

EARLY MODERN MIGRATION FROM THE  
MID-WALES COUNTY OF RADNORSHIRE  
TO SOUTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA,  
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THREE  
MEREDITH FAMILIES

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*I*n 1971 the Honorable Thomas M. Rees of California observed that “very little has been written of what the Welsh have contributed in all walks of life to the shaping of American history.”<sup>1</sup> In 1979 historian David Galenson maintained that “the issue of the composition of America’s early immigrants is an important one and will continue to receive considerable attention from historians who seek to understand the social and economic history of colonial America.” However, Douglas Greenburg’s examination of the historiography of the middle colonies revealed that Pennsylvania, which witnessed the immigration of many early modern Welsh Quaker migrants, has not attracted as much attention from researchers as has its neighboring states. In 1992, twenty-one years after Rees’s observations, Aaron Fogelman noted, “there is little literature on Welsh immigration in eighteenth-century America and quantitative estimates

are virtually non-existent." In 1994 Wayne Bodle showed that, during the preceding fifteen years, the *William and Mary Quarterly* had "published fewer articles with specific Middle Colonies themes than had been published in the previous fifteen years." Bodle highlighted Barry Levy's study of Quakers in the Delaware Valley. Levy undermined his argument by conflating north Wales and Cheshire, thereby ignoring their cultural and linguistic differences. Boyd Stanley Schlenker too asserted that no adequate account of settlement of the Welsh in colonial Pennsylvania exists. James T. Lemon later declared that while many studies on early Pennsylvania have appeared since the 1970s, much remains to be written about the contribution made by emigrants from Wales to the development of the colony.<sup>2</sup>

Among Welsh historians of the period, John Davies pointed to the distinctive local identity embraced by many Welshmen. He observed, "to be Welsh in America was to be from Wales; to be Welsh in Wales was to be from Carmarthenshire or Anglesey or Glamorgan or Denbighshire." Studies by Arthur H. Dodd, J. Gwynn Williams, and Geraint H. Jenkins are examples of this localism.<sup>3</sup> Their research concentrated on Quaker migration from the counties of Merioneth and Montgomeryshire. While the majority of the early modern Welsh who migrated to southeast Pennsylvania did come from these two counties, a number also migrated from Radnorshire.

The Radnorshire local historian, Frank Noble, briefly addressed the issue of eighteenth-century Radnorshire-Pennsylvania emigration fifty years ago. In expanding on Noble's work, I observe Geraint Jenkins's warning that for this period in Welsh history "there is a woeful lack of either primary sources or secondary material on topics such as demography, size of households, social structure, foreign trade and much else besides."<sup>4</sup>

In the eighteenth century, Radnorshire (now part of the larger county of Powys) was the second smallest county in Wales, measuring twenty-eight miles from north to south and twenty-seven miles from east to west. With 16,270 inhabitants, it also had the second-smallest population.<sup>5</sup> There is a significant diversity of cultures and communities between people who live in the different upland and lowland areas of Wales.<sup>6</sup> There are also wide regional variations in both spoken and written Welsh, which may have made for some communication difficulties among early migrants from Merioneth, Montgomeryshire, and Radnorshire.<sup>7</sup> Even today it is alleged that the difference in Venedotian dialect (north) and South Wales Welsh is as distinct as that between the English spoken in Alabama and New England.<sup>8</sup>

There were religious differences, too. The Radnorshire families who left for Pennsylvania were Quaker, Baptist, or Anglican. Quaker migration has been more thoroughly documented than migration by the other two groups. Mary K. Geiter pointed out that research on the Baptists in the middle region of North America has been relatively neglected.<sup>9</sup> Thus, I will endeavor to trace the religious, economic, and social contribution that Radnorshire Baptists and Anglicans, as well as Quakers, made to early Pennsylvanian development under William Penn's 1701 Charter of Privileges that guaranteed religious freedom to all.<sup>10</sup> As Dissenters from the Established Church, early Baptists anticipated the Quakers in emphasizing a biblical rather than a liturgical form of worship.

Some Radnorshire Dissenters were "pushed" into the decision to emigrate because they faced discrimination, not only on religious but also on ethnic grounds. While under the terms of Henry VIII's 1536 "Act of Union" between Wales and England, Welshmen received full citizenship alongside the English, the Act also contained a clause, not repealed for 457 years, that "no person or persons that use the Welsh speech or language shall have or enjoy any manor office or fees . . . unless he use and exercise the speech or language of English."<sup>11</sup> Thus monoglot Welshmen were barred from all public office in their own country as well as in England. Nevertheless, more than one hundred years later, monoglot Quakers still inhabited Radnorshire's uplands. Writing to George Fox in 1654, Westmoreland preacher Thomas Holme noted: "I staid the first dayes in radnersher in the mountains where I had divers meetings . . . there is a great convincement in that part, but the most are Welsh and some cannot understand English."<sup>12</sup> In 1669, when Richard Davies, one of Penn's Welsh agents, visited the county he commented that John ap John "was . . . the first Friend that I had heard declare in a meeting in the English tongue; though he was not perfect in that language."<sup>13</sup>

In Wales, Dissenting churches flourished in the country's isolated, harsh, highland northern and central regions, including Radnorshire, for there the Anglican Church suffered most as a result of poor parochial organization and the absence or indifference of its spiritual leaders. Historian Roy Porter observed that "the province was left to itself: some of its Anglican bishops never set foot within the principality [of Wales]." In Britain, separatist congregations of Baptists and Quakers came into being after the Civil War, when they campaigned for liberty of conscience and an individual interpretation of the Bible. At that time, Baptists were "among the most vigorous and enterprising of the sects which emerged in Wales."<sup>14</sup>

Both Baptists and Quakers maintained strongholds in Radnorshire.<sup>15</sup> There was a Baptist community in Olchon on the Hereford/Radnor border as early as 1633. Quaker meetings also flourished in the area. In 1657, after first visiting Radnorshire, George Fox recalled in his journal, "We passed through Montgomeryshire into Wales, and so into Radnorshire, where there was a meeting like a leaguer [a besieging army]."<sup>16</sup> Fox made many converts among the county's Baptist population for Baptists, along with Quakers, emphasized direct experience of God rather than ritual and ceremony. Baptists, like Quakers, were persecuted under a series of laws springing from the 1661 Clarendon Code. Dissenters were barred from the universities and from all public office. They were punished for their refusal to swear any oath of allegiance and for their refusal to pay tithes to "the steeple house"—the established church.

Welsh as a medium of worship continued to be undermined by the appointment to Welsh livings of monoglot English clerics. Coupled with religious victimization, ethnic discrimination against the Welsh also persisted. In 1606 a parliamentary diarist recorded that an English member of Parliament viewed the Welsh as "the most base, pesantly, perfidious peoples of the world." In 1682 the satirist William Richards referred to the Welsh language as "native gibberish."<sup>17</sup>

The majority of those "gibbering natives" who chose to participate in Penn's Holy Experiment were not poor farm laborers, but came from that stratum of society known as the middling sort.<sup>18</sup> Some, indeed, described themselves as "gentlemen," basing this assertion on their descent from the families of the ancient Welsh princes. The term "middling sort" covers a wide socioeconomic spectrum.<sup>19</sup> In Welsh rural society, the social hierarchy was comprised of the gentry, followed by yeomen who were frequently substantial farmers. Below yeomen came husbandmen, who were "middling to small peasant farmers." On a par with husbandmen were rural craftsmen. These included blacksmiths, carpenters, weavers, tailors, wheelwrights, saddlers, coopers, turners, and thatchers. Beneath the craftsmen were laborers, "the workhorses of the Welsh economy." Figure 1 shows the status or occupation of those resilient Radnorshire emigrants.<sup>20</sup> Clearly, gentlemen and yeomen predominated. Nevertheless, the Welsh held craftsmanship and manual skills in high regard and the artisan class played a fundamental role in the social, cultural and economic evolution of their new society.

