

‘YN EU HIAITH EU HUNAIN’ / ‘IN THEIR OWN LANGUAGE’:
THE SETTLEMENT AND ASSIMILATION OF THE WELSH
IN IOWA COUNTY, WISCONSIN, 1840-1920

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ABSTRACT

Attracted by opportunities in lead mining and agriculture, the Welsh established a small but influential ethnic community in Iowa County, Wisconsin, in the mid-nineteenth century. However, it is a community that has so far escaped detailed historical study. This dissertation examines the settlement and assimilation of the Welsh between their arrival in the 1840s and the ethnic community's effective dissipation in the early twentieth century. As Calvinistic Protestants from Britain, they were culturally similar to native-born Americans and other British immigrants. More than any other factor, it was the Welsh language that distinguished them from their neighbours and compelled them to settle close to each other and worship in their own congregations. Therefore this dissertation not only traces the development of the Welsh ethnic community, but also examines the role of language in shaping this process as well as how the immigrants' perception of their native tongue changed. Although the Welsh went through a process of 'ethnicization' that reinforced their distinctive cultural identity, they also embraced mainstream American political and economic values. Indeed, the Welsh projected a public image of themselves as obedient citizens and were eager to assimilate. Rooted in beliefs they brought with them from Wales, these attitudes, as well as demographic change, contributed to the decline of Welsh linguistic and cultural identity in Iowa County in the early twentieth century.

Declaration

DECLARATION

This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.

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This dissertation is being submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of MA.

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Introduction

In 1895, William D. Davies, traveling agent for the American Welsh-language newspaper, *Y Drych*, published a volume of his recollections of visiting Welsh settlements throughout the United States. His Wisconsin itinerary included an excursion to Iowa County, in the southwestern part of the state. There Davies passed the village of Barneveld:

...wrth droed y Mynydd Glas, lle y mae sefydliad o Gymry llwyddianus o gwmpas, a'r gwahanol enwadau Cymreig yn addoli yn eu hiaith eu hunain.¹

...at the foot of the Blue Mound, where lies a settlement of successful Welsh people, and where the various Welsh denominations worship in their own language.

Traveling on the Chicago and Northwestern Railway, Davies's next stop was the county seat, Dodgeville:

...sydd yn ganolbwynt masnachol lled fawr o amaethwyr a mwynwyr plwm, ac yn dref lled Gymreigaidd, ac eglwysi gan y tri enwad Cymreig yn y wlad o gwmpas.²

...quite a large commercial centre for farmers and lead miners, and a town quite Welsh in character, with churches for the three Welsh denominations in the surrounding countryside.

Davies's journey continued to the Welsh community in the Pecatonica river valley in the far southwestern corner of the county, where he stayed overnight and visited acquaintances he had not seen for several years.³

Davies characterized the Welsh communities of Iowa County as economically successful and able to maintain their cultural identity through 'worship in their own language'.

¹ W. D. Davies. *America a Gweledigaethau Bywyd* (Merthyr Tydfil: Joseph Williams, 1895), p 236. Translations are my own unless noted otherwise. In quoting primary sources, I have maintained the original spelling.

² *ibid.*

³ *ibid.*

As Bill Jones has noted, ‘in most places in the United States where the Welsh settled in significant numbers, they earned recognition as a small, but distinctive and locally influential group.’⁴ The Welsh of Iowa County qualify as such a community, although they have only been mentioned briefly in surveys of Welsh immigration to the United States.⁵ The purpose of this dissertation is to examine the development of Welsh ethnic identity in Iowa County from around 1845, when the Welsh began to arrive in significant numbers, to the first few decades of the twentieth century, by which time the first generation had largely passed on and most of the Welsh churches had either disbanded or lost their distinctive Welsh character.

The process of assimilation has provided a focus for the few scholars who have examined the Welsh in the United States in depth, most notably, the studies by Anne Kelly Knowles of Welsh settlement in Ohio and eastern Wisconsin, and Bill Jones’s treatment of the Welsh community in Scranton, Pennsylvania. In addition, Ronald Lewis has examined the social and economic assimilation of Welsh coalminers in the United States.⁶ Each of these studies provides a comprehensive treatment of Welsh integration in a specific economic milieu. In southeastern Ohio, the Welsh came initially to farm, and were later instrumental in developing the region’s iron smelting industry. In Waukesha

⁴ W. D. Jones. ‘The Welsh Language and Welsh Identity in a Pennsylvanian Community’ in G. H. Jenkins, ed., *Language and Community in the Nineteenth Century* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1998), 262-286 (p. 262).

⁵ The Dodgeville and Pecatonica Welsh are discussed briefly in P. G. Davies. *Welsh in Wisconsin*. Second Edition. (Madison: Wisconsin Historical Society Press, 2006), pp. 40-41.

⁶ The works by A. K. Knowles are: *Calvinists Incorporated: Welsh Immigrants on Ohio’s Industrial Frontier* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997); ‘Religious Identity as Ethnic Identity: The Welsh in Waukesha County’ in R. C. Ostergren and T. R. Vale. *Wisconsin Land and Life*. (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1997) pp. 282-299; and *Welsh Settlement in Waukesha County, Wisconsin 1840-1873*. MS thesis, University of Wisconsin, Madison, 1989. For Pennsylvania, see W. D. Jones. *Wales in America: Scranton and the Welsh 1860-1920* (Cardiff and Scranton: University of Wales Press & University of Scranton Press, 1993). For a broader assessment of the Welsh in American coal mining, see R. Lewis. *Welsh Americans: A History of Assimilation in the Coalfields* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008).

County, Wisconsin, the Welsh became successful farmers. Pennsylvania's coalfields drew Welsh miners across the Atlantic in the thousands. In the case of the Ohio and Wisconsin Welsh, Knowles has described the assimilation process as a renegotiation of Calvinist values in the face of American capitalism. The prosperity the Welsh embraced ultimately weakened the cultural, religious and linguistic bonds that had defined their separate identity.⁷ For Jones, the Scranton Welsh maintained a strong sense of Welsh identity even as they became thoroughly integrated into the economic and political system. However, the community's Welshness weakened with the decline of the churches and their attendant institutions that fostered the language and culture.⁸ Lewis has argued that by nurturing a distinctive ethnic culture, the Welsh in the American coalfields 'prepared the way for assimilation on their own terms'.⁹

Most recently, Cherilyn Walley has taken a highly statistical approach to the Welsh in the state of Iowa, revealing a small and thinly spread population of farmers and miners who assimilated rapidly into American society.¹⁰ Walley's interpretation of this process is based on the work of Elliott Barkan, who has defined assimilation as:

... the point at which individual members of ethnic groups have shed the cultural, linguistic, behavioral, and identificational characteristics of their original group as well as disengaged from the associational, or structural, activities that have set them apart from others"¹¹

Barkan's emphasis on the individual elevates the narrative of assimilation from a simplistic discussion of group identity to a complex, multi-step process. While an ethnic group may appear to have reached a specific step based on the behaviour of the majority

⁷ A. K. Knowles, *Calvinists Incorporated*, p. 243.

⁸ W. D. Jones, *Wales in America*, pp. 106-107.

⁹ R. L. Lewis, *Welsh Americans*, p. 154.

¹⁰ C. Walley, *The Welsh in Iowa* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2009).

¹¹ E. Barkan, 'Race, Religion, and Nationality in American Society: A Model of Ethnicity: From Contact to Assimilation.' *Journal of American Ethnic History*, Vol. 14, No. 2 (Winter, 1995), 38-101; (p. 47).

of its members, within a community or even a family, individuals may be at different stages. In this study, Barkan's own 'six-stage' model of assimilation¹² has been collapsed into three that correlate to the development and dissipation of the Welsh communities under scrutiny:

- 1) Arrival describes the process of emigration, contact and acculturation. This section focuses on the factors that drew the Welsh to Iowa County, the paths they took to get there, and the development of institutions, secular and religious, that reinforced an ethnic identity.
- 2) Adaptation describes the increasing participation of the Welsh in American economic and political life. This section will concentrate first on the Welsh as farmers and business owners, and will follow with Welsh-Americans' engagement with the state and political activities.
- 3) Integration describes the rapid decline of Welsh identity in the first decades of the twentieth century, as a function of demographic change and cultural choice.

Although this dissertation follows a roughly chronological path, it acknowledges that individuals within the Welsh community would have found themselves at different stages of the assimilation process. Furthermore, it takes into account the unique and privileged position of the Welsh compared to other immigrant groups in the nineteenth-century Midwest.

¹² *ibid.*, pp. 51-60.

Mid-nineteenth century white Americans defined themselves as Anglo-Saxons and drew sharp contrasts between themselves and German, Scandinavian, and most notably Irish immigrants.¹³ At a time when European immigrants—Catholics in particular—were viewed with suspicion by some native-born Americans,¹⁴ the Welsh were fortunate not to be possessed of exotic folkways. The theology of Welsh Baptists, Independents and Calvinistic Methodists corresponded directly to that of American Baptists, Congregationalists and Presbyterians. As immigrants from Britain, the basic foundations of American political and economic life would have been familiar to them, even if the republic provided greater opportunity for democratic expression and prosperity.¹⁵ Indeed, the Welsh were as close as one could come to the American mainstream while remaining separated from it by language.

As industrious Protestants, the Welsh were respectable ‘Anglo-Saxons’ to native-born Americans. However, they lived at a distance from the host culture. In Anne Kelly Knowles’s words, the Welsh created ‘self-regulating’ communities. Americans tolerated their ‘clannishness’ as long as the Welsh ‘kept their noses clean’.¹⁶ This study posits that their language, more than any other factor, reified this distinction.

Therefore, while this dissertation examines the process of integration the Welsh followed into American society, it simultaneously considers the role of their language in directing this process. During this period, most Welsh people were Welsh-speaking,

¹³ M. F. Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race*. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1998), pp. 39-90.

¹⁴ The terms ‘native American’ or ‘native-born American’ here refer to nineteenth-century white Americans descended from colonial British settlers, sometimes called ‘old stock’ Americans, or if from New England, ‘Yankees.’ They should not be confused with ‘Native American’ meaning the indigenous people or ‘Indians.’

¹⁵ R. T. Berthoff, *British Immigrants in Industrial America, 1790-1950*. (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1953), pp. 127-128.

¹⁶ A. K. Knowles, ‘Religious Identity as Ethnic Identity,’ p. 291.

although many were also bilingual or had some knowledge of English. Furthermore, many Welsh speakers internalized the pernicious belief that their native language was to be confined to chapel and home. English was the language of science, industry, politics and economic success.¹⁷ Inspired to emigrate by hopes of a higher standard of living, the Welsh in the United States maintained this mindset, to the disappointment of nationalistic observers such as Michael D. Jones, who saw the language as essential to Welsh identity.¹⁸

Although this dissertation draws predominantly from Welsh-language sources created by the immigrants themselves, their letters, diaries and articles in English comprise another body of source material. Many Welsh-born citizens of Iowa County ultimately chose to use the dominant language of their adopted country. Even as they worshiped in Welsh, full participation in their new country's rapidly developing economy and broadening democracy required English. Indeed, the Welsh enthusiastically supported the 'Americanization' of other immigrants during the 1880s and 1890s, when religious and ethnic distinctions defined electoral politics.

Nevertheless, Welsh ethnic identity was complex and attitudes to language, culture and assimilation often contradictory. The Welsh-born citizens of southwestern Wisconsin continued to identify strongly with their ethnicity while embracing American citizenship. One outspoken Welshman, D. D. Evans, complained in 1881 that his countrymen had been unjustly ignored in the recently published *History of Iowa County*, and issued the following call to arms in the *Dodgeville Chronicle*. The clumsy spelling

¹⁷ I. G. Jones. *Mid-Victorian Wales: the Observers and the Observed*. (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1992), p. 69.

¹⁸ R. O. Jones. 'The Welsh Language in Patagonia' in G. Jenkins, ed., *Language and Community in the Nineteenth Century* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1998), 287-316 (p. 291).

suggests Evans may have submitted a handwritten note to a typesetter unfamiliar with the language:

Gwranddo Gymro.

Gan nad yw hanes y sir, gan y sais wedi gwneyd cyfiawnder a'r Cymru, yr wyf a'r gais llawer o gyfeillion wedi penderfynu dyfod allan ac hanes Cymra, Iowa county, mewn llyfryn; felly diolchais i'r hen ardylyddion i anfon i nu pob rhyw hanasion a ddylsai fod mewn cof mor fuan ac gallant.

WISCONSIN EAGLE¹⁹

Listen Welshman.

Because the history of the county written by the Englishman (i.e. English speaker) did not do justice to the Welsh, at the request of many friends I have decided to come out with a history of the Welsh in Iowa County, in a pamphlet; therefore I would be grateful if the older residents of the district would send us any stories that ought to be remembered as soon as they can.

WISCONSIN EAGLE

No such pamphlet, if published, appears to have survived. Although the avian avenger would probably be disappointed with anything but an effusive portrait of his neighbours and compatriots, it is hoped that the following pages will go some way towards correcting this perceived injustice.

¹⁹ *Dodgeville Chronicle*, 22 April, 1881.

Part One: Arrival

1.1 Land and Lead

Iowa County (Fig. 1) lies in the southwestern part of the American state of Wisconsin. This administrative unit of approximately 760 square miles is the focus of this study of nineteenth-century Welsh immigration and assimilation in the American Midwest. Along with neighbouring Grant and Lafayette counties, Iowa County comprises the Wisconsin Lead Region, one of the earliest parts of the state to attract permanent Euro-American settlement, beginning in the 1820s. Initially, the area's lead deposits drew native-born Americans from the southern United States, including Kentucky, Missouri and Tennessee. By the mid-1830s the region had also attracted a sizeable number of skilled hard-rock miners from Cornwall. The defeat of the Sauk leader Black Hawk in 1832 effectively ended the presence of the region's original inhabitants and opened up land to more extensive settlement. The Lead Region initially hosted the government of the Wisconsin Territory, and villages coalesced at Mineral Point and Dodgeville. Iowa County as an administrative unit was established in 1829, although its current boundaries were not set until 1847, a year before Wisconsin acquired statehood.²⁰

While lead mining was an incentive to immigration, the agricultural economy it supported also attracted newcomers, and between 1840 and 1850, the population of Iowa County increased dramatically from 3,978 to 9,525, of which 47% were foreign-born.²¹

²⁰ M. P. Conzen, 'The European Settling and Transformation of the Upper Mississippi Valley Lead Region' in R. C. Ostergren and T. R. Vale. *Wisconsin Land and Life*. (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1997), 163-196 (pp. 167-175). Also, R. C. Ostergren. 'The Euro-American Settlement of Wisconsin, 1830-1920.' *Wisconsin Land and Life*, 137-162 (pp. 139-140, 151-154).

²¹ A. E. Smith. *The History of Wisconsin, Vol. I: From Exploration to Statehood*. (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1985), pp. 468-469.

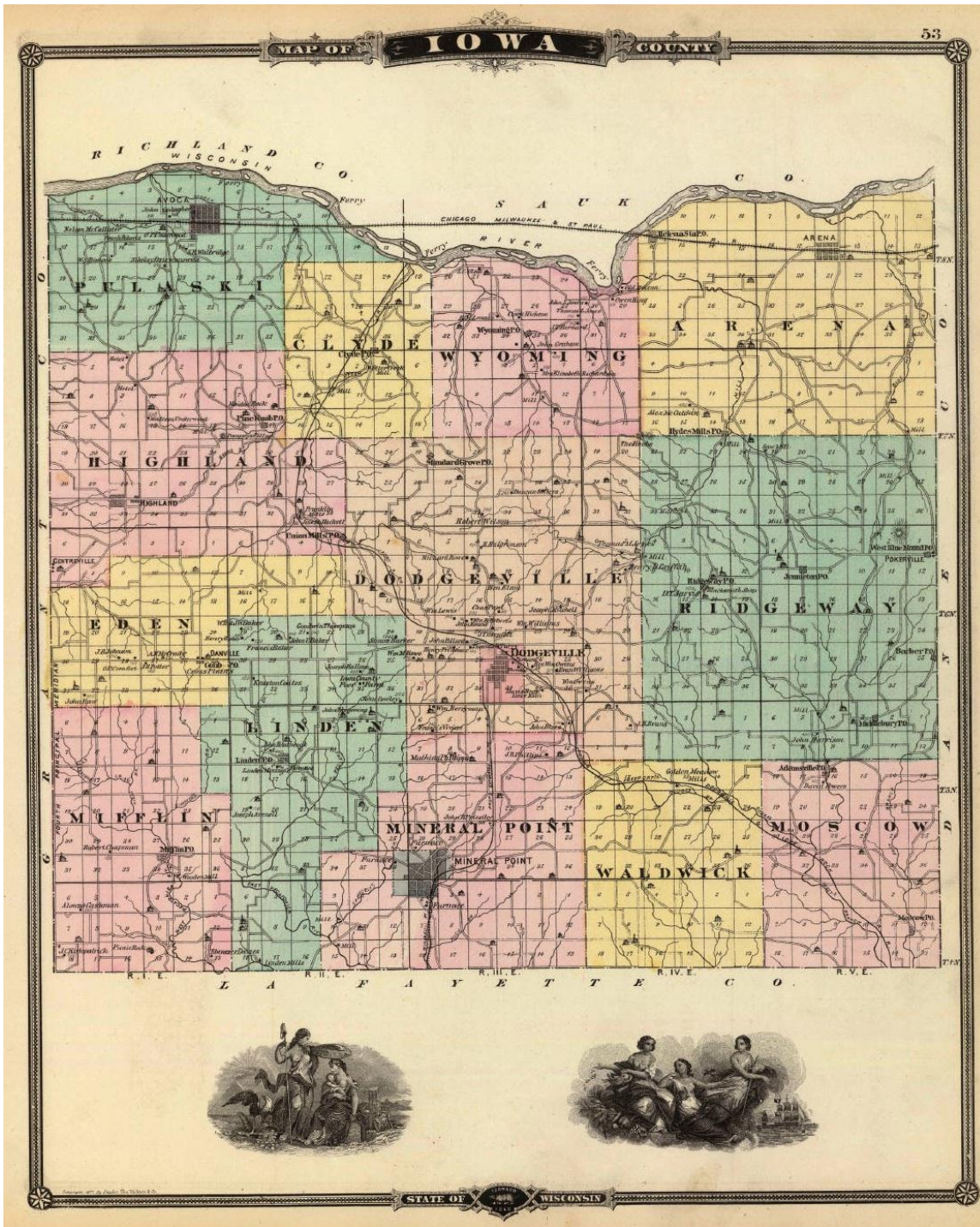


Fig. 1: Map of Iowa County, Wisconsin, 1877, showing the civil towns into which the county was divided. (Milwaukee: Snyder, Van Vechten & Co., 1878). (Digital image from David Rumsey Map Collection. © 2000 by Cartography Associates, used under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 2.0 License: <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/2.0/>)

Although a few Welsh arrived in the region in the 1830s, they did not come in significant numbers until the mid 1840s, incidentally just as the region's lead production peaked and then began to decline.²² The period under examination in this dissertation begins with this influx of Welsh immigrants.

The impetus for emigration from Wales can briefly be summarized as a combination of population growth and a desire for a higher standard of living. Outside of the great landowners, the gentry and a small middle class of wealthier farmers and industrialists, the majority of the Welsh population was poor and agrarian.²³ Freeholders lost much of their income to taxes and the church tithe, resented by Nonconformists. Tenants were caught in a constant struggle to pay rent and were unable to support themselves entirely from the land they cultivated.²⁴

The industrial centres of south Wales attracted seasonal and permanent migrants from the rural west, which helps explain why the Welsh emigrated in smaller numbers than the Irish, with whom many shared similar levels of economic deprivation.²⁵ However, even in rural districts many a tenant farmer might also be a miner or quarryman in order to supplement the meagre earnings of his labour in the fields.²⁶

For the land hungry, one alternative was emigration, and the 1840s marked a wave of Welsh emigration to the United States, precipitated in part by the price collapse in the agricultural market in 1842-1843.²⁷ As Anne Kelly Knowles has demonstrated, the reasons for emigration were often localized and deeply personal. Furthermore, even

²² *ibid.*, pp. 490-491.

²³ D. J. V. Jones, *Rebecca's Children: A Study of Rural Society, Crime and Protest* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), pp. 29, 99-100.

²⁴ *ibid.*, p. 49.

²⁵ W. E. Van Vugt, *Britain to America: Mid-Nineteenth-Century Immigrants to the United States* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1999), p. 99.

²⁶ D. J. V. Jones, *Rebecca's Children*, p. 16.

²⁷ *ibid.*, pp. 44, 143.

though poverty drove migration, emigration required some financial resources and those who crossed the Atlantic were often the better off members of the peasant class.²⁸

1.2 ‘Eden of the West’

The 1845 booklet *Desgrifiad o Dirioagaeth Wisconsin* represented one effort to draw the Welsh into an emigration scheme by the British Temperance Emigration Society.²⁹ Founded in Liverpool in 1842, the society enrolled poor English workers in a plan to purchase land in the Wisconsin Territory. Among its alcohol-free colonies was the short-lived village of Dover, located in the northeastern corner of Iowa County. The Welsh booklet is a translation from an English original, containing information about Wisconsin’s climate and agricultural potential, as well as testimonials from English settlers in the southeastern part of the territory. Also included are excerpts from geologist David Dale Owen’s report to the United States Congress regarding the growth of lead production. It may be impossible to know whether this particular piece of promotional literature inspired Welsh emigration to Wisconsin. Nevertheless, it is clear that information about the territory was circulating in Wales and elicited a response. In 1846, *The Chieftain* left Bangor with 200 emigrants bound for Wisconsin, mainly from Caernarfonshire and Anglesey.³⁰

However, more than any utopian scheme, the most powerful force in encouraging Welsh immigrants to settle in Wisconsin was the endorsement of ordinary settlers who wrote —or went back — to Wales or other Welsh settlements in the United States to inform relatives about the economic opportunities available and encourage them to join

²⁸ A. K. Knowles, *Calvinists Incorporated*, pp. 20-21.

²⁹ D. Lloyd (trans.) *Desgrifiad o Dirioagaeth Wisconsin* (Bangor: Robert Jones, 1845).

