



## EARLY WELSH SETTLERS OF PENNSYLVANIA

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**T**HE Welsh constituted an early and important element of the population of provincial Pennsylvania, and made a significant contribution to its progress. Playing a conspicuous part in the founding of the colony, they were one of the formative influences that started it on its career of political, economic and social development.

The emigration of a considerable number of sturdy Welshmen to Pennsylvania was due primarily to religious motives. The early Welsh immigrants were mostly Quakers, and were persecuted in their home land for their religious principles. By acts of Parliament their public worship was forbidden on penalty of fines and imprisonment. In these trying circumstances they welcomed the opportunity to secure relief from oppression by migrating to Pennsylvania, and were among the first to accept Penn's liberal offers to the oppressed everywhere to seek an asylum in his province. The fact that Penn himself was a Quaker and was of Welsh ancestry strengthened their resolve to emigrate to his colony, where there was every assurance of religious liberty as well as of economic opportunity.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> H. M. Jenkins, *Historical Collections of Gwynedd*, 95-107; T. A. Glenn, *Merion in the Welsh Tract*, 14-20; W. C. Braithwaite, *The Beginnings of Quakerism*, 158-159, 295-299; William Sewell, *The History of the Rise and Increase of the Christian People Called Quakers*, I, 107, 242, 346, II, 37, 52, 290, 312, 313; Rufus M. Jones, *The Quakers in the American Colonies*, 442.

A further consideration influencing their determination to emigrate was the belief that, by purchasing a large tract of land and settling thereon in a body, they could maintain a community of their own in the New World and thereby perpetuate their distinctive language and institutions. Inasmuch as many of the Welsh Quakers belonged to the gentry and were men of means, the accomplishment of this object seemed feasible. Linked with the desire to escape from persecution was the longing to perpetuate under happier skies the language and customs of their beloved country; and a combination of favoring circumstances pointed to the attainment of both these objects.<sup>2</sup>

With these purposes in mind, a committee of prominent Welsh Quakers visited William Penn in London in 1681 to enter into negotiations with him for the purchase of a large tract of land in Pennsylvania. The leader in this movement was John ap John, the "Apostle of Quakerism in Wales," who may be regarded as the founder of the Society of Friends in that country as well as the father of the Welsh Tract in Pennsylvania. Proceeding with the caution characteristic of his race, John ap John secured the appointment of a committee representing the Monthly Meetings of six Welsh shires with a view to holding a personal interview with Penn before embarking upon an enterprise of such consequence. The outstanding members of this committee were John ap John, Dr. Thomas Wynne, Richard ap Thomas, Dr. Griffith Owen, Dr. Edward Jones, John ap Thomas, Hugh Roberts, Thomas Ellis, Charles Lloyd, Richard Davies, John Bevan, and Lewis ap David. Being assured of religious liberty in the new colony, their main purpose in interviewing Penn was to reach an agreement with him that the lands which they proposed to purchase should be adjacent, so as to form a distinct settlement composed exclusively of Welsh. This would give them the opportunity they desired of maintaining undisturbed their own language and institutions, or at least they so believed. Furthermore, they wished to have it definitely understood that their settlement should constitute a "Barony," or County Palatine, with the right of self-government—an *imperium in imperio* "within which all causes, quarrels, crimes and disputes might be tried and wholly determined by officers, magistrates, and

<sup>2</sup> C. H. Browning, *Welsh Settlement of Pennsylvania*, 22, 26; George Smith, *History of Delaware County, Pa.*, 164; Glenn, *op. cit.*, 21; Jones, *op. cit.*, 442; *Pa. Archives*, Ser. I, Vol. I, 108-109.

juries of our own language." The agreement reached between Penn and the Welsh delegation was verbal and was never later committed to writing, which was unfortunate in view of the controversy subsequently arising as to its details. It appears, however, that the committee was well satisfied with the results of the interview, and agreed to purchase and dispose of forty thousand acres of land to the Welsh Friends. Accordingly, its members returned to their respective communities and reported favorably to the Monthly Meetings upon the project. Subscriptions were promptly made and the enterprise was launched with enthusiasm. Such was the origin of the famous "Welsh Barony" or "Welsh Tract" in Pennsylvania.<sup>3</sup>

Inasmuch as it required time to dispose of land to actual settlers, and meanwhile arrangements had to be made with Penn to clinch the bargain as well as to assure the carrying out of the particular objects in view respecting a distinctive settlement, special methods were adopted to effect these ends. The leaders in the enterprise became heads of companies of adventurers and, as trustees, took out patents in their own names for thirty thousand acres of land to be disposed of to the Welsh settlers. Ten thousand additional acres were conditionally engaged in view of prospective needs, and this land was later disposed of by Penn in small lots to actual settlers. Thus the whole amount of land engaged for the Welsh Barony was forty thousand acres.<sup>4</sup>

The patentees for the 30,000 acres for which Penn granted deeds in this tract "may be considered," says Browning, "self-constituted heads of seven companies for the division and sale of this land to the Welsh whom Penn and they hoped would be actual settlers on it."<sup>5</sup> The heads of these "companies" were John ap Thomas and Dr. Edward Jones, company number one, 5,000 acres; Charles Lloyd and Margaret Davies, company number two, 5,000 acres; John Bevan, 2,000 acres; John ap John and Dr. Thomas Wynne, 5,000 acres; Lewis ap David, 3,000 acres; Richard ap Thomas, 5,000 acres; and Richard Davies, 5,000 acres. It appears that the heads of some of these companies acted merely as trustees in purchasing blocks of land, whereas the heads of other companies

<sup>3</sup> Rufus M. Jones, *The Quakers in the American Colonies*, 442; Browning, *op. cit.*, 24-26; Glenn, *op. cit.*, 21; Braithwaite, *op. cit.*, 206.