Some Radnorshire farmers lived well, though the desire to keep taxes low undoubtedly motivated at least a few to undervalue their property.

# MIGRATION FROM THE MID-WALES COUNTY

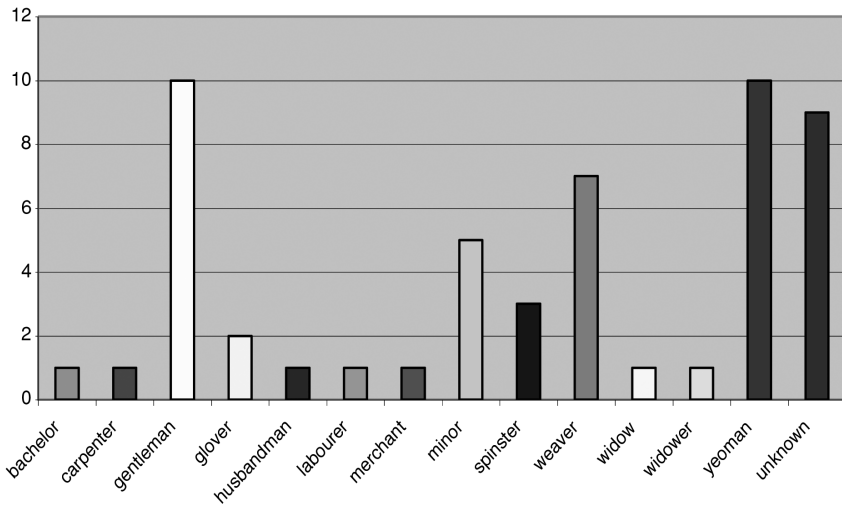


FIGURE 1: Immigrants by occupation or status.

Historian Keith Parker pointed out that “it is difficult to believe that Evan Davies of Llanddewi Ystradenni, sheriff of the county in 1636–7, had a landed estate accurately reported at £8.6 shillings in 1630, when his estate was valued at £600 per annum in 1660.” Barry Reay noted that the wealth of yeomen farmers varied enormously between counties and within them. He highlighted discrepancies in eighteenth-century English Hearth Tax returns: “In Essex and Somerset a return of one hearth almost certainly guarantees that the occupant of the house concerned was poor, the same is not true of Cheshire.” Welsh houses of the period relocated at the National History Museum, St. Fagans, reveal that a one-hearth farmhouse, such as Abernodwydd from Montgomeryshire, could have three spacious rooms on the ground floor. A one-hearth cottage like Nantwallter, also at St. Fagans, was a much more primitive affair. As the home of a farm laborer, it was a small, mud-walled, two-roomed, one-hearth cottage, with a roof thatched with rushes.<sup>21</sup>

It was mainly from the ranks of Radnorshire’s freeholders, yeomen, and craftsmen that Pennsylvania’s Quaker and Baptist migrants were recruited. They were a self-reliant people, for their farmsteads and cottages were scattered over Radnorshire’s remote uplands. The migrants took this pattern of settlement with them to Pennsylvania. Reverend Robert Weyman, an

Anglican missionary there, commented on the different settlement patterns the Welsh, as opposed to the English, adopted in the colony: “the number of inhabitants . . . are dispersed over a large compass of ground and lie not together as our towns in England but scattered and remote.” Scholar Alwyn D. Rees held that, given the hilly terrain of upland Wales, the native way of life there was inimical to the growth of nucleated settlements.<sup>22</sup>

In those scattered mid-Wales communities, the family, the primary social group and unit of economic production, was of paramount importance.<sup>23</sup> When additional labor was required, it was usually available from relatives. Help also came from neighbors who invariably lived some distance away. Radnorshire migrants carried this practice with them to their new land, where it was continued for generations, for “no matter what the region or time period, where production was concerned the typical Pennsylvania farm unit was family-based.”<sup>24</sup>

Between 1682 and 1730, approximately fifty Radnorshire families left for Pennsylvania, out of a total of 2,000 Welsh emigrants who came to America.<sup>25</sup> Figure 2 shows the proportion of Baptists, Quakers, and Anglicans among them.

In 1683 six Baptists from the congregation in Llanddewi sailed from Milford Haven to Philadelphia. All six names are recorded in the minutes

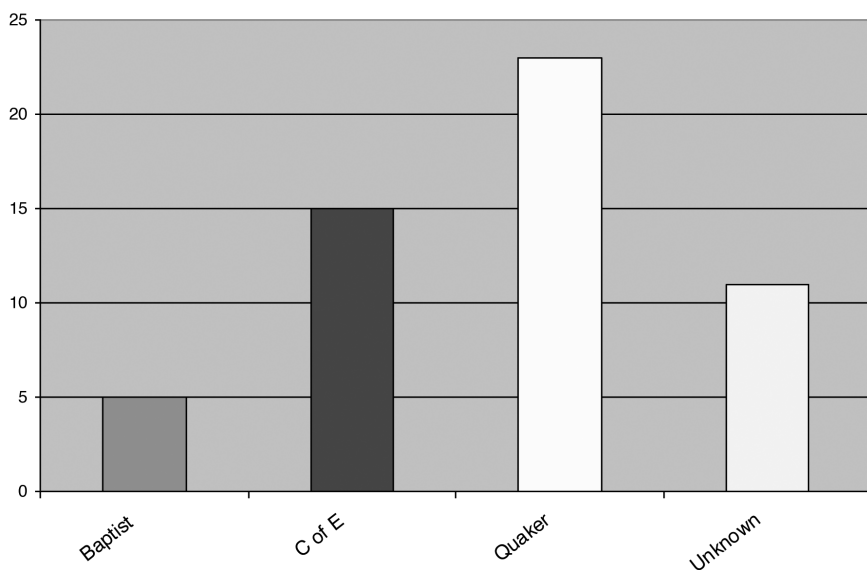


FIGURE 2: Emigrants by religion.

of the church they founded at Pennepeck—the fullest set of minutes for any colonial congregation before 1730. The site of the church they founded near the Schuylkill River at Pennepeck was beautiful, for overhanging branches of trees provided shade for the pastor and the candidate about to be baptized in the river’s “softly meandering current” (see fig. 3).

The region must have been reminiscent of the Baptists’ home parish in Radnorshire, of which Reverend Jonathan Williams said: “the vale of Llanddewi is narrow, but singularly beautiful and fertile. No part of the county surpasses it in abundance and variety of produce.”<sup>26</sup> It must have been the search for religious and civic freedom that motivated these Baptist farmers to migrate to Pennsylvania, for in Llanddewi they were accustomed to fruitful soil.

The majority of Radnorshire’s Quaker and Baptist migrants came from the upland parish of Nantmel where even today farms scattered across the parish’s 20,000 acres contain extensive areas of uninhabited moorland. Pastoralism has dominated the area for centuries. The first emigrants in the Delaware Valley named the areas where they settled “Nantmel” and “Radnor” to remind them of that homeland. Their river “Ithan” was named for Radnorshire’s own “Ithon.”