³⁰ *North Wales Chronicle*, 11 August, 1846.

the emigration to the west. J. Edno Roberts, a Welsh-born resident of Oshkosh, in the central part of the state, recalled that in the 1840s and 1850s:

Yr oedd yn amser gwan yn Nghymru y blynyddoedd hynny ac yr oedd llawer o lythyrau canmolaethus yn dod o'r America ac yn arbenig o ddyffryn mawr y Mississippi fel y gelwid y darnau o'r dalaeth boblogwyd gan Gymry y pryd hwnw. Cofiwyf yn dda fel y byddai hen gymeriadau doniol yn son am, a chanmol "Dyffryn yr Afon Fawr," dyna y rheswm goreu yn ol fy mam fach i, sef llythyrau canmoliaethus y rhai ddaethant yma gyntaf.³¹

It was a hard time in Wales in those years and many enthusiastic letters came from America, especially from the great Mississippi valley as the area of the state populated by the Welsh was then known. I remember well how some funny old characters would praise the "Valley of the Great River." This was the main reason [why the Welsh came to Wisconsin] according to my dear mother, namely the positive letters from those who came here first.

According to Sarah James Jones, a native of southwestern Iowa County, one of Edno Roberts's 'characters' inspired her parents to leave Wales. Her account implies that this promoter of emigration was less than honest about conditions on the Midwestern frontier:

... a man (Peter Morris from Dodgeville) went back to Wales and told about the wonders of America. This man may have made this a business—getting people to come over from Wales. He told them they did not need to bring anything with them because everything could be purchased for very little. Because of this Mother left almost all of her lovely shawls and clothes in Wales. She felt badly about this after coming to America.³²

News about the 'wonders of America' swept through Cardiganshire in 1842 in the form of letters and articles published in the Welsh-language press, and played a role in bringing settlers to Waukesha County in southeastern Wisconsin.³³ This 'Prairieville propaganda' continued with accounts of Welsh settlement further west, including in the

³¹ Wisconsin Historical Society (WHS), Madison. WHS File 1909 December 8. Phillips, Laura J., Letters, 1909-1910. J. Edno Roberts to Howell D. Davies, 21 March, 1910.

³² Iowa County Historical Society (ICHS). R. Davies, 'The Welsh Element in Iowa County.' Unpublished manuscript reminiscences gathered in 1945, recompiled in 1976, p. 4.

³³ W. E. Van Vugt, *Britain to America*, p. 105.

Lead Region. In 1845, *Y Diwygiwr* published a letter from Thomas Evans, formerly of Llanelli, to his father, because, in the editor's words, 'chan fod cymmaint o swm yn nawr am yr America'³⁴ (*there is so much noise right now about America*). Evans was eager to point out the popularity of Dodgeville as a destination:

Mae llawer o'r Cymry yn dyfod i'r lle hwn yn barhaus o bob parthau o'r States, ac yr wyf wedi clywed i fod llaweroedd yn bwriadu mudo y Gwanwyn nesaf o Ogleddbarth Cymru, oll yn meddwl sefydlu yn y Winsconsin [sic]. Fe fyddai yn dda iawn genyf pe byddech chwithau yn dyfod yma ...³⁵

Many Welsh people are coming here continuously from all over the States, and I have heard that many intend to emigrate from North Wales next spring, all thinking of settling in Wisconsin. I would be pleased if you too came here ...

Iowa County offered settlers more than one means to prosperity. Those with origins in the countryside who had migrated to industrial districts may well have appreciated this variety of opportunity (Fig. 2). As another correspondent from Dodgeville wrote in 1853:

Y maent yn codi y mŵn hwnw yn y cylchoedd hyn i gyd am 15 neu 20 milltir, yr ochr ddwyreiniol i Dodgeville. Y mae llaweroedd o Gymry yn y cwmpasoedd hyn, y nifer fwyaf yn fwnwyr, ac yn meddu tŷ a gardd, a gallant gadw a fynont o wartheg,—mae yr holl dir yn gommon llawn o borfa.³⁶

They mine the ore all around this area for 15 or 20 miles to the east of Dodgeville. There are many Welsh here, most of them miners, who own houses and gardens, and can keep cattle if they wish—all the land is a common pasture.

In the 1840s, the lead-mining industry in Wales was plagued with low productivity and low prices.³⁷ A lead miner in Wales around 1840 might be

³⁴ *Y Diwygiwr*, March 1845, p. 77.

³⁵ *ibid.*, p. 78.

³⁶ *Y Cenhadwr Americanaidd*, September 1853, p. 347.

³⁷ W. J. Lewis, *Lead Mining in Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967), pp. 215-221.



Fig. 2. Mary Jones, shown here, and her husband, Morgan Jeffries Jones, were among the early Welsh settlers in Dodgeville. Before coming to Wisconsin, the couple had spent time in both agricultural and industrial districts in Wales. Mary was born in Aberdare, Glamorgan, and Morgan hailed from Myddfai, Carmarthenshire. (Image and genealogical information courtesy of the Iowa County Historical Society).

fortunate to earn about 15 shillings a week.³⁸ In Wisconsin, one English miner claimed to have earned the equivalent of 25 shillings a day.³⁹

The opportunity to be self-employed by buying mineral rights from the government, as well as owning or investing in a mine may have been more significant than higher wages in drawing lead miners from Cornwall and Yorkshire to southwestern Wisconsin.⁴⁰ This may also have been true for the Welsh, although few of those who ended up as lead miners in Wisconsin appear to have started out as such in Wales. From what little information we have, there does not appear to have been a significant migration of miners from the lead-bearing districts of Wales as there was from Cornwall.

Among the Welsh who came to Iowa County, lifelong miners seeking to continue in their occupation therefore may have been the exception rather than the rule. Robert C. Owens, a native of Holywell, Flintshire, came directly to Dodgeville in 1849 to mine lead, as he had done in Wales. Briefly lured to California by the gold rush in the early 1850s, he returned to Wisconsin with little to show for his effort. Although he became well known as a Baptist minister, poet and correspondent for various Welsh-language periodicals, he continued to work underground near Dodgeville until a few years before his death in 1879.⁴¹

Other miners took advantage of a wider variety of opportunities. Monmouthshire native Evan Williams, who arrived in Pennsylvania in 1841, mined coal in Kentucky, Missouri and Illinois, and prospected for gold in California before purchasing 80 acres in Dodgeville in 1856. He continued to mine and farm this land for at least the next twenty-

³⁸ *ibid.*, p. 269.

³⁹ W. E. Van Vugt, *Britain to America*, p. 88.

⁴⁰ *ibid.*, pp. 87-88

⁴¹ *Dodgeville Chronicle*, 12 December, 1879; *Y Wawr*, April 1880, pp. 33-35.

five years, annually extracting 150 tons of zinc and lead in the 1870s. Above ground, he ‘erected a large and pleasant residence, and built around it a small village of barns’.⁴² Similarly, Caernarvonshire-born Robert Williams mined lead from his arrival in Dodgeville in 1844 until 1849, when he purchased 240 acres of land from the federal government and began farming. He was noted for his ‘roomy farm house and substantial barns,’ as well as the ‘model stone granary’ he erected to commemorate his adopted country’s centennial in 1876.⁴³

By 1850, agriculture had taken the place of mining as the main occupation in the lead region.⁴⁴ However, census records from that year show that most of the Welsh-born men in and around Dodgeville were still working the diggings. Of the 107 whose occupations were noted in the 1850 census, 63 were listed as miners, 19 as farmers and two as merchants. The remainder comprised a blacksmith, a jeweler, a minister, a shoe maker, a tavern keeper and a wagon maker.⁴⁵ Lead prices could be volatile, but an increase implied better times for all engaged in the frontier economy:

Mae y mŵn gwedi codi o 13 i 19 dolar y fil, ac y mae hyny yn gyffroad mawr trwy’r wlad; ac ni chymmer mo’r mŵnwyr ddim ond aur neu arian am dano, a hyny cyn symud y mŵn oddiwrth y gwaith. Mae y tyddynwyr yn dyfod â’u nwyfau i’r trefydd a’r pentrefydd, i’w gwerthu yn y marchnadoedd i’r mŵnwyr, ac yn gael pris da am yr anifeiliaid, y llafur, y caws, a’r ymenyn.⁴⁶

*The mineral has risen from thirteen to nineteen dollars a thousand and this has caused a great stir throughout the country and the miners will accept nothing but gold or silver for the mineral. The smallholder brings his produce to the market to sell to the miner and gets a good price for his animals, corn, cheese and butter.*⁴⁷

⁴² *History of Iowa County, Wisconsin* (Chicago: Western Historical Company, 1881), p. 904.

⁴³ *ibid.*,

⁴⁴ M. P. Conzen, ‘Upper Mississippi Valley Lead Region’ p. 177.

⁴⁵ Federal manuscript census, 1850.

⁴⁶ *Y Diwygiwr*, March 1845, p. 77.

⁴⁷ This section of the letter translated in A. Conway, *The Welsh in America: Letters from the Immigrants* (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1961), pp. 100-101.

In Wales, lead miners were often forced by low wages to supplement their income with farming.⁴⁸ In the Wisconsin lead region, the high cost of food made small-scale farming on the side profitable, and ultimately an end in itself.⁴⁹

While some Welsh correspondents recognized the mineral wealth buried underneath Iowa County's 'firm land,' others focused on the soil itself. Thomas Evans was enthusiastic in promoting the agricultural advantages of Wisconsin:

... pa un sydd yn rhagori ar yr holl Daleithiau a'r Canadas... Mae yn wlad iachus, ac ynnddi ddyfroedd rhagorol, y *prairies* yn aml, a digon o dir caled, fel y galloch gael eich dewis, heb ddim gwaith tori'r coedydd mawrion fel yn y taleithiau ereill; ac y mae yma ddigon o bigion tir am 5s. yr erw...⁵⁰

*...which is superior to all the states and the Canadas. It is a healthy country with wonderful water, prairies and plenty of firm land so you can take your choice. There is no work to be done cutting down large trees like in the other states, and there is plenty of land costing five shillings an acre...*⁵¹

Land ownership would naturally have been an attractive prospect to tenant farmers in Wales, and enthusiastic correspondents were keen to point out the natural attributes of the landscape that lent it to agriculture, as well as the low cost and ease of purchase. Evans observed that it was possible to 'squat' on the land for a year without payment, and that 'y mae yma lawer yn byw ar ffermydd er ys pedair blynedd, heb dalu ceiniog'⁵² (*had lived in farms for four years for four years without paying a penny*).

Another Dodgeville settler, David Jones, wrote to *Y Cenhadwr Americanaidd* in 1847, encouraging relatives in Palmyra, New York, to take advantage of the inexpensive government land:

⁴⁸ W. J. Lewis, *Lead Mining in Wales*, pp. 275-276.

⁴⁹ M. Walsh. *The Manufacturing Frontier: Pioneer Industry in Antebellum Wisconsin, 1830-1860* (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1972), pp. 71-72, 81.

⁵⁰ *Y Diwygiwr*, March 1845, p. 77.

⁵¹ Conway translation.

⁵² *Y Diwygiwr*, March 1845, p. 77.

Mae digon o dir llywodraeth i'w gael yma—tir coed, a thir heb ddim coed arno. Mae yma rai cymry yn ffarmio, a rhai yn codi mwn plwm. Cyfeiriaf y sylwadau hyn yn neillduol at rai o'm hen anwyl frodyr yn Palmyra. Carwn yn fawr fod o les iddynt, pe gallwn ond gwneud lles hefyd; a charwn fod yn eu plith, ond nis gallaf oddieithr iddynt ddyfod i'r "West" er lles eu plant, i gael mwy o dir a chartref helaethach iddynt.⁵³

There is plenty of government land available here—wooded land and land without wood. Here some of the Welsh are farming and some are mining lead. I direct these comments especially to my dear brothers in Palmyra. I would love to be of some benefit to them if only I could; and I would love to be with them, but I cannot unless they come to the 'West' for the benefit of their children, to acquire more land and a bigger home.

In a letter published in the Welsh-American newspaper, *Y Seren Orllewinol*, J. P. Harris praised the region's natural fertility. Speaking directly to his countrymen in Pennsylvania, he peppered his Welsh prose with English words that described features specific to the American landscape:

Nid ydwyf wedi gweled nemawr ddim tir tlawd yn yr holl dalaeth. Pa un bynag ai prairie, ai oak openings ai bottom land, mae'r soil yn dda, a chynhyrcha grop toreithiog iawn. Parth lliw'r soil, y mae yn ddu, a thra ddwfn, tir heb angen gwrtaith yn y ffordd o achles am hir flynyddau yw...mae'r prairie yn annysgrifiadwy braidd : y drychfeddwl mwyaf trawiadol yw tonau y mor ar ol ystorom...⁵⁴

I have never seen any poor land in the whole state. Whether prairie, oak openings or bottom land, the soil is good and produces an abundant crop. As for the colour of the soil, it is black and quite deep, and the land does not need to be fertilized with manure for many years...the prairie is almost indescribable: the most striking image that comes to mind is the waves of the sea after a storm....

To his credit, Harris also stressed the challenges facing potential settlers, and cautioned readers to consider the move carefully. Summer was short and winter was long in 'Eden y Gorllewin' (*the Eden of the West*), and farmers had to be industrious whenever

⁵³ *Y Cenhadwr Americanaidd*, June 1847, p. 179.

⁵⁴ *Y Seren Orllewinol*, April 1851, p. 90.

the sun appeared to be ready for the winter.⁵⁵ Nevertheless, he remained confident that determined settlers would be successful:

Dir yw y bydd y wlad hon, yn un o'r rhai cyfoethocaf yn yr Amerig cyn hir. Mae ymfudwyr lawer yn ymarllwys iddi yn feunyddiol. Os penderfynu dod yma, dod a'r teulu yr un amser yw y goreu. Mae'r draul yn fawr a'r ffordd yn faith. Ni chynghorwn neb i symud yma heb eu bod yn benderfynol ei hymladd allan drwy'r tew a'r teneu. Y mae yma rhai a ewyllysient fod yn ol yn Mhensylvania...⁵⁶

This country will surely be one of the richest in America before long. Many immigrants are pouring in daily. If you decide to come here, it is best to bring the family at the same time. The cost is great and the road is long. I would not counsel anyone to move here unless they are determined to fight on through thick and thin. There are some here who wish they were back in Pennsylvania...

Nevertheless, as 'Edno' recalled, 'Yr oedd y tir hefyd yn prinhaus yn hen dalaethau New York ac Ohio yn gystal a gogledd Pa'.⁵⁷ (*land was becoming scarce in the old states of New York and Ohio as well as northern Pennsylvania*). The prospect of settling on one's own land was still a powerful incentive to those willing to tough it out. Furthermore, expected economic growth and infrastructure development made Wisconsin a profitable investment for those with the means to make it their home:

... mae pob tebyg y bydd i'r cyfleusderau presenol fwyhau yn fawr yn eu telerau ...gyda y sicrywdd, sydd o gael y cledr-ffordd i redeg heibio iddynt. Yn awr, gan hyny, yw yr amser mwyaf priodol i ddynion a feddiannant o \$500 i \$1000 ar ol cyrhaedd yno, i gael gafael ar gartref cysurus i dreulio eu hoes yn y byd.⁵⁸

... it is likely that the present opportunities will increase greatly...with the assurance of having the railroad running past. Because of this, now is the best time for men arriving here with \$500 to \$1000 dollars to get hold of a comfortable home for the rest of their lives.

⁵⁵ *ibid.*, p. 91

⁵⁶ *ibid.*

⁵⁷ WHS 'Laura Phillips letters', J. Edno Roberts to Howell D. Davies.

⁵⁸ *Y Cenhadwr Americanaidd*, September 1853, p. 348.

By 1858, Iowa County was connected by rail to markets in Chicago and Milwaukee, as well as to the Mississippi River.⁵⁹ It goes without saying that improvements in transportation contributed to the influx of immigrants. ‘Edno’ attributed the arrival of the Welsh in Wisconsin to the opening of the Erie Canal from Albany to Buffalo, creating a short cut across New York State to the Great Lakes: ‘[a’r] agerfadau ar y llynoedd yn cludo eu miloedd bob haf i Green Bay a manau eraill’⁶⁰ (*The steamboats on the lakes carried thousands to Green Bay and other places every summer*).

Those who came to Iowa County arrived in an area that had been partially settled since the 1820s. Plenty of land remained for the taking, but some of the most attractive areas had already been claimed. The second generation of Welsh settlers in Iowa County often attributed their parents’ attraction to the area to its resemblance to the landscape of their native country. Hugh Davies claimed that his parents ‘settled here because they wanted water and wood, and it looked like the country they had left in Wales’.⁶¹ Sarah James Jones also stated that her parents ‘wanted to be near springs, rivers, hills and valleys, as they had in Wales’.⁶² Indeed, Thomas Evans told his father that the landscape resembled that of the Towy and Teifi valleys in Wales.⁶³ However, it is perhaps more realistic to consider that some of the Welsh were left with cheaper, hillier land that had not already been settled by others, as was the case in other rural areas.⁶⁴ This may explain the presence of many Welsh in the partially wooded valleys northeast of Dodgeville,

⁵⁹ R. N. Current. *The History of Wisconsin, Vol. II: The Civil War Era, 1848-1873* (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1976), pp. 31-35.

⁶⁰ WHS ‘Laura Phillips letters’, J. Edno Roberts to Howell D. Davies.

⁶¹ ICHS, ‘Welsh Element’, p. 2.

⁶² ICHS, ‘Welsh Element’, p. 4.

⁶³ *Y Diwygiwr*, March 1845, p. 77.

⁶⁴ A. K. Knowles, *Calvinists Incorporated*, p. 30.

known as ‘Ardal y Coed’ in the Welsh-language press, and in the similar terrain of the Pecatonica river valley in the southwestern corner of the county (Fig. 4).

1.3 The Welsh at Pecatonica

One of the most detailed accounts of the arrival of the Welsh in Iowa County can be found in *Cofiant y Parchedig John Davies, Picatonica*, the biography of a popular minister (Fig. 2). The Davies family was among the first Welsh families to settle in Pecatonica. Before leaving Wales, the family lived at Bron Fedw near Hermon, Pembrokeshire, where the senior John Davies worked at the Glogue Slate Quarry (Chwarel y Glôg). They attended the Calvinistic Methodist Chapel at Bwlchgyroes, some distance from their home. The family emigrated to the United States in 1839, with the younger John, his sister, Mary, and her husband, Jonathan Davies, crossing first, their parents and other siblings following a few months later. Within the first two years they had lived in Pottsville and Blossburgh, Pennsylvania, before settling for three years at Slate Hill in the same state, where the younger John took up work in a quarry.⁶⁵

The Davies family, however, was set on ‘ymfudo i’r Gorllewin i brynu tir, ac ymsefydlu arno fel amaethwyr dros weddill eu hoes’⁶⁶ (*moving to the West, purchasing land and settling on it as farmers for the rest of their lives*). The family finally arrived in Wisconsin in 1846, after a journey down the Ohio River from Pennsylvania and up the Mississippi to Galena, Illinois. From there, they traveled by wagon to Mineral Point and Dodgeville. With their parents in temporary lodgings in Dodgeville, John and his brother William went to look at Pecatonica. They acquired maps from the Land Office in Mineral

⁶⁵ W. Hughes. *Cofiant y Parch. John Davies, Picatonica* (Utica, NY, T. J. Griffiths: 1878), pp. 35-79.

⁶⁶ *ibid.*, pp. 73-74.

Point and took a land surveyor with them. The same day they purchased government land at \$1.25 per acre and paid in full.⁶⁷

The Davieses were not the first Welsh settlers at Pecos. The first was William Owen, ‘an old sailor who plied the waters of the Mississippi for many years,’ and who arrived in the 1830s.⁶⁸ The second Welsh resident of Pecos was William H. Jones. Like the Davies family, Jones had settled in Pottsville and Blossburg, Pennsylvania before coming to Wisconsin in 1844. If the surviving accounts are correct, Pecos welcomed a considerable number of Welsh from Blossburg.⁶⁹ This indicates a classic pattern of chain migration, in which a few people migrate first, encourage other members to join them, and are followed by a larger contingent or even a continuous stream from the homeland or previous community.⁷⁰

The Davies family and the other Welsh families who settled in Pecos in the 1840s comprised the core of the community. The 1850 Federal Census for the town of Mifflin, Iowa County corresponds with the account of the Davies family’s migration to Pecos and shows telltale signs of chain migration among the Welsh-born residents (Appendix 1).

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 79-87.

⁶⁸ D. J. Williams. *One Hundred Years of Welsh Calvinistic Methodism in America*. (Philadelphia, Westminster Press: 1937), p. 168.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ C. Walley. *The Welsh in Iowa*, pp. 22-23.