<sup>4</sup> Jones, *op. cit.*, 442; Glenn, *op. cit.*, 21; Browning, *op. cit.*, 24-26.

<sup>5</sup> Browning, *op. cit.*, 33.

bought on their own account with the expectation of selling so much of their holdings as they did not wish to retain. Penn, however, regarded all these heads of companies as trustees and recognized no difference in his dealings with them.<sup>6</sup>

It seems that Penn, whose first plan was to dispose of his land in tracts of 5,000 acres, had in mind the Dutch scheme of "patroon concessions," with which he was doubtless familiar. The first sales were made principally on the basis of 5,000 acres, for which the price was one hundred pounds sterling and a quit-rent of one shilling for every hundred acres. As first purchasers, the Welsh bought the land in blocks before it had been surveyed, and their barony was not laid out until 1684; its boundaries were not definitely determined until 1687. The Welsh Barony of 40,000 acres lay on the west side of the Schuylkill, north of Philadelphia. It was a fertile, attractive region of about sixty-two square miles, admirably adapted to the requirements of the Welsh farmers who occupied it. Its general lines included eleven and a half of the present townships, in Montgomery, Chester, and Delaware Counties, of Lower and Upper Merion, Haverford, Radnor, Tredyffrin, East Westland, West Whiteland, Willistown, East Goshen, West Goshen, East Town, and a part of West Town. Magnificently located, it constituted a compact, thrifty, and distinctive settlement by a particularly desirable group of Welsh colonists.<sup>7</sup>

Settlement of the Welsh Barony began early and proceeded rapidly. Authorities are agreed that between 1682 and 1700 the Welsh were the most numerous body of immigrants arriving in Pennsylvania. Their initial settlements were made in the townships of Merion and Haverford in 1682, and, as population thickened, they spread rapidly over Radnor and Goshen townships. Soon thereafter the swelling tide of Welsh immigrants occupied Goshen, Tredyffrin, and Uwchlan, and eventually settled the remaining townships of the barony. When Penn advertised his land in the New World, the Welsh were the first to accept his offers and the first racial group to effect a mass settlement within the bounds of the province under the Charter. They did not even wait for Penn to precede them, but started at once to occupy their barony. Some

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> T. M. Rees, *A History of the Quakers in Wales and Their Emigration to North America*, 182; T. W. Bean, *History of Montgomery County, Pa.*, 140; Browning, *op. cit.*, 33-37, 488; Smith, *op. cit.*, 164-165.

arrived in the colony before Penn, and others came on the same ship with him, while for two decades they constituted the most numerous, and perhaps the most substantial, group among the diversified racial elements that flocked to Pennsylvania as to a land of promise.<sup>8</sup>

The pioneer Welshman in Pennsylvania was Dr. Edward Jones, whose ship, the *Lion*, arrived at Upland August 13, 1682. Dr. Jones, described as "chyrurgeon," was the first settler in the present county of Montgomery, and was the founder of "Merion in the Welsh Tract." Accompanying him were his wife and two small children and about forty other immigrants. Prominent among these were William ap Edward and family, Edward ap Rees and family, and Robert ap David and family. These gentlemen were the landholders of the party and, with their families, numbered sixteen, while the others were farm hands and servants. This first group of settlers in the Welsh Barony was assigned by Thomas Holme, Penn's surveyor, a tract of land on the west side of the Schuylkill, which they proceeded to occupy. Dr. Jones, who was prominent among the first settlers, became a justice of the peace in the Welsh Tract, and was one of its first representatives in the assembly. His co-founders of Merion, Edward ap Rees, William ap Edward, and Robert ap David, were also outstanding men among the early settlers of the province.<sup>9</sup>

The second party of Merion adventurers to settle on the "Thomas and Jones Tract" is known as the "Hugh Robert's Party" and included as landholders Hugh Roberts, Edward Owen, William John, Caldwalader Morgan, Hugh John, Gainor Roberts, and Katherine Thomas. This company, numbering about fifty persons, arrived at Philadelphia in November 1683. Hugh Roberts, who headed the party, was a Quaker minister of high repute, first in Wales and later in Pennsylvania—a man of education and character, who wielded a great influence among the Friends. Altogether, there were seventeen purchasers who bought land through Thomas and Jones, as agents or trustees of company number one, who had land laid out for them in Merion embracing 5,000 acres. These

<sup>8</sup> G. P. Donehoo, *Pennsylvania: A History*, I, 461-462; Smith, *op. cit.*, 148.

