other there is what we always called 'the long room' which runs the entire length of that side of the house . . . The cellar is two rooms under the two bedrooms on the main floor, and the cellar door opens out onto the front law next to the meadow. It was built for fruit and vegetable storage . . . It was dirt floor . . ." (89 [Juanita Staples Moore]) The furniture of the home included an organ, a roll-top desk and high-backed rocking chair for Thomas, and for Annie a "fine hand-carved hardwood dresser with [a] tall arch-top mirror and heavy handcarved frame . . . a tall glassed-in, six-shelf fruit cupboard . . . a ten-foot, cretonne-covered chest [for storing] extra bedding from season to season . . ." (56, 57, 58)

A few of his children wrote of their lives while living in this home.

Daughter Mary Wright Jones wrote: "I had to stay home a great deal to help Mother so I was quite a big girl when I attended the Summit Stake Academy. Later I went to Mary Fisher's Sewing School and made my living before I was married doing sewing for other people. When I was fourteen . . . Coalville and vicinity was growing. The railroad was the source of transportation." (87, 88 [Mary Wright Jones])

When son Thomas Francis was a teenager "he had acquired a variety of skills: he fashioned perfect brass miniatures of an anvil, 'S' wrench, hatchets; helped his sister Mary make wax flowers; taught himself to play the organ, the violin and the harmonica; invented a functional three-wheel bicycle (among other things) used for years by many in Spring Hollow . . . It had two metal-tiered wheels on the rear, and one in front." (12)

"[Granddaughter] Mary Jones Rigby said: 'Mother often told us how she and her brothers and sisters gathered Mountain Trout off the meadow. The irrigation water flowed into the ditches from the mountain creeks and out onto the meadow carrying the Trout out of the ditches onto the grass. She would take a big dishpan and pick up the fish . . . When I was a little girl Mother told us about an elderly Indian woman who lived down at the southeast corner of the meadow. She came in the early spring and stayed all summer until snowfall. She was very poor and she would come up and visit with the family regularly and often went with Mother to gather Trout from the meadow. She also showed them how to do blanket weaving.'" (93, 94, 95 [Mary Jones Rigby]) "[Granddaughter Juanita Staples Moore] said: 'Mother told about one time the Indian woman's baby was very sick and she came and begged for some pillows to put the baby on.'" (95 [Juanita Staples Moore])

Several grandchildren of Thomas recorded memories of him, and experiences with him, which would have been from the time he lived in the Brick House at Spring Hollow.

"[His granddaughter Juanita Staples Moore wrote] 'Grandfather was a small built man. My father could wear his clothes. (John William Staples weighed around 135 pounds, I would guess; slim and not more than five feet six inches tall.)'" (92 [Juanita Staples Moore]) "[Granddaughter] Maggie Savage said . . . he had beautiful white hair and was a little fellow." (93 [Maggie Savage]) "[Granddaughter] Rhoda Amelia Wright Gram said: ' . . . To me he was a very handsome man. I loved his white hair and white beard . . . He used to tell me that in the winter he got fat so he weighed up to 125 or 130 pounds, and in the summer he said he always got thin! He wasn't very tall. I guess maybe five feet six or seven inches.'" (93 [Rhoda Amelia Wright Gram]) "[Granddaughter Fannie Louisa Wright Bradshaw Inman said: 'Grandfather was a short little bit of a man with a white beard, white mustache and hair . . .'" (93 [Fannie Louisa Wright Bradshaw])

Juanita Staples Moore also wrote: "Grandfather loved flowers and trees. He planted a good sized fruit orchard and had flowering lilacs and mock orange bushes. His favorite flower was the gladiolus. He also had a swarm of honey bees, and took honey and wax. I remember years ago of seeing large bricks of beeswax which had had taken from his bees. This beeswax played an important part in those early days." (89 [Juanita Staples Moore])

