

"The English is Swallowing up Their Language": Welsh Ethnic Ambivalence in Colonial Pennsylvania and the Experience of David Evans

TRADITION HAS LONG HELD THAT William Penn was a leading actor in the history of the Welsh people. Penn, it is suggested, was himself a Welshman, his name coming from the Welsh word for a hilltop. The reality is that William Penn was hardly a hero to the early Welsh settlers of Pennsylvania.

Among the so-called First Purchasers of land were a number of Welsh Quakers who reached the colony in 1682 and settled Merion, several miles west of Philadelphia. Others soon staked out homesteads in what later became Haverford and Radnor townships.¹ Desiring to preserve their "Welshness," these colonists pressed Penn to survey for them a "Welsh Tract" of some 40,000 acres in what are now portions of Montgomery, Chester, and Delaware counties. Their claim was based on a meeting in London in May 1681 between Penn and a committee of leading Welsh Quakers. During the meeting, evidently, it was agreed that lands purchased would be adjacent, so as to form a Welsh settlement "within which all causes, quarrels, crimes

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¹ There is no adequate comprehensive account of the Welsh settlement in colonial Pennsylvania. For the most useful works, see C.H. Browning, *Welsh Settlement of Pen(n)sylvania* (Philadelphia, 1912); T.A. Glenn, *Merion in the Welsh Tract* (1896; reprint ed., Baltimore, 1970); W.F. Dunaway, "Early Welsh Settlers of Pennsylvania," *Pennsylvania History* 12 (1945), 251-69; J.J. Levick, "John ap Thomas and his Friends," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* (hereafter, *PMHB*) 4 (1880), 301-28; Levick, "The Early Welsh Quakers and Their Emigration to Pennsylvania," *ibid.*, 17 (1893), 385-413. See also Richard S. Dunn and Mary Maples Dunn, eds., *The Papers of William Penn* (5 vols., Philadelphia, 1982-1987), 2:526-27.

and disputes might be tried and wholly determined by officers, magistrates and juries of our own language.”² Penn had agreed to this, they said. Yet whatever was agreed upon was not committed to paper, and it appears that ultimately Penn reneged on his promise, so that by 1689 the so-called Welsh Tract was broken up administratively.

The Welsh settlers perhaps constituted somewhat less than ten percent of the early Pennsylvania population,³ but it often has been supposed that they were largely well-to-do gentry. There were several such family groups, yet the great bulk actually were families from more humble circumstances, predominantly from Merionethshire (which supplied about one-third of all the early Welsh Tract settlers), with a number of others from Montgomeryshire and Radnorshire. As Barry Levy has shown, “the overwhelming majority of Merionethshire and Montgomeryshire Quakers . . . lived in one-hearth houses and cottages.”⁴ In 1685 Thomas Ellis wrote to the founder of Quakerism, George Fox: “I wish that those that have estates of their own . . . may not be offended at the Lord’s opening a door of mercy to thousands in England, Especially in Wales . . . who had no estates either for themselves or children.”⁵ Indeed, the first known publication in Welsh printed in America, Ellis Pugh’s 1721 *A Salutation to Britons* (as it is translated), was written, Pugh said, for “poor, unlearned people such as artisans, labourers and shepherds, men of low degree like myself.”⁶

The plans for a self-contained Welsh-speaking colony-within-a-colony had come to nothing. Besides, even from the earliest days, the

² Quoted in Dunaway, “Early Welsh Settlers,” 252-53.

³ Lewis Evans (Philadelphia) to John Pownall, Nov. 1, 1764, Facsimile 236, Manuscript Collection (National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth) (hereafter, NLW).

⁴ Barry Levy, *Quakers and the American Family: British Settlement in the Delaware Valley* (New York, 1988), 26. For the humble financial background of the areas of Wales which produced most Welsh settlers for Quaker Pennsylvania, see pp. 29-36. For the numbers from Merionethshire, see pp. 64-65. See also A.H. Dodd, “The Background of the Welsh Quaker Migration to Pennsylvania,” *Journal of the Merionethshire Historical and Record Society* 3 (1958), 111-27, especially 111-17.

⁵ Thomas Ellis to George Fox, 4 mo. [July] 13, 1685, printed in the *Journal of the Friends Historical Society* (London) 6 (1909), 174.