<sup>9</sup> Albert Cook Myers, *Narratives of Early Pennsylvania, West New Jersey, and Delaware, 1630-1707*, 228, 452; Bean, *op. cit.*, 139; Browning, *op. cit.*, 64, 79-92; Glenn, *op. cit.*, 61-62, 315.

were the pioneer settlers of the Welsh Barony, all of whom were Quakers and men of character and property.<sup>10</sup>

The patent for 5,000 acres of land held in the names of Charles Lloyd and Margaret Davies, each of whom had a half interest as trustees, was disposed of to Thomas Lloyd and seven other Welsh Quakers. Charles Lloyd did not himself come to Pennsylvania, but transferred his interest to his brother Thomas. The allotment of 2,500 acres to Margaret Davies under this grant was conveyed by deeds in April 1683 to Joseph Harris, Thomas Jones, Edward Thomas, Margaret Thomas, John Humphrey, John Rytherch, and Thomas Morris. Thomas Lloyd, a man of great distinction in the early history of the province, was educated at Oxford and belonged to the Welsh gentry. Arriving in Philadelphia in August 1683, he at once became a leader in provincial affairs, serving as land commissioner, president of the council, and deputy governor. He never resided on his land in the Welsh Barony, but lived in Philadelphia.<sup>11</sup>

John Bevan's patent for 2,000 acres in the Welsh Tract was disposed of in part to Charles ab Evan (Bevan), Matthew Jones, David Jones, and several others. In this third company of adventurers John Bevan (ab Evan), who was a Quaker minister acting as trustee for this small group of settlers, was a large landholder and seems to have belonged to the gentry of Wales. Arriving with Hugh Robert's party on the *Morning Star* in November 1683, he became prominent in the Welsh Barony and throughout the province, serving as justice of the peace in Haverford Township and as a member of the colonial assembly. Rees Thomas, who came over in the same ship with John Bevan in 1683, bought three hundred acres of land in Merion township, settled down as a prosperous farmer, and became a justice of the peace and a member of the assembly.<sup>12</sup>

Penn's patent for 5,000 acres of land issued to John ap John and Dr. Thomas Wynne, as trustees, located the holdings in the townships of Merion, Haverford, Radnor, Goshen, Newtown, and Middletown. This land was promptly disposed of to Welsh im-

<sup>10</sup> J. J. Levick, "John ap. Thomas and His Friends," in *Pa. Mag. of Hist. and Biog.*, IV, 301-321, 325-328; Browning, *op. cit.*, 103, 132; Glenn, *op. cit.*, 323-335.

<sup>11</sup> Isaac Sharpless, *Two Centuries of Pennsylvania History*, 63; Browning, *op. cit.*, 141-161; Glenn, *op. cit.*, 33-35, 340-341.

<sup>12</sup> Browning, *op. cit.*, 163-168.

migrants. Much to the regret of the Quakers, John ap John did not himself come to Pennsylvania; but Dr. Thomas Wynne, his co-partner in the enterprise, came over with Penn in the good ship *Welcome* in 1682. Dr. Wynne, called a "practitioner of physick," was prominent in the early history of Pennsylvania. He was a member of the preliminary assembly of delegates at Upland in December 1682, and, when the first organized assembly of the province was held in Philadelphia, he was chosen as the first speaker of that body. He resided in Philadelphia, and it is claimed that his residence was the first brick house erected in that town.<sup>13</sup>

The head of the fifth company for the division and sale of lands in the Welsh Barony was Lewis ap David, who subscribed for 3,000 acres. Retaining 750 acres for himself, he conveyed, under date of May 1682, the remainder of his allotment to William Howell, Henry Lewis, Rees Others, and Evan Thomas. Henry Lewis, the best known member of this group, was the foreman of the first grand jury for Philadelphia County.<sup>14</sup> Richard ap Thomas, subscriber for 5,000 acres of land in the Welsh Barony and head of the sixth company of adventurers for Pennsylvania, was not very successful in disposing of his holdings. Arriving in the province with the Hugh Roberts party in November 1683, he was in poor health and died shortly thereafter. His son, Richard ap Thomas, Jr., disposed of 1,786½ acres to Philip Howel, Robert Williams, Edward Jones, Hugh Roberts, David Howel, and Robert David.<sup>15</sup>

The seventh and last company of Welsh adventurers for Pennsylvania under the original agreement with Penn was led by Richard Davies as subscriber and trustee. On June 19 and July 30, 1682, deeds for varying amounts of this land were given to Rowland Ellis, Richard Humphrey, Ellis Morris, Lewis Owen, Rowland Owen, Evan John William, Evan ap William, David ap Evan, Edward Owen, James Price, and John Roberts, gentlemen, and to sixteen others. Their holdings were laid out in the townships of Merion, Radnor, Goshen, and Newtown, though more than half of them lay in Radnor township. Richard Davies himself, however, never came to Pennsylvania. Rowland Ellis, who purchased the largest holding, was a Quaker minister and one of the most prom-

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 175-193.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 195-203.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 207-212.

inent men in the province. In 1683 he sent his farmer, Thomas Owen, to look after his interests, but did not himself come over until 1787, when he was accompanied by about one hundred of his neighbors; but remained only nine months. Finally, in 1696, he resolved to make his home in Pennsylvania and sailed with a hundred more of his neighbors, arriving in Philadelphia in June, 1697. He named his home Bryn Mawr after his paternal home in Merionethshire, Wales, and the name has been happily perpetuated by the town and college of Bryn Mawr, located in the vicinity of his estate. An outstanding citizen, he represented Merion in the assembly and was greatly respected for his high character and for his sound judgment in civil and religious affairs.<sup>16</sup>