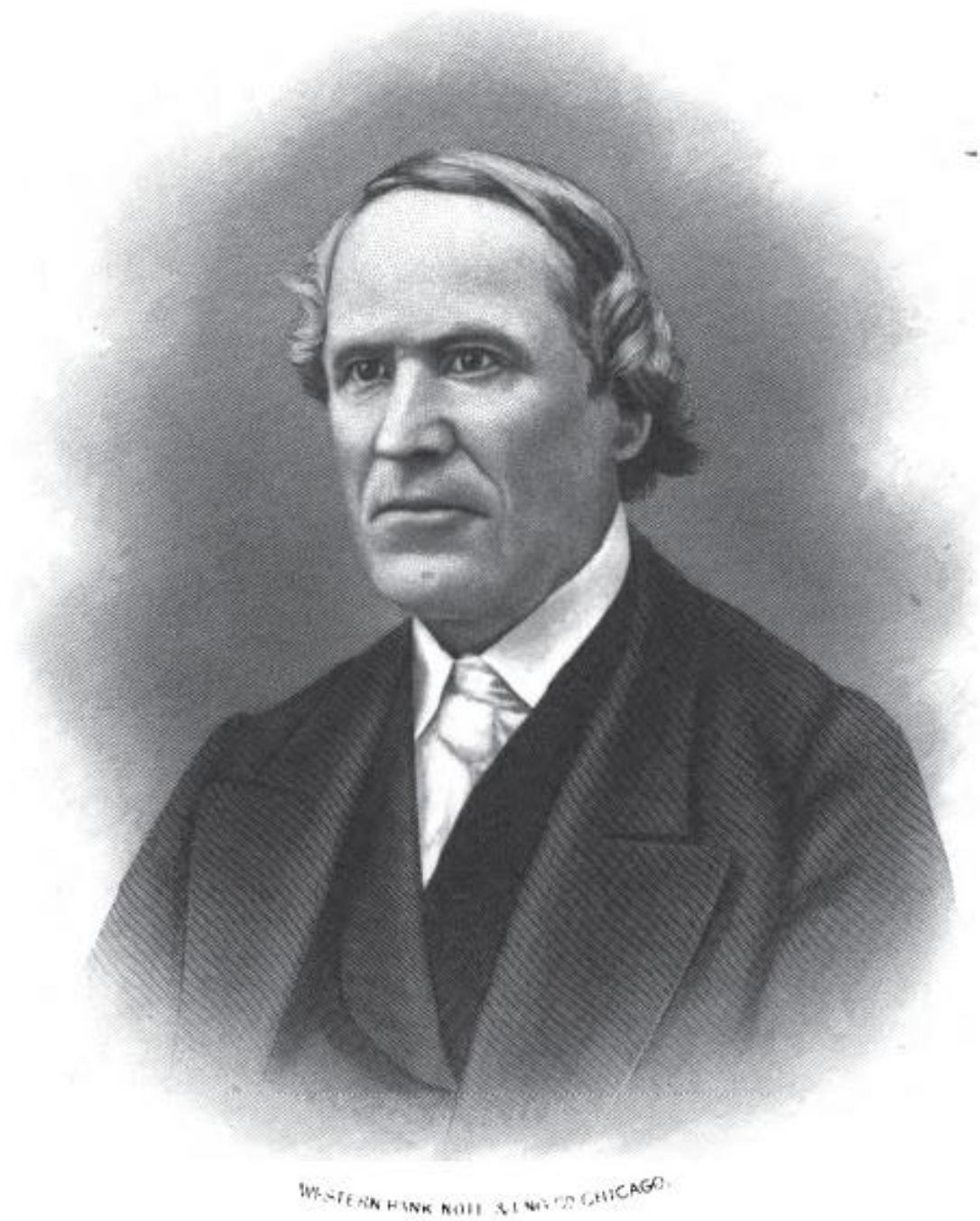


Fig. 3: The Rev. John Davies of Pocatonia. From W. Hughes.
Cofiant y Parch. John Davies, Pocatonia. (Utica, NY, T. J. Griffiths: 1878)

Comparing the census schedule with the John Davies biography confirms that the household headed by 80-year-old John Davis is indeed the Davies family, in spite of the misspelled surname. However, while the Davies siblings (and their cousin, Benjamin Thomas) were all adults or teenagers who had been born in Wales, other households, such as the Casewell, John W. Jones and Phillips families, all include children born in Pennsylvania in the previous decade. While it is possible that Reese and Jane Williams had come to Wisconsin directly from Wales, we cannot be certain from the census that they had not settled elsewhere in the United States beforehand. Although the census lists a month-old son, Samuel, given their age, they may have lived elsewhere in the United States previously and had other children who had died.

Assuming the government price of \$1.25 per acre, the \$500 value of their real estate potentially gives the Davieses 600 acres, a huge amount of land compared to what most freeholders owned in Wales. Surviving land patent certificates indicate that the younger John Davies purchased at least 440 acres of government land in the late 1840s.⁷¹ Of course, not all the land in Iowa County was owned by the federal government, and land speculators often resold property to prospective farmers at higher prices and interest.⁷² Nevertheless, the mere possibility of owning land was a vast improvement over economic conditions in Wales. Therefore, it is no surprise to see more farmers than miners among the Welsh in Mifflin, although given the fluidity of occupations among adult male Welsh immigrants, some may have divided their time between different kinds of work.

⁷¹ Mineral Point Historical Society (MPHS), Federal land patent certificates in W.A. Jones/Welsh Settlement papers.

⁷² R. N. Current, *The History of Wisconsin, Vol. II*, p. 108.

Table 1: Population by country of birth, Town of Mifflin, 1850

Country	Number	Percentage*
United States	445	69.5
Wales	72	11.0
England	55	8.5
Germany	25	4.0
Canada	22	3.5
Ireland	11	2.0
Scotland	4	0.5
France	3	0.5
Norway	3	0.5
Total	640	100

* Rounded to the nearest half percent.

The Welsh were surrounded by a much larger community of native Americans and immigrants (Table 1), and comprised the second largest nationality after the American-born. Although the English, Scottish, Irish and Canadians—dominated the immigrant community, the Welsh-born were the largest group whose native language was not English. Given these figures, it is easy to see how this section of the town quickly came to be seen as the ‘Welsh Settlement’.

Even if some of the Welsh understood some English or were fully bilingual, the Welsh language drew them together and influenced their choice of destination. As

J. Edno Roberts recalled:

Dichon fod prinder rhai yn gallu siarad Saesonaeg yn dylanwadu i’r un cyfeiriad iw nesu at eu gilydd i gael siarad, ac addoli yn yr iaith eu magwyd.⁷³

Undoubtedly the lack of English speakers among them influenced their being close to each other in order to speak and worship in the language in which they had been raised.

⁷³ WHS ‘Laura Phillips letters’, J. Edno Roberts to Howell D. Davies.

As immigrants from Wales built communities in the new world, they sought initially to replicate the religious and cultural life they had established in the old.

1.4 Building a Community

Although Welsh immigrants had begun arriving in Iowa County in the 1840s, the flow increased rapidly during the following decade (Table 2). From 1850 to 1860, the county's Welsh-born population increased substantially then slowed down by 1870. Of course, the addition of American-born children increases the number of potentially Welsh-speaking inhabitants considerably. R. D. Thomas clearly included these additional *Cymry* in his 1875 estimate of 2,560, with Dodgeville and Pecatonica as the main centres of Welsh settlement.⁷⁴

Table 2: Welsh-born population, Iowa County, 1850-1870.
Source: Federal manuscript censuses

Town	1850	1860	1870
Arena	14	30	60
Dodgeville	285	402	297
Highland	30	24	10
Linden	10	37	48
Mifflin	70	114	122
Mineral Point	17	13	18
Pulaski	0	0	1
Ridgeway	145	298	260
Waldwick	0	1	19
Wyoming	1	12	14
Total	572	931	849

⁷⁴ R. D. Thomas, *Hanes Cymry America* (Utica: T. J. Griffiths, 1872), pp. 28-32.

At almost 11 percent of the county's population, the Welsh were a significant enough minority to establish communities that nurtured a sense of cultural identity in response to an unfamiliar environment.⁷⁵ Like other immigrants, the Welsh often named locales where they settled after familiar places in Wales. 'Pant Coch,' the farm of William Williams at West Blue Mounds, derived its name from his previous home at Tanygrisiau, Caernarfonshire.⁷⁶ John and Jane Williams named their Dodgeville homestead 'Tŷ Mawr' after their farm in Anglesey.⁷⁷ The prosperous conglomeration of Welsh farmsteads on the prairie east of Dodgeville was known as 'Caergybi' (Fig. 5), later Anglicized to 'Hollyhead' [sic].⁷⁸

For Welsh speakers with little or no knowledge of English, everyday tasks could be fraught with frustration. One Pecatonica resident recalled the difficulty her mother had shopping in an English-speaking town, even though she was accompanied by a neighbour with a better grasp of the language. When asking for 'braid' one of the women had to lift the hem of her skirt to show the clerk the decorative trim before she was understood.⁷⁹

Beside the language barrier, the Welsh faced primitive living conditions in the early years of settlement. In his otherwise favourable report on Iowa County in 1851, J. P. Harris had to admit 'mae'r annedd-dai yn wael iawn. Tai logs braidd drwy'r holl wlad'⁸⁰ (*the homes are very poor. Mere log houses throughout the country*). Over time, the rudimentary structures of the frontier gave way to more comfortable dwellings. By the 1850s, 'balloon-frame' construction had become the preferred building method in the

⁷⁵ Based on a total population of 24,133 from the 1875 state census. R. M. Bashford, *Legislative Manual of the State of Wisconsin* (Madison, 1876), p. 327.

⁷⁶ J. R. Richards, 'Llythyrau William Williams o'r America at ei frawd' *Y Traethodydd* 459, 77-86 (p. 77).

⁷⁷ *Y Cyfaill o'r Hen Wlad*, February 1880, p. 73.

⁷⁸ One local farm still uses this spelling as part of its name.

⁷⁹ ICHS, 'Welsh Element', p. 4.

⁸⁰ *Y Seren Orllewinol*, April 1851, p. 90.

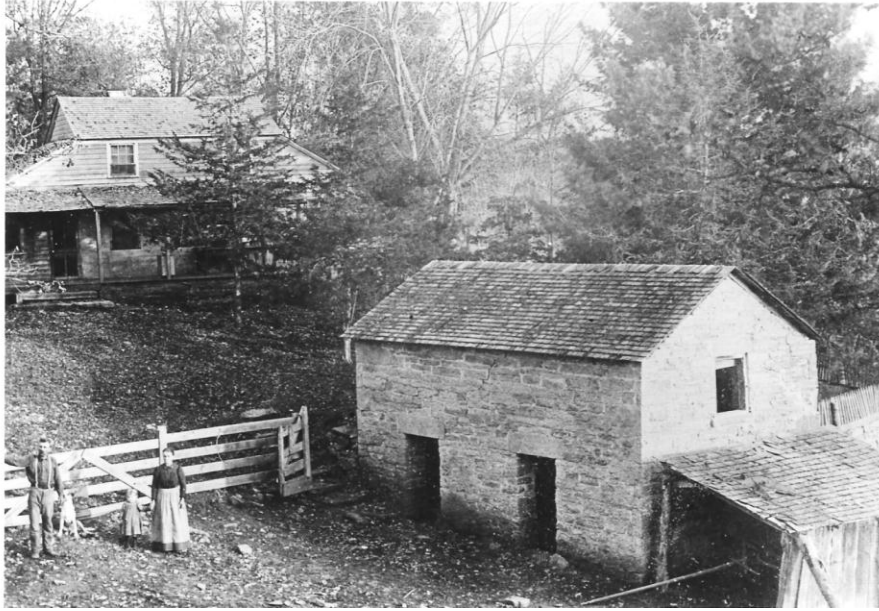


Fig. 4. The Thomas Humphrey farmstead at Pecatonica. Note the hilly, wooded terrain. (Iowa County Historical Society).



Fig. 5. The Davis family home at Caergybi, the prosperous rural settlement on the prairie east of Dodgeville (Iowa County Historical Society).

Midwest. A plentiful supply of cheap lumber, sold in standardized dimensions, enabled more modern houses to be built quickly.⁸¹

Through the windows of their crude cabins, the first Welsh settlers saw the valleys and prairies of southwestern Wisconsin as an untamed wilderness. As Robert C. Owens observed in 1850:

Nid oes ond ychydig dros bedair blynedd er pan yr ymsefydlodd Cymry yn y cwm hwn. Yn flaenorol i hyn nid oedd y lle amgen na thrigle y neidr, y blaidd, a'r carw.⁸²

It is only a little more than four years since the Welsh settled in this valley. Before then, the place was nothing more than the dwelling place of the serpent, the wolf and the stag.

As for the area's original inhabitants, the Welsh of Iowa County said little about their predecessors in the Welsh-language press and did not use much ink lamenting the Indians' fate. By this time, those who remained presented no threat to settlers. In fact, the deadliest threat to life came from the old world, one with which many of the Welsh were already familiar. During outbreaks in 1849 and 1850, 'Asiatic cholera,' brought to North America by European immigrants, claimed thousands of lives in Wisconsin. Lacking a clean water supply, the Lead Region was particularly affected. For those unfortunate to contract the disease, diarrhea and dehydration often led to death within hours.⁸³ Little wonder it induced panic. At Pecatonica in 1850, the Welsh cancelled religious services.⁸⁴ In Dodgeville, the newly formed Calvinistic Methodist congregation lost many of its members.⁸⁵

⁸¹ W. Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis*, pp. 178-179.

⁸² *Y Seren Orllewinol*, May 1850, p. 125.

⁸³ P. T. Harstad. 'Disease and Sickness on the Wisconsin Frontier: Cholera,' *Wisconsin Magazine of History* Vol. 43 No. 3, Spring 1960, 203-220.

⁸⁴ *Crynodeb o Hanes yr Eglwysi Methodistiaid Calffinaidd Dosbarth Dodgeville, Wis., o'u Cychwyniad hyd yn Bresenol* (Utica: T. J. Griffiths, 1893) p. 13.

⁸⁵ *ibid.*, p. 8.

The virulence of the epidemic and the helplessness of those who faced it are apparent in the obituary sections of the Welsh-language press. Owen Owens died within six or seven hours of falling ill, while Barbara Johns ‘ca’dd ei chymeryd drwy’r glyn cysgod angau mewn tuag wyth awr’⁸⁶ (*was taken through the valley of the shadow of death within about eight hours*). The death of 21-year-old Johns inspired the preacher and miner Robert C. Owens, under his bardic pseudonym, Trebor, to pen two *englynion* in her memory:

Bwriwyd y chwaer Barbara—i ffwrn oer
 Y ffyrnig golera,
 O’n plith yr aeth drwy y pla,
 ‘N ddu amwsg oddiyma

Byrbrwnt fu, iē Barb’ra fach—ehedaist
 O hudol fyd afiach
 Draw yn Nef, cei droi yn iach
 A’th urddas filwaith harddach.⁸⁷

*Our sister Barbara was thrown—into the cruel furnace
 Of fierce cholera.
 Taken from us by the plague,
 And shrouded in black.*

*The suffering was short, yes, young Barbara—you flew
 From the sick and tempting world
 Up to Heaven, where you will be well,
 And your dignity a thousand times more beautiful.*

For Trebor, Barbara and the many others he eulogized could expect a heavenly reward for their suffering on earth. Having survived a risky ocean crossing and settled in a wilderness, many were already focused on the hereafter. For people raised to fear divine punishment, the indiscriminate cruelty of cholera made the hand of providence all too real.

⁸⁶ *Y Cenhadwr Americanaidd*, November 1850, p. 350.

⁸⁷ *ibid.*

1.5 From *Seiat* to Sunday School

In Wales, religious enthusiasm peaked at times of distress, with revivals following poor harvests, epidemics and economic depressions. Adherence to a Nonconformist denomination was almost synonymous with being Welsh, even if only half the population actually attended religious services. The Calvinistic Methodists were the largest and most organized of these sects, followed by the Independents or Congregationalists and the Baptists.⁸⁸ For the Welsh in Wisconsin, religious faith provided a similar refuge from the challenges of a new country, and the Calvinistic Methodists and Congregationalists remained the dominant denominations.⁸⁹ The Calvinistic Methodists were the most meticulous in documenting their organization, growth and development. If we accept R. D. Thomas's population estimate, then close to a quarter of the Welsh in Iowa County attended their services in 1880 (Table 3). Unfortunately we do not have comprehensive statistics for the Congregationalists or the Baptists, but it is reasonable to believe they also had sizeable congregations. To study this far-flung microcosm of nineteenth-century Welsh society then, one must take into account the influence of Nonconformist Christianity on the character of the community.

⁸⁸ R. Davies, *Hope and Heartbreak: A Social History of Wales and the Welsh, 1776-1871* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2005), pp. 324-338.

⁸⁹ A. K. Knowles, 'Religious Identity as Ethnic Identity: The Welsh in Waukesha County' in R. C. Ostergren and T. R. Vale. *Wisconsin Land and Life* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1997), 282-299 (pp. 282-286).

Table 3: Statistics of the Dodgeville Presbytery of the Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Church, 1880. Source: *Y Cyfaill o'r Hen Wlad*, October, 1881, p. 397

Church name	Mewn Cymundeb <i>Communicants</i>	Cynulleidfa <i>Congregation</i>	Ysgol Sabbothol <i>Sunday School</i>	Dirwestwyr <i>Temperance</i>
Peniel	129	291	80	—
Capel Ceryg	30	80	35	30
Dodgeville	52	118	65	52
Salem	36	70	50	36
Bethel	25	60	18	25
Goshen	22	40	23	22
Total	294	659	271	165

The houses of worship themselves comprised the most visible manifestation of this religious culture. Into their settlements in New York, Pennsylvania and Ohio, the Welsh had imported the vernacular architecture of the chapel, right down to the separate doors on either side of the pulpit for men and women.⁹⁰ In Wisconsin the early churches were not copies of prototypes in the homeland, but even simpler utilitarian structures. Many were replaced by larger, more polished buildings as their congregations became more prosperous (Fig. 6).

Over the course of the nineteenth century, at least fifteen Welsh-speaking Calvinistic Methodist, Congregational and Baptist congregations sprang up in Iowa County. Some were short-lived, while others lasted into the twentieth century.⁹¹ The Welsh Congregational churches were affiliated with their English-speaking counterparts. The Calvinistic Methodists, however, were a distinct denomination with their own organizational structure. The Iowa County churches constituted *dosbarth Dodgeville* (the

⁹⁰ A. K. Knowles, *Calvinists Incorporated*, pp. 147-149.

⁹¹ E. G. Hartmann, *Americans from Wales* (Boston: Christopher Publishing House, 1959), p. 189.



Fig. 6. Carmel, one of two Welsh Calvinistic Methodist churches at Pecatonica. The stone building in the background is the original ‘Capel Ceryg’ built in 1854 (Iowa County Historical Society).

Dodgeville presbytery) that convened three times a year.⁹² William Williams of Blue Mounds either traveled 15 miles to Dodgeville or 30 miles to Pecatonica for these meetings. Occasionally, he traveled 100 miles or more to Welsh Prairie, Columbus or Racine for the half-yearly ‘*sasiwn*’ or state *cymanfa* where ministers were ordained, prayer meetings and sermons were held, and important decisions were made.⁹³

Initially, it was up to settlers to provide for their own salvation. As Thomas Williams wrote from Dodgeville in 1845:

⁹² D. J. Williams, *One Hundred Years*, p. 196.

⁹³ J. R. Richards, ‘Llythyrau William Williams o’r America at ei frawd’ *Y Traethodydd* 459, 77-86 (p. 83).

Yr ydym tua 10 neu 12 o grefyddwyr, rhwng Methodistiaid Calfaidd ac Annibynwyr, yn cydweithredu yn frawdol a chysurus. Nid oes genym yr un pregethwr yn ein hiaith ein hunain.⁹⁴

We are around ten or twelve believers, between Methodists and Independents, working together comfortably like brothers. We do not have a preacher in our own language.

This type of fellowship, or *seiat*, held in a settler's home and led by lay preachers, was the precursor to a congregation, and was especially well suited to both rural Wales and the American frontier.⁹⁵ Initially, the Calvinistic Methodists and Welsh Congregationalists in Dodgeville worshiped together. However, they held separate *seiat* meetings.⁹⁶ The two groups finally split in 1849 with the construction of a Calvinistic Methodist church in the village.⁹⁷

This kind of cooperation was present throughout the Welsh settlements. In one of his earliest letters to his brother in Wales, William Williams reported that the Calvinistic Methodists of Blue Mounds worshiped together with the Dissenters [i.e., Congregationalists] every other Sunday.⁹⁸ Sharing a common language and similar challenges, the advantages of cooperation outweighed differences and set a precedent for the Welsh community of Iowa County as a whole. It is, however, important to note that in Wales many attended more than one chapel on Sunday.⁹⁹ Denominations differed over sacraments and organization, not basic beliefs. Sectarian distinctions were of greater importance to the ordained than to the ordinary chapel-goer.¹⁰⁰ In Wisconsin, evidence of

⁹⁴ *Y Cenhadwr Americanaidd*, January 1845, p. 20.

⁹⁵ A. K. Knowles, 'Religious Identity as Ethnic Identity', p. 286.

⁹⁶ D. J. Williams, *One Hundred Years*, p. 197.

⁹⁷ *Crynodeb*, p. 7

⁹⁸ J. R. Richards, 'Llythyrau William Williams', p. 79.

⁹⁹ R. Davies, *Hope and Heartbreak*, p. 339.

¹⁰⁰ I. G. Jones, *Explorations and Explanations: Essays in the Social History of Victorian Wales* (Llandysul: Gomer Press, 1981), pp. 230-231.

inter-denominational quarrels and schism within congregations is rare.¹⁰¹ When a faction left the Calvinistic Methodists at Peniel in 1854, establishing a new congregation in a hastily built stone chapel, Capel Ceryg, on the opposite side of the Pecatonica River, they did so simply to make church attendance more convenient for themselves.¹⁰² Any ill feeling was probably soothed by the beloved John Davies, who continued to minister to both congregations.

In his obituary, it was noted of Robert W. Hughes of Pecatonica that:

Parchai Mr. Hughes grefydd a chrefyddwyr o bob enwad cyn iddo ei phroffesu ei hun, ac fel y cyfryw yr oedd ei dy yn agored i weinidogion a chrefyddwyr o bob enwad.¹⁰³

Mr. Hughes respected the faithful of every denomination before professing religion himself, and as such his house was open to ministers and believers of every sect.

Similarly, although he considered himself a Baptist, ‘Trebor’ Owens reported on events and submitted poetry to the Calvinistic Methodists’ *Cyfaill o’r Hen Wlad* and the Congregationalist magazine, *Y Cenhadwr Americanaidd*.

William Davies Evans, visiting Dodgeville on a tour of the United States in 1882, was taken aback by the enthusiasm of all three of the Welsh denominations to hear him preach:

Pregethais yn y prydnewn a’r hwyr yn Dodgeville i gynulleidfa cynwysedig o dair, sef Bedyddwyr, Annibynwyr, a Threfnyddion Calfinaidd. Yr wyf yn nodi hyn am unwaith i’r dyben o roddi ar ddeall mai hyn ydyw yr arferiad, nid yn unig yn Dodgeville, ond mewn llawer o leoedd eraill yn America. Pa wr dyeithr bynag a ddaw heibio i bregethu, a pha un bynag ai bychan ai mawr fyddo, cyduna y Cymry o bob enwad fyned i’w wrando.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰¹ Knowles, ‘Religious Identity as Ethnic Identity’, p. 294.