Welsh migrants were frequently obliged to start literally “from scratch,” so craftsmanship and manual skills became increasingly important to the social, cultural, and economic evolution of their new society.<sup>27</sup> Accustomed as they

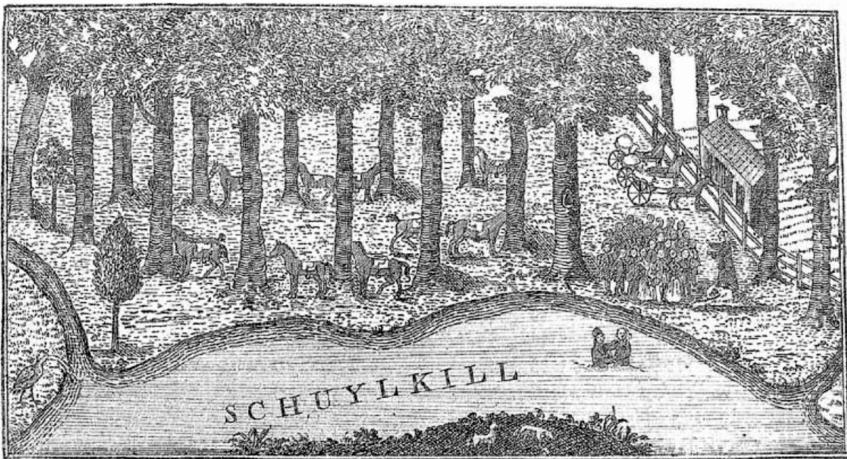


FIGURE 3: Baptizing in the Schuylkill River, Welsh Tract. Source: Joseph Cruikshank and Isaac Collins, printers, “Baptism in Schuylkill River,” woodcut (Philadelphia, 1770).



had been to working the acidic soil of the mid-Wales uplands, Radnorshire farmers must have believed that the fertile farmlands of the Delaware Valley were truly heaven-sent. They became good wheat farmers, for historian James Lemon noted that in relation to their numbers, the Welsh became wealthier than other immigrant farmers. The names of those first purchasers have been preserved in the Pennsylvania State Archives.<sup>28</sup>

The migrants' dream of creating their own Welsh "Utopia" in Pennsylvania did not live up to the reality. William Penn reneged on the agreement he made in 1681 with Welsh Quaker agents that their 40,000 acres were to be in an undivided tract west of Philadelphia. In February 1686 Penn granted 600 acres within the Welsh Tract to Richard Ingelo, son of Nathaniel Ingelo, the English Anglican clergyman who had arrived with Penn on the *Welcome*.<sup>29</sup> Thus, instead of one unbroken tract in Philadelphia County, the Welsh found themselves being apportioned between smaller tracts in Newcastle, Kent, and Sussex counties, now in Delaware, where they were a minority. In 1689 some of the initial purchasers appeared before the assembly in Philadelphia to present their appeal for the preservation of the Welsh Tract. They affirmed:

We desire to be by ourselves . . . that we might live together as a civil society, to endeavour to decide all controversies amongst ourselves in a gospel order, and not to entangle ourselves with laws in an unknown tongue; as also to preserve our language, that we might ever keep correspondence with our friends in the land of our nativity.<sup>30</sup>

Clearly, becoming entangled "with laws in an unknown tongue" evoked memories of their difficulties with Stuart legislation, written in English, back home.

These pleas were of no avail. The civil authority, formerly exercised by Quaker meetings in Haverford, Merion, and Radnor, was replaced by township government. Vigorous protest was useless and the manner in which the situation was handled did not endear Penn to the Welsh. With what was clearly a jibe at Penn's unavailability because of his absence in England, they declared that he was *diwyneb* (faceless)—a description not far short of the modern "faceless bureaucrat."<sup>31</sup>

Though all separate privileges for the Welsh Tract had been lost, migrants from Radnorshire continued to arrive in Pennsylvania, for even after the passing of the English Act of Toleration in 1689, discrimination against Dissenters was not completely eliminated.<sup>32</sup> In June 1698, Hugh Roberts, leader of the



1683 Merioneth Quaker emigrants, brought back word to Radnorshire about the good, as well as the Godly, life to be had in Pennsylvania. In 1699 David Powell of Nantmel, together with Richard Hughes, chartered the *William Galley* to take sixty-one people from Carmarthen to Philadelphia.<sup>33</sup> Among the passengers were John and Susannah Price of Nantmel, Quakers who had reconverted to Anglicanism. In Pennsylvania they attended fortnightly Anglican services in William Davies's home in Newtown, adjoining Radnor Township. There, Reverend Evan Evans conducted services in Welsh. For Evans, recouping of communicants like the Prices was crucial, as his 1707 report to the Anglican missionary Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (hereafter SPG) made clear:

The Welch of Radnor . . . require a minister to be settled among them who understands the Brittish language, there being many ancient People among those Inhabitants that do not understand the English . . . such a minister may be capable by the blessing of God to bring in a Plentiful Harvest of Welch Quakers that were originally held in the Church of England but were unhappily perverted.<sup>34</sup>

Describing Radnor or "Welshtown" in 1708, John Oldmixon noted that "in this place is a congregation of the Church of England—but no settled minister."<sup>35</sup> Many of the inhabitants of Radnor Township were still monoglot Welsh speakers but Evans, like other clergy, had few Welsh books available.<sup>36</sup> The Welsh-speaking Thomas Jenkin wrote to the SPG in August 1708, emphasizing his linguistic and evangelical proselytizing intentions:

the congregation at Newcastle have never had a Church of England clergyman amongst them that could preach to them in their own language and most of them understand no other. . . . I therefore design to spend much of my time and paines upon them in order to reclaim them from their pernicious errors.<sup>37</sup>

Not only was the Welsh language losing ground to English, but Baptists were losing ground to the Anglicans. From Pennepeck in 1712, Reverend Abel Morgan wrote to the Baptist congregation in Blaenau Gwent that "although many Welsh are in this country I fear but few are likely to keep up the true Protestant religion or their language. The English is swallowing their language, though assisted by religion."<sup>38</sup>

In an undated letter to the SPG, the Radnor congregation of the Anglican Reverend Weyman requested that he “be permanently appointed as clergyman that we may have the . . . means of grace dispensed to us in our own Language which is more edifying to us than any other can be.”<sup>39</sup> The SPG complied and provided Weyman with a supply of Welsh devotional literature. However, use of the Welsh language slowly declined and in 1734 Reverend Griffith Hughes became the last Welsh-speaking incumbent at St. David’s Church, Radnor Township.

The Welsh language and culture were sustained for a time by Baptist and Anglican congregations. The silent worship of Quakers did not lend itself to Welsh devotional hymn-singing, however. In other churches, too, the use of Welsh slowly crumbled. During the process of their assimilation, Welsh speakers became bilingual, gradually shifting their primary allegiance to English. They maintained the Welsh language and customs within their own social networks, but were gradually subsumed by much greater numbers of migrants from other European countries. In the face of religious diversity their Quaker allegiance also became weaker. Nevertheless, historian Gwyn Williams maintained that between 1682 and 1700 at least 2,000 Welsh emigrants “braved the horrible Atlantic crossings to create their pioneer settlements in a new world.”<sup>40</sup> Among these were approximately fifty families from Radnorshire. Figure 4 indicates the parishes of origin of these resilient Radnorshire emigrants.