"[Granddaughter] Mary Jones Rigby said: 'When he sat down to table for his meals he wanted a spotless cloth and the table set neatly. Above all he required that his food be dished up nicely with no drips or sloppiness. He wanted to be served first; especially wanted the first portion from a can of salmon before it was broken. He enjoyed its solid molded shape as it came from the can. He hated a sloppy butter plate; and would not allow loud talking at table. He wanted everything orderly; everything in its place . . . He had a beautiful black surrey in which he took great pride. It was real plush even for those days. It had lights on it. He drove it with a team of matched black horses. When we went to Coalville from Cache Valley to visit him, they came to Echo to meet us in the beautiful surrey. There was only one train from Echo to Coalville and its schedule did not fit our night arrival time at Echo. . . . Grandpa kept goats. I especially remember a mean old billy that got Grandpa in all kinds of trouble with his neighbors. One time the goat knocked a neighbor's door down. The Englishman's cursing brogue left nothing unsaid . . .'" (93, 94, 95 [Mary Jones Rigby])

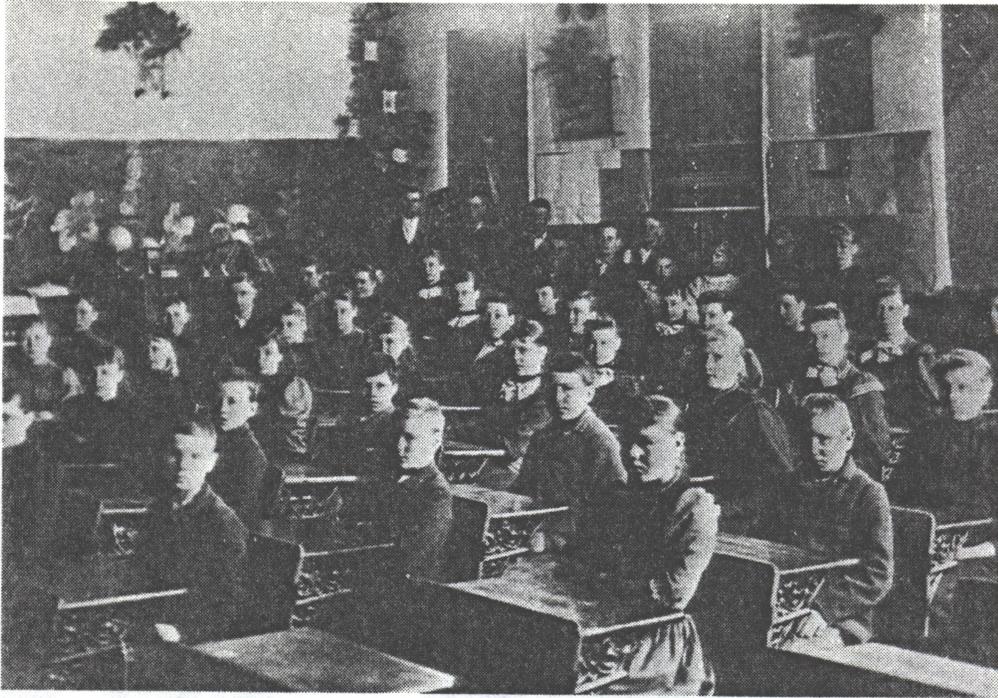
"[Granddaughter] Rhoda said: 'Grandfather loved his garden. He would take me out and show me his

violets at the front door entering into the cellar. They were the first flowers to come in the spring. He had lots of flowers. Sometimes I would stay with Grandpa and Grandma . . . Grandpa had lots of fruit trees. Ben Davis apples, crab apples and some big red ones. I helped him carry them into the cellar storage rooms through the door where the violets grew. But I don't imagine I was much help. Sister Elizabeth went to school I Coalville then too, but she was thirteen and had to help Aunt Louie with the work and help look after me, but she visited Grandpa and Grandma after school too whenever permitted.” (96 [Rhoda Amelia Wright Gram])

”[Granddaughter Elizabeth Thomas said:] When I was thirteen and lived . . . near Grandpa Wright's in Spring Hollow, he was then up in years. It was the school year of 1908-1909 and he wasn't able to do much. He'd get up in the morning, come out and have breakfast and lay on the couch under the window and go to sleep. He would get up at noon and ride down on the horse Old Doll to Coalville to get the mail . . . He went nearly every day to get the mail. At least three times a week.” (95, 96) ”[Granddaughter] Rhoda Amelia Wright Gram said: ` . . . I used to sit by him on his lounge in kitchen where he laid most of the time because he was ill, during the spring before he died in December 1909.” (93 [Rhoda Amelia Wright Gram]) ”[His granddaughter Juanita Staples Moore wrote] `Grandfather just slept away. Mother said they would rouse him to eat and then he'd go back to sleep.” (92 [Juanita Staples Moore]) ”[Granddaughter Fannie Louisa Wright Bradshaw Inman said: ` . . . [He] was more silent than anything else, as I remember. He didn't talk much.” (93 [Fannie Louisa Wright Bradshaw Inman])