Such was the manner of the purchase and settlement of the original 30,000 acres of the Welsh Barony under the seven companies to which Penn issued patents for the lands. Nearly all the settlers on this tract were Welsh, and a large majority of them were Quakers. Eminently desirable as settlers, they represented a higher grade of intelligence and a more substantial financial rating than that of the average immigrants, and their moral quality was unsurpassed. Many of them were members of the Welsh gentry, while others sprang from the sturdy yeoman class. The more prosperous among them brought their servants, who helped to augment the population of the barony. The 30,000 acres disposed of in the manner described above did not include all the land embraced in the Welsh Tract, which, as has been noted, amounted to 40,000 acres altogether. The remaining 10,000 acres, which had been conditionally engaged by the Welsh delegation in their interview with Penn, were disposed of later by Penn himself, or by his agents, in individual sales to actual settlers and to parties buying for speculative purposes. This land was regarded as being a part of the Welsh Tract and was settled chiefly by Welshmen, though the proportion of other nationalities occupying it was higher than in the case of the original 30,000 acres.<sup>17</sup>

The hope of the Welsh settlers that their barony would become a little government of their own, where Welsh laws, language, and customs would prevail, was not realized. Only for a few years were they able to carry out their ideas in this regard. At first, no

<sup>16</sup> Robert Proud, *History of Pennsylvania*, I, 22; Levick, *op. cit.*, 324-325; Browning, *op. cit.*, 213-248; Glenn, *op. cit.*, 205-240.

<sup>17</sup> Glenn, *op. cit.*, 187; Browning, *op. cit.*, 279-280.



one hindering, they undertook to rule themselves in their own way, and had none of the usual township divisions and officers. They were a peaceable folk, and what little civil authority was needed was exercised through their Quaker meetings. This system came to an end in 1690, not because the Welsh wished it but because outside forces changed it. It had been the understanding of the Welsh that their barony would lie in one undivided tract, not subject to division into municipal districts; but in 1685 the provincial authorities ran a division line between Philadelphia and Chester Counties, thereby dividing the Welsh Tract. Furthermore, in 1690 the civil authority exercised by the Quaker meetings was abolished in the three townships of Haverford, Merion, and Radnor, and in its stead the regular township government was established; and, as the population increased, other townships were created within the barony with similar government. The Welsh contended that this was contrary to their understanding with Penn, and insisted that, if there were to be any townships at all, their barony should constitute only one municipal district, in which they should select their own officers from among themselves and should collect their own taxes. But this arrangement did not appear to the representatives of Penn to be feasible; hence the barony was divided into townships, as was customary elsewhere throughout the province. To the Welsh, however, who claimed that this was in violation of their agreement with the proprietary, the new arrangement was a real grievance against which they protested stoutly. They objected also to the placing of their tract partly in one county and partly in another, which was accomplished by the running of the division line between Philadelphia and Chester Counties, and the consequent transference of the townships of Haverford and Radnor from the former to the latter county. As other Welsh settlers came in, additional townships were created in the barony, which was settled rapidly. The Welsh at first stood on what they conceived to be their rights, protesting against the division of their tract by county and township lines and refusing to recognize the validity of the municipal arrangements to which they were subjected. By 1690, however, they had discovered the hopelessness of their struggle against the provincial authorities, and submitted with as good a grace as possible to conditions which they were powerless to resist. Penn had declined to sustain them in their contention, and against his decision there could be no appeal. Thus ended their

high hopes of maintaining a little government of their own in Pennsylvania. The scheme was Utopian and was doomed to failure from the start, but the manner in which Penn handled it did not add to his popularity with the Welshmen in the province, nor incline them to shout his praises from the housetops.<sup>18</sup>

Trouble arose between Penn and the Welsh over the matter of quit-rents. The proprietary's commissioners insisted that if the Welsh wished to exclude other racial elements from settlement within the bounds of their tract they must pay quit-rents on the whole 40,000 acres, and that payment should be made as from the date of the survey of the tract. The Welsh, on the other hand, while protesting against the encroachments of settlers other than those of their own nationality within the barony, were unwilling to pay quit-rents on the unimproved parts of the tract and objected also to paying these from the date of the original survey, which was not the final one. The commissioners thereupon opened up parts of the barony to settlers of other nationalities and issued deeds to them for land within its bounds. Thus the Welsh Tract was not peopled exclusively by Welshmen, though other racial elements were but sparsely represented in the barony for many years. Furthermore, the population of the Welsh Tract was not altogether Quaker, since Baptists and Episcopalians were found there almost from the beginning.<sup>19</sup>

Outside of the Welsh Tract proper, there were other distinctive Welsh settlements to which attention is now directed. The most important of these was Gwynedd township in the present Montgomery County, where the Welsh founded an early mass settlement. The Gwynedd settlement, also known as North Wales, owed its origin partly to the favorable reports of Pennsylvania made by the settlers of the Welsh Barony to their friends in Wales, and partly to the activities and persuasions of Hugh Roberts, an influential Quaker minister who had emigrated to the province, but had returned to his old home on a visit in 1697. In that year William John and Thomas ap Evan, advance agents of a group of

<sup>18</sup> S. G. Fisher, *The Making of Pennsylvania*, 204; J. S. Futhy and G. Cope, *History of Chester County, Pa.*, 28-30; George Smith, *op. cit.*, 165-171-173, 187; Bean, *op. cit.*, 140; Rees, *op. cit.*, 181-182; Charles P. Keith, *Chronicles of Pennsylvania, 1688-1748*, I, 129-130; Browning, *op. cit.*, 334-337, 327, 332; Glenn, *op. cit.*, 49-51.