⁶ Cwrtmawr Manuscript 982B (NLW). Pugh, a Quaker stonemason in Wales, had continued to ply that trade in Pennsylvania. A.H. Dodd, *The Character of Early Welsh Emigration to the United States* (Cardiff, 1953), 31.

Welsh Tract was never linguistically "pure." A number of the settlers spoke English fluently, and some others had taken advantage of the tedious sea crossing to learn it. News of the arrival of the first shipload of Welsh settlers was sent back to Wales in a letter written in English. Even in Gwynedd Township, the most Welsh of the settlements founded outside the Welsh Tract in 1698, Quaker services were from the beginning bilingual, Welsh not being intelligible to the entire congregation.⁷ In the short term, those Welsh Quakers in Pennsylvania who desired to maintain a separate ethnic identity were aided by the fact that Quakerism had no order of ordained clergy. In the absence of the necessity for religious leaders speaking Welsh, a Welsh Quaker could converse with the inner spirit in whatever language he chose. On the other hand, the absence of printed confessions, catechisms, or hymnbooks among Quakers clearly hindered the perpetuation of the Welsh language.

It was not the only reason, but the depletion of Welsh Quaker ranks by emigration to Pennsylvania contributed largely to the rapid decline of Quakerism in Wales.⁸ By 1698 hot letters—couched of course in loving "thee" and "thou" language—were being exchanged between Welsh Quakers of Wales and Pennsylvania, with the Wales Welsh critical of their Pennsylvania brethren for departing ("runnings to Pennsylvania," as some put it) for newer pastures.⁹ Such criticism likely increased the readiness of the Pennsylvania Welsh Quakers to merge into their predominantly English surroundings. They gave up attempting to maintain an exclusively Welsh identity, an identity

⁷ Browning, *Welsh Settlement*, 19; Levick, "John ap Thomas," 322; Glenn, *Merion*, 41-42, 66-68 (for the letter); Dodd, "The Background," 124.

⁸ Levy, *Quakers*, 113-14; Frederick B. Tolles, *The Atlantic Community of Early Friends* (London, 1952), 24.

⁹ "An Epistle from our Monthly Meeting held at Merion in the Welch Tract in Pennsylvania the 11th of the 3rd mo. 1699 To Our dear Friends and Brethren at their Yearly Meeting in Wales," 64153, Manuscript Collection (NLW). This "Epistle" contains extracts from a letter of 1698 written from Wales and critical of those who had left for Pennsylvania. The original of the 1698 letter is in the Friends Library, London. One settler wrote from Philadelphia: "I desire that none may take occasion by any word that I have dropped that I think . . . better of this country [Pennsylvania] than it deserves nor suppose that I do not repent of my coming for be it far from me from encouraging any to venture themselves . . . to the danger of the seas and many more inconveniences." Rowland Ellis to Richard Johnson (Dolgellau, Merionethshire), April 1, 1698, 6209E, Manuscript Collection (NLW).

already diluted to a considerable extent, and addressed themselves to succeeding in their new world—as Quaker Pennsylvanians, not as Welshmen. For most, it appears that cultural and linguistic separateness was too high a price to pay for being locked out of the opportunity of becoming upwardly mobile young colonials. By the turn of the eighteenth century, those who remained self-consciously Welsh clustered in small groups in separate farming settlements.

It was at this time that David Evans, a twenty-three-year-old Welsh dissenter from Carmarthenshire, set sail for America. David Evans's name is carved only crudely on the story of colonial Pennsylvania. Usually glimpsed as a minor figure in the ecclesiastical rumblings of the Great Awakening upheaval, Evans was, in fact, an important member of the self-consciously Welsh settlers who attempted to create an island of ethnicity within the sea of Anglo-American colonial society.¹⁰ Having been brought up in a farming family and having served mainly as an apprentice shepherd and also as a weaver, he represents the agrarianism of the typical Welsh immigrant. More than that, Evans's career reveals a number of the features of ambivalence experienced by an ethnic and linguistic minority in colonial Pennsylvania, especially since he himself added to the rapidity with which Welsh identity declined and died.¹¹

David Evans's reason for immigration to America surely will add to historians' lists of motives for New World settlement: "I voyaged over the great seas to Pennsylvania to earn money so that I could buy plenty of books."¹² He was in want of more money than he

¹⁰ Traditionally, Evans's birth has been placed several years later. However, the actual date, together with many other facts hitherto unknown, have come to light through the discovery of an autobiographical "poem" written by Evans towards the end of his life. This poem, written in the Welsh language, was printed in full in Gareth Alban Davies, "Y Parch. David Evans, Pencader—Ymfudwr Cynnar I Pennsylvania," *National Library of Wales Journal* 14 (1965-1966), 85-92. The original is in the Rosenbach Library and Museum, Philadelphia. I am indebted to Mrs. M. Carter for translating this work into English. The unfinished poem consists of sixty-three very short sentence-like verses, from which I have quoted extensively in the text. All biographical and other useful factual information contained in the poem has been utilized. References to the poem will be Evans: Poem, followed by the number(s) of the verse(s).