"Grandmother Annie died September 18, 1911 in Coalville. Grandfather Thomas died December 7, 1909. Both are buried in Coalville. The WRIGHT cemetery lot is at the foot of the slope a short distance to the left as you enter the gate. It is a tall white marble stone with brown top and brown base." (71)

*
CHALK CREEK SCHOOL - About 1890-1895



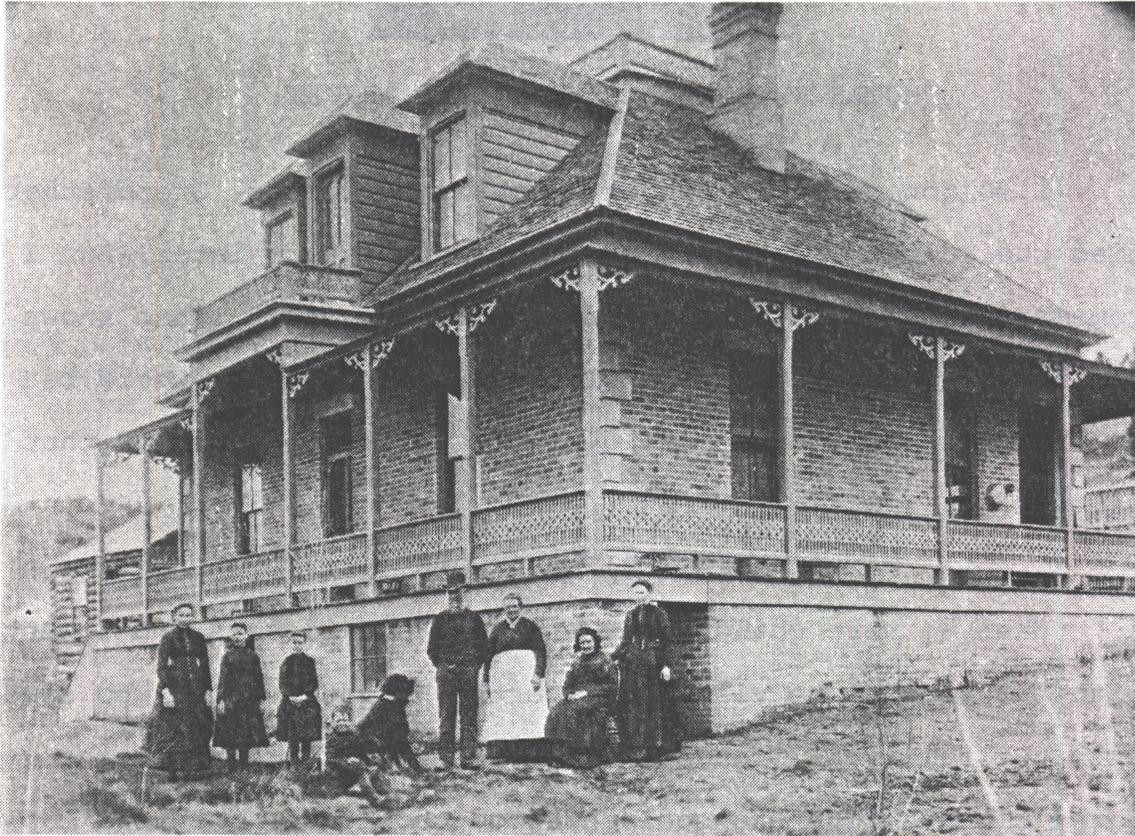
ANNIE LYDIA WRIGHT is fifth student in second row; her sister Mary is across the aisle right beside the girl in front of Annie; Louisa Ann Staples is across the aisle right beside the girl in front of Mary. STUDENTS in picture listed in this order by Aunt Annie: Margaret E. Sauley, Lillian Marshall, Edrick Clark, Mary E. Wright, Charles L. Frost, Ernest Frost, Rebecca Walton, Joseph Sauley, Merium Livsey, Eliza A. Hayes, Emma Pyrah, Mary Wilson, Susie Hartley, John Barton, Moroni Barton, Thomas Salmon, Mary E. Buchanan, Fanny S. Wilde, Jane Sauley, Caroline Gillott, Louisa Ann Staples, Amelia Wilson, Ann Gillott, James H. Wilde, Emily Wright, Emma Wilson, John Staples, Rachel Barton, Joseph Wilde, Thomas Parkinson, Gilbert Wilde, Archibald Buchanan, Silvester Wilde, Edith Wright, Sarah A. Reece, Annie Walton, Ada Wilson, Mary A. Bridge, Sarah H. Wilson, Emily Wilde, Ellen Lee and Annie L. Wright.