<sup>19</sup> Fisher, *op. cit.*, 205; Browning, *op. cit.*, 381-386; Glenn, *op. cit.*, 51-52; Smith, *op. cit.*, 176.

Welshmen who had decided to emigrate to Pennsylvania, arrived in Philadelphia and proceeded to select and purchase land for the proposed settlement. Fortunately for their purposes, there was in Montgomery County a large tract of land consisting of 7,820 acres, which was well suited to their requirements. This land, which was owned by Robert Turner, a wealthy Philadelphia Quaker, was purchased by John and Evan on March 10, 1698, for five hundred and eight pounds, or at the rate of six pounds ten shillings for each hundred acres, at which price it was sold to the colonists upon their arrival. The main body of the immigrants arrived at Philadelphia July 17, 1698, and proceeded to occupy their newly acquired land, which they called Gwynedd after the ancient name of a historic region of North Wales.<sup>20</sup> The original settlers in this township included Edward Foulke, Thomas Evans, Robert Evans, Cadwalader Evans, Owen Evans, William John, John Humphrey, John Hugh, and Hugh Griffith. The settlement of Gwynedd, begun in 1698, had become practically complete by 1720 as others came in and the land was divided. In 1741 the township, which was one of the most prosperous in the county, had ninety-three taxables.<sup>21</sup>

From the beginning there were Welsh settlers in Philadelphia, and many of these were prominent in the affairs of the city and of the province. A large proportion of the early physicians and mayors of the city were Welsh, among the latter of whom were Edward Roberts and Thomas Wharton. Thomas Lloyd was an outstanding citizen, and Francis Hopkinson was a man of distinction in the Revolutionary era. Dr. Cadwalader Evans, grandson of the Gwynedd pioneer of that name, was an eminent physician of Philadelphia, and General John Cadwalader was a distinguished soldier of the Revolution. As time passed, many of the Welsh who had settled in the barony, or in Gwynedd, removed to Philadelphia, as did a number of those who had located in other parts of the province.<sup>22</sup>

A few Welshmen settled at an early date in Bucks County, where Cold Spring Baptist Church, the first of that denomination in the colony, was established chiefly by them in 1684. Some of the Welsh overflowed from Philadelphia County into Bucks County about

<sup>20</sup> H. M. Jenkins, *Historical Collections Relating to Gwynedd*, 21-32, 40; Sherman Day, *Historical Collections*, 482-483; Browning, *op. cit.*, 265-268; Jones, *op. cit.*, 443.

<sup>21</sup> Jenkins, *op. cit.*, 50-53.

<sup>22</sup> Browning, *op. cit.*, 308.

1722, and settled chiefly in two or three townships on the southwestern border. Between 1700 and 1715 a number of Welshmen who had settled in the vicinity of Gwynedd, in the upper part of Philadelphia County, crossed over into New Britain and Hilltown townships in Bucks County—a region then known as Perkasy.<sup>23</sup>

The Welsh settled in considerable numbers in Berks County at an early date, in the townships of Caernarvon, Brecknock, and Cumru, and, to a less extent, in those of Maiden Creek and Robeson. For fifty years they migrated as individuals and in small groups farther and farther up the Schuylkill. According to Montgomery: "Before 1740 several hundred of them had settled in the district beyond South Mountain; these were Baptists, and their lands were taken up mostly along and in the vicinity of Wyomissing and Cacoosing Creeks, and there they were most thickly settled." Prior to 1752 they had taken up tracts of land aggregating 20,000 acres in this region. The Welsh also settled in Lancaster County in small numbers around the year 1700. Along the Conestoga in this county were found, prior to 1725, such Welsh names as James Lloyd, Gabriel Davis, Philip David, David Jenkins, and Edward Davies. Twenty-four Welsh families migrated from Radnor township in Chester County to Churchtown in Lancaster County in 1730, and founded Bangor Episcopal Church.<sup>24</sup>

In 1796 a flourishing settlement in what is now Cambria County was effected by Welsh immigrants under the leadership of the Reverend Morgan J. Rees, a Baptist minister, who had purchased a tract of land around the present town of Ebensburg and sold it to his brethren in small tracts. This group of Welshmen, being principally Baptists, founded Ebensburg and settled the adjacent region. They named their settlement Cambria after their former home, which was the mountainous section of Wales; and Cambria Township gave its name to the whole county when the latter was cut off from Somerset County in 1804. Among the pioneer settlers were Thomas Phillips, William Jenkins, Theophilus Rees, Evan Roberts, Rees Lloyd, William Griffith, Daniel Griffith, Isaac Griffith, John Jones, David Thomas, Evan James, George Roberts, Thomas Jones, and John Jenkins, all of whom arrived during the

<sup>23</sup> W. H. H. Davis, *History of Doylestown, Old and New*, 4; Rees, *op. cit.*, 187.