¹⁰² *Crynodeb*, p. 16.

¹⁰³ *Y Drych*, 20 January, 1881.

¹⁰⁴ W. D. Evans, *Dros Gyfanfor a Chyfanidir* (Aberystwyth: J. Gibson, 1883), p. 71.

I preached in the afternoon and evening in Dodgeville to a congregation including all three, the Baptists, Congregationalists and Calvinistic Methodists. I note this for the purpose of letting it be understood that this is the custom, not only in Dodgeville, but in many other places in America. Whoever comes by to preach, whether famous or not, the Welsh come together to hear him.

Preachers and ordained ministers were often revered to the extent that ‘they could do no wrong’.¹⁰⁵ The Reverend John Davies was esteemed as ‘brenin a barnwr y fro’ (*the king and judge of the district*)¹⁰⁶, and his biography relates his innate righteousness with an almost hagiographical reverence. For example, when John and his brother William first arrived in Pecatonica, they heard of a widow who was leaving her house and selling the contents. Upon visiting the woman, William served as a translator. John immediately recognized that the widow was underselling her possessions to be rid of them quickly, and told his brother to tell her not to ask too little. She was, John said, ‘yn weddw dlawd, er nad ydyw hi yn Gymraes’¹⁰⁷ (*a poor widow, even though she is not Welsh*). This act of common decency won praise not only for him but also for the rest of his family:

Dyna yr enghraifft gyntaf o ofal calon, a thynnerwch cydwybod y teulu hwn yn Wisconsin; ond enghraifft a ddilynwyd gan luoedd o rai tebyg o bryd i bryd yn y teulu cywir a thynner hwn. Dadblygiad o’u cymeriad cyffredinol hwy ydoedd.¹⁰⁸

That was this family’s first example of heartfelt care and tenderness of thought in Wisconsin; but it was an example followed by a host of others in this righteous and tender family. It was a natural development of their general character.

William Jones, Davies’s successor at the Carmel church, saw in his predecessor ‘[g]wir ddelw y tadau Methodistaidd’ (*the true image of the Methodist fathers*), recalling the leaders of the great eighteenth-century revivals and founders of Calvinistic

¹⁰⁵ ICHS, ‘Welsh Element’, p. 3.

¹⁰⁶ W. Hughes, *Cofiant y Parch. John Davies*, p. 123.

¹⁰⁷ *ibid.*, p. 84.

¹⁰⁸ *ibid.*, p.85.

Methodism.¹⁰⁹ Davies's moral character and *hwyl* in the pulpit propelled him to the status of a celebrity among the Welsh in Wisconsin. Ordained in 1850, he was usually asked to preach twice at the *cymanfaoedd* held around the state, refusing payment for his services. His fame even extended beyond the boundaries of Wisconsin.¹¹⁰ When he visited the Welsh settlements in Minnesota in 1857:

This eminent divine was then in the noonday of his glory... he was received like a king and scarce could the old fathers and mothers in Israel be kept from worshipping him. The people followed him from one corner of the settlement to the other, and daily he preached two or three times in the crowded cabins.¹¹¹

Never marrying, Davies served as the minister for both the Peniel and Carmel churches until his death in 1877. After his passing, his grateful flock erected a granite memorial next to Peniel, inscribed in Welsh and English, at the cost of \$1,100.¹¹²

While the Pecatonica Welsh nurtured the Reverend Davies, they also enthusiastically welcomed other stars of the pulpit. The highlight of the opening of Bryn Seion Congregationalist church in 1872 was the appearance of the famous 'Rahel o Fôn'. A sensational figure in Wales, Rachel Paynter Davies began preaching with the Baptists and emigrated to Ixonia in southeastern Wisconsin in 1866.¹¹³ Although some of the elders at Pecatonica grumbled about a woman in the pulpit, she was warmly received by most of the Welsh.¹¹⁴ 'Trebor' praised her as:

¹⁰⁹ *ibid.*, p. 167.

¹¹⁰ *ibid.*, pp. 118-122.

¹¹¹ *Hanes Cymry Minnesota, Foreston a Lime Springs, IA. Wedi ei gasglu gan amryw o'r hen sefydlwyr* (Mankato, Minnesota, 1895), English section, p. 55.

¹¹² W. Hughes. *Cofiant y Parch. John Davies*, p. 133; M. Knebel, *In the Shadows of the Mines: The Village of Rewey, Wisconsin, 1880-1980 and Southern Part of the Town of Mifflin* (Rewey Historical Committee, 1980) p. 28.

¹¹³ Welsh Biography Online: <http://wbo.llgc.org.uk/en/s-DAVI-RAC-1846.html>

¹¹⁴ WHS Platteville SC 79 Rural Sociology Class Papers, 1944-1954. H. Gibbon, 'A History of my Community'.

Efengyles hynod ... megys planed newydd wedi ymddangos yn anamserol—yn nhyb rhai—yn ffurfafen y byd Crist’nogol.¹¹⁵

...an extraordinary evangelist, like a new planet that has appeared, ill-timed—according to some—in the firmament of the Christian world.

These ‘eminent divines’ exemplified the moral standards which were expected of the faithful. They were the embodiment of Christian behaviour, destined for glory. For those who hoped to find themselves among the elect, church was the high point of the week, and the Sabbath was observed strictly. Cooking and even personal grooming were done on Saturdays. ‘The women made soup, *cawl* in Welsh, and we had it *ailduym* [sic] (warmed over) on Sunday’ recalled the Reverend Davies’ niece.¹¹⁶ Church itself was an all-day affair:

We attended Peniel Church every Sunday. We went in a lumber wagon at first, then sometime later, in a light wagon, always with a parasol in case of rain. We took our dinner with us. The morning service started at ten o’clock, then we had an hour for lunch, and in the afternoon we had Sunday School from one until three o’clock. Sunday was strictly a day of rest.¹¹⁷

The Sabbath may have been a day of rest, but it could still require effort, and many ‘walked to Church, carrying the small children, sometimes five miles or more’.¹¹⁸ Considering that John Davies had regularly walked three miles to his chapel in Pembrokeshire, this may not have been so unfamiliar to settlers from rural Wales.¹¹⁹ At Dodgeville, it was customary for the church to provide a small lunch for those who had come from distant, scattered homesteads.¹²⁰

¹¹⁵ *Y Cenhadwr Americanaidd*, November 1872, p. 348.

¹¹⁶ ICHS, ‘Welsh Element’, p. 6.

¹¹⁷ *ibid.*, p. 3.

¹¹⁸ *ibid.*, p. 4.

¹¹⁹ W. Hughes, *Cofiant y Parch. John Davies*, p. 41.

¹²⁰ *Crynodeb* p. 4.

If religion provided spiritual sustenance, it also served to keep the flock separate from the world. The *Rheolau Dysgyblaethol* (Disciplinary Rules) of the Calvinistic Methodists commanded believers to avoid:

‘gorwagedd y byd a’i arferion llygredig; megis ... dawnsiau, chwareuyddiaethau, gloddestfa, cyfeddach, diota, a’r cyffelyb’.¹²¹

...the vanity of the world and its polluted customs, such as ... dances, plays, revelries, feasts, tippling and the like.

Such entertainments were never too far away—in rowdy Mineral Point and downtown Dodgeville, where the habits of hard-drinking miners may have inspired the Welsh churches to become more puritanical. When the Calvinistic Methodists of Dodgeville were considering the construction of a chapel in 1848, the *seiat* had a choice of two pieces of land, one priced at ten dollars, the other at fifty, which happened to be used by the circus when it came to town. The more expensive plot was chosen after a particularly zealous elder cried out:

Gadewch i ni brynu yr un haner cant; dyma y fan mae y diafol wedi ddewis i ddangos ei bethau; gadewch i ninau brynu y lle i ddangos y gwaed a lifodd ar Galfaria, ac yna bydd raid iddo fyned i rywle arall i osod ei *shops*.¹²²

Let us buy the fifty dollar one; it is the place the devil has chosen to display his wares; let us buy the place to show the blood that flowed at Calvary, and he will have to go somewhere else to put his shops.

More than forty years later, the Pecatonica correspondent to the *Dodgeville Chronicle* lamented that the ‘degrading and demoralizing pastime’ of dancing had been introduced ‘into this peaceable, God-fearing settlement’.¹²³ Church records indicate that full membership in a congregation could be incumbent upon one’s agreement to take a

¹²¹ *Rheolau Dysgyblaethol, Cyfansoddiad a Chyffes Ffydd y Corff o Fethodistiaid Calфинаidd Cymreig* (Rome, New York: R. R. Meredith, 1857) p. 11.

¹²² *Crynodeb*, p. 7.

¹²³ *Dodgeville Chronicle*, 6 February, 1891.

temperance pledge. In 1880, the numbers of full church members and temperance society members among the Calvinistic Methodists were almost identical. (Table 2).

It would, however, be a mistake to view the Welsh community in Iowa County as dour and joyless. Religious revivals created excitement themselves—in 1890, 500 people came to witness a baptism on Ben Davis’s farm in Ridgeway.¹²⁴ The temperance society sponsored by the Dodgeville Calvinistic Methodists lightened the gravity of its meetings by showcasing the musical talents of the community. One meeting in 1888 featured solo and choral pieces, in Welsh and English, interspersed between prayers and a lecture in Welsh by Sem Phillips.¹²⁵ The Welsh at Pecatonica celebrated the Fourth of July in 1889 with a picnic near Peniel Church, an outdoor performance by the Ladies Vocal Class, and a ‘grand concert’ featuring the Peca-‘Tonic’ Glee Club, and a children’s choir.¹²⁶ In 1872, Joseph Parry, the celebrated Welsh-American composer, included Dodgeville and Spring Green, just across the Wisconsin River from Iowa County, on a concert tour, proceeds from which went to assist Welsh churches in paying off their debts.¹²⁷

These approved entertainments provided some relief from the seriousness of Calvinist theology. Nevertheless, they grew out of religious institutions that ingrained a severe attitude to ungodly behaviour in their members from an early age. Hugh Davies walked silently with his neighbours to the Pecatonica Baptist church for a ‘special meeting’ during the week: ‘no one dared to run or whistle or he would be punished’.¹²⁸ Next to the admonition of parents, Sunday schools provided religious discipline and

¹²⁴ J. F. Helmenstine, *Weehaukaja: A History of the Village of Barneveld and the Town of Brigham, Vol. 1* (published by the author, 1976), p.114.

¹²⁵ *Dodgeville Chronicle*, 3 April, 1888, quoted in J. F. Helmenstine, *Weehaukaja, Vol. 1.*, p.115.

¹²⁶ *Dodgeville Chronicle*, 28 June, 1889.

¹²⁷ *Y Cenhadwr Americanaidd*, June, 1872, advertisement on inside cover.

¹²⁸ ICHS, ‘Welsh Element’, p. 3.

indoctrination. Children were required to memorize passages from the bible and other religious works. In early 1860, the Calvinistic Methodist Sunday School at Pecatonica reported that during the preceding six months, the students had memorized 880 chapters of the bible and 3,106 verses, as well as sections from the *Hyfforddwr yn Egwyddorion y Grefydd Gristionogl* (Primer in the Principles of the Christian Religion) by Thomas Charles, and *Rhoddd Mam* (A Mother's Gift), by John Parry.¹²⁹ The school's secretary, Edward Harries, even submitted a poem with his report, addressing the institution of the *Ysgol Sabbothol* directly:

Arwaeni feddyliau ieuencyd ein hoes,
Trwy'th oleu pur dysglaer at gariad y Groes,
Gan ddangos i'r meddwl anfarwol a byw,
Mae'r Nefoedd yw cartref, a'i bywyd yw Duw.¹³⁰

*You lead the thoughts of today's youth,
Through your pure shining light to the love of the Cross,
By showing the immortal and living mind,
That Heaven is home and God is life.*

While it may not have been its main purpose, the Sunday school also kept the Welsh language in use among the younger generation. The institution was even called 'prif noddfa yr iaith Gymreig yn America' (*the chief sanctuary of the Welsh language in America*), in one *Cyfaill* editorial, which also stressed the connection between faith and language.¹³¹ 'Cymysgedd iaith y plant' (*the mixture of the children's language*) was a threat to the Sunday School's continuing survival, and the Welsh 'collent eu crefydd pan

¹²⁹ *Y Cyfaill o'r Hen Wlad*, March 1860, p. 119.

¹³⁰ *ibid.*, p. 108.

¹³¹ *Y Cyfaill o'r Hen Wlad*, February 1859, p. 49.

gollent eu hiaith' (*lose their religion when they lose their language*), the article warned.¹³²

For the first generation of immigrants and their children, Calvinistic religion and the Welsh language were inseparable and interdependent. Any resistance to the dominant tongue of the new country was couched in religious terms. Phoebe Jones, the sister of the Rev. John Davies, refused to speak English and called it the 'devil's language'.¹³³ It is impossible to know the extent of this sentiment. However, given that women's roles were confined to the home and the church, they would probably have been more resistant to English than men. At her husband's insistence, Phoebe's sons attended the State Normal School in nearby Platteville, and two of them went on to study at Princeton University.¹³⁴ The impetus to assimilate, coupled with religious, economic and political change presented a formidable challenge to Welsh-speaking Calvinism.

1.6 The 'God-Almighty Joneses'

Although Calvinism dominated the Welsh communities in Iowa County, not every Welsh-speaking immigrant adhered to one of the predominant sects or even attended a church. Most notably, the valley near Helena settled by the Lloyd Jones family in the mid 1860s became a bastion of Unitarianism or 'Liberal Christianity' (Fig. 6). Richard Lloyd Jones and his wife, Mary Thomas, were natives of an area in Cardiganshire where Unitarianism had taken hold in the previous century and which was called disparagingly the *Smotyn Du* ('Black Spot') by the surrounding Calvinists. Richard may have been the most outspoken and idealistic Welshman to settle in Iowa County. A tenant farmer, hatter

¹³² *ibid.*

¹³³ MPHS, 'Recollections of David B. Jones.' Unpublished manuscript by E. H. Bennett.

¹³⁴ WHS, 'Welsh Element', pp. 4-5.

and preacher in Wales, he may have encountered Iolo Morganwg when the Celtic revivalist was frequenting the Unitarian chapels of the Teifi valley. He probably participated in the Rebecca Riots before following his brother to Wisconsin in 1844. The family lived on a homestead in Ixonia in eastern Wisconsin for twelve years until Richard's outspokenness led to a heresy trial and their dismissal from the Welsh Congregational church where they worshiped. Richard and Mary then relocated to Spring Green before the family began purchasing land across the river in the town of Wyoming in 1863.¹³⁵



Fig. 7. Richard Lloyd Jones and family, 1883.
(Wisconsin Historical Society, WHi-63524)

¹³⁵ For the story of the Lloyd-Jones family's emigration and settlement in Wisconsin, see C. Lloyd Jones, *Youngest Son* (Madison, 1938) and M. Secrest, *Frank Lloyd Wright, a Biography* (New York: Harper Collins, 1992) pp. 19-50. See also G. Roberts, 'Taliesin yng Ngardd Eden' in M. W. Thomas, *Gweld Sêr: Cymru a Chanrif America* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press 2001), pp. 128-157.

There was no Welsh Unitarian church in the United States for the Lloyd Joneses to join. Richard preached to his own family, but never lived to see the chapel his son, Jenkin, built in the ‘Valley of the God-Almighty Joneses’ as Helena Valley came to be known, in 1886. The Rev. Jenkin Lloyd Jones numbered among the most prominent Unitarian leaders of the late nineteenth century. Embracing the progressive zeitgeist, his theology took a more universalist direction, and he organized a ‘World Parliament of Religions’ at the Chicago World’s Fair of 1893.¹³⁶

Their religious isolation may have forced the Lloyd Joneses to interact more immediately with American society than did other Welsh immigrants. Nevertheless, they maintained a strong sense of Welsh identity. Richard and Mary’s home was Welsh-speaking, and Jenkin, who had left Wales as an infant, returned to the Black Spot in 1882 to preach in his native language.¹³⁷ He also served as an adjudicator for the *eisteddfod* held at the 1893 World’s Fair.¹³⁸ Jenkin’s brother, Thomas, kept a diary in English but noted that he received *Yr Ymofynydd*, the Welsh Unitarian magazine, and also asked Jenkin to send him a Welsh hymnal. When Welsh ministers came to Spring Green to preach, Thomas made the effort to cross the river to attend their sermons.¹³⁹

After his rise to prominence in a denomination respected by Americans for its intellectualism, Jenkin, too was invited to speak and preach in his native tongue at the Welsh Congregational Church in Spring Green, a far cry from when his parents had been

¹³⁶ Dictionary of Unitarian and Universalist Biography online:
<http://www25.uua.org/uuhs/duub/articles/jenkinlloydjones.html>

¹³⁷ G. Roberts, ‘Taliesin’, p. 148.

¹³⁸ H. T. Edwards, *Eisteddfod Ffair y Byd: Chicago, 1893*. (Llandysul: Gomer Press 1990), pp. 133-134.

¹³⁹ WHS M2003-119 Jones, Thomas Lloyd. Diaries, 1856-1893. Diary, 14 January 1863 and letter from Jenkin Lloyd Jones, 13 October 1883.

accused of heresy in Ixonia.¹⁴⁰ Over time, ethnic and linguistic commonalities had overcome powerful divisions of belief.

In Iowa County the Welsh created a community that incorporated many of the characteristics of their own culture. However, whatever their denominational preferences, settlement in rural Wisconsin forced them to cooperate and become more conscious of their cultural identity—even more than they had been in their native land. Choosing to live close to each other and connected to the larger Welsh community in the United States by the Welsh-language press and personal relationships, the Welsh had undergone a process of ‘ethnicization’. To apply Jon Gjerde’s definition of this process, the Welsh were no longer immigrants, but comprised an ethnic group founded on a perception of their common national identity.¹⁴¹ More fundamentally, as Anne Kelly Knowles has explained, Calvinistic Christianity, expressed through the Welsh language, became the chief ‘vessel’ of this ethnic culture.¹⁴² However, as much as they embraced their shared identity, the Welsh of Iowa County were subject to the pressures of the larger society that surrounded them, and the necessity of participating in its economic and political life.

¹⁴⁰ *ibid.*, 8 January 1871.

¹⁴¹ J. Gjerde, *The Minds of the West: Ethnocultural Evolution in the Rural Middle West, 1830-1917* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), p. 228.

¹⁴² A. K. Knowles, ‘Religious Identity as Ethnic Identity,’ pp. 295-296.

Part Two: Adaptation

2.1 Agrarian Change

‘Yr ydani yn buw yn ddigon cysurus ond yn gweithio ddigon calad’¹⁴³ (*We live very comfortably, but work very hard*), wrote William Williams from his farm at West Blue Mounds to his brother in Wales in 1851. The Welsh farmer enjoyed greater prosperity in Wisconsin, but success required tremendous effort, as well as the ability to respond to the dramatic transformation of the Midwestern economy in the second half of the nineteenth century. Improved communications, the expansion of transportation infrastructure, and labour-saving machinery all contributed to the development of a sophisticated agrarian economy that connected farmers with national and international markets.¹⁴⁴

In the earliest years of Welsh settlement, farming had just superseded mining as the area’s main economic activity, and subsistence-level agriculture was evolving into the cultivation of cash crops. Nevertheless, the existence of a prairie farmer remained tenuous. In August of 1866, Thomas Lloyd Jones reported a ‘long and tedious harvest nearly a month long troubled with rain and down grain’.¹⁴⁵ Throughout much of the Midwest, wheat, easy to grow but susceptible to damage and disease, was the main crop although due to demand from the local mining population for a more varied diet, it was never quite as dominant in the Lead Region as it was in other parts of Wisconsin.¹⁴⁶

As William Williams wrote in 1851:

Yr oedd yma ud y leni gin dalad a mhen i bron iawn, cnwd mawr. Gwenith tri chant o ysdycia mawr, haidd cant a hanner o ysdycia, cerch 4 cant o ysdycia ...¹⁴⁷

¹⁴³ J. R. Richards, ‘Llythyrau William Williams’ p. 79; letter dated 1 September 1851.

¹⁴⁴ These developments are discussed at length in W. Cronon. *Nature's Metropolis*, pp. 55-147; also, R. C. Nesbit, *The History of Wisconsin, Vol. III: Urbanization and Industrialization, 1873-1893*, pp. 1-45.

¹⁴⁵ Thomas Lloyd Jones, diary, May, June and 17 August 1866.

¹⁴⁶ M. P. Conzen, ‘Upper Mississippi Valley Lead Region’ p. 179.

¹⁴⁷ J. R. Richards, ‘Llythyrau William Williams’ pp. 78-79; letter dated 1 September, 1851.

This year the grain paid well, and was a large crop. Wheat, three hundred big shocks, barley, one hundred and fifty shocks, oats four hundred shocks ...

In the same letter, Williams described his livestock, comprising oxen and horses for pulling ploughs and wagons, and other animals, including pigs, sheep and hens.¹⁴⁸ Meat, wool and eggs produced on the farm would have been for personal consumption and the local market. In 1852, Williams wrote that he sold six pigs a year and slaughtered three himself.¹⁴⁹

With the arrival of the railroads in the late 1850s and the heightened demand of the Civil War years, Iowa county farmers were increasingly integrated into a national market.¹⁵⁰ Grain became a fungible commodity, distributed via the grain elevator and graded for quality according to standards established by the Chicago Board of Trade. Furthermore, by switching to feed crops, like ‘Indian corn’ (maize), farmers could profit by sending their harvest to market in the form of hogs and cattle.¹⁵¹ As Williams noted in 1863:

Y mae y fasnach yn mynad yn lled dda yma yn awr. Yr ydani wedi gwerthu tia dwy fil a ffedwar cant o bwysi o borc eleni am bedair dolar y cant ag igian sent gyda hyny am bob cant wedi eu lladd am arian parod. Y mae y gwenith yn dolar y bwsial yn awr. Yr oedd y llynadd am hanar hyny. Y mae y ffordd heuarn yn lled agos i ni yma. Awn yno yn hwylus, ag yn ol, yr un dydd, a gwerthwn bob peth am arian parod.¹⁵²

Business is going very well here now. We have sold about 2,400 pounds of pork this year at a price of four dollars per hundred and 20 cents extra for every hundred already slaughtered for cash. Wheat is a dollar a bushel now. Last year it was half this. The railroad is quite close to us here. We go there [to market] quickly, and get back in the same day, selling everything for cash ...