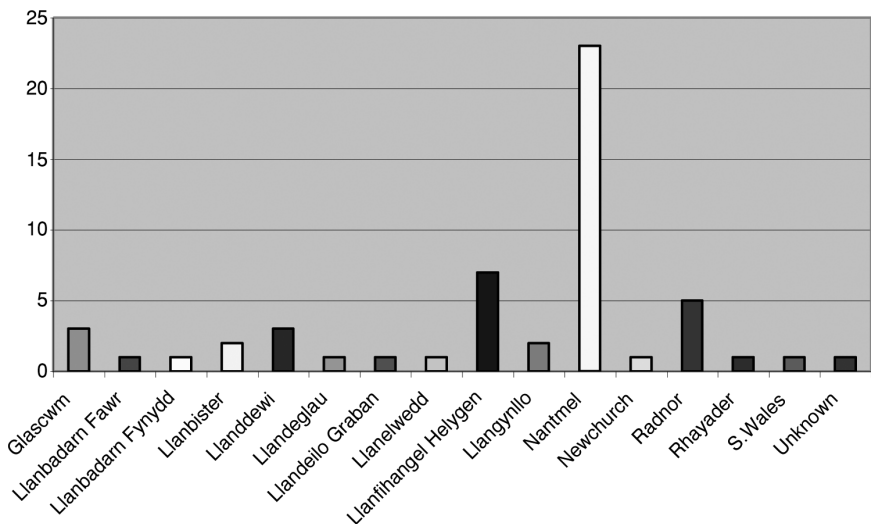


FIGURE 4: Emigrants by parish of origin.

The Welsh of Philadelphia remained mindful of their ethnic origins, despite their declining use of their language. On St. David's Day, March 1, 1729, a group of them met at the King's Head Tavern in King Street (now Water Street) in order to form the Society of Ancient Britons. Reverend Robert Weyman was appointed chairman, an indication of the increasingly important role Anglicans, as opposed to Quakers, were beginning to play in Philadelphia's public affairs.<sup>41</sup> After their inaugural meeting, the group attended divine service in Christ Church, where Reverend Weyman preached the sermon in Welsh. By 1731 the Society was flourishing. Tickets for that year's meeting, held at Owen Owen's "Indian King" in Market Street, were sold at five shillings a head. A report in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* noted that in the evening a ball was held at the home of Captain Hoskins.<sup>42</sup>

### Meredith Families

As historian James Lemon pointed out, many Welsh migrants prospered economically in Pennsylvania. However, it was the significant contribution that the Meredith families made to the development of the colony that drew the particular attention of earlier scholars Wayland Dunaway and Sidney G. Fisher.<sup>43</sup> Members of Meredith families from west Radnorshire migrated to Pennsylvania in 1683, 1708, and 1730. It is difficult to specify their blood relationship because no relevant parish registers for the period are extant. Even the normally meticulous Quaker records do not show the birth date of David Meredith, though the birth of Reese Meredith, early in 1708, who was from the same parish of Llandegley, can be deduced from his father's 1707 will. Llandegley lies five miles from Llandrindod, which was then a village before it was developed in the mid-eighteenth century into an internationally renowned spa. Three miles from Llandrindod is Nantmel, the home parish of Simon Meredith.<sup>44</sup> Demographer D.E.C. Eversley pointed out that during early modern times:

Marriages between persons resident in the same parish, and those involving a partner from an adjoining parish or one within a five mile radius, account for 75–80 per cent of all marriages, and if we extend the radius to fifteen miles, we are likely to include all except an insignificant fraction of places of origin of partners.<sup>45</sup>

Research on early modern Radnorshire marriages corroborates Eversley's findings.<sup>46</sup> There is therefore a high probability that these three Meredith

families were in some way related. Sadly, no records remain either in Radnorshire or in Pennsylvania that could demonstrate their exact connection. Whether related or not, all three Meredith families not only made a significant contribution to Pennsylvania's colonial history, but also later to the success of the American Revolution.

### *David Meredith*

David Meredith (1637–1727), who migrated to Pennsylvania in 1683 with his wife and children, was among the earliest of Radnorshire's settlers in Pennsylvania.<sup>47</sup> Described in the 1663 Radnorshire Gaol Files as a "yeoman" from Llandegley, he was twice imprisoned for his Quaker beliefs.<sup>48</sup> Assured of freedom of worship in William Penn's "Holy Experiment," "weaver" Meredith was determined to participate. But his classification as a weaver is misleading, for it belies his true status as a yeoman farmer. The woolen industry was an essential complement to farming in rural Wales and "weaving looms were expensive at around £2," the equivalent of a seventeenth-century craftsman's wages for twenty-two days' labor.<sup>49</sup> Substantial farmers like David Meredith carried out weaving during slack winter months, assisted by skilled laborers.

In July 1683 Radnor Men's Quaker Meeting received a request from David James, who had emigrated in 1682, for a certificate of removal to Pennsylvania for himself and his family.<sup>50</sup> At this meeting, a similar certificate was prepared for David Meredith who had been a neighbor of James, dated 20th of the 5th month 1683. David later presented it to the Friends' Monthly Meeting in Radnor, Pennsylvania.

In Pennsylvania's early years, membership in the Quaker community helped people succeed.<sup>51</sup> A major function of Friends' Monthly Meetings was civil administration, and David Meredith's life in Radnor was an exemplar of successful Quaker community leadership. Evidence of the responsibilities that he exercised can be seen in the Haverford Meeting minutes for August 1693: "the inhabitants of said two townships [Haverford and Radnor] . . . should pay one shilling per hundred [acres] towards the taking of Wolves. . . . David Meredith and Steven Bevan for Radnor to receive the said tax."<sup>52</sup> Maintaining neighborhood fences was also one of Meredith's duties, as was poor relief. In 1695 he was nominated along with Rees Thomas "to confer with Edward Morgan and to inquire into his condition, and whether he wants relief at present, and to bring an account thereof to the next meeting." In the following meeting both men were:

ordered to inquire further into ye present condition of Edward Morgan and what he intends to do in relation to his present settlement, and to see him relieved out of Friends Collection, what he is in necessity of to his present subsistence.<sup>53</sup>

Meredith continued to enjoy success as a farmer but his wife, Katherine, passed away in September 1688, only five years after her arrival in Pennsylvania.