<sup>24</sup> M. L. Montgomery, *History of Berks County, Pa.*, 70; I. D. Rupp, *History of the Counties of Berks and Lebanon*, 111; W. H. Egle, *History of Pennsylvania*, 841-843.

fall and winter of 1696-97. In the following spring and summer these were joined by the Reverend Morgan J. Rees, John Evans, William Rees, Simon James, William Williams, George Turner, Thomas Griffith, James Evans, Griffith Rowland, David Edwards, Thomas Lewis, David Davis, John Roberts, David Rees, John Thomas, and Robert Williams. Practically all of these settlers were Welshmen, and were mostly married men who brought their families with them. The Reverend Rees Lloyd was the first settler in Ebensburg and gave it its name. The Welsh settlements extended to the adjoining townships and constituted a flourishing community. As late as 1873, and perhaps later, the Welsh were the most numerous racial element in Ebensburg and in Cambria township, and for many years the services of the Baptist Church there were conducted in the Welsh language.<sup>25</sup>

It is difficult, if not impossible, to arrive at a correct estimate of the number of Welshmen in Pennsylvania in the colonial era. There seems to be no question, however, that they were the most numerous racial element arriving in the province between 1682 and 1700, and possibly for a year or two later. After 1700 Welsh immigration dwindled rapidly, since there was no longer religious persecution in the home country and the impulse to emigrate had about spent itself. A few Welshmen continued to come down to about 1720, but after that time the movement practically ceased, and any further increase in the provincial period was due to the birth rate rather than to immigration. The population of the colony in 1700 was estimated at about 20,000, of whom it seems probable that one third were Welshmen. By the end of the colonial era the Welsh had, except in a few scattered communities, largely lost their national identity and become merged with the English, but it would seem safe to say that in 1776, or at least by 1790, there were approximately twelve thousand people in the province who were either entirely or chiefly of Welsh stock. In 1734 the Welsh constituted about one-fourth the population now embraced within the limits of Montgomery County, were quite strong in the counties of Chester and Delaware, and were fairly well represented in the counties of Bucks, Berks, and Lancaster, and in the city of Philadelphia. Relatively, however, they lost ground fast in these districts,

<sup>25</sup> Egle, *op. cit.*, 470-471; J. M. Swank, *Progressive Pennsylvania*, 40; T. J. Chapman, *The Valley of the Conemaugh*, 15, 70; Sherman Day, *op. cit.*, 180-181.

owing to the fact that their immigration ceased early, whereas that of the English, the Germans, and the Scotch-Irish increased rapidly and overwhelmed them. Even in their own original townships they were outnumbered by other racial groups, especially by the English, as time passed. In Gwynedd Township, for example, the Welsh in 1743 numbered 39 taxables out of 48, but in 1776 they numbered only 24 taxables out of 143. Other townships that had once been Welsh strongholds showed a similar decrease in relative strength, and the disproportion became still more marked with each succeeding decade. In the census of 1790 the Welsh were not listed as a separate racial element, but were counted as English.<sup>26</sup>

The influence of the Welsh upon the early development of Pennsylvania was by no means inconsiderable. As a class they were possessed of more wealth, and perhaps of more education, than was found ordinarily among the immigrants, and none surpassed them in moral worth. Prior to 1730 nearly all the physicians in the province were Welshmen, including such men as Thomas Wynne, Griffith Owen, Edward Jones, Lloyd Zachary, Thomas Cadwalader, and Cadwalader Evans; and later, Thomas Bond, Phineas Bond, and Judah Foulke. Dr. Wynne was the physician of Penn; and his great-grandson, Dr. John Jones, was the physician of Washington. Many of the most eminent ministers among the Friends were Welsh, among them being Robert Owen, Rowland Ellis, Hugh Roberts, Ellis Pugh, and Evan Lloyd. Prominent in the affairs of the colony were Thomas Lloyd, David Lloyd, the Cadwaladers, Merediths, Clymers, Morgans, and others. After the first few decades of the colony's history, however, the Welsh were not remarkable for the number of distinguished men springing from their ranks.<sup>27</sup>

Although some of them were acquainted with the mechanic arts, the Welsh immigrants were mostly farmers. As time passed, however, many of them, especially in the second and third generation, sold their farms, moved to Philadelphia, and entered the mechanical pursuits or engaged in trade or the professions. As farmers they

<sup>26</sup> Fisher, *op. cit.*, 202, 203; Bean, *op. cit.*, 141.

<sup>27</sup> H. M. Jenkins, *Pennsylvania: Colonial and Federal*, I, 308; xxx; H. G. Jones, *The Charter and By-Laws of the Welsh Society of Pennsylvania*, 3; J. J. Levick, "The Early Welsh Quakers and Their Emigration to Pennsylvania," in *Pa. Mag. of Hist. and Biog.*, XVII, 411; Proud, *op. cit.*, I, 220-222; Rees, *op. cit.*, 186.

were energetic, skillful, and thrifty. Oldmixon, writing of them in 1708, after a visit to the Welsh Barony, says:

This tract is thick of townships; as Radnor, before-mentioned, west Merioneth, and others. 'Tis very populous, and the people are very industrious; by which means this country is better cleared than any other part of the country. The inhabitants have many fine plantations of corn, and breed abundance of cattle, insomuch that they are looked upon to be as thriving and wealthy as any in the province—and this must always be said of the Welsh, that wherever they come, 'tis not their fault if they do not live, and live well, too; for they seldom spare for labor, which seldom fails of success.<sup>28</sup>