TEACHER: Frank Evans

* Picture supplied by William Carr Jones, son of Annie Lydia Wright Jones.

Chalk Creek School - About 1890 - 1895 (32)

THOMAS WRIGHT BRICK HOME BUILT IN 1884, COALVILLE, UTAH
ON THE SPRING HOLLOW ROAD
STILL STANDING 1971



In picture, looking out to the meadows, are, L. to R.:
Martha Marantha, Annie Lydia, Bertha Ann, John Alfred,
Grandfather Thomas, Grandmother Annie,
Great-grandmother Martha Rippon Wright, and Mary.

(Picture supplied by Juanita Staples Moore)

Old Brick House (54)



THOMAS WRIGHT 1830-1909
ANNIE DALE 1842-1911

Thomas and Annie Wright (50)

Family Life

Much of the foregoing gives a glimpse into life in the family of Thomas and Annie. For example, their children were raised on a ranch, lived in an environment in which they had provide their own entertainment, and began working at an early age. Also, Thomas greatly improved the family's standard of living as he worked to provide for them. Here are some some additional insights to the family life of Thomas.

"[His granddaughter Juanita Staples Moore wrote] `Mother said he was the rule and what he said was law. Sometimes Grandmother who was mild and gentle would try to tell him he was too harsh with the children but he never listened. One night Uncle John and Mother had gone out to a party and because they were not home by nine o'clock Grandfather locked the door and it was cold. Mother said her dress was frozen stiff, but Grandfather wouldn't let them in so they had to sleep in the horse barn. Mother heard Grandmother begging Grandfather to let them in the house, but he wouldn't.'" (92 [Juanita Staples Moore])

"[Granddaughter] Maggie Savage said she liked Grandfather very [much] because he was good to her and told her she was a good cook, as good as those in England!" (93 [Maggie Savage]) "[Granddaughter] Mary Jones Rigby said: `Grandfather was patient with his grandchildren. He often carefully explained to them the

dangers of playing certain games and cautioned them against doing things they had been warned not to do.” (93, 94, 95 [Mary Jones Rigby])

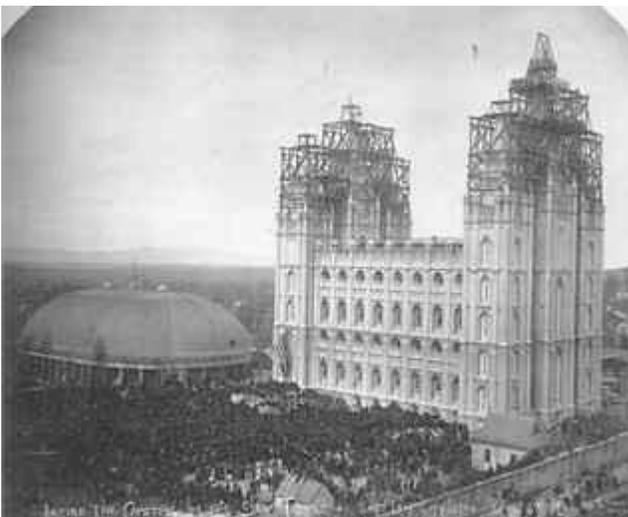
Religious Life

As noted above, Thomas, joined the LDS Church on March 19, 1849, and all members of his family joined the LDS Church in England. (47, 48, 65)

Thomas Wright paid tithes to the LDS Church as evidenced by tithing receipts from 1890 and 1906; he contributed to the construction of Church buildings as illustrated by receipts for donations to: the construction of the Summit Stake House in 1882, 1889, and 1891 (also known as the Great Coalville Tabernacle, which was later demolished in 1971 to the dismay and outrage of many in the community [27]); the construction of the Salt Lake Temple in 1892; and the Coalville East Ward building fund in 1906. He also made contributions to help emigrants come to Utah as evidenced by receipts from 1886 and 1887. (101 – 103). When he and his wife paid tithing, they did so “in potatoes, eggs, butter, chickens . . . and sometimes cash . . . “ (97)