By 1689 Meredith's acreage in Radnor Township had increased to 250. In 1690, he married Mary Jones, a widow, of Upper Providence. A copy of their Quaker prenuptial agreement is still held by Gwynedd Meeting.<sup>54</sup> Despite his disappointment at the loss of the Welsh Tract—he had signed the fruitless 1689 petition—Meredith began to improve his lot, though he received a setback in the spring of 1696 when he was among a group of subscribers from Haverford and Radnor townships who pledged £10 apiece to William Penn to buy land along the Susquehanna River, in order to expand the trade in beaver skins, then the monopoly of the Indians. In June 1696, when Indians from the Ohio Valley raided the Susquehanna region, enthusiasm for the project waned; when Penn failed to return to Pennsylvania by May 1698, David Meredith's pledge, like those of the other subscribers, was voided. Even so, in 1690 he was the highest taxpayer of Radnor.<sup>55</sup>

By 1701 Pennsylvania was "a vigorous, prosperous plantation" and David Meredith was a vigorous, prosperous farmer. In 1703 he purchased 980 acres in Plymouth Township from Francis Rawle and James Fox, English Quakers who had failed to establish a woolen industry there. Meredith acquired part of this estate, that portion of the tract "adjacent to the Schuylkill River." He settled in Norristown, where until a Meeting House was constructed in 1708 Quaker meetings were held in Meredith's substantial three-story house. Historian Lemon noted that "early draft surveys show that, in newly opened areas, the settlers took up land in stream bottoms or near springs." As late as 1900, the limits of the old dam that provided water for David Meredith's mill could still be distinctly traced just below the road. On the slope opposite his house, the race down which the water flowed to operate his sawmill below was clearly outlined.<sup>56</sup>

To the end of his life, Meredith remained an irreproachable overseer of Quaker affairs. In 1714 Gwynedd and Plymouth Meetings established joint monthly gatherings where in 1715, aged seventy-eight, he, along with two other senior Friends, was given a weighty responsibility:

David Meredith, Thomas Evans and George Lewis are appointed to Attend the Service of the next Quarterly Meeting and to report the Love and Unity is Maintained among our Meetings [kept] up and Friends Concerned to put the Discipline into Practice.

At the next Quarterly Meeting he was called upon to investigate the moral uprightness of a prospective bridegroom:

Isaac Williams and Elizabeth Marle Declared their Intention of Marriage with each other the first time—David Meredith and William Coulston are appointed to Inspect into his Clearness and Conversation and make report thereof the Next M:ing.

The September 1715 Meeting recorded that “David Meredith and Ellis Pugh are Appointed to speak with John Roads respecting that he is charged with—and why he did not more frequently attend meeting.”<sup>57</sup>

Ellis Pugh, David Meredith’s co-overseer in Gwynedd, came from Dolgellau in Merioneth. Arriving in Pennsylvania in 1687, four years after David Meredith, Pugh achieved fame with *Annerch ir Cymru* (“Greetings to the Welsh,” or “A Salutation to the Britons,” as the book was called in English). It was written toward the end of Pugh’s life and was the first volume to be published in Welsh in America.<sup>58</sup> The book’s full title reflects the Quaker author’s concerns with the necessity for the Welsh to continue to live a Christian life:

A Salutation to the Britons to call them from many things, to the one thing needful, for the saving of their souls; especially to the poor, unarmed trailer, ploughmen, shepherds and those that are of low degree like myself. This is in order to direct you to know God and Christ, the only wise God, which is life eternal, and to learn of him, that you may become wiser than their teachers.

In January 1699, Ellis Pugh’s daughter, Ellin, married David Meredith’s son, Meredith David. In Wales the bridegroom would have been known as Meredith *ap* David, that is, Meredith, son of David. The marriage was an important social, as well as religious, meeting, for more than 250 people signed as witnesses to the marriage certificate.<sup>59</sup> One of them, Rowland Ellis, later translated Ellis Pugh’s *Annerch ir Cymru* into English. Ellis’s name

appeared along with David Meredith's in the list of first purchasers of land in Chester County. In 1700 Rowland Ellis was elected as one of Philadelphia's representatives to the Pennsylvania assembly.

Like many Meredith family members back in Radnorshire, David Meredith lived to a great age. To the end, he remained a respected figure in his Quaker community. Thomas Chalkley, the celebrated Quaker minister and master mariner, called on him in 1726 when returning to Philadelphia from a missionary visit to Okley, now in Susquehanna County:

the next Day I called to see my old Friend David Meredith, who being about 89 years of Age, I thought it probable I might not have another Opportunity of seeing him. He met me with gladness, and told me, It was their meeting-day; so that I stay'd, and was much comforted and tendered by the Power of Christ.<sup>60</sup>

David Meredith's participation in Penn's "Holy Experiment" must surely be considered a success. Though the Welsh Tract did not materialize, Meredith nevertheless spent his life in the company of like-minded Friends in southeast Pennsylvania, where he was neither persecuted for his religion nor vilified for his language. Like many other early settlers whose memory is now lost to history, he surmounted his initial difficulties and achieved material success while remaining steadfast in his Quaker beliefs. Such pioneers could have no more appropriate epitaph than that provided by eighteenth-century historian Robert Proud:

Divers of these early Welsh settlers were persons of excellent and worthy character; and several of good education, family and estate, chiefly Quakers; and many of them either eminent preachers in that society or otherwise well qualified and disposed to do good, in various capacities, both in religious and civil, in public and private life.<sup>61</sup>

### *Simon Meredith*

A second family of Radnorshire Merediths came to Pennsylvania in 1708: Simon Meredith (1663–1747) from the parish of Nantmel, together with his wife, Jane, and their four sons, Hugh (11), James (9), John (6), and Thomas (3). In 1697 Simon and Jane had been married by "bond" rather than by the calling of banns. The existence of their marriage bond reveals



that they were of "middling status," for only farmers with some means were in a position to find persons who would act as guarantors that the marriage would take place. Simon and Jane were Baptists, not Anglicans, but at that time only Quakers and Jews were permitted to marry outside the Anglican communion.

Little is known of Simon Meredith's first five years in the colony, which had grown considerably since David Meredith arrived. From 4,000 in the entire colony in 1682, the number of settlers in Philadelphia alone had swelled to 10,000 by 1720. Simon was among the first to purchase land in French Creek, Coventry Township, about thirty miles west of Philadelphia. Three hundred acres sandwiched between the lands of James Pugh and James Logan were surveyed for him on May 13, 1713. His Pughtown home is now a listed building.<sup>62</sup> Its location enabled him to congregate with like-minded Baptists in the area:

English Sabbath-keepers in Newtown, Providence, Easttown, and Tredyffrin townships of Chester County, . . . migrated to the upper end of the county, where they took up land at the falls of the French Creek in Nantmeal Township, and there founded a settlement and congregation, destined for years to come to be the largest and most influential body of Seventh Day Baptists in the Province. Among the names of these early pioneers, who were mainly Welsh, were . . . Simon Meredith . . . [etc.].<sup>63</sup>

From then on, Simon Meredith's name appeared regularly in the middle band of taxpayers for East Nantmel Township.<sup>64</sup>

Less than twenty years after his arrival, like David Meredith before him, Simon had become a prosperous farmer and a prominent local citizen. On October, 3, 1727, "a rainy day," according to Benjamin Franklin, Simon was elected one of Chester County's eight representatives to the Pennsylvania assembly. The governance of the colony was still largely in the hands of Quakers, so his election as a Baptist was an achievement. David Lloyd, then Speaker of the House, also represented Chester County. Simon was also a county magistrate, carrying out judicial duties as ordained by the assembly.<sup>65</sup>

While Simon was prospering, his son Hugh was not. Almost thirty years old, and unhappy farming in Chester County, Hugh had found employment at Samuel Keimer's printing house in Philadelphia, where he worked alongside the young Benjamin Franklin. The day of the 1727

assembly elections, Franklin and Keimer had one of their frequent quarrels.<sup>66</sup> Franklin recalled that it was on that evening that Hugh suggested he and Franklin enter into a partnership on their own.<sup>67</sup> According to Franklin, Hugh's father had formed a good opinion of him and would be willing to back their venture. Anxious to see Hugh succeed in printing where he had failed in farming, Simon duly advanced the young men 100 pounds to purchase a printing press. It was not long before Benjamin Franklin was using Simon's high-powered connections at the assembly in order to gain access to the arena of political printing. Soon he and Hugh were elected official printers to the government of Pennsylvania. Their first commission, "The Pennsylvania General Loan Office Register of 1729," was discovered in 1999.<sup>68</sup>

In 1730 Meredith and Franklin printed the third book to appear in Welsh in America. Not inappropriately, given that Hugh was from a Welsh-speaking Baptist family, its title was *Y Dull o Fedyddro a Dwfr* (On the Manner of Baptizing with Water), allegedly written by Benjamin Wallin. It was produced by Franklin and Meredith in their new printing works in Philadelphia, *yn yr Agraph-dy Newydd yn ymmil y Farchnad, gan* (in the new printing house on the corner of Market Street, by) "B. Franklin a Hugh Meredydd 1730, pris Is."<sup>69</sup> (An imperfect copy of the title page of the book is reproduced as figure 5.)