The Welsh made free use of indentured servants to work their farms; and many a Welsh landowner brought along servants from Wales, some of whom were menials, but others were experienced farmers and farm laborers. Sometimes these were related to their masters, but, being too poor to pay their passage over, agreed to sell their services for a term of years to meet the charges of transportation to the New World. When their term of service expired and they set up for themselves as farmers, their master often resorted to slaves to furnish the required labor on their plantations, and thus Negro slavery was introduced among the Welsh.<sup>29</sup>

The social and domestic life of the early Welsh settlers resembled that of their English neighbors, especially among the Quakers. Their favorite articles of diet were mutton, or kid seethed in milk, boiled venison, barley cakes, broth, and bread made of Indian corn; and they were especially fond of milk and cheese. In personal appearance they were of medium stature and inclined to be thick-set, had a ruddy complexion, with blue or hazel eyes and clean-shaven faces, and wore their light or auburn hair closely trimmed. In dress they were not averse to finery, and the wealthier among them expended considerable sums for "beaver hats, silk gowns, Irish linens, silver-mounted canes and riding whips, gingham of divers hues, silk hose and handkerchiefs, bonnets and shawls, embroidered waistcoats, heavy riding coats, and clothes with silver buttons." Also, they consumed their full share of spirituous liquors, brandy, gin, and wine, being particularly partial to brandy.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Cited in Sherman Day's *Historical Collections of Pennsylvania*, 483.

<sup>29</sup> Browning, *op. cit.*, 259-263; Glenn, *op. cit.*, 197-198.

<sup>30</sup> Glenn, *op. cit.*, 198-199.

The Quaker historian, Robert Proud, pays his tribute to the Welsh pioneers in Pennsylvania as follows:

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 the society, or otherwise qualified and disposed to do good, in various capacities, both in religious and civil, in public and private life. Of some of them there are particular and extraordinary accounts in manuscript, both respecting their eminent religious services among the Quakers, &c, and also their great usefulness among their neighbors, in settling the province, and in regulating and managing the civil affairs of the government; as persons justly and highly esteemed and distinguished both in private and public station.<sup>31</sup>

The religious affiliations of the Welsh settlers, who were a very devout people and cherished their principles stoutly, were of great significance. According to Jenkins, "the greater part were Friends, a considerable number were Baptists, and some remained members of the Church of England."<sup>32</sup> To this he might have added that a few were Presbyterians and a handful might be found in other religious bodies, especially in the later years of colonial history.

The large majority of the early Welsh settlers in Pennsylvania were Quakers fleeing from persecution in Wales, and this is particularly true of those located in the Welsh Barony. The Welsh contributed powerfully to the early pre-eminence of the Quakers in the province, furnishing a goodly proportion of both ministers and laymen and exercising a strong influence upon denominational affairs. They built the first church in Merion and it remained the only one in that township until 1770, when the Lutherans erected a church at Ardmore. A monthly meeting was promptly organized in the Welsh Tract, and services were held at first under the trees or in the homes of the members. In 1684 two log churches were built, one in Merion and the other in Haverford. Between 1695 and 1700 both these buildings were replaced by substantial stone structures. The Merion meeting house is one of the historic buildings of Pennsylvania. From the founders of the Merion Meeting were descended many men whose influence upon colonial Penn-

<sup>31</sup> Proud, *op. cit.*, I, 220.

<sup>32</sup> H. M. Jenkins, "Early Welsh Settlers," in Bucks County Historical Society *Papers*, I, 398.



sylvania was very large; among these were John Dickinson, Francis Hopkinson, Dr. Thomas Cadwalader, John and Lambert Cadwalader, Clement and Owen Biddle, Edward Roberts, Robert Wharton, Joshua Humphreys, and Dr. Lloyd Zachary. The Welsh Quakers not only founded flourishing meetings in Chester, Delaware, and Montgomery Counties, and in Berks County, but swelled the membership of the churches founded by the English Quakers by many substantial additions.<sup>33</sup>

Among the Welsh settlers in the province, the Baptists were the next most numerous religious body. In fact, the Welsh were chiefly responsible for the founding of the Baptist denomination in Pennsylvania, furnishing at first a larger proportion of the ministers and members than did the English. As noted above, some of the constituent members of the first Baptist church in the province were Welshmen. The second Baptist church in the province, first known as Pennepek and later as Lower Dublin, was organized in 1688 chiefly by Welsh immigrants, and has had a history extending over two hundred and fifty-seven years. Originally a rural church, it is now within the limits of Philadelphia. Its pastors were mostly Welshmen down to the Revolution, the most eminent of them being Morgan Edwards, who was the author of *Materials toward a History of the Baptists in Pennsylvania*, and was one of the principal founders of Brown University. In 1711 Welsh Baptists in Tredyffrin Township, Chester County, organized Great Valley Baptist Church, which was served by Welsh pastors for one hundred and seventeen years. Montgomery Baptist Church, in Gwynedd Township, Montgomery County, was organized by the Welsh in 1719, and was served by Welsh pastors for many years. New Britain Baptist Church, in Bucks County, was founded by the Welsh in 1754. Prior to the Revolution this racial group furnished the majority of the Baptists in the colony. In several Baptist churches preaching was in the Welsh language until late in the provincial period.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>33</sup> Glenn, *op. cit.*, 364-371; Smith, *op. cit.*, 148; Donehoo, *op. cit.*, 462.