His family participated in the Church in Coalville. ”[Granddaughter] Rhoda said: `Sometimes I would stay with Grandpa and Grandma, and Aunt Bertha would `fuss over me’ and take me to Sunday School with her. We would walk over to Cluff Ward meeting house which is still there, and sometimes Grandpa would go and give a prayer. ’” (96 [Rhoda Amelia Wright Gram]) His wife was active in the LDS Church and served as “Treasurer of the Relief Society for a long time.” (98, 107) “[His daughter Mary] taught Sunday School for six years and was President of the M.I.A. until [she] married and moved to Cache Valley.” (89 [Mary Wright Jones]) Mary wrote of the role of Sunday School and Primary in her young life: “There were no picture shows or entertainments. We had to make our own pleasures with work and play. When I went to Sunday School and Primary that was fine; but in the early part of my life we didn’t have them.” (87) Thomas Wright owned a large, leather-bound Bible. (57)

"[Thomas Wright and his first wife Lydia Kay, who died in 1865,] were sealed in the LDS Temple on June 27, 1870 . . . Thomas and Annie were sealed in the LDS Temple on June 27, 1870.” (65, 67, 68) Given that in 1870 there was no functioning LDS temple, presumably these ordinances were performed in the Endowment House in Salt Lake City.



Salt Lake City Temple under construction in 1892 (www.lightplanet.com)



Coalville Tabernacle (441)

Work and Community Life

As noted above, as a young man in England Thomas was coal miner and a farmer. When he arrived in the Utah he first found work on the construction of the transcontinental railroad during the fall of 1868 in Weber Canyon. Also mentioned above, Coalville was a farming and mining town. Thomas was involved in both industries.

“He was president of the irrigation company for many years in Coalville, and was very fair in his dealings with the many controversies over water. “ (94 [Mary Jones Rigby])

Coal was first discovered in Coalville in 1859, by 1861 two mines had been opened in Spring Hollow, and by 1867 there were seven mines in Coalville; the Wasatch mine, in Spring Hollow, was Coalville's largest mine. (25) “[Thomas Wright] was Superintendent of the Wasatch Coal Mine where about everyone in Coalville worked. It was said he ruled with an iron mind . . . [The] men at the mine called him ‘Old Tom’ at his back, he was so exacting and demanding to have things done his way . . . [One] time at the mine [Thomas] had an accident which gouged his abdomen seriously so that some of his intestine hung out, yet he refused help, held

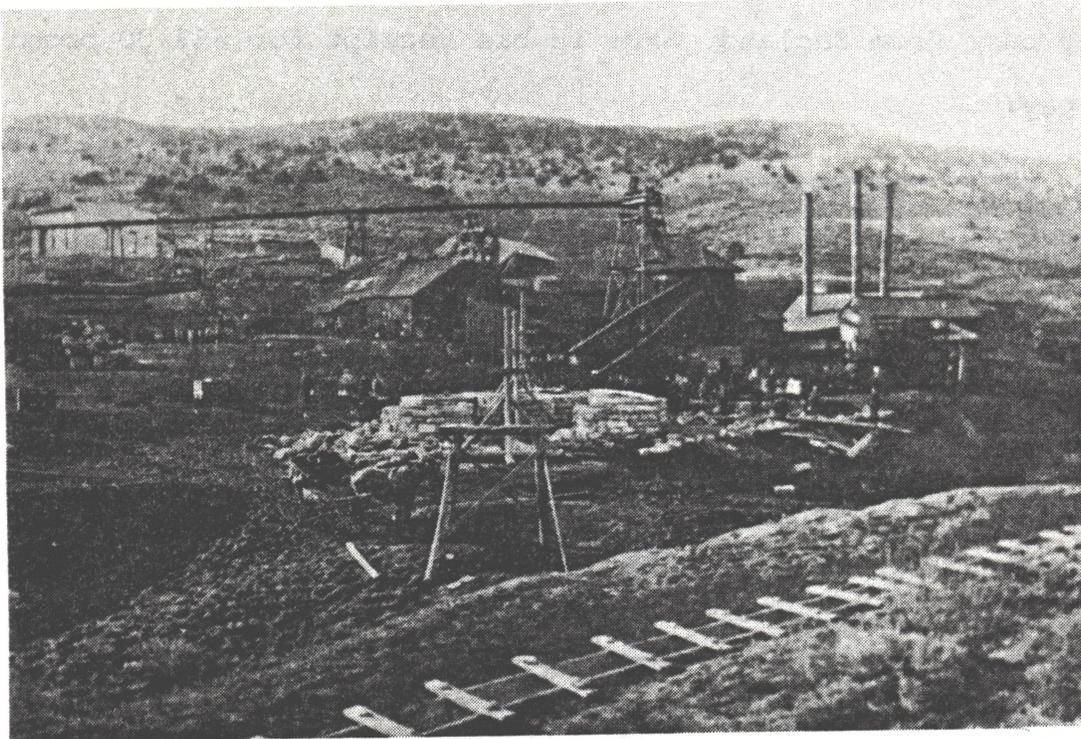
his abdomen with his hands and walked all the way home.” (90)