Hugh's success was, however, short-lived. He continued frequenting Philadelphia's many taverns where, as early as 1693, there were between 12 and 20 or one for every 100 to 170 people.<sup>70</sup> (Franklin's Junto, established in the autumn of 1727, of which Hugh was a member, met initially in a Philadelphia tavern.) Furthermore, by 1730 Simon Meredith no longer enjoyed his influential place in the assembly, nor was he in a position to advance his son a further loan of 100 pounds. Hugh was therefore of limited assistance to Franklin in the furthering of his ambitions. Franklin's new backers "did not like his continuing the partnership with Meredith," whom they accused of drinking to excess. Even though Franklin himself was not averse to a glass of wine, he dissolved his connection with Hugh.<sup>71</sup>

Hugh moved temporarily to the Cape Fear district of North Carolina from where, as Franklin recorded,

he sent me two long letters containing the best account that has been given of that country, the climate, soil, husbandry. . . . I printed them in the papers and they gave great satisfaction to the publick.<sup>72</sup>

Hugh's articles promoting the Cape Fear country appeared in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* and were published as a book in 1922.<sup>73</sup> They were clearly intended

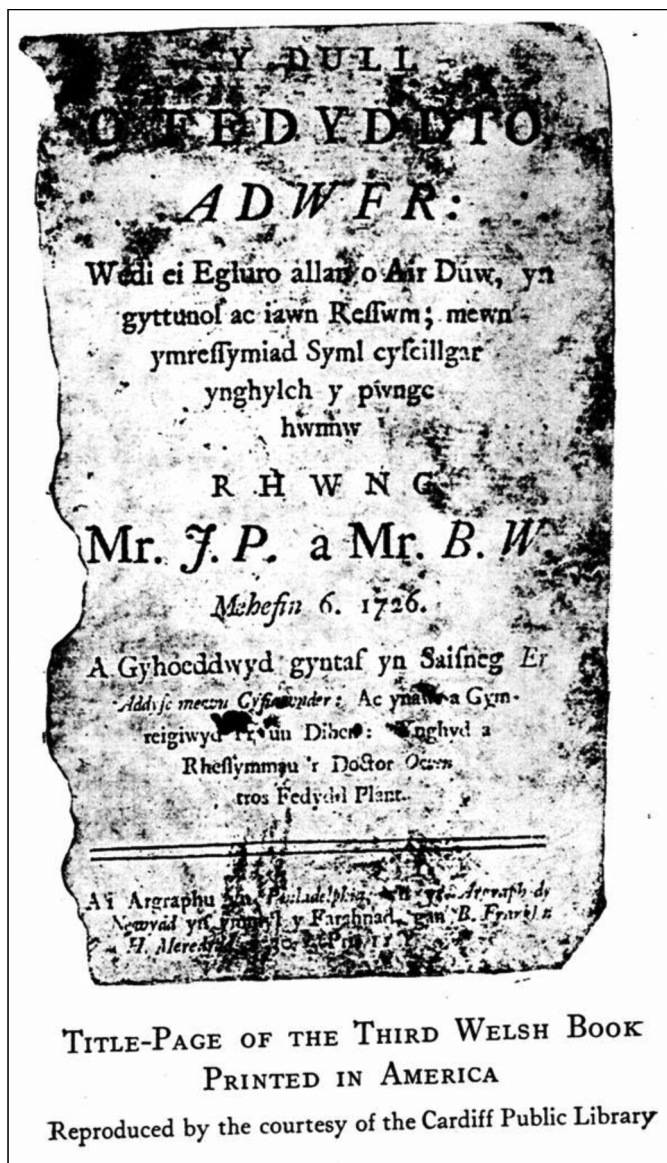


FIGURE 5: Franklin/Meredith Third Welsh Book.

to promote the area to potential settlers from Pennsylvania, as the following extract shows:

*Remainder of the Account of CAPE FEAR*, Begun in our last . . . here are Parroquets in the Summer, and greater Plenty of Turkeys than ever I saw in *Pennsylvania*. Here are Foxes, Wolves, Wildcats, Possums, Raccoons, and Panthers always, and Bears sometimes in great Plenty; also Plenty of Deer. . . . Alligators are very numerous here, but not very mischievous; however on their Account Swimming is less practis'd here than in the Northern Provinces.<sup>74</sup>

Motivated perhaps by Hugh's dispatches, in fact many Pennsylvanians moved further south, for Bernard Bailyn noted that between 1730 and 1750, the population of North Carolina doubled, from 35,000 to almost 70,000, many of whom moved down the "Great Wagon Road" from the Pennsylvania backcountry.<sup>75</sup>

While Hugh may have been the "black sheep" of what became a distinguished Pennsylvanian family, historian Barry Levy admitted that he "was wrong to group him rhetorically in regard to wealth with the struggling Quaker families that the new land in North Carolina might appeal to." Levy was equally wrong to ascribe Hugh's wayward character to the failure of his Quaker upbringing. All four of Simon's sons had been brought up in a Baptist household, though John became a Quaker after marrying Grace Williams of Uwchlan Township in November 1727.<sup>76</sup>

By May 1745 Hugh was again in Philadelphia, then a thriving metropolis, where he was establishing himself in a new line of business. He announced in the *Pennsylvania Gazette*:

HUGH MEREDITH opposite John Jones' s at the Sign of the Plow and Harrow in Third Street, Philadelphia, hereby informs his former good Employers, and others, That he is now ready to take in and print or stamp Linen, Linen and Cotton, &c. for Counterpains, Curtains, or any other Uses; and that now having better Conveniency, he can perform it much better than he could do in the Country; those inclined to employ him, may apply to him at his Place of Abode, where Attendance will be given, and Patterns may be chosen.<sup>77</sup>

Six years later Hugh was again in Chester County, from where he advertised the loss of his indentured servant in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* of March, 5, 1751:

Run away this morning from Hugh Meredith of Newtown, Chester County, a servant man, named Robert Jones, he is about 5 foot 10 inches high, and of swarthy complexion: Had on when he went away, a good felt hat, a lightish coloured cloth coat, and fustian jacket, old leather breeches, ribbyarn stockings, good shoes; had three shirts with him, and several other things, viz. A buckskin and three yards of white linnen. Who ever takes up and secures said servant, so as his master may have him again shall have Three Pounds reward, paid by HUGH MEREDITH. N. B. All masters of vessels are desired not to carry him off at their peril.<sup>78</sup>