¹⁴⁸ *ibid.*

¹⁴⁹ *ibid.* p. 80; letter dated 28 December, 1852.

¹⁵⁰ R. N. Current, *History of Wisconsin Volume II: The Civil War Era*, pp. 376-381.

¹⁵¹ W. Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis*, pp. 104-147, 222-235.

¹⁵² J. R. Richards, ‘Llythyrau William Williams’ p. 169; letter dated 8 February, 1863.

These developments are apparent in the federal censuses. For example, Meredith Evans produced 750 bushels of wheat and 200 bushels of maize in 1870. In 1880, his efforts yielded 2,000 bushels of maize and only 325 bushels of wheat.¹⁵³ Evans was considered prosperous and his farm ‘a long way ahead of its time’ by his neighbours at Caergybi. The first in the neighbourhood to own a binder, he also kept a threshing machine on his farm.¹⁵⁴ Technological innovation on the farm coincided with these new patterns of agriculture, and Evans was at the forefront of this change. As another Iowa County farmer proclaimed, ‘the wheat raising period in this country is passed and now the farmer’s main dependence is on corn...the best fattener that can be used as cattle feed’.¹⁵⁵ Furthermore, between 1870 and 1880, Evans increased his herd of pigs from 10 to 40, and his cows from 10 to 14, producing 900 pounds of butter at the end of the decade.¹⁵⁶

However, it is possible that the Welsh benefited from taking a conservative approach to these changes, waiting until they were proven strategies rather than popular fads. A review of the agricultural census for a section of rural Dodgeville in 1880 reveals the Welsh may have been on the soundest financial footing among immigrant and old-stock American farmers alike. (Table 4). Determining ethnic nationality by cross-referencing with the population census, and including the second generation in each national group, it is possible to build a statistical picture of this district’s agricultural practices. Statistics for the five main ethnic groups are shown in the table below.

¹⁵³ Federal agricultural manuscript census for Iowa County, 1870 and 1880.

¹⁵⁴ ICHS. D. M. Evans, ‘The Earth Abideth’ (unpublished manuscript), recollections written in 1951, p. 7.

¹⁵⁵ *Dodgeville Chronicle*, December 3, 1880.

¹⁵⁶ Federal agricultural manuscript census for Iowa County, 1870 and 1880.

Table 4: Mean farm values, tilled acreage, and acreage of maize and wheat of select ethnic groups, enumeration district 150, Dodgeville, 1880.
 Source: Federal manuscript population and agricultural censuses.

Nationality	Total farm value*	Tilled Acres**	Maize	Wheat
American	\$2360	67	16	7
English	\$2794	79	17.5	10.5
German	\$2736	69	11	24
Norwegian	\$1883	52	10	15
Welsh	\$3176	87	19	17

* Including land, fences and buildings. ** Including fallow and grass in rotation.

Whereas American and English farmers devoted around twice as many acres to ‘Indian corn’ (maize) than wheat, the distribution was more even among the Welsh. The Norwegians and Germans lagged behind in switching to maize, and were also less wealthy, if one considers farm value and tilled acres as measures of prosperity. Even if the figures are not representative of Iowa County as a whole, they do indicate that well-established Welsh farmers could be substantially better off than their neighbours.

Although this may be attributed to their cautious approach, undoubtedly it helped that the gently rolling prairies of Caergybi provided some of the best farmland near the county seat (Fig. 8).

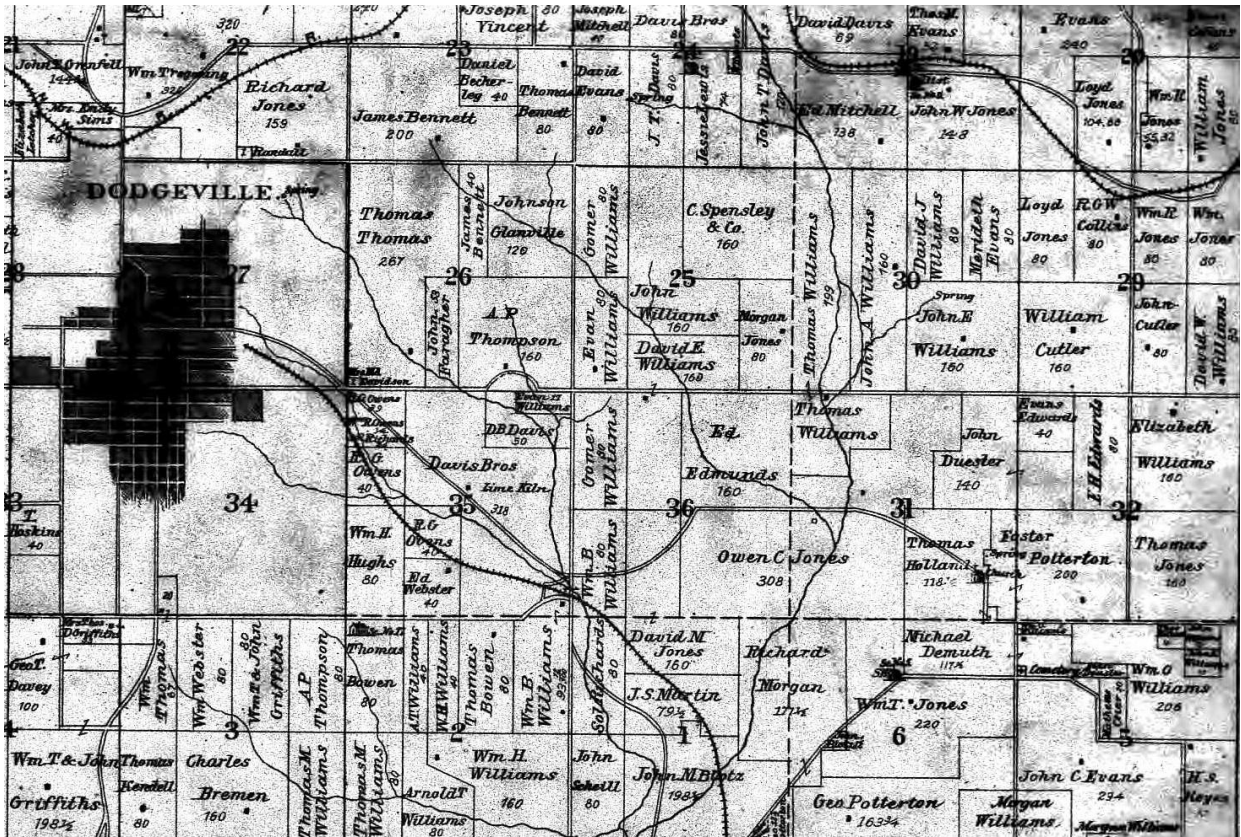


Fig. 8. Welsh-owned farms dot the prairie at Caergybi, the rural settlement east of Dodgeville. From F. E. Morrow. *Plat Book of Iowa County* (Madison: Selwyn Brant, 1895), p. 37.

Diminishing wheat yields in the 1870s spurred the growth of dairy farming in Wisconsin. Promotional campaigns by state officials and special railroad rates for shipping cheese helped transform a minor side-operation of the farm into a profitable industry. In addition, the arrival of migrants from New York state and Swiss immigrants had brought valuable cheese making expertise to Wisconsin. Dairy farming was particularly beneficial to farmers in the valleys of Iowa County, since it put marginal land into use as pasture.¹⁵⁷

By 1883, Thomas Lloyd Jones was producing butter and cheese in large enough quantities to ship out to market or exchange with relatives. One day saw 24 pounds of

¹⁵⁷ M. P. Conzen, 'Upper Mississippi Valley Lead Region' p. 179.

butter sent to the station.¹⁵⁸ Two days later, he ‘sold 19½ lb of cheese to Uncle Thomas’ and received a little over seven bushels of wheat in return.¹⁵⁹ That year he made inquiries about hiring a cheese maker, and was also perusing the price list of a New York company selling creamery equipment.¹⁶⁰ In the town of Ridgeway, Evan Jones founded the first cheese factory around 1873, and the local product was ‘acknowledged to be as good in quality as can be produced anywhere, and brings the highest prices paid in the New York market’. Another early cheese factory belonged to Jane P. Jones, a striking exception to the invisibility of women in the economic life of the Welsh community in Iowa County.¹⁶¹ After her husband’s death in 1863, Jones carried on her 490-acre farm at West Blue Mounds.¹⁶² The 1870 census indicated she owned, as a head of household, \$4000 worth of real estate, substantially more than her neighbours.¹⁶³ Her success as a farmer enabled her to pursue other business opportunities. In 1881 Jones moved into the village of Barneveld, where she opened a dress shop which developed into a general store and grocery (Fig. 9).¹⁶⁴

Obviously, women were as crucial to the stability and success of their farmsteads as their husbands, but recognition of their contribution as farmers and entrepreneurs in their own right is rare. Outside of ‘keeping house’, the main female occupations during

¹⁵⁸ Thomas Lloyd Jones, diary, 20 February 1883.

¹⁵⁹ *ibid.*, 22 February 1883.

¹⁶⁰ *ibid.*, 25 January, 1883. The price list from Burrell and Whitman, Little Falls, New York, is included in miscellaneous papers.

¹⁶¹ *History of Iowa County*, p. 836.

¹⁶² *ibid.* p. 962.

¹⁶³ Federal manuscript census, 1870.

¹⁶⁴ J. F. Helmenstine, *Weehaukaja: A History of the Village of Barneveld and the Town of Brigham, Vol. 2* (published by the author, 1977), p. 23.



Fig. 9. Jane Jones's home and store in Barneveld.
(Courtesy of Karin Sevde)

this period were milliner or domestic servant.¹⁶⁵ Given the prevalence of hired men in the Lloyd Jones diaries and male farm labourers in the census, agricultural work and the day-to-day business of the farm were usually male responsibilities among native and immigrant settlers alike. By the late nineteenth century, Americans no longer considered women's labour in the fields necessary or respectable, and criticized European immigrants, particularly Germans, for persisting in sending their wives and daughters to work alongside men.¹⁶⁶ It should be noted that in the poorer parts of Wales, women often joined men on the land.¹⁶⁷ At least one Welshman in Dodgeville, who appears to have been poorer than most of his compatriots there, praised his daughter's strength in the

¹⁶⁵ Federal manuscript census, 1870.

¹⁶⁶ J. Gjerde, *The Minds of the West*, pp. 155, 171-174.

¹⁶⁷ R. Davies, *Hope and Heartbreak*, pp. 107-108.

fields and skill with the plough.¹⁶⁸ However, it is likely that Welsh farmers in Iowa County and elsewhere in Wisconsin, given their general prosperity, conformed to Anglo-Saxon cultural expectations and kept their wives and daughters out of the fields. There can be no doubt that Thomas Lloyd Jones's wife, Esther, was instrumental in running the family farm when her husband was away from home. However, her departure for a 'woman congress' in Madison suggests she had time to cultivate an interest in current affairs and women's emancipation.¹⁶⁹

2.2 Cooperation and the Ethnic Economy

Personal ambition and individual effort did not lead to success without the cooperation of relatives and neighbours. William Williams noted the sharing of equipment and resources in an 1858 letter:

Y mae yr injan ddyrnu on cwmpas ni yn awr. Byddwn yn helpu ein gilidd fel cymdogion hefo hono. Rhaid cael tia 12 o ddyinion iw chanlyn, ag 8 o geffylau i'w thynu.¹⁷⁰

The threshing machine is near us now. We'll help each other as neighbours with it. You need 12 men to follow it and eight horses to pull it.

Similarly, the diaries of Thomas Lloyd Jones reveal his reliance on hired labourers, neighbouring farmers and his own relatives. For instance, one week in November 1869, Thomas Lloyd Jones paid John Davies, Isaac Evans, John Evans, and his brother-in-law, James Phillip, on a daily basis for tasks such as husking corn, hauling manure and work on a stable. The following Monday, Thomas himself 'went to John

¹⁶⁸ See Morgan's comment on his daughter: '...I have very big girl he work on the farm good' in Appendix II. WHS, File 1888 January 27. Morgan, Simon. Letter, 1888.

¹⁶⁹ Thomas Lloyd Jones, diary, 8 October, 1879.

¹⁷⁰ J. R. Richards, 'Llythyrau William Williams' p. 165; letter dated 16 October 1858.

Davis (and) worked $\frac{3}{4}$ Day on wheat'.¹⁷¹ With their adjoining farms, it was also easy for Thomas to share or trade labour and resources with his father Richard, and brothers, James, John and Enos. By 1880, William Wright, the husband of sister Anna, and their son, Frank, appear in his diary, 'hauling straw under the hogs' and cutting lumber for railroad ties (sleepers) in the woods with James.¹⁷²

Although Thomas Lloyd Jones's diaries suggest a preference for relying on his relatives or employing fellow Welshmen, he was not averse to hiring men from different ethnic backgrounds. James Phillip was born in Scotland whilst another hired man, John McBoyle, was born in Wisconsin to Scottish parents.¹⁷³ In 1871, he employed Ole Johnson, a Norwegian.¹⁷⁴ It is impossible to say anything definitive about the relationships Thomas may have had with these employees, although a 'Norwegian girl', perhaps hired to help in the house, left because she 'would not stay any longer being home sick'.¹⁷⁵

Similarly, the Lloyd Jones brothers happily traded with local Americans such as lumber merchant Owen King, but also worked closely with Thomas's Welsh-born brother-in-law, E. W. Evans, who lived across the river in Spring Green.¹⁷⁶ Trading relationships, like hiring choices, may have been prioritized by kinship and ethnicity, but the Lloyd Joneses were hardly closed to economic activity with their diverse neighbours.

Other examples of Welsh intra- and inter-ethnic cooperation can be found throughout Iowa County. In 1881 Walter Thomas designed and built an imposing stone

¹⁷¹ Thomas Lloyd Jones, diary, 24 to 29 November 1869.

¹⁷² *ibid.*, 5 and 6 January 1880. Thomas's young nephew is better known as Frank Lloyd Wright, the architect.

¹⁷³ *ibid.*, 12 December 1866. McBoyle's nativity from 1860 census.

¹⁷⁴ *ibid.*, 13 November 1871. There are several males named Ole Johnson, all born in Norway, listed in the 1870 federal manuscript census for Iowa County.

¹⁷⁵ *ibid.*, 4 April, 1871.

¹⁷⁶ *ibid.*, 15 and 21 February 1883.

barn to store winter feed for his stock-raising business near the village of Barneveld, employing three Welsh stonemasons, one of whom being his brother-in-law.¹⁷⁷ Similarly, cheese factory records illustrate the tendency of the Welsh to support each other. Most of the initial shareholders of the Bryn Gyrwen Cheese Company near Barneveld, incorporated in 1904, were first- or second-generation Welshmen, with the exception of a Norwegian, a Swiss and an American with no immediate Welsh ancestors.¹⁷⁸ The Holyhead Bank Cheese Factory near Dodgeville, established in 1902, served the needs of dairy farmers who were mostly, though not exclusively, Welsh by birth or parentage. Nevertheless, at both Bryn Gyrwen and Holyhead, the cheese makers were initially Swiss immigrants, hired for their technical expertise.¹⁷⁹ Again, the evidence suggests the Welsh were practical rather than exclusive in choosing business partners. With their small numbers, cooperation with others, native and immigrant, was necessary in undertaking ambitious enterprises. Furthermore, by the turn of the century, second-generation Welsh Americans and individuals born in Wales but raised in the United States were increasingly the economic decision makers in their ethnic communities. This younger generation would have been less inclined to maintain ethnic exclusivity in business.

One venture which appears to have been almost exclusively Welsh was a telephone cooperative set up in 1901 by the residents of the Welsh Settlement in southwestern Iowa County. The Rewey and Mineral Point Telephone Company's ledger lists, with few exceptions, ethnic Welsh subscribers in the early years of its operation.

¹⁷⁷ A. Bachner and D. Lowe, National Register of Historic Places Registration Form for Thomas Stone Barn, available online: www.uwex.edu/lgc/barns/pdf/ThomasStoneBarnNRForm.pdf

¹⁷⁸ ICHS 2011.36.8. 'Bryn Gaerwyn Factory', 'Bryn Gyrwen' is the earliest name given to this facility, spelled 'Bryn Gaerwyn' and even 'Bryn Grwyn' in later years. Evidently the original meaning was lost to subsequent generations.

¹⁷⁹ Nativity of these individuals determined from cross-referencing names with 1900 and 1910 federal manuscript censuses.

The company's officers were all Welsh apart from the treasurer, of likely Cornish parentage. Contracts for construction and maintenance of the line were given to members of the community.¹⁸⁰ The *Dodgeville Chronicle* instructed subscribers in the etiquette of using a shared line, and one is left to wonder if this new medium of communication affected the use of the Welsh language.¹⁸¹ Such speculation aside, the telephone cooperative indicates a resilient ethnic community eager to embrace new technology and engage with the wider world.

2.3 Changing Landscape, Changing Language

The Welsh enthusiastically welcomed changes in transport and communication even when they transformed the geography of their communities. The construction of the Chicago and Northwestern Railway in 1881 drew farmers and tradesmen away from Jennieton and West Blue Mounds to the new settlement of Barneveld. In 1882, the 'busy little village' was bustling with a wide variety of businesses, from hotels to millinery shops.¹⁸² The following year, the village called for 400 hitching posts to be installed before spring.¹⁸³ Most notably, the Calvinistic Methodist congregation at West Blue Mounds relocated to a new building in Barneveld.¹⁸⁴ The village became a social and economic focal point for the Welsh in eastern Iowa County, affording new opportunities for trade. The railroad had not only drawn Jane P. Jones to Barneveld, but also brought to her store 'Millinery and Dress Goods of the latest fashions', as well as a 'first class

¹⁸⁰ ICHS 2009.225.11., Rewey and Mineral Point Telephone Co., Record Book 1901-1919.

Treasurer M. H. Goninen was born in Illinois to English parents, according to the 1910 federal census.

¹⁸¹ *Dodgeville Chronicle*, 26 July, 1901.

¹⁸² *ibid.*, 14 July, 1882.

¹⁸³ *ibid.*, 9 February, 1883.

¹⁸⁴ *ibid.*, 4 May, 1883; *Crynodeb*, pp. 18-19.

milliner from the East'.¹⁸⁵ Others were able to conduct secondary businesses in distant Welsh American communities. For example, Jenkin Jones farmed near Barneveld while maintaining a creamery business in West Rosendale, about 80 miles to the northeast.¹⁸⁶

Of course, the railroads that connected Iowa County to Chicago and New York also took many of its residents to the West. The rising values of improved land encouraged many to sell their farms and seek new opportunities on the expanding frontier.¹⁸⁷ More research is needed to reveal the scale of the Welsh migration from Iowa County, but a number of the celebrated Welsh settlers of Minnesota had lived in Dodgeville.¹⁸⁸ With a heavy heart, William Williams noted the dwindling number of Calvinistic Methodists at West Blue Mounds in 1873, and the following year he and his wife, Margaret, left to spend their remaining years with their children in Minnesota.¹⁸⁹

One of those who sought to leave Dodgeville for opportunities in the west was Simon Morgan, a Welsh farmer of modest means. In 1888, Morgan wrote to W. E. Powell, the Welsh-born emigration agent for the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad, asking for information and assistance in moving to the Dakota Territory. Morgan's broken English shows telltale signs of Welsh syntax and spelling, like confusing Welsh 'hi' (she) with English 'he', and literally translating 'kill hay' for 'cut hay' from the Welsh '*lladd gwair*'. Morgan sought out Powell's help, he said, because 'i things you not lead the welsman on the crooked' (i.e., I think you will not mislead a Welshman), literally translating the Welsh phrase '*ar gam*'. Advertising himself as a

¹⁸⁵ *Dodgeville Chronicle*, 1 June, 1883.

¹⁸⁶ *Barneveld Banner*, 13 October, 1899.

¹⁸⁷ R. C. Nesbit, *History of Wisconsin III*, pp. 41-42.

¹⁸⁸ *Hanes Cymry Minnesota*, pp. 75, 128, 186, 261, 263.

¹⁸⁹ J. R. Richards, 'Llythyrau William Williams' pp. 171-173.

potential preacher, Morgan pleaded with Powell for a ticket to Dakota, promising that others would follow:

...can you give pass ole my family and the wells people wat will go aftar me if i go. Now Mistar Powal you must be a good welsman and a good criston and help your country mans ole you can and god will pay you good and your conscience be quiet for you.¹⁹⁰

It is unclear whether Morgan was a resident in Dodgeville or just passing through. His letter, however, illustrates the transient nature of much settlement in the Midwest, and the continued process of chain migration. Whether Morgan made it to Dakota or not, there must have been many others like him, whose names never appeared in the obituary columns of the Welsh-American press. Bill Jones has suggested the real numbers of Welsh immigrants may have been significantly higher than official figures, and Morgan may represent one of these unrecorded immigrants, constantly on the move.¹⁹¹ More significantly, Morgan's letter indicates that Welsh speakers with little knowledge of English sought out the assistance of other Welsh ethnics as a matter of economic survival. That he attempted to write in English may reflect a belief that he would be taken more seriously in the language of his adopted country, knowing that the recipient was a successful, assimilated immigrant. Moreover, it suggests that knowledge of English was seen as crucial to achieving prosperity, and that Welsh immigrants without it were at a distinct disadvantage in the American economy.

¹⁹⁰ Wisconsin Historical Society, File 1888 January 27. Morgan, Simon. Letter, 1888. The assistance of Powell is recommended to Welsh travelers and immigrants in W. D. Evans, *Dros Gyfanfor a Chyfandir*, p. 65.

¹⁹¹ W. D. Jones. *Wales in America*, pp. xvii-xviii.