Presumably in Spring Hollow, he “developed a 663-acre farm, grew fruit trees, planted flowers, kept honey bees, cattle, horses, hogs, sheep, goats.” (96)

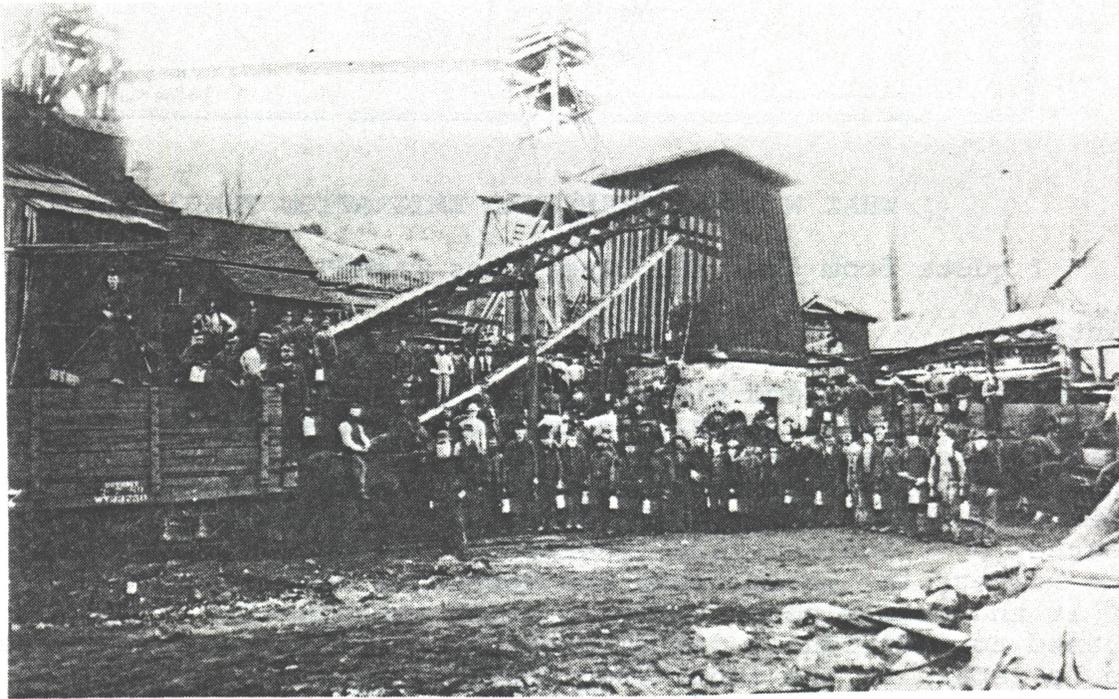
As noted above, Thomas contributed to the community by “[furnishing] the logs to build the first schoolhouse up Spring Hollow so [his children] wouldn't have to walk so far to school.” (88 [Mary Wright Jones])