¹¹ Evans: Poem, 1-14.

¹² *Ibid.*, 15. Evans received only two or three years of formal education in Wales.

Dissent from the Church of England had never been strong in Wales, yet after the

needed for books because he arrived in the New World as a "redemptioner." He had arranged for the ship's captain to pay his passage, and once he had arrived, Evans secured the patronage of someone in Merion. This man paid the captain, and, in return, Evans bound over his labor—working, as he tells it, "patiently cutting trees and clearing the land, with very little opportunity to look at books." During this period he also became a carpenter. After four years paying off his indenture, he moved to the town of New Castle, on the Delaware, where he worked as a carpenter, "but with little enjoyment." He left the town, complaining of "their low morals," and moved next to Philadelphia. There he continued to labor as a carpenter, but soon "wearied of that lively city" and moved to Radnor, only a few miles west of Merion.¹³ During his boyhood in Wales he had moved with his family nine or ten times; now he was continuing his wandering life in Pennsylvania.

Upon his arrival in Pennsylvania, about 1704, Evans sought out a Welsh settlement, Merion. Yet English was the prevailing language among the Welsh there. He soon moved from the solidly Quaker Merion to the very un-Welsh towns of New Castle and Philadelphia, but when he resettled once again, it was in the predominantly Welsh-speaking township of Radnor, where there were many colonists who did not understand English. Indeed, an Anglican clergyman wrote

restoration of the monarchy in 1660, a number of independent congregations were formed, some Baptist, others Independent (Congregationalist) with certain Presbyterian leanings. Royal indulgences in 1687 and 1688 opened new doors for non-conformists in England (including Wales), and five ministers were ordained in Carmarthenshire in the latter year. One of these was William Evans, ordained in Pencader; and in that small Carmarthenshire village he established a school, held in the building constructed by the dissenters for their worship. There David Evans received his brief early formal education. William Evans remained at Pencader for fifteen years, as minister and schoolmaster. He then went on to teach at an academy in Carmarthen that trained men for the ministry. There his Presbyterian leanings became more pronounced. In about 1715 he was described as a "Presbyterian," as opposed to an "Independent." Thomas Rees, *History of Protestant Nonconformity in Wales* (London, 1883), 261. William Evans is considered one of the most important figures in Welsh intellectual development. See Sir John Lloyd, *A History of Carmarthenshire* (2 vols., Cardiff, 1939), 2:159-62; *Dictionary of National Biography* (22 vols., London, 1908-1909), 6:939; *Dictionary of Welsh Biography* (Oxford, 1959), 255-56. For the background to Welsh nonconformity during this period, see G.H. Jenkins, *Literature, Religion and Society in Wales, 1660-1730* (Cardiff, 1978).

¹³ Evans: Poem, 15-23 (quotations from 18, 20, 21, 22).

in 1707 that he had conducted services in Welsh at Radnor once a fortnight for the preceding four years.¹⁴

Only individuals or very small groups of Welsh settled in America during the eighteenth century. For the tiny numbers of Welsh Congregationalists/Presbyterians who emigrated during the early years of the century, the Great Valley in Chester County was the focal point of settlement. Located at the very center of the valley, within the original Welsh Tract, this area, called Tredyffryn ("the town in the wide valley"), was organized about 1707. Evans probably was attracted to Radnor by the arrival of this small group of his Welsh co-religionists, among whom he began supplementing his meager earnings by teaching pupils and leading religious services.