2.4 Layered Identities

Although prosperity was elusive for Morgan, most of the Welsh in Iowa County appear to have been economically comfortable. In Dodgeville, one of the most successful and enduring retail businesses was the ‘mercantile store’ established by brothers-in-law Robert G. Owens and Hugh W. Jones in the 1860s, which operated until 1908 (Fig. 10). Never marrying, Owens became wealthy enough to tour western Canada and California after he retired and in 1911 spent two months in Wales visiting relatives.¹⁹²

The partnership was cemented by Jones’s marriage to Mary Owens, Robert’s sister. Owens’s other sister, Jennie, was the second wife of another prominent Dodgeville businessman, Samuel W. Reese. Born in Llanbrynmair in 1829, Reese arrived in the United States in 1845, settling first in Cincinnati before coming to Dodgeville in 1852. He initially worked as a clerk in a general store before taking up the study of law in 1856. Admitted to the bar two years later, Reese embarked on a varied career, serving as president of the village board, district attorney and later, mayor, after Dodgeville was incorporated as a city. Perhaps his most lasting contribution to the prosperity of Dodgeville was the establishment of the village’s first bank in 1871.¹⁹³ Indeed, Reese had joined the local economic elite as ‘one of the solid men of Iowa County’.¹⁹⁴ However, while a quintessentially American ‘self-made man,’ he was also a good Welshman. When

¹⁹² ICHS Genealogy File OWENS.2007.153.1

¹⁹³ *History of Iowa County*, p. 897; A. M. Thomson, *A Political History of Wisconsin*, (Milwaukee: C. N. Casper, 1902), p. 386. Thomson gives Reese’s birthdate as 1830. Reese’s first wife was Alice L. Ennor, a native of Cornwall who died in 1881.

¹⁹⁴ *History of Iowa County*, p. 897.

the state's Welsh Congregationalists needed legal assistance to incorporate in 1897, they turned to Reese, noting his connection to two of their denomination's renowned divines:



Fig. 10. The Jones and Owens Mercantile Store in Dodgeville.
(Iowa County Historical Society)

Nid rhyfedd am garedigrwydd Mr. Reese a'i baroddrwydd i 'weini ar y seint,' canys un o fechgyn yr Hen Gapel, Llanbryn-mair ydyw, ac wedi ei feithrin yn athrawiaethau efengyl Mab Duw gan y fath ddynion a'r Parchn. Samuel a John Roberts.¹⁹⁵

Mr. Reese's kindness and willingness to 'serve the saints' is no surprise, because he is a son of the Old Chapel at Llanbryn-mair, and was nourished with the philosophy of the gospel of the Son of God by such men as the Reverends Samuel and John Roberts.

Just as John Davies had evoked the great Methodist revival, so Reese represented a link to the hotbed of nineteenth-century Welsh Congregationalism. Like most of his fellow immigrants, Reese comfortably expressed what Jon Gjerde has described as 'layered identities' in that his ethnic identity complemented his American citizenship.¹⁹⁶ For the Welsh, once the barrier of language had been negotiated, the distance between these two identities was short in contrast to that which separated many of Wisconsin's other immigrants from their new country and complicated their assimilation. However, in common with these other groups, religious and ethnic allegiances defined Welsh engagement with the state and participation in electoral politics.

2.5 Good Citizens

When Owen C. Jones of Dodgeville died in 1908, the few lines in his obituary devoted to his role as a citizen could easily have summarized the political participation of many of Iowa County's Welsh in the second half of the nineteenth century. Jones had been:

... yn ddinesydd da, ac yn teimlo dyddordeb mewn diwygiadau gwleidyddol a moesol, ac fel y cyfryw yr oedd yn teimlo yn falch fod dinas Dodgeville wedi cael buddugoliaeth ar bleidwyr y saloons yn etholiad y gwanwyn diweddfaf.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁵ *Y Cenhadwr Americanaidd*, August 1897, p. 247.

¹⁹⁶ J. Gjerde, *The Minds of the West*, pp. 59-60.

¹⁹⁷ *Y Drych*, 20 February 1908.

...a good citizen, interested in political and moral reforms, and as such was proud that the city of Dodgeville was victorious over the saloon party in the elections last spring.

Motivated by concerns that grew directly out of their religious convictions, the Welsh had become full participants in the political life of the republic by the end of the nineteenth century. They were noted as the most naturalized of any nationality, more eager to become citizens of the United States than other British immigrants.¹⁹⁸ Many realized they were unlikely to return to Wales and were less emotionally attached to the British crown than English or Scottish immigrants.¹⁹⁹ Besides, rural Wales was already geographically and linguistically distant from the centres of economic and political power, and the Welsh had no political apparatus of their own to command their loyalty. For many immigrants, shifting allegiance from the crown to the republic was an act of duty and obedience to the powers that be.

For R. D. Thomas, who advised his countrymen to become citizens at the earliest opportunity, good citizenship was intrinsic to Christian behaviour:

‘Byddwch yn ddeiliaid ufudd i’r Llywodraeth; yn gymydogion caredig a heddychol; yn grefyddwyr duwiol, haelionus, tangnefeddus a ffyddlon ... Ymroddwch i roddi addysg da i’ch plant.’²⁰⁰

Be obedient subjects of the Government; kind and peaceful neighbours; godly, generous, peaceful and faithful believers... Devote yourself to giving your children a good education.

His advice could just as easily come from a chapel pulpit in Wales. The difference was that in the United States the Welsh could live under a more responsive and representative government. Until late in the nineteenth century in Wales, suffrage was limited and political power remained in the hands of the gentry and wealthy

¹⁹⁸ R. T. Berthoff, *British Immigrants*, p. 140.

¹⁹⁹ P. G. Davies, *Welsh in Wisconsin*, p. 35.

²⁰⁰ R. D. Thomas, *Hanes Cymry America*, p. 82.

landowners.²⁰¹ The American republic's limited democracy afforded a Welshman—although not a Welsh woman—a greater voice in public life.

Citizenship was not a prerequisite to participation, since suffrage was contingent on residency during much of the period under study. White male non-citizens could vote in Wisconsin until the practice was phased out by an amendment to the state constitution approved in 1908.²⁰² Neither, it should be added, was political office attractive to many of the century's earliest Welsh immigrants, and few first-generation Welsh-Americans participated in government above the county level.²⁰³ However, almost immediately upon arrival, the Welsh were eager to participate in the governance of their local communities.

2.6 A Self-governing Community

Public education was established in Wisconsin upon statehood in 1848 with the establishment of districts that could raise taxes for education. The taxpayers in each district met annually to elect a board and vote on district matters such as schoolhouse construction or the subjects to be taught. It should be noted that school was often intermittent, and attendance was not compulsory.²⁰⁴ Records from the board meetings of one school district at Pecatonica reveal that the Welsh were eager to attend and vote at the annual meeting. Furthermore, they did so, at times, in their native language (Fig. 11). The Welsh embrace of the 'common school' is no surprise, since the movement that

²⁰¹ R. Davies, *Hope and Heartbreak*, pp. 100-101.

²⁰² R. B. Fowler, *Wisconsin Votes: An Electoral History* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2008), p. 5.

²⁰³ A. K. Knowles, *Waukesha County*, p. 97.

²⁰⁴ R. N. Current, *The History of Wisconsin, Vol. II*, pp. 161-169.

The Text Books used in School are as follows

Spelling Books Webster
Reading Books Mc Guffey and Towns
Arithmetic Greenleaf and Adams
Kind of School Houses 2 frame
Value of same \$150

I hereby Certify that the above is correct Statement
of facts required to be reported that Common
School has been taught in this District during the
past year for six months by a qualified Teacher
Dated this 1 day of September, A D 1858
John W. Jones District Clerk

C. Cyfarfod Blynyddol y District No. 3 in the Town
of Mifflin yr hun a gynhalioed Medi 27, 1858
Gweithrediaid yr Cyfarfod sydd fel y canlyn
yn 1 Dewisiwyd John Davies yn Gadeirydd y Cyfarfod
yn 2 Dewisiwyd Siyddogion am yr amser dyfodol
David Davies yn Director am 3 blynedd

Robert W. Hughes yn Dmysoydd am 2 flynedd
J. W. Jones yn ysgrifennydd am 1 flynedd
yn 3 Passiwyd fod yr Ysgol i ddedura yn mis Nawrth 1859
yn 4 Passiwyd fod \$40 Dallar o drath i gael ei chodi yn
y district at dalu yr Ysgol feister
yn 5 fod \$5 Dallar o drath at flack Beard a phethon orail
yn 6 Passiwyd i fod y Beard i mofyn dyn neu fenyw
i gadw ysgol fel y byddont yn gwelod yn orau
yn 7 Passiwyd fod y Cyfarfod blynyddol nesaf i
fod am 2 or gloch y Prydsawn

Fig. 11. A page from the record book of Mifflin School District No. 3, showing notes in English and Welsh.

inspired Wisconsin's system was the project of Calvinistic reformers from New England.²⁰⁵

The earliest recorded meeting of Mifflin School District No. 3 was held in 1851 at which district decided to raise a tax levy of \$40 and set the first of April, 1852 as the start of the next school term. This inaugural meeting took place at the 'Welsh Calvinistical Church' (sic), suggesting that many of the officers and attendees were members of that congregation.²⁰⁶ Interestingly, the man chosen as director, William Owens, was later described as non-religious, but as one of the community's earliest settlers may have been looked up to due to his age and experience.²⁰⁷ Two other founders of the settlement, John Hughes and John W. Jones, were elected as treasurer and clerk respectively. Both Owens and Jones also served as supervisors on the town of Mifflin board, and appear to have been that board's only Welsh officers through the 1850s.²⁰⁸ In subsequent years, the Rev. John Davies is listed as chairman of the meeting, further evidence of the status he held among the Welsh at Pecatonica. For this immigrant community, religious and secular governance lay with the same set of 'elders', and the republic was a logical extension of existing structures of self-regulation.

The annual meeting minutes were sometimes recorded in Welsh by secretaries who probably assumed their notes would only be read by fellow Welsh speakers, although the practice ceased in the 1860s as settlers of different ethnic backgrounds arrived in the district. The board approved a number of English-language textbooks,

²⁰⁵ P. Theobald, *Call School: Rural Education in the Midwest to 1918* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1995), pp. 6-31.

²⁰⁶ WHS Iowa Small Series 1 School District No. 3, Town of Mifflin. District record, 1851-1867. Entry dated 29 September, 1851.

²⁰⁷ *Crynodeb*, p. 13.

²⁰⁸ *History of Iowa County*, p. 818.

including the standard McGuffey reading books, although it appears that books were to be purchased by parents or provided by the teacher, in keeping with the practice of the time.²⁰⁹ The Welsh were eager to teach their children English, in keeping with their belief that the language was the key to success in their new country. Jenkin Lloyd Jones's experience growing up in rural Jefferson County, Wisconsin, must have been similar to that of the Welsh children at Pecatonica:

I learned to speak, read, and love the English language. My first teacher was a Cambro-American who could by her bi-lingual accomplishment ease the way of the little Welsh immigrant children into English. I think I can remember crying when the teacher would speak to me in the then unintelligible English.²¹⁰

It is possible that Hugh W. Lewis, a Welsh immigrant, provided similar comfort to Welsh-speaking children during his three-month employment beginning in 1857.²¹¹ Teachers George Brammall, Jemima Ann Shannon and Ellen Smith may have had a much harder time communicating with some of their pupils.²¹²

Even if the school board had preferred Welsh-born teachers, the pool of candidates willing to do this poorly compensated work was probably limited. Teaching was barely a profession, and teachers were hired for short, three-month terms at most. The salary was modest, and women earned less than men.²¹³ The prevalence of non-Welsh teachers was due to necessity, but settlers knew their children would be totally immersed in English in school, underscoring their commitment to linguistic assimilation.

²⁰⁹ WHS Mifflin school district record, 1 September, 1858. On textbooks, see P. Theobald, *Call School*, pp. 85-86.

²¹⁰ J. Lloyd Jones. *An Artilleryman's Diary*. (Wisconsin History Commission, 1914), p. xii.

²¹¹ WHS Mifflin school district record. Hugh Lewis's contract dated 6 December, 1858 [sic]. From reading the contract, it is clear the secretary wrote down the wrong year. This appears to be the Welsh-born Hugh Lewis listed in the 1860 federal manuscript census.

²¹² Contracts for these three teachers appear in the records from 1852, 1853 and 1858 respectively.

²¹³ P. Theobald, *Call School*, pp. 92-101.

As long as Welsh remained the language of the home and chapel, the Pecatonica settlers were happy to adopt the language of their new country in public life.

Through this particular project of self-governance the Pecatonica Welsh learned the ropes of participation in the republic. It took the pivotal conflict over slavery and federal power to shape the Welsh into loyal Americans and determine their political orientation for the remainder of the century.

2.7 'The Rights of Black and White under Heaven'

While the Welsh of Iowa County were negotiating the essentials of education, they were no doubt aware of the storm brewing hundreds of miles away. No political issue was of greater import in the first half of the nineteenth century than slavery and its expansion as new states joined the union.

The Welsh in the United States were overwhelmingly opposed to slavery, reflecting their Nonconformist denominations' disapproval of the practice. Much of the credit for this can be given to the Rev. Robert Everett, a Congregational Minister in New York State. Everett's *Y Cenhadwr Americanaidd* was the foremost vehicle of abolitionism among Welsh readers, complemented by his translation of the anti-slavery novel, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Furthermore, Everett went beyond many contemporaries in expressing a deep sympathy for African Americans and a genuine belief in racial equality.²¹⁴ Most notably, his son's letters from 'Bleeding Kansas' eventually convinced Everett that armed conflict was inevitable and justified in ending slavery. Initially

²¹⁴ The most comprehensive study of Everett and his work is J. Hunter, *I Ddeffro Ysbryd y Wlad: Robert Everett a'i Ymgyrch yn Erbyn Caethwasanaeth Americanaidd* (Gwasg Carreg Gwalch, 2007). See also, J. Hunter, *Sons of Arthur, Children of Lincoln: Welsh Writing from the American Civil War* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2007), pp. 49-91.

pacifistic, the Welsh immigrant community followed Everett's change of heart.²¹⁵ Both *Y Cenhadwr* and *Y Drych*, which became unabashedly anti-slavery in the 1850s, endorsed the Republican Party, drawing Welsh Americans further into partisan politics. During the war, *Y Drych* fiercely condemned antislavery pacifists as Confederate sympathizers, thus reinforcing sentiment behind the Union war effort, President Lincoln and the Republicans.²¹⁶

As Jerry Hunter has proven, the Welsh were exceptional in seeing the Civil War as a struggle to end slavery, as most northerners, even if they disapproved of slavery, were more concerned with crushing the rebellion and saving the union.²¹⁷ Wisconsin was no exception. In contrast to the Welsh, many of the state's Germans and Irish were unwilling to fight for the 'negro' and sympathized with the Democratic Party, which urged reconciliation with the south.²¹⁸

Among the Welsh in Iowa County, passionate support of the war was tempered with ambivalence about actually joining the Union Army, particularly as the war dragged on and conscription, rather than voluntary service, became the norm. Late in 1864 the Reverend Evan Owen gratefully received \$484.10 from the area's Welsh Congregationalist churches to avoid the draft and help pay for a substitute to serve in his place. Although the practice was considered respectable Owen took pains to explain that 'Ar y pryd nid oedd genyf olwg na bwriad am ddim ond myn'd i'r rhyfel a gwasanaethu

²¹⁵ J. Hunter, *I Ddeffro Ysbryd y Wlad*, pp.188-205.

²¹⁶ A. Jones and B. Jones, *Welsh Reflections: Y Drych and America 1851-2001* (Llandysul: Gomer Press, 2001) pp. 17-24.

²¹⁷ J. Hunter, *Sons of Arthur*, pp. 182-188.

²¹⁸ R. N. Current, *The History of Wisconsin, Vol. II.*, pp. 312-319.

fy nhymor os cawn fyw.’²¹⁹ (*At the time I had no intention other than going to the war and serving my term if I survived.*)

Although the Rev. Owen avoided going to war, eventually the conflict came to him with the death of one of his congregants, Dafydd Roach, early in 1865. Conscripted the prior year, the 39 year-old father of six had refused donations to hire a substitute. When his wife, Ann, the eldest daughter of miner-poet Robert C. Owens, brought the money to her husband encamped in Madison, he refused because ‘teimlai mai ei ddyledswydd i’w Dduw a’i wlad oedd myned ei hunan’²²⁰ (*he felt it was his duty to his God and his country to go himself*).

Roach’s first experience of battle was to be his last. Shot in the abdomen at Hatcher’s Run in Virginia, he was buried on the battlefield. Back in Wisconsin, the Rev. Owen conducted a funeral service, and another local minister sent an obituary to *Y Cenhadwr* on behalf of a church that had lost ‘un o’i cholofnau cryfaf’ (*one of its strongest pillars*).²²¹ ‘Trebor’s’ elegy for his son-in-law, ‘Galareb’ (*Mourning*), appeared in the same issue and expresses the ideological foundation of Roach’s service:

Nid oedd ynddo duedd bradwr,
Gwir wladgarwr ydoedd ef;
Fe ddadleuai dros iawnderau
Du a gwyn o dan y nef;
Gelyn perffaith i gaethiwed,
Free press, free speech a byth free men,
Oedd ei enwog arwyddeiriau,
Er cael saethau llawer sen.²²²

*There was in him no treacherous tendency,
He was a true patriot;
He argued for the rights*

²¹⁹ *Y Cenhadwr Americanaidd*, January 1865, p. 20.

²²⁰ *Y Cenhadwr Americanaidd*, July, 1865, p. 217-218.

²²¹ *ibid.*, p. 218.

²²² *ibid.*, p. 210.

*Of black and white under heaven;
A perfect enemy to slavery,
Free press, free speech and forever free men,
Were his famous mottos,
Despite the arrows of rebuke.*

Trebor's elegy draws a line between his virtuous son-in-law and the treacherous Confederates and also implies that Roach believed sincerely in racial equality.

Furthermore, the words 'free press, free speech' and 'free men', refer directly to the Republican Party's 1856 presidential campaign: while violence engulfed Kansas, the newly formed party and its candidate, John C. Frémont, adopted the slogan 'Free press, free speech, free Kansas, free men and Frémont'.²²³ As the only English words in the poem, they declare Roach's (and more so, Trebor's) loyalty to an English-speaking political culture, and indeed to a political party.

The language of the rest of the poem may be Welsh, but the theology departs from the pacifistic Calvinism preached in Wales and celebrates a militaristic faith inextricably bound to the fate of the American nation:

Milwr da yn myddin Iesu,
Ydoedd Dafydd yn ei oes;
Swyddog ffyddlon i'w wasanaeth,
Yn milwriaeth fawr y groes;
Er i'w gorph gael ergyd marwol
Gan angeuol fradwr cam,
Aeth ei ysbryd i baradwys,
I fynwes hoff'r hen Abraham.²²⁴

*A good soldier in the army of Jesus,
Was Dafydd in his time;
A faithful officer in His service,
In the great war of the cross;
Although his body was mortally wounded
By a twisted, murderous traitor,*

²²³ R. N. Current, *The History of Wisconsin, Vol. II.*, p. 232.

²²⁴ *Y Cenhadwr Americanaidd*, July, 1865, p. 210.

*His spirit went to paradise,
To the beloved bosom of old Abraham.*

Although the poem refers explicitly to the biblical Abraham, it is impossible to read this stanza without thinking of President Lincoln, even though Roach died three months before his assassination. Indeed, ‘Galareb’ is followed in *Y Cenhadwr* by poems dedicated to Lincoln. Owens probably put pen to paper some months after both deaths, and his use of the patriarch’s name seems a conscious invocation of the slain president.

Those who could not help free the slaves by fighting were willing to contribute in other ways. At a prayer meeting at Pecatonica in 1865, \$22.75 was collected ‘at gynorthwyo y Negroaid Rhyddion, pa rai sydd wrth y miloedd yn croesi y llinell o gaethiwed i ryddid’²²⁵ (*to help the Free Negroes, who in their thousands are crossing the line from slavery to freedom*). It has also been claimed that the Pecatonica Welsh assisted fugitive slaves fleeing via the so-called Underground Railroad, a network of safe houses.²²⁶ The community also welcomed a freed slave into their community after the war.

The exact circumstances of James D. Williams’s emancipation are unclear, and one source suggests he was ‘bought’ out of slavery by Edward Williams, a Pecatonica settler serving in the Union army.²²⁷ Whatever the facts, the former slave lived in the Welsh Settlement for the rest of his life. Williams never married and lived with several families through the years, farming and mining lead (Fig. 12). He could also be relied upon to help his neighbours at harvest time and was remembered as ‘a good Christian man. He liked everyone and everyone liked him ... He played an accordion and had a

²²⁵ *Y Cyfaill o’r Hen Wlad*, February 1865, p. 43.

²²⁶ M. Knebel, *In the Shadows of the Mines*, p. 40.

²²⁷ ICHS, ‘Welsh Element’, p. 2.

beautiful singing voice.²²⁸ Indeed, Williams joined the Carmel congregation where he learned to sing Welsh hymns, and joked about being ‘the only Welsh negro in history’.²²⁹

Williams died in 1903 and was buried under a stone that proudly declares him ‘made free by President Lincoln’s proclamation’. The obituary in the Dodgeville Chronicle pointed out that ‘although “Jim,” as he was known by his friends, was one of the colored race, he was very highly esteemed by his acquaintances’.²³⁰ Therein lies the rub, for the meagre accounts of his life suggest the relationship between Williams and the Welsh was tinged with the paternalism typical of many whites who sympathized with African Americans. More troubling, he was remembered as ‘Nigger Jim’ by second-generation residents and the lead diggings on his land were known as the ‘Nigger Mine’.²³¹ Did a belief in racial equality erode as the memory of the Civil War faded and the Welsh assimilated attitudes more typical of white American society at the time? Clearly the relationship between Williams and the Welsh is difficult to comprehend from a modern perspective. Williams was probably the only African American the Pecatonica settlers knew well; there were very few blacks in Iowa County. However, in neighbouring Grant County a small settlement of former slaves thrived, where blacks and whites shared schools and churches and in a few cases intermarried.²³² Had Williams suffered unbearable prejudice, Pleasant Ridge would have provided a safe haven. His decision to put down roots at Pecatonica is the strongest evidence that Williams considered himself an equal and integral member of the community.

²²⁸ *ibid.*

²²⁹ P. G. Davies, *Welsh in Wisconsin*, pp. 40-41.