In 1896 Thomas Wright played a role in the creation of what was to become a Wright family icon. Thomas, his brother Francis Henry and others bought the raw land for a ranch, which would later become the “Wright Brothers Ranch on Yellow Creek.” (18, 22) They paid \$750 for the property, which is 40 miles from Coalville. (23,24) “[The] original ranch property comprised approximately 244 acres on the Utah-Wyoming line, most of it in Wyoming, a little in Utah.” (22) “[Son Thomas Francis], who moved to the property in 1897 with his wife and first child,] operated the ranch from 1897 until his death in 1935 . . . “ (16, 22) “With but four months formal education, [Thomas Francis] went from blacksmithing, to coal mining, and silver mining to cattle ranching. He developed an 8000-acre cattle ranch and helped found the Stockgrowers Bank in Evanston, Wyoming, still operating [as of 1972 when TWOC was published.]” (13) Norma Jean wrote: “Almost everyone in the family mentions ‘the ranch’ in material submitted to me for this record. That is because almost everyone in the family visited or worked on the ranch while we were growing up. ‘The ranch’ identifies me and my family.” (18)

”[Granddaughter] Mary Jones Rigby wrote: ‘Mother said Grandpa did very well financially, but if he could have just collected the interest on money he lent and never got back, he would have been even better off . . . “ (93, 94, 95 [Mary Jones Rigby]) “When he died in 1909 his estate appraisal showed his cash at only \$1500, his land and improvements valued at \$6800. These material riches he left to his children.” (98)



WASATCH MINE - Coalville, Utah About 1890-1900
THOMAS WRIGHT, Superintendent



WASATCH MINE - Coalville, Utah
THOMAS WRIGHT, white beard in foreground.

Wasatch Coal Mine (77)

Additional Information On The Attributes and Personality of Thomas Wright

"He was not only the eldest of his brothers and sisters but apparently the figurehead who assumed with great courage full authority; he went right ahead in his way to get things done and required all those around him to do likewise. Many stories are told about him, revealing a man of firm thoughts and determination, a great sense of humor and love of beauty. He was also a tease . . . " (90)

Of Thomas being a tease, grandson Lawrence Emery Wright wrote: "When our Grandfather got older he didn't have much to do and didn't feel too well, and one day he came over to our place and Mother had bought a new table, supposed to be an expensive one. And he sat there and argued with Mother telling her the table wasn't level. I don't know whether he was teasing her or not, but they really argued about it." (91) Norma Jean writes of how she had seen this trait in his descendants. (91, 92 [Lawrence Emery Wright])

Some family members have written of his sense of humor. A niece, Rose Alene Eskelson, wrote: "Uncle Tom once said 'It's our Joe for religion, our Frank for business, our Bill for edification, but me for tintillect (intellect)!' " (90 [Rose Alene Eskelson]) Of this Norma Jean, daughter of son Thomas Francis, wrote: "I laughed aloud when I read this because it sounded so like my Father who had a fabulous vocabulary all his own which he used to amuse himself, and others, he hoped. He coined words and used them on unsuspecting listeners to see if they would take notice. For example, he would say UPendicular for perpendicular, and PENNSYLTucky for Pennsylvania-Kentucky. His sly use of words was probably [copied] from his [father]." (91) Grandson Lawrence gave his version of how Thomas described himself and his brothers: "Our Frank's the preacher, our Joe's the worker, our Will's the businessman, and I'm the overseer." (91 [Lawrence Emery Wright]) Frank was the youngest of the brothers, who served a mission to New Zealand and also served as bishop of the Coalville Ward. (377)

"[Granddaughter] Mary Jones Rigby said: 'He was a perfectionist and wanted everything in perfect order: his yards, farm land, his home . . . " (93, 94, 95)

Eulogy

Norma Jean wrote many words of praise about Thomas.

“Whatever Thomas Wright was like, he left footprints where he walked. To me, like all the others who came, he was a giant.” (96)

“Taxes he felt unfair were paid `under protest,' yet he donated generously to the building of the Salt Lake Temple, the Coalville Tabernacle and Coalville East Ward.” (97)

“[Material] riches he left to his children. His real riches he took with him: his powerful character and the good he had done in life. What we HAVE we leave to others. What we ARE we take with us.” (98)

“Thomas and Annie accomplished a lot with a little. Arriving in Coalville with only their trust in God and His Authority on this earth, courage, ability to work and pray, they gave more than forty productive years to America. They expanded their lives, instilled character in all their children, gave constant service to their fellowman, therefore to God. As commanded, with courageous patience they endured to the end. And as Elder J. Reuben Clark said in his 94th year, `To ensure to the end is no childish task.'” (108)