By taking it upon himself to conduct services of worship, Evans soon came to the attention of the first American Presbyterian presbytery, which had been organized only since 1706. The traditional Presbyterian insistence upon an educated ministry informed the very self-identity of this presbytery, whose members at that time were graduates of Glasgow or Harvard. Moreover, the Presbyterians did not allow a man to preach until he had been ordained. Therefore, when the presbytery learned, in 1710, that

David Evans a lay person had taken upon him publickly to teach or preach among the Welch in ye great Valley, Chester County, it was unanimously agreed yt ye said Evans had done very ill and acted irregularly in thus Invading ye work of the Ministry; And was thereupon censured.¹⁵

To take this action, the presbytery obviously considered the Welsh at Tredyffryn to be under their supervision, although the affair of Evans's preaching is the first time the Welsh are mentioned in the presbytery's records. No doubt these Welsh settlers felt vulnerable in their Quaker surroundings. Their limited numbers precluded the possibility of anything like a Welsh-speaking presbytery; so they sought ecclesiastical protection and guidance in the "English" presbytery. Like the congregation, Evans accepted the judgment of the presbytery

¹⁴ Dodd, "The Background," 124; Browning, *Welsh Settlement*, 19, 584, 585.

¹⁵ Guy S. Klett, ed., *Minutes of the Presbyterian Church in America, 1706-1788* (Philadelphia, 1976), 9.

(though he would later refer with apparent sarcasm to this body who had determined to control his future as being made up of "godly, infallible preachers").¹⁶ Whatever his real feelings towards them, Evans accepted the additional ruling that he must pursue further studies. He thus became the first candidate for the ministry whose education was guided by the original American presbytery. Although he was the only such candidate during the presbytery's brief ten-year existence, his case set an important precedent for the educational policy of subsequent church presbyteries and synods.

It would be four years before the presbytery ordained Evans. Elder clergymen guided him for some of the time,¹⁷ but during the academic session 1712-1713, he was sent north to the struggling Yale College.¹⁸ It must have been a combination of the desperate need for students, Evans's reasonable level of proficiency and mature age of thirty-one, and pressure exerted upon the college by the presbytery that induced Yale to award him a degree after a single year of residence.¹⁹ The normal course of study was three or four years. After a further year under trial by the presbytery, Evans began his ministry "to my fellow countrymen" in a settlement called Pencader.²⁰ This community had been formed by a number of families who evidently had had a dispute

¹⁶ Evans: Poem, 28.

¹⁷ Klett, ed., *Minutes*, 9, 11, 13, 15, 16-17.

¹⁸ During its early years Yale was noted for being lax in its entrance requirements. Richard Warch, *School of the Prophets: Yale College 1701-1740* (New Haven, 1973), 51, 189-90; Brooke Kelley, *Yale: A History* (New Haven, 1974), 16, 17.

¹⁹ Franklin B. Dexter, *Biographical Sketches of the Graduates of Yale College, October, 1701-May, 1745* (New York, 1885), 110. During the period 1702-1716, the years when Yale was located at Saybrook, seventy-three percent of its fifty-six graduates became clergymen. Warch, *School*, 270. Sometime after 1737, Evans received an M.A. from Yale. On the title pages of four books of notes he prepared for the education of his sons (see below, note 65) he inscribed "A.B." after his name, but some time later he crossed through those letters and substituted "A.M." The title page of his *Law and Gospel*, published in 1748 (see below, note 49) gives the author as "David Evans, A.M." However, his M.A. was hardly remarkable, since during that period it was given automatically on application three years after B.A. graduation to any alumnus who merely had avoided conduct of which Yale disapproved. It even was possible to receive an M.A. without attending a graduation ceremony. In fact, the vast majority of Yale B.A.s in these early years received the higher degree. Warch, *School*, 268; Kelley, *Yale*, 469; Franklin B. Dexter, *Documentary History of Yale* (New Haven, 1916), 344-45. The "Catalogue of the Officers and Graduates of Yale University" (Yale University Library) lists Evans as receiving the M.A. but does not give the year.

²⁰ Klett, ed., *Minutes*, 19, 20, 21, 23, 86; quotation from Evans: Poem, 29.

with their fellow Welshmen at Tredyffryn. They had moved some forty miles south and established Pencader (present-day Glasgow, Delaware).²¹ In 1714, more than four years after his irregular preaching was first considered, Evans was ordained by the presbytery, which in the intervening years had exercised a constant supervision of his progress. Throughout the process both Evans and the Welsh settlers had submitted to the presbytery's authority, if, one suspects, somewhat grudgingly.