While Hugh Meredith's temperament had led him to experiment with a career other than farming, his brothers continued working on the land. However, with the rapid growth of the colony, perceived as "very flourishing" by a mid-eighteenth-century English visitor, different opportunities presented themselves to settlers.<sup>79</sup> Hugh's nephews, John and Hugh, sons of his brother James, were first-generation Americans and took advantage of wider opportunities available to them. John became a blacksmith in New Britain, Bucks County. In an age of horse-drawn vehicles, this was an essential and lucrative occupation. His older brother, Hugh (1743–1815), became a doctor in Doylestown. In 1805 Hugh built an imposing mansion in that town for his son, Charles, also a physician. Dr. Hugh later helped found the Union Academy in Doylestown and was the first of a line of seventeen physicians stemming from the Meredith family of Bucks county.<sup>80</sup>

The Revolutionary War caused friction in many families. For example, while Benjamin Franklin embraced independence, his son, William, remained loyal to the English crown; two of the nephews of "printer" Hugh Meredith were similarly driven apart. One, Dr. Hugh Meredith, fought with Captain Christian Binkley's Militia Company, Third Battalion, New Britain Company. However, John, Dr. Hugh's brother, retained his British citizenship. He took refuge behind British lines in New York, moving from there to Annapolis, Nova Scotia, where he died in 1787.<sup>81</sup> Because he was a loyalist, John's estate in New Britain was forfeited under the Pennsylvania Confiscation Act of March 6, 1778. In 1784, he presented a claim for land and property in Pennsylvania which had been left to him in his father's will.<sup>82</sup> In his own will, John had appointed his "brother Simon Meredith by Letter of Attorney to act in his stead in receiving monies from his father's estate."<sup>83</sup> However, on January 21, 1784, seven years after John's death, the Attorney General heard:

the case of James Meredith's will dated 3 February 1774, proved 16 February 1775 in Bucks Co with letters of administration issued to Thomas Meredith, the Sole Executor. The Testator's son John Meredith was attainted by Proclamation 7 July 1780 and his estate in New Britain Twp., Bucks Co. was eventually sold to Adam Melchor.<sup>84</sup>

Along with properties belonging to other British loyalists, his estate of 100 acres containing a house, barn, orchard and meadow, had been advertised for sale in the *Pennsylvania Packet*, May 15, 1781.

### *Reese Meredith*

By 1730, the year of Reese Meredith's removal to Philadelphia, emigration from Wales had long since diminished to a trickle. As scholar Richard Allen pointed out, "from being an influential minority group, in the late seventeenth century, the Welsh became simply one of the many ethnic communities in Pennsylvania."<sup>85</sup> Nevertheless, in 1730 Reese Meredith, born in the Llandegley parish of Radnorshire, came to Philadelphia alone at the age of twenty-two. The city in which he settled had increased considerably in size and prosperity since the arrival of the earliest settlers almost fifty years previously, and it offered considerable opportunities for advancement to young entrepreneurs like Reese Meredith. Reese was no footnote to history, even though he only appears casually in monographs written about the American mercantile class. He merits no mention at all in any studies of British merchants of the period, though his success in Philadelphia was due in no small measure to the financial and personal encouragement he received from his uncle, a merchant in Bristol. Reese's background in Radnorshire was relatively humble. However, possessed of outstanding business acumen, he became one of the most successful members of the Philadelphian mercantile community that had "more than doubled in size between 1750 and 1791, accommodating the careers of hundreds of successful traders."<sup>86</sup>

When Reese left Radnorshire, he could never have dreamed of success on such a scale, nor that he would transfer his loyalty from the British Crown to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania before he died. His earliest years in mid-Wales were veiled in sadness. His father died in November 1707, two months before Reese was born. Four years later his mother, Elizabeth (nee Southall), and both his grandfathers died. Reese was then cared for by his maternal



grandmother, Mary, who had six underage children of her own. Mary and her family eventually moved from her husband's estate in Llanfihangel Rhydeithon, the parish adjoining Llandegley, to Leominster, then a thriving market town in the Welsh Marches, the border land between Wales and England. There, in 1722, aged fourteen, at a premium of £40, Reese became apprenticed as a mercer to his uncle, Samuel Southall, his mother's younger brother.<sup>87</sup>

Reese completed his eight years of apprenticeship in 1730. The death of his grandmother the previous year may have had some bearing upon his decision to move to Pennsylvania, for by that time there was little overt discrimination in England against Quakers. His Southall family members were very successful merchants in Leominster, but they were divided over problems of inheritance. Reese's uncle, John Southall, had moved from Leominster to Bristol where he traded as a merchant, and it was from there that Reese emigrated to Philadelphia, initially as his uncle's factor, selling British goods for him on a commission basis.

In Leominster Reese had worshiped regularly at the Quaker Meeting House in the town, a building that had been in existence since 1689. Consequently, Leominster Friends provided Reese with a letter of removal to Friends in Philadelphia. As a newcomer to that city, Reese would have found comfort and support within the Philadelphia Quaker community, which met at the Great Meeting House, located on the southwest corner of Market and Second streets. Undoubtedly, the talk in the Men's Meetings, which Reese first attended in 1730, would have been of the major fire that had broken out on Philadelphia's Fishbourne's Wharf in the spring of that year. The conflagration was reported in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* of April 30, 1730. This disastrous occurrence led eventually to the creation by Franklin of the Union Fire Company, of which Reese was later to become clerk.<sup>88</sup>

While Reese had connections with his merchant uncle in Bristol, unlike many merchants in Philadelphia he did not initially have any family contacts in that city. His success as a merchant is therefore all the more laudable, achieved initially by his ability as a Quaker to establish relationships with some of the city's most prosperous businessmen.

On March 23, 1738, Reese Meredith made a propitious marriage to Martha Carpenter, the granddaughter of Samuel Carpenter, who had once been the colony's richest merchant and deputy governor under William Penn. Martha was also the niece of William Fishbourne, himself a wealthy merchant and former mayor of Philadelphia. It was from Fishbourne's Wharf that Reese began trading, initially with his first partner, Samuel Neave.



From Fishbourne's, the *Southall*, one of his early vessels named after his family, sailed to Bristol to connect with his uncle, John Southall.<sup>89</sup> At that time, Bristol was an important port for trading with Philadelphia. Historian Kenneth Morgan pointed out that "John Adams . . . coupled Bristol with Philadelphia as the greatest commercial cities of the British Empire after London."<sup>90</sup> It may well have been Reese who fostered trading links between his uncle Southall and the great Philadelphia Quaker merchant Israel Pemberton. A 1747 letter from Pemberton to Southall makes clear that the two enjoyed a regular business correspondence.<sup>91</sup>

Between 1735 and 1766, John Southall sent regular exports from Bristol to his nephew in Philadelphia. There was a seasonal rhythm to trade with the colonies. John's spring exports consisted mainly of manufactured items. In the autumn he sent Reese woolen goods. From Bristol, Reese imported goods from the growing manufacturing sector of Great Britain, which, seeing Pennsylvania as a vital overseas market, capitalized on Philadelphia's increasing demand for "household commodities, tools, weapons and all kinds of utensils." Together with textiles and glass items, Reese also imported manufactured goods, as his many advertisements in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* make clear.<sup>92</sup>

At the height of his success, Reese traded from his own premises on Meredith Wharf. From there, his ships, like those of other merchants, sailed the North Atlantic. Reese profited from his son-in-law Henry Hill's family links to the wine trade, Madeira, the Canary Islands, and Lisbon, Portugal. Reese also had interests in Barbados, for his Quaker principles did not prevent him from owning and trading in slaves.