²³⁰ *Dodgeville Chronicle*, 14 August 1903.

²³¹ ICHS, ‘Welsh Element’, p. 2. Also, H. Gibbon, ‘A History of my Community’ in WHS Platteville SC 79 Rural Sociology Class Papers, 1944-1954.

²³² Z. Cooper, *Black Settlers in Rural Wisconsin* (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin Press, 1977), pp. 21-29.



Fig. 12. James D. Williams (left) and neighbours at work clearing stumps from the fields at Pecatonica (Iowa County Historical Society).

2.8 Piety and Politics

The identification of the party of Lincoln with victory over the rebellion and the end of slavery shaped the Welsh into a loyal Republican voting bloc until the early twentieth century. A review of the short biographies of Welsh citizens in *The History of Iowa County* reveals overwhelming identification with the Republican Party.²³³ At least one candidate for the post of county judge felt compelled to publish a press release in Welsh in *Y Drych* to make sure Welsh voters knew he was running as a Republican.²³⁴ When Samuel W. Reese failed to gain support from fellow Republicans for a nomination to the

²³³See short biographies of prominent citizens in Dodgeville, pp. 880-906 and Mifflin, pp. 917-930.

²³⁴*Y Drych*, 30 March, 1893.

state ticket he complained to fellow Welshman William A. Jones that the party took the Welsh vote for granted.²³⁵

Jones himself was a nephew of the Rev. John Davies and served two terms in the state assembly as a Republican and was another leading member of the county's party before being selected as Commissioner of Indian Affairs by President William McKinley.²³⁶ Similarly, Iowa County Judge John T. Jones was a lifelong Republican although his reputation earned the support of the local Democrats and the Prohibition Party as well.²³⁷

During this period, the Republican Party dominated Iowa County politics, and could count on the support of the majority as well as the *Dodgeville Chronicle* which served as the party mouthpiece (in contrast to the *Mineral Point Democrat*). Under the name 'Wisconsin Eagle', correspondent D. D. Evans of Jennieton became vociferously partisan as elections approached, as his 1880 endorsement of Isaac Davis for County Treasurer illustrates:

...he is from a good Republican stock, is a son of John D. Davis (Talgoed), an old and respected resident of our town, is well educated, strictly temperate and in every respect thoroughly reliable.²³⁸

Since temperance played such a significant role in religious life, the Welsh vote was heavily influenced by Republican appeals to moral concerns. The relative prosperity of the Midwest in the postwar decades meant that these issues, rather than economic concerns, often played a role in electoral politics. Indeed, when economic anxiety became

²³⁵ MPHS, W. A. Jones papers, S. W. Reese to W. A. Jones 30 July 1894.

²³⁶ *Mineral Point Democrat*, 26 September 1912.

²³⁷ *The Cambrian*, November 1893, pp. 321-322.

²³⁸ *Dodgeville Chronicle*, 2 April 1880.

significant, short-lived third parties arose only to peter out as prosperity returned.²³⁹

Although generally a Republican supporter, Thomas Lloyd Jones attended meetings of the Greenback party, which advocated creating inflation to ease indebtedness. He also joined the quasi-political Patrons of Husbandry, commonly known as the Grange.²⁴⁰ An agrarian reform movement that arose after the onset of the 1873 depression, the Grange pressed for government regulation of grain-elevator operators and railroad companies. As the crisis subsided, the Grange became more of an educational society for farmers.²⁴¹

Ultimately, the zeal of abolitionism was redirected towards the evil of the saloon. Although the Republican party elite was careful not to push the issue too far, alcohol was bundled with the treacherous South and Catholic immigration as dire threats to prosperity and progress.²⁴² D. D. Evans cheerfully exploited the overheated rhetoric, claiming that a local Democrat who tumbled while campaigning was ‘evidently in sympathy with Southern habits, and believes in Kentucky treats’.²⁴³

Given the emphasis on temperance and teetotalism among the Welsh, it is no surprise they appear to have been more concerned about alcohol than other voters, even aggressively prohibitionist. Unable to turn the state or the nation dry, Dodgeville’s prohibitionists could finally celebrate the passage of a ‘No License’ ordinance in 1908, which banned saloons in the city limits. The city was held up as an example by the Wisconsin Anti-Saloon League, which printed a pamphlet extolling the benefits of

²³⁹ R. B. Fowler, *Wisconsin Votes*, pp. 32-62.

²⁴⁰ Thomas Lloyd Jones, diaries; Lloyd Jones attended a Greenback meeting in Dodgeville 17 September 1877 and attended Grange meetings, 17 September 1879, 11 January 1882, 1 February 1882. He is also mentioned as a Grange member in the *Dodgeville Chronicle*, December 3, 1880; on the Greenback party platform, see R. B. Fowler, *Wisconsin Votes*, pp. 43-45.

²⁴¹ R. C. Nesbit, *History of Wisconsin III*, pp. 96-100.

²⁴² R. B. Fowler, *Wisconsin Votes*, p. 50.

²⁴³ *Dodgeville Chronicle*, 15 October 1880.

prohibition. The pamphlet quoted a number of businessmen of Welsh birth or extraction who claimed the law had increased prosperity and public morale.²⁴⁴

In this moralistic political environment, religion and ethnicity, rather than economic class, determined partisan affiliation. Paul Kleppner and Richard Jensen have established that the Midwestern electorate was roughly divided into two religious factions. Protestant ‘pietists’ sought to legislate moral reforms and threw their support behind the Republicans. The Democratic Party drew on support from ‘liturgical’ voters such as the Catholics and Lutherans who saw morality as the business of the church rather than the state. Wisconsin’s sizeable German population strongly opposed the Republicans and saw anti-Catholic and prohibitionist sentiment in particular as an attack on their culture. Since before the Civil War, the Republicans had also relied on the support of anti-Catholic voters who believed the pope had political designs on the United States.²⁴⁵

These divisions were not concrete, and ironically it was a Catholic Republican, Michael Bennett of Dodgeville, whose legislation in the state assembly brought Wisconsin’s religious and ethnic tensions to a head. In 1889 the state assembly passed Bennett’s law requiring all schools in the state to teach in English, including the Catholic and Lutheran parochial schools. The reaction to the law was furious enough to break the Republican grip on state government, as Germans streamed to the polls in 1890 and gave the Democrats the governorship and both houses of the legislature. The law would ultimately be repealed and the Republican majority would return, but for several years

²⁴⁴ ‘Dodgeville’s No License Law.’ Undated pamphlet published by the Wisconsin Anti-Saloon League. WHS, unnumbered accession. John J. Roberts and John R. Jones collected papers.

²⁴⁵ R. Jensen, *The winning of the Midwest: social and political conflict, 1888-1896* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), pp.58-88 and P. Kleppner, *The Cross of Culture: a Social Analysis of Midwestern Politics, 1850-1900* (New York: Free Press, 1970), pp. 36-91.

ethnic and religious differences played an even more disproportionate role in state politics.²⁴⁶

True to their ‘pietistic’ beliefs, the Welsh remained firmly in the Republican camp. At their annual meeting at Barneveld and Spring Green in 1890, the state’s Welsh Congregationalists resolved to support the Bennett Law in order to prove ‘conclusively the loyalty of the Welsh people to the laws and institutions of their adopted country’. The law was a ‘wise and necessary enactment’ since although the Welsh:

... cling very tenaciously to the use of their native language in the home circle and in their religious assemblies they wholly disapprove of the violent denunciations of compulsory teaching of English in the public schools, by sectarian bigots and political agitators ...²⁴⁷

Welsh-American identity was now tied even more closely to the English language, and in supporting the Bennett Law, the Welsh condemned other immigrants who tried to perpetuate their native language and culture in the public sphere. Reinforcing this commitment, the Welsh Congregationalists published the resolution in English in *Y Cenhadwr* followed by an extraordinary declaration of Welsh-American exceptionalism:

Nothing fires a Welshman’s heart more quickly or calls from him a more determined opposition than the encroachments of Rome. They have sworn eternal enmity to its oppression. They desire to see their adopted country as free from its abominations as their beloved Cambria beyond the sea is. It would have done good to our weak-kneed native American politicians to listen to the scathing castigation administered by these sturdy descendants of the Penrys and Walter Caradocs and other eminent Welsh reformers to that class of office seekers, who would sacrifice their birthright, honor, and religion to the minions of Rome for political preference and power.²⁴⁸

²⁴⁶ R. B. Fowler, *Wisconsin Votes*, pp. 69-70.

²⁴⁷ *Y Cenhadwr Americanaidd*, July 1890, p. 222.

²⁴⁸ *ibid.*

Laying bare ethnic and religious divisions, the Bennett Law controversy had whipped this assembly of divines into a patriotic frenzy and justified their own sectarian prejudices. Furthermore, they believed the moral force the Welsh had inherited from their ancestors made them more reliable defenders of the republic than their American legislators, many of whom had qualms about supporting the law too strongly.²⁴⁹ Wisconsin's ethnic politics afforded expression of a virulent anti-Catholicism among some of the Welsh that had remained academic among the Nonconformist revivalists in the old country. Once awakened, this sentiment would remain a potent force, and as late as 1914, Rev. Griffith Griffiths of Pecatonica reported that almost every household there subscribed to *The Menace*, an anti-immigrant magazine in which:

...y dynoethir dirgeloedd y Babaeth ac y tynir y llen megys oddi ar lygredd ac aflendid Sodomaidd arweinwyr yr eglwys Babaid, yn nghyd a'u cyfrwysdra dichelldrwg i gael y Pab, nid yn unig yn gynrychiolydd Crist, ac yn frenin nefoedd, daear ac uffern, ond mewn modd arbenig yn frenin ac yn ben ar yr Unol Daleithiau.²⁵⁰

... the mysteries of Catholicism are exposed and the curtain is raised from the Sodomitical corruption and filth of the leaders of the Catholic church, as well as their cunning and evil scheme to make the Pope, not only the representative of Christ, and the king of heaven, earth and hell, but in a particular fashion ruler of the United States.

Embracing this poisonous rhetoric, Griffiths and his fellow *Menace*-readers saw themselves cleaving to an American identity that was predominantly Protestant and Anglo-Saxon. Whether supporting prohibitionist legislation or contrasting their loyalty to their adopted country with the perceived disloyalty of others, the Welsh tried to present themselves as 'good' immigrants. Although still eager to identify themselves as Welsh by birth or descent and adhere to the Calvinistic faith of their fathers, through their own

²⁴⁹ R. Jensen, *Winning of the Midwest*, p. 145.

²⁵⁰ *Y Drych*, 19 March 1914.

assimilationist polemics—expressed ironically at times in Welsh—they asserted themselves not only as citizens of the United States but also as English-speaking Americans.

Part Three: Integration

3.1 'The Cream among your own Nationality'

Samuel W. Reese, John T. Jones and William A. Jones were the most prominent and successful of the Iowa County Welsh in the late nineteenth century. Unlike the myriad ministers and preachers celebrated in the pages of the denominational magazines, these ambitious and practical Welshmen were obligated to serve a wider community. Reese was praised for the solvency of his bank, his support of local charities and his unwavering Republicanism.²⁵¹ Judge Jones, who had had the good fortune to work in Madison in the office of Welsh-born Secretary of State Llewellyn Breese, enjoyed broad support from the county's voters and the endorsement of the Democratic as well as Republican party.²⁵²

The career of William A. Jones merits even more discussion (Fig. 13). A nephew of the Rev. John Davies, he arrived in Wisconsin at the age of six and was raised in a Welsh-speaking household at Pocatonia. Jones was educated at the Platteville State Normal School and worked as a schoolteacher before becoming Superintendent of Iowa County Schools. However, Jones aggressively pursued successful careers in business and politics, and went into banking in Mineral Point before turning his talents to the Mineral Point Railroad Company and the Mineral Point Zinc Company. Jones was elected mayor of Mineral Point and in 1894, to the state assembly. He was elected twice to the state assembly before being appointed Commissioner of Indian Affairs by President William McKinley in 1897, in which post he would serve until 1907.²⁵³

²⁵¹ *Dodgeville Chronicle*, 24 October 1902.

²⁵² *The Cambrian*, November 1893, p. 322.

²⁵³ *Mineral Point Democrat*, 26 September 1912.

Jones's tenure in the Bureau of Indian Affairs was marked by his aggressive reform of the corruption that influenced contracts between the government agencies and merchants who supplied provisions for reservation rations. His success in rooting out cronyism earned high praise from newspaper editors who regarded him as 'a man possessing the highest ideals of a public servant'.²⁵⁴

Administrative reform was not the only agenda Jones pursued in Washington, for he was also more eager than previous commissioners to change the Indians themselves. Jones cut the rations they received from the government to encourage self-sufficiency. It was a policy that met with general approval, although Jones's edict that the Indians shorten their hair and cease using traditional names was ridiculed in some quarters. 'Americanization' was not just for immigrants, and Jones sincerely believed his policies were in the best interests of the Indians themselves.²⁵⁵ Jones was probably informed by his own journey from Welsh-speaking immigrant to English-speaking American. He had, after all, come from relatively poor circumstances and his mother had refused to speak the 'devil's language'.²⁵⁶ His prosperity rested on his participation in an English-speaking economy and political establishment. His residence in Mineral Point, which had a negligible Welsh population, and membership of the local Episcopal church were additional steps away from his Welsh upbringing.²⁵⁷

Information about Jones's relationships with other Welsh Americans is far from complete, and the extent of his participation in Welsh events is unclear. In 1895 he was

²⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁵ WHS MSS 495 Jones, William A. Papers, 1873, 1892-1911. Assorted newspaper clippings. For a summary of Jones's agenda and accomplishments, see F. P. Prucha, *The Great Father: The United States Government and the American Indians*, Vol. II (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984), pp. 764-766.

²⁵⁶ MPHS, 'Recollections of David B. Jones.' Unpublished manuscript by E. H. Bennett.

²⁵⁷ Jones's membership of Trinity Episcopal Church from *Mineral Point Democrat*, 26 September 1912.

invited to preside over a section of the ‘Milwaukee Musical Eisteddfod’.²⁵⁸ A decade later he was invited by W. E. Powell to attend a banquet in Milwaukee to celebrate St. David’s Day, at which he could expect to ‘meet the cream among your own Nationality’.²⁵⁹ Although Jones was in demand as a leading representative of Welsh America, and was well known in Welsh-American business circles, he may have been ambivalent at best about this role. He does not appear to have garnered much attention in the Welsh American newspapers, and his Welsh origins merited little mention in the local or national press.

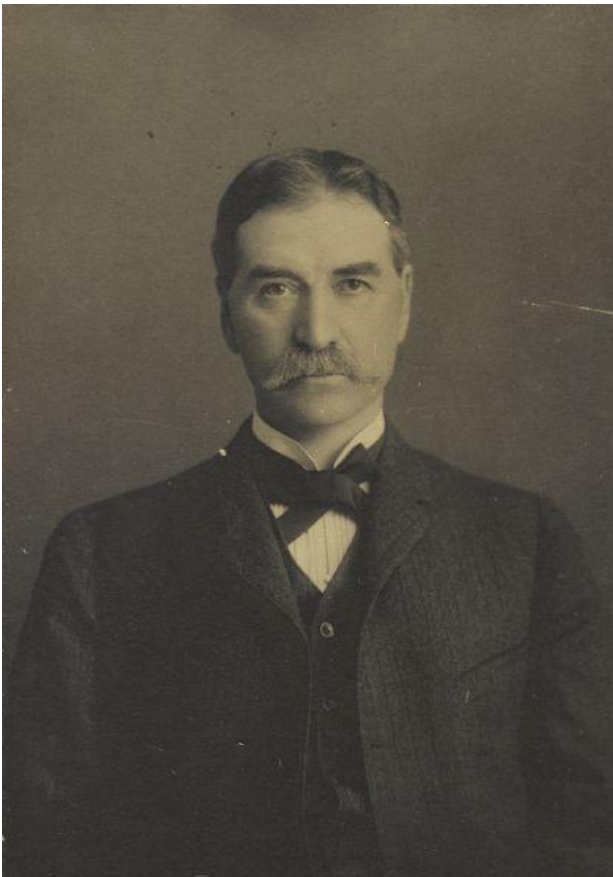


Fig. 13. William A. Jones
(Wisconsin Historical Society,
WHi-30865)

²⁵⁸ MPHS, W. A. Jones papers, O.W. Williams to W. A. Jones 30 November 1895.

²⁵⁹ *ibid.*, E. Powell to W. A. Jones, 17 January 1905.

Like Powell, Jones received pleas of assistance from fellow Welshmen. William Apmadoc of the Chicago Cymmrodorion Society sent a request to Jones in Washington to have one David Rosser, ‘an admirable Welsh gentleman in every respect’, employed at the Chicago Indian Commission office.²⁶⁰ Jones also received a solicitation asking for a donation to the new University of Wales at Bangor, written in both English and Welsh because the sender was uncertain of the recipient’s language.²⁶¹ Jones never appears to have used Welsh after childhood, and it is no surprise that he along with Iowa County’s other Welsh Republicans corresponded with each other in English.²⁶² Attitudes to the language had changed, particularly among the Welsh-American elite, which no longer saw knowledge of it as essential to Welsh identity.²⁶³ Indeed, for men like Jones, their allegiance not only to the United States, but also to what they perceived to be American political and cultural values, superseded their tenuous connection to Wales and other Welsh Americans. Exemplified by Iowa County’s leading Welshmen, this shift in perspective mirrored a decline in the use of Welsh in immigrant communities throughout the United States.

3.2 Greener Pastures

By the 1890s, Iowa County’s Welsh population was mature and prosperous, much like Welsh America as a whole. Undoubtedly many visited the World’s Fair and Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893, where they could marvel at American ingenuity and

²⁶⁰ WHS MSS 495 Jones, William A. Papers, 1873, 1892-1911. W. Apmadoc to W. A. Jones 22 February 1901.

²⁶¹ *ibid.*, L. D. Jones to W. A. Jones, 9 February 1904.

²⁶² MPHS, W. A. Jones papers. This collection contains a number of letters between Jones, Samuel W. Reese and Thomas Williams of Barneveld that discuss Republican politics. All are in English.

²⁶³ W. D. Jones, ‘The Welsh Language and Welsh Identity in a Pennsylvanian Community’ in G. H. Jenkins, ed., *Language and Community in the Nineteenth Century* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1998), 262-286.

exciting technology that would become commonplace in the following century. The famous *eisteddfod* which was held at the fair was perhaps the apogee of Welsh culture in the United States.

Iowa County however was hundreds of miles from the geographic focus of Welsh culture in the United States, the coal district of Pennsylvania, which could claim a much greater Welsh population. Iowa County never hosted Welsh cultural activities on the scale of the *eisteddfodau* in Scranton and Hyde Park; the population to support it simply did not exist.²⁶⁴ Elsewhere in Wisconsin, the Welsh hosted *eisteddfodau*, and the Racine and Milwaukee Welsh sent contingents to compete at the 1893 Chicago World's Fair.²⁶⁵ There is little evidence to suggest the Welsh of Iowa County actually participated in any Wisconsin *eisteddfodau*, although it seems probable that similar events were held locally on a very small scale. The Welsh themselves were acutely aware of their small numbers. As one correspondent reported in 1891:

Anfynych y bydd dim hynod yn digwydd yma ag y gellir dweyd ei fod yn wir Gymreig. Ar hyn o bryd rheolir a llywodraethir ein tref gan ein cefndryd y Cornish, eto gellir dweyd fod yma ychydig o Gymry a'r rhai hyny yn bur.²⁶⁶

Rarely does anything happen here that could be called truly Welsh. At this time our town is run and governed by our cousins the Cornish, but it can still be said there are a few Welsh here, and they are pure [Welsh].

By 1905, the Welsh-born in Iowa County numbered 257, less than a third of the 1860 population.²⁶⁷ While the older generation was passing away, their children and grandchildren were themselves seeking greener pastures elsewhere. As has been

²⁶⁴ W. D. Jones, *Wales in America*, pp. 87-144, describes the Scranton Welsh community's cultural life in detail.

²⁶⁵ P. G. Davies, *Welsh in Wisconsin*, p. 23.

²⁶⁶ *Y Drych*, 10 December 1891.

²⁶⁷ *Tabular Statements of the Census Enumeration and the Agricultural, Dairying and Manufacturing Interests of the State of Wisconsin* (Madison, 1906), p. 131.

mentioned above, many had already struck out for the west. The Midwest's rapidly expanding cities also lured rural residents to take advantage of new economic opportunities, to the extent that public officials worried about a 'draining' of the rural population and its potential effect on agriculture.²⁶⁸ These demographic changes had a profound impact on the Welsh, as the Rev. D. D. Davies of Dodgeville wrote in 1897:

Y mae cryn lawer o Gymry wedi bod yn yr ardaloedd hyn; ond lleihau y mae y Cymry wedi i ymfudiaeth ddarfod. Y mae y plant yn Seisnigeiddio, yn gwasgaru i ardaloedd eraill, ac yn priodi a chenedloedd eraill, eto i gyd y mae cryn lawer o Gymry yn aros.²⁶⁹

There used to be many Welsh people in this area; but the Welsh have decreased since immigration ceased. The children are becoming Anglicized, are scattering to other places, and are marrying people of other nationalities, yet there still remain a good many Welsh.

Although a few new immigrants trickled in around the turn of the century,²⁷⁰ the combined effects of mortality, marriage and migration accumulated. Nowhere was this more devastating than in the county's Welsh churches.

3.3 Diminishing Zeal

At the end of the nineteenth century Iowa County's Welsh congregations still maintained strong connections to the homeland. When the Rev. Peter Gray Evans of Dodgeville visited Wales in 1894, he not only took in the national Eisteddfod at Carmarthen, but also reported finding Rhys Lewis, another Calvinistic Methodist pastor formerly of Dodgeville, 'well and happy among the hills' and passed on his greetings to friends in

²⁶⁸ J. D. Buenker. *The History of Wisconsin, Vol. IV: The Progressive Era, 1893-1914* (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1998), pp. 137-139.

²⁶⁹ *Y Cenhadwr Americanaidd*, May 1897, p. 155.

²⁷⁰ For example, John Tibbot Williams, who arrived in Dodgeville in 1906. ICHS 'Welsh Element', p. 6.