<sup>34</sup> W. H. H. Davis, "Southampton Baptist Church," in Bucks County Historical Society *Papers*, 196-197; N. C. Fetter, "New Britain Baptist Church," *Ibid.*, 439-441; Morgan Edwards, *Materials toward a History of the Baptists in Pa.*, 6, 10, 24-28, 31-34, 37-39, 47-52, 54; David Spencer, "Baptist Beginnings in Pennsylvania," in *The Baptist Commonwealth*, Jan. 7, 1904, Oct. 13, 1904; David Benedict, *A General History of the Baptist Denomination*, 601; H. G. Jones, *History of the Baptist Church in the Great Valley, Tredyffrin Township, Chester County, Pa.*, 6-7.

Like the Baptists, the Episcopal Church (Church of England) had a relatively small membership in Pennsylvania in colonial times. It was recruited chiefly from the English element of the population, but had a small following among the Welsh and some adherents from other racial groups. Some of the Welsh immigrants, particularly those who came after 1700, were Church of England people and continued this relationship in Pennsylvania. The Reverend Evan Evans, the Welsh rector of Christ Church, Philadelphia, began a mission at Radnor in 1700 and gathered a following. Soon thereafter about one hundred Welsh Episcopalians in Radnor, Haverford and Merion, petitioned the Bishop of London for a settled minister who could speak both Welsh and English; and their petition was granted. In 1715 a church edifice was erected, and in 1717 this log structure was replaced by the little stone building which still stands as one of the most interesting landmarks of provincial Pennsylvania. Such was the origin of historic St. David's Episcopal Church, pleasantly located in one of the valleys of Radnor. The Episcopal mission at Oxford was composed largely of Welsh, who erected a neat building and contributed to the services of the rector of Christ Church. Some of the first parishioners at St. Thomas, White Marsh, and St. James Episcopal churches were Welshmen. In Caernarvon Township in Berks County some Welsh Episcopalians built a stone church late in the colonial period, and called it Bangor after their native diocese in Wales. The Keithian schism among the Quakers resulted in numerous additions of Welsh Quakers to the Episcopalians, and at a later period there were occasional converts among the Welsh by the Episcopalians. The number of Welsh Episcopalians in the province in 1776 amounted to several hundred.<sup>35</sup>

There were a few Welsh Presbyterians in the colony. The Reverend Malachi Jones, a Welsh minister, organized the Presbyterian church at Abingdon in 1714, and it appears that several members of his flock were Welshmen. It was, however, very exceptional to find Welshmen in Presbyterian churches in Pennsylvania in the early days.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>35</sup> W. S. Perry, *Historical Collections Relating to the American Colonial Church*, II, 315; Henry Pleasants, *The History of Old St. David's Church, Radnor, in Delaware County, Pa.*, 4, 17, 140, 147; David Humphreys, *An Historical Account of the Incorporated Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts*, 149, 155-156; Browning, *op. cit.*, 584-585.

<sup>36</sup> H. M. Jenkins, "Early Welsh Settlers," in *Bucks County Historical Society Papers*, I, 398; Browning, *op. cit.*, 487; Bean, *op. cit.*, 141.

Although the Welsh had been almost entirely absorbed by the English in Pennsylvania by the close of the colonial era and had lost practically all trace of their national identity, language and customs, there is still left a pleasing remembrance of their early settlements in the place-names they left behind them. Welsh names are very common in the vicinity of Philadelphia throughout Chester, Delaware and Montgomery Counties, as for example, Merion, Haverford, Radnor, Eastcaln, Uwchlan, Tredyffrin, Wynnewood, Pennlyn, Gwynedd, St. David's, Bryn Mawr, Bryn Athyn, Cwynyd, Crumllyn, Llanerch, Berwyn, and Duffryn, not to mention the Welsh Mountains. Thirteen postoffices in Montgomery County alone are of Welsh origin. These names remind us how important the Welsh were in the early history of Pennsylvania, and caution us not to forget that while their national identity was lost, nevertheless their numbers were not insignificant nor their influence to be despised. An exceptionally desirable class of immigrants, they added an element of strength to the province, and their descendants have contributed worthily to the enrichment of the life of the commonwealth, many of whose most eminent sons have been proud to boast their strain of ancient Cymric blood.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>37</sup> Bean, *op. cit.*, 142; Fisher, *op. cit.*, 205-206. James J. Levick calls attention to changes occurring in names of Welsh individuals after coming to Pennsylvania, as follows: "The word 'ap' means 'son of.' After their removal to America this nomenclature was changed somewhat, being abandoned. The ap John became John's (son) or Jones; ap Edward, Edward's; ap William William's; ap Robert, Robert's, the possessive apostrophe being omitted. In other instances the final letter of ap became the first of the new name, thus ap (or ab) Owen became Bowen; ap Evan, Bevan; ap Humphrey, Pumphrey; ap Howell, Powell; ap Rees, Price; ap Hugh, Pugh." See James J. Levick, "John ap Thomas and His Friends," in *Pa. Mag. of Hist. and Biog.*, IV, 321.