As Reese now enjoyed considerable status in Philadelphian society, his children were in a position to make fortunate marriages. Samuel married Margaret, the daughter of Dr. Thomas Cadwalader, an eminent physician, a trustee of the University of Pennsylvania, and allegedly "a fallen off Quaker." Reese's daughter, Elizabeth, married George Clymer, a merchant and politician who signed the Declaration of Independence, while Reese's youngest daughter, Ann (Nancy) married Henry Hill, a wealthy wine merchant.<sup>93</sup> Reese, Samuel, and George formed a business partnership, *Meredith-Clymer*, which lasted four years after Reese's death until 1782. The weddings of Samuel and his sisters took place in Christ Church, a fashionable Anglican church in Philadelphia. Consequently, they were disowned by the Society of Friends for marrying "out of unity." While Reese remained a Quaker, Samuel was later a vestryman at St. Michael's Episcopal Parish Church, Trenton,

New Jersey. As scholar Nathaniel Burt noted, as the eighteenth century progressed, “the typical Philadelphian family pattern became Quaker turned Anglican.” Increasing numbers of prominent members of the Church of England began exerting an influence on the politics and social life of the city.<sup>94</sup>

Reese also created important links with Philadelphia’s social elite. In 1736 Benjamin Franklin had set up the Union Fire Company to protect the property of its members against fire. It also functioned as a social club, whose members were mainly Quakers of the first rank. By 1744 Reese had become the company’s clerk. In 1756 he was rated at £70 in the Philadelphia tax list, thus joining Philadelphia’s elite group, a position he held until he died in 1778. He was rated at over £100 in the list for 1774.<sup>95</sup>

One of the most lasting friendships Reese made was with George Washington, whom he first met in 1755, as the young gentleman colonel from Virginia was returning from the ill-fated Braddock expedition in the French and Indian War. After drinks in the Coffee House near Walnut Street, Reese, who then lived nearby on the northeast corner of Water and Walnut streets, invited Washington home to supper. In later life, Reese prevailed on his friendship with Washington to help two colleagues seeking to settle in Virginia. Writing in 1773, Reese made the following request to his “esteemed friend”:

Esteemed Friend Philadelphia May 5th 1773

Colonel Washington

From the little acquaintance I had with thee formerly, I take the liberty of recommending the Bearer Capt. John Harper who is in partnership with William Hartshorne—John Harper comes down in order to see the Country, if he likes it, they propose to come down and settle with you; they are Men that have a very pretty Interest—Wm Hartshorne lived with me some Time—They are Industrious, Careful, Sober Men; If Capt. Harper should want to draw on this place for Five hundred Pounds I will engage his Bills shall be paid—Any Civilities shewn him will be return’d by Thy Friend

Reese Meredith

This letter written in Reese’s own hand is preserved in the Library of Congress.<sup>96</sup> Reese’s son, Samuel, too, benefited from this friendship, for he

became the first U.S. Treasurer appointed by President Washington after the Constitution came into effect in 1789. A notice in *Porcupine's Gazette* of March 3, 1798, also identifies Samuel as the first president of the Welsh Society of Philadelphia, which was inaugurated that year.

In his old age, Reese retained his place among the social elite of the city. In a diary entry for September 21, 1774, John Adams recorded a visit he made to Reese's daughter, Nancy, and her husband, Henry Hill: "rode out of Town six Miles to Mr. Hills where we dined with Mr. Hill and Lady, Mr. Dickinson and his Lady, Mr. Thompson and his Lady, old Mr. Meredith, father of Mrs. Hill."<sup>97</sup>

Reese's life and work in Philadelphia was played out against a backdrop of three major wars involving the American colonies: the War of Jenkins' Ear/King George's War (1739–1748), the French and Indian War (1754–1763), and the Revolutionary War (1775–1783). His Quaker principles were sorely tested by these events. In 1747 Reese faced repeated censure from the Friends for outfitting a warship sent to intercept French and Spanish marauders sighted at the approaches to Philadelphia. He was again criticized in 1757 for contributing toward the sum of 10,000 pounds for Massachusetts soldiers preparing for the French-Indian War, but he was not disowned by the Philadelphia Monthly Meeting. A Quaker to the end of his life, he was nevertheless persuaded by his son Samuel and his son-in-law, George Clymer, to give support to the Revolutionary War. Unlike his nephew, Quaker merchant Thomas Wharton, who refused to participate in the war, Reese became "a reluctant revolutionary" two years before his death in 1776.<sup>98</sup>

While his business partner George Clymer was a revolutionary activist, Reese was not.<sup>99</sup> Influenced by Clymer, Reese was persuaded to accept a share of \$25,000 from the Continental treasurers "to be applied to the purpose of importing gunpowder for the continental armies." He, together with Samuel, Clymer and Samuel Mifflin were to

be allowed out of the same five pr.cent for their trouble and expenses therein, that they keep all their proceedings as much as possible a secret from every other person but the Congress and the general of the continental forces [i.e., Washington].<sup>100</sup>

Quaker to the end, in November 1777 Reese affirmed, but did not swear, his allegiance to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

No likeness of Reese Meredith exists, for many Quakers eschewed portraiture. However, a statue was raised in memory of his son, Samuel, near

his last home in Pleasant Mount Village, Wayne County, Pennsylvania. Reese did not live to see his granddaughter, Martha Meredith Read, become one of the first American feminist writers who dedicated *Monima or the Beggar Girl* to Dr. Hugh Meredith, aware perhaps that both their grandfathers migrated from the same small area of Radnorshire.<sup>101</sup> Nor could Reese have known of the accolade afforded to his great-grandson, Dr. Meredith Clymer, a brigade surgeon in the Civil War when in 1902 that distinguished physician's obituary notice was posted in the *British Medical Journal*.<sup>102</sup> Reese Meredith, the orphan from the remote parish of Llandegley, in the heart of Wales, not only made a fortune during his life in Philadelphia. He also became the progenitor of one of the most aristocratic and influential "dynasties" in the city.<sup>103</sup>

## Conclusion

By the end of Reese's life, toward the close of the eighteenth century, "the Welsh Population of Philadelphia which had constituted one-third of the colony was now less than five per cent (12,000) of a total population of 250,000." By that time also, there was little further immigration from any of the counties of Wales to America. The Welsh were all too few in number to keep a separate identity indefinitely and because their ability to speak English enabled them to interact with a larger number of ethnic groups, the Welsh language and culture became increasingly marginalized. Nevertheless, even if they no longer had the language (Samuel Meredith, for example, was not a Welsh speaker), their ancient culture and ancestry were anchored in Welsh societies, like the Philadelphia Welsh Society, which Samuel helped to set up, and which also offered assistance to poor immigrants from Wales. It was also through societies like these that Welsh exiles "sought to recreate something of the cultural life of their homeland and to promote their nationality's presence."<sup>104</sup> The Philadelphia Welsh Society exists to this day, as do similar societies in other parts of the United States.

Three hundred years ago, it was the attraction of religious freedom and the chance to own large acres and develop a better quality of life that motivated many stalwart Radnorshire farmers to make the perilous Atlantic crossing to Pennsylvania in search of freedom and prosperity. Most eventually lost their religion and their language, but for some there were different compensations. And what was a severe loss to Wales was a huge gain for America, for immigrants like the Merediths, from that small area in the little county lying at the heart of Wales, left an indelible mark on the history, not only of Pennsylvania, but also of the United States.

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