Wisconsin.²⁷¹ Ten years later, the Congregationalist churches of Dodgeville, Caergybi and y Coed welcomed T. E. Nicholas directly from Llandeilo as their permanent pastor after more than a year of relying on itinerant ministers and preachers. Within a few months however, Nicholas was called to return to Wales where he embarked on a colourful career fraught with controversy over his increasingly radical politics.²⁷² These are but two examples of how the transatlantic network of ministers and churches provided connections to Wales and other Welsh communities. However, these links mattered to fewer and fewer people.

The surviving statistics of the national Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Church give an initial impression of stability and even growth during this period. However, while the number of communicants increased until 1916, the number of baptized children was decreasing.²⁷³ In his missives to *Y Drych*, the Rev. Griffiths of Pecatonica gloomily noted the shrinking of his congregation and its effect on the religiosity of the community:

‘Fel y mae yr hen bobl yn cael eu cymeryd i ffwrdd, y mae sel a ffyddlondeb crefyddol ardaloedd yn colli ac yn darfod ...’²⁷⁴

As the old people are taken away, the zeal and religious faith of an area diminishes.

Griffiths was not only worrying about the souls of his flock at Pecatonica. He also served on the state’s Welsh Sunday School Committee, which noticed a sudden decrease in membership, particularly in the two oldest classes, starting in 1912. Surviving minutes from meetings between 1907 and 1915 also show that the Dodgeville presbytery was not

²⁷¹ *Dodgeville Chronicle*, 17 August 1894.

²⁷² *Y Drych*, 28 January 1904; Welsh Biography Online: <http://wbo.llgc.org.uk/en/s8-NICH-EVA-1879.html>

²⁷³ D. J. Williams, *One Hundred Years of Welsh Calvinistic Methodism*, p. 444.

²⁷⁴ *Y Drych*, 19 March 1914.

as active in the *Cymanfa* as the Welsh churches in central and eastern Wisconsin.²⁷⁵

During this period Dodgeville never contributed any prizewinners to the *Cymanfa*, although most of those who took the examination were successful. The Peniel and Carmel congregations at Pecatonica, more remote and rural than the other churches, remained the most faithful to religious education.²⁷⁶

Financial support never lacked for the Calvinistic Methodist church in Dodgeville, by this time known as the Welsh Presbyterian church, but the congregation, still conducting many services in Welsh, was dwindling.²⁷⁷ In 1919 the church began to conduct its Sunday morning services in English, which the last minister's wife, Mrs. Gwilym E. Jones, believed was 'yr unig obaith i lawer o'r eglwysi Cymreig fyw y dyddiau hyn'²⁷⁸ (*the only hope for many Welsh churches these days*). Nevertheless, the change in language had no real effect on the church's decline. The church briefly reopened for a sermon 'in the tongue of the Welsh forefathers' the following year, and was used for two funerals in 1924. The building was sold in 1930 and demolished shortly thereafter (Fig. 12).²⁷⁹

The Congregationalists had adopted this proactive approach to the decline of the Welsh language earlier, offering English services that kept younger members from straying starting in the 1890s. In 1895, it was noted rather apologetically that Dodgeville, Bethel and 'Holyhead' were 'gradually working towards English services'.²⁸⁰ In Dodgeville alone, 'the church is Welsh but all services are in English. Singing is

²⁷⁵ WHS. SC 2802 Wisconsin Welsh Sunday School Committee. Minutes, 1907-1915.

²⁷⁶ *ibid.*

²⁷⁷ *Dodgeville Chronicle*, 28 August 1930.

²⁷⁸ *Y Drych*, 23 January 1919.

²⁷⁹ *Dodgeville Chronicle*, 28 August 1930

²⁸⁰ *Our Church Life*, November 1895 p. 13

improved and the congregation much larger’, while ‘Holyhead and Bethel have parts of all services in English. Both are moving on a higher plane.’²⁸¹ With the shift in language came a dilution of separate identity. The Welsh Congregationalists never comprised a separate denomination and these three churches already enjoyed a close relationship with Plymouth Congregational Church in Dodgeville. Both Bethel and Caergybi closed in the first decade of the twentieth century.²⁸² During this period, numerous notices in the *Chronicle* suggest many older residents of rural Dodgeville were selling farms and moving into the city. With shrinking rural congregations and a decline in the language that distinguished them, separate Welsh churches were no longer needed. In 1917 the Dodgeville church was finally absorbed into the Plymouth congregation.²⁸³



Fig. 14. The Welsh Presbyterian Church in Dodgeville, shortly before its demolition in 1930 (Iowa County Historical Society).

²⁸¹ *ibid.*, December 1895, p. 26

²⁸² E. G. Hartmann, *Americans from Wales*, p. 189.

²⁸³ WHS. Platteville Micro 13 Southwestern Wisconsin area church records, 1839-1988. 9 September 1917.

J. Glyn Davies, who visited Wisconsin in 1898, claimed that religious skepticism played as much of a role in the decline of Welsh American churches as demographic and linguistic change.²⁸⁴ This may explain the rapid decline in adult rather than youth membership in Wisconsin's Welsh Sunday schools. The closing of so many Welsh churches in such a brief period strongly implies that for second-generation and even more so for third-generation Welsh Americans, religion was no longer the focus of their social life. Neither, however, was a sense of Welsh identity, and without the Welsh language, there was no justification for separate churches. The exceptions in Iowa County were the Peniel and Carmel churches at Pecatonica, which continue to serve the rural community and in recent years have begun to host annual *Cymanfaoedd Ganu* with limited singing in Welsh, although services have long been in English. Pecatonica's rural isolation may have allowed a sense of Welsh identity to last longer. Nevertheless, the closing of the Welsh churches in and near Dodgeville marked the effective end of the county's Welsh ethnic community.

²⁸⁴ J. G. Davies, 'Cambria, Wisconsin in 1898.' *Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion*, 1957, 128-159 (p. 141).

Conclusion

This study of the Welsh in Iowa County, Wisconsin reveals an immigrant community that assimilated so successfully into American society that its existence has almost been forgotten. Like other immigrants, the Welsh underwent a process of ethnicization that reinforced their cultural characteristics and religious tendencies. However, because their Calvinistic theology corresponded to their new country's dominant Protestant ethic, they easily embraced the American political values that corresponded most closely to their own. As farmers and businesspeople, the Welsh were successful, and some first-generation immigrants joined Iowa County's elite. Neither were the Welsh too 'clannish' to avoid economic cooperation with other ethnic groups. As they became more established in the local economy and participated in political life, the Welsh cultivated a public image of themselves as patriotic Protestants whose ethnic characteristics strengthened their adopted country.

The most significant factor differentiating the Welsh from their American neighbours was their language. This dissertation has paid particular attention to Welsh-language sources and the role of *Cymraeg* in directing and responding to the processes of settlement and assimilation. Whether by preference or necessity, Welsh-speakers settled close to each other and Welsh churches defined the ethnic community's character. The Welsh however, never defended their language strongly. Although their acceptance of the language's inevitable decline went hand in hand with their Americanization, it was rooted in attitudes the Welsh had brought with them.

This dissertation lays the foundation for an even more thorough examination of the Welsh and other ethnic communities in this part of southwestern Wisconsin. A deeper statistical analysis of Iowa County's historical demographics will further illuminate its past. A detailed examination of marriage and migration patterns as well as a review of the economic statistics over time will be essential to completing a truly comprehensive study of the Welsh and their neighbours. Most importantly, this dissertation has placed the Welsh of Iowa County in the wider context of nineteenth-century Welsh immigration. As in Pennsylvania, Ohio and eastern Wisconsin, the Welsh of Iowa County created a small but influential community in which, for a time, hundreds of families worshiped and conducted their lives 'in their own language'.

Appendix I: Welsh Households, Town of Mifflin, Iowa County, Wisconsin, 1850.

Source: Federal census manuscript.

Name	Occupation	Age	Place of Birth	Value of Real Estate Owned
Robert Casewell		28	Wales	\$100
Ann Casewell		26	Wales	
Robert Casewell		9	Pennsylvania	
John Casewell		4	Pennsylvania	
Edward Casewell		2	Ohio	
David Davis	Farmer	40	Wales	\$200
Margaret Davis		29	Wales	
Thomas Davis		10	Wales	
Reese Davis		8	Wales	
David Davis Jr.		4	Pennsylvania	
John Davis		1	Wisconsin	
John Davis [†]	Farmer	80	Wales	\$500
William Davis		41	Wales	
Ann Davis		54	Wales	
William Davis		54	Wales	
Sally Davis		53	Wales	
Esther Davis		40	Wales	
John Davis		35	Wales	
Elizabeth Davis		17	Wales	
David Davis		15	Wales	
Benjamin Thomas		40	Wales	
Griffith Griffiths	Miner	29	Wales	
Margaret Griffiths		34	Wales	
Margaret Griffiths		2	Wisconsin	
Thomas Griffiths		1	Wisconsin	
Robert Hughes	Farmer	39	Wales	\$500
Lear Hughes ^{††}		27	Wales	
William Hughes	Miner	50	Wales	
Thomas Lewis	Miner	28	Wales	
John Hughs	Farmer	35	Wales	\$300
Mary Hughs		45	Wales	
Robert Hughs		17	Wales	
Ann Hughs		14	Wales	
Grace Hughs		12	Wales	
Mary Hughs		10	Wales	
Richard Hughs		7	Wales	
Jane Hughs		3	Wisconsin	
Benjamin Williams		24	Wales	

[†] This is the Davies family, originally from Bron Fedw, Pembrokeshire. The younger John listed here is the famous Reverend John Davies.

^{††} Another census taker's mistake; I believe this name should be Leah.

John Jones	Farmer	48	Wales	
Elizabeth Jones		48	Wales	
Rachal Jones		21	Wales	
William Jones		17	Wales	
Elizabeth Jones		13	Wales	
David Jones		8	Pennsylvania	
John W. Jones		38	Wales	\$250
Elizabeth Jones		35	Wales	
Ann Jones		13	Pennsylvania	
John H. Jones		10	Pennsylvania	
William Jones		6	Pennsylvania	
Elenor Jones		4	Wisconsin	
Griffith H. Jones		1	Wisconsin	
William H. Jones		60	Wales	\$200
Ann Jones		60	Wales	
Hugh Jones		19	Wales	
William Owens	Farmer	55	Wales	\$500
Michael Evans		17	Wales	
John Phillips	Farmer	49	Wales	\$150
Rachel Phillips		46	Wales	
Mary Phillips		32	Wales	
Evan Phillips		14	Wales	
Hanah Phillips		11	Wales	
Elizabeth Phillips		9	Pennsylvania	
Margaret J. Phillips		7	Pennsylvania	
Isabell Phillips		3	Wisconsin	
Mary Phillips		1	Wisconsin	
Thomas Powell		60	Wales	
Margaret Powell		60	Wales	
Christmas Powell		13	Wales	
William Rolett		50	Wales	
Catherine Rolett		50	Wales	
David Rolett		26	Wales	
Ellen Rolett		24	Wales	
Margaret Rolett		20	Wales	
Rowland Rolett		10	Wales	
Evan Rolett		7	Wales	
Edward Williams		58	Wales	\$100
Margaret Williams		50	Wales	
Edward Williams, Jr.		10	Wales	
Ann Williams		7	Wales	
Reese Williams	Miner	36	Wales	\$300
Jane Williams		36	Wales	
Samuel Williams		1 month	Wisconsin	

William Williams	Miner	26	Wales	
Jane Williams		16	Wales	
William Evans		47	Wales	\$50
William Evans		14	Wales	
Hanah Evans		7	Wales	
Catherine Evans		4	Wales	
Hanah Jones		17	Wales	

Appendix II: Letter from Simon Morgan to W. E. Powell, 1888.

Seeking assistance in moving to the Dakota Territory, Simon Morgan, possibly a temporary resident in Dodgeville, sent the following letter to William E. Powell, the Welsh-born Emigration Agent for the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad Company. Evidently Morgan's knowledge of English was limited, and the spelling and syntax reflect the influence of his native Welsh. The reasoning for Morgan's use of English is unclear, especially given his apparent knowledge of Powell's bardic name, Gwilym Eryri. The manuscript is a typewritten copy on which it is noted that the letter was read at a 1942 meeting of the Waukesha County Historical Society.

Source: Wisconsin Historical Society Archives, Madison: File 1888 January 27. Morgan, Simon. Letter, 1888.

LLYTHIR AT GWILYM ERYRI

Dodgeville, Wis., Jan 27, 1888

Mistar W. E. Powal,

Emigrant Agent of the Ralerode Cumpani.

i understand you be a welsman and not toke the wels langwage and so i rite to you in the inglis – i was wels two but can toke the two langwage. Now Mistar Powal i want ffarm and i things of go to the docata wat you bee agent for, and want to no wat is besd plase there and wat is best time to go there and wat is best ralerode to go on, &c. i no you work for the Santpole Cumpani but i things you not lead the welsman on the crooked. i now tell you of the family so you no wat kind of plase sute me besd. First i have my wife and he be vary strong and he rase me sick tuff children and more i things purty soon. Next i have vary big girl he work on the farm good he kill hay hold plow and rase tatos. Then i have big boy works good on ffarm, good two. After that i have boy wat is two wild for me here he drink the ale and ran after the gurls and i be frade he make bad with sum of them. i things the decata be good plase for him he tame good deal on the big prares ther – the other children be smolar ole boys and gurls and i things they grow good in the docata. Now for me i like the church meetins and if you send me to plase ther is no prech i can help make the prayer meetin. My helth is not vary good and don't send me to where the water is so bad wich is vary bad for the gravel who trubbul me ole the time and i must drink the gin for it. i have very good stock which is two horses one mule three cyws dyram breed two syws one black is poland china and one red i not no wat breed he was but he be good for rase pigs and i have thr hens and one cock and he be full blud two.

Now when i batter go can you give pass ole my family and the wells people wat will go aftar me if i go. Now Mistar Powal you must be a good welsman and a good cristion and help your country mans ole you can and god will pay you good and your conscience be quiet for you. Now i go to Cambria, Wis. to se sum frinds before i go to the west if you plees syr rite a letter to me to the care of Mistar Enoc Evans drugistar Cambria, Wis. and if you send me pas i cum to see you i make poetry two which you like i remember to you Vary Kind Syr.

Trualy yours

SIMON MORGAN

Appendix III: ‘Galareb Trebor’

Robert C. Owens, lead miner, Baptist preacher and poet of Dodgeville, composed the following elegy in memory of his son-in-law, Dafydd Roach, killed in battle early in 1865. The poem, published in July of that year in *Y Cenhadwr Americanaidd*, is accompanied here by a literal English translation. The original text includes an epigram, an *englyn* by Talhaiarn, which I have omitted.

GALAREB

*Ar ol Mr. DAFYDD ROACH, Ridgeway, Wis.,
yr hwn a laddwyd yn mrwydr Hatcher's Run,
ger y Potomac, dydd Llun, Chwef. 6, 1865.*

Beth yw'r cynwrf, beth yw'r cwyno,
Beth yw'r wylo sydd yn bod?
Drwy gym'dogaeth Ridgeway dawl,
A thrwy ardal deg y Coed;
Dyna'r achos o'r holl ochain,
A'r wylofain sydd yn awr;
Am fod Dafydd Roach yn gorwedd
Fewn rhyw fedd o'r gladdfa fawr!

Ar y chweched dydd o Chwefror,
Draw yn mrwydr Hatcher's Run;
Ergyd *mwsget* gan y bradwr,
Gwypodd Dafydd yn y fan;
Aeth y belen drwy 'mysgaroedd,
Yntau syrthiodd heb un llef,
Ond, dywedai, Iesu, Iesu,
Dyna'i eiriau olaf ef.

Cadd ei ddrafftio yn mis Hydref,
Pan oedd adref yn ei dŷ,
Ufuddhaodd ef i'r alwad,
Aeth i'r gâd yn eithaf hy';
Penderfynodd mai ddyledswydd,
Ydoedd myn'd yn rhwydd os rhaid,
I amddiffyn hawl yr UNDEB,
Y'ngwyneb hyll elynol haid.

Nid oedd ynddo duedd bradwr,
Gwir wladgarwr ydoedd ef;
Fe ddadleuai dros iawnderau
Du a gwyn o dan y nef;
Gelyn perffaith i gaethiwed,

MOURNING

*For Mr. DAFYDD ROACH, Ridgeway, Wis.,
killed at the battle of Hatcher's Run,
near the Potomac, Monday, February 6, 1865.*

What is the commotion, what is the complaint,
What is this weeping?
Through the quiet neighbourhood of Ridgeway,
And through the fair district of the Wood;
Here is the cause of all the sighing,
And the wailing now;
Because Dafydd Roach now lies
In a grave in the great burial ground!

On the sixth day of February,
There in the battle of Hatcher's Run;
A blow from the traitor's musket,
Brought down Dafydd there;
A bullet went through his bowels,
Then he fell without a cry,
Except to say, Jesus, Jesus,
Those were his last words.

He was drafted in October,
While at home in his house,
He obeyed the call,
Very boldly he went into battle;
He decided it was his duty,
To go quickly as needed,
To defend the rights of the UNION,
Against an ugly, hostile horde.

There was in him no treacherous tendency,
He was a true patriot;
He argued for the rights
Of black and white under heaven;
A perfect enemy to slavery,

Free press, free speech a byth free men,
Oedd ei enwog arwyddeiriau,
Er cael saethau llawer sen.

Dyn yn gweddu i'w egwyddor,
Yn ei dymor, ar y daith;
A dinesydd pur a ffyddlon,
O mor wiwlon yn ei waith;
Cafodd gynyg cefnau gwyrddion,
Gan gyfeillion i'w ryddhau;
Ond, ni fynai ef mo honynt,
Ni wnai'r hynt ei gyfiawnhau.

Priod tirion, o'r un galon
A'i gydmares ar bob awr;
Tad yn gwenu ar ei deulu,
Er eu lloni ar y llawr,
O mor fynych yr ochneidiai,
Y gweddiai mewn iaith gref,
Am i'w blant i gael adnabod
Iawn y groes a'i aberth Ef.

Cofio'i ymddiddanion swynawl,
Cyn i'r gelyn wneud ei frâd;
Sydd yn alar i'w anwylion;
Am eu hunig anwyl Dad;
Mae yr un oedd yn eu gweini,
A'r gwyneb gwych fu'n lloni eu gwedd;
A'r fynwes gynes fu yn caru,
'Nawr yn pydru yn y bedd.

Gallodd fyw heb wneud gelynion;
Byddai'n dirion yn ei dŷ
Yn croesawu gweision Iesu,
Rhais sy'nawr, a'r rhai a fu;
Y mae degau o gym'dogion,
Heddyw'n dystion mai gwir yw
'Fod e'n dilyn lletygarwch,
Mewn gwir heddwch gyda'r byw.

Byth ni thynai yn Bethania,
'N groes i feddwl brawd na chwaer,
Ond arddelwai'r gair drwy'i ddilyn,
Gyda deigrin byddai'n daer
Am i'r Arglwydd lwyddo'i achos,
Gwneud y nos yn oleu ddydd,

Free press, free speech and forever free men,
Were his famous mottos,
Despite the arrows of rebuke.

A man suited to his principles,
In his season, on the journey;
And a pure and faithful citizen,
Oh, how excellent in his work;
He was offered greenbacks (i.e. dollars),
By friends to release him;
But, he would have none of it,
It could not be justified.

A kind husband, of the same heart
Always as his wife.
A father who smiled on his family
To cheer them up in their lowly place,
Oh how frequently he sighed,
Prayed with powerful words,
That his children would know
The righteousness of the cross and His sacrifice.

I remember his charming conversation,
Before the enemy's treason;
Which grieves his dear ones,
For their only, dear father;
He was their minister,
And his fine face cheered theirs;
And the warm breast that loved them,
Now rots in the grave.

He could live without making enemies;
Was kind in his home
Welcoming the servants of Jesus,
Some still living, some passed on;
Many of his neighbours
Today are witnesses to the truth
Of the hospitality he practiced
And peace he shared with them.

At Bethania, he never contradicted
The opinions of his brother and sister,
But embodied the word through following it;
Tearfully he was eager
For the Lord's cause to succeed,
Making night turn to day

Drwy ddwyn dynion i'w gyffesu,
A dal eu ffordd—fel teulu'r ffydd.

Milwr da yn myddin Iesu,
Ydoedd Dafydd yn ei oes;
Swyddog ffyddlon i'w wasanaeth,
Yn milwriaeth fawr y groes;
Er i'w gorph gael ergyd marwol
Gan angeuol fradwr cam,
Aeth ei ysbryd i baradwys,
I fynwes hoff'r hen Abraham

Ond ar fore'r adgyfodiad,
Fe gaiff gorph ar newydd wedd,
Wedi ei fythol anfarwoli,
I fwynhau tragwyddol hedd,
Caiff y Delyn aur a'r palmwydd,
Coron hardd o ddwyfol fri;
I gydganmol yn dragwyddol,
Aberth iawnol Calfari.

Boed i'r weddw sydd mewn tristwch
Gael diddanwch tan ei bron;
Arglwydd IOR, na ddigia wrthi,
Yn yr oruchwyliaeth hon;
Aed ei serch oddiar y ddaiar,
Doed esmwythder idd ei nyth,
Aed ei hiraeth ar ol Iesu,
Ef yn Briod iddi byth.

Dodgeville, Wis.

TREBOR

By bringing men to confess
And find their way—in the family of faith.

A good soldier in the army of Jesus,
Was Dafydd in his time;
A faithful officer in His service,
In the great war of the cross;
Although his body was mortally wounded
By a twisted, murderous traitor,
His spirit went to paradise,
To the beloved bosom of old Abraham.

But on the morning of the resurrection,
He will have a new body,
Made immortal for ever,
To enjoy eternal peace,
He will receive the golden harp and the palm,
A beautiful crown of divine honour;
To join in eternal praise
Of the righteous sacrifice at Calvary.

Let the widow in sadness,
Receive this consolation in her breast;
LORD, take no offence at her
In this dispensation;
Let her affection leave the earth,
Let relief come to her nest,
Let her long for Jesus,
He will be her Bridegroom for ever.

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