From the start of his new ministerial status Evans had "an opinionative difference" with some members of his Pencader congregation, especially with one man, Samuel James.²² By 1718 his original people at Tredyffryn were requesting the presbytery to move Evans back to them, the presbytery being informed that there was great unrest at Pencader.²³ Evans knew the source: the "Devil," he said, "with his devious tricks lit a bonfire of plots against me." He had had to face "constant dangerous enemies until there was no sign whatsoever of achieving peace—alas nor any hope of quietness."²⁴ But when he moved temporarily to Tredyffryn, serious difficulties arose there, also. The problems took three years to sort out, and Evans became "weak and faint" due to so much "wrangling and arguing."²⁵

²¹ "Notes and Queries," *PMHB* 2 (1878), 344. The presbytery recorded in 1714: "There being diverse people in the Great Valley [Tredyffryn] with whom Mr David Evans has been concerned, it was queried whether said people should be looked upon as a part of the Church and Congregation of the Welsh-Tract [Pencader, Delaware], or a distinct body by themselves, and it was carried by the Presbry, that they be esteemed a distinct society." Klett, ed., *Minutes*, 22.

²² Richard Webster, *A History of the Presbyterian Church in America* (Philadelphia, 1857), 348.

²³ "Minutes of the Presbytery of New Castle," pp. 13, 15, 19 (Presbyterian Historical Society) (hereafter, PHS).

²⁴ Evans: Poem, quotations from 31, 32, 33.

²⁵ "Minutes of the Presbytery of New Castle," pp. 22, 31, 35, 41, 51, 64; quotations from Evans: Poem, 33. All the while, Evans was trying to get back-pay owed him by Pencader. It was not until the spring 1723 that he finally was recognized by his presbytery as the permanent minister of Tredyffryn. During the four years while Evans had been in training, Tredyffryn had been dependent for preaching mainly from Malachi Jones, an elderly minister from Wales who had settled at Abington. He continued to serve Tredyffryn occasionally until Evans returned there from Delaware. Joseph S. Harries, "The Presbyterian Church in Tredyffryn," *Journal of the Presbyterian Historical Society* 4 (1908), 278. In 1723 a new minister was installed at Pencader, another Welshman, Thomas Evans, who remained there until his death in 1743. Webster, *A History*, 374-75.

Meanwhile, American Presbyterianism had formed itself into a synod, with three presbyteries. As the synod increased its size and structure, there was a concurrent move for an increase in its powers. In 1721 a proposal was made to improve and systematize the synod's organization, prompted by the need to exercise firmer discipline over morally deficient ministers. Twenty-one of the twenty-five ministers on the synod's roll were present; of the twenty-one, Evans was one of six who voted against the measure.²⁶ Throughout the formative years of American Presbyterianism a tension persisted between the structured system of church judicatories familiar to its Scottish and Irish ministers, and the more loosely structured clerical associations of England (including Wales) and New England.²⁷ Not surprisingly, of the six who voted against the 1721 measure, four were originally from New England, the other two from Wales. By the 1722 synod four of the protestors, including Evans, had reconsidered their position and stated that they "freely grant, yt there is full executive Power of Church Government in Presbrys and Synods . . . and yt the keys of the Church are committed to the Church officers and them only." That was a decided Presbyterian, as opposed to a Congregationalist, position; however, the four ministers added that an individual's conscience must not be offended by such an exercise of power. Evans remained uneasy, and the following year he and Malachi Jones, both Welshmen, were the only members of the synod who objected to the setting up of a committee to oversee bills and overtures.²⁸ It was to this committee that overtures were presented so that the committee could systematically refer them to the whole body. The procedure was familiar to members of the synod who had come from Scotland and Ulster. For men from Wales, where Congregationalist patterns dominated the non-Anglican order, such organizational forms smacked of authoritarian practices.

At the bottom of this concern over procedures was something far more fundamental, for American Presbyterianism was sensing the first rumbles of the controversy over subscription that had troubled

²⁶ Klett, ed., *Minutes*, 51.

²⁷ Marilyn J. Westerkamp, *Triumph of the Laity: Scots-Irish Piety and the Great Awakening, 1625-1760* (New York, 1988), 145.

²⁸ Klett, ed., *Minutes*, 55, 57-58, 59 (quotation from 57-58).

the Presbyterian churches in the British Isles. The growth of seemingly un-Calvinistic doctrines among some Presbyterians in Scotland, Ireland, and England had seen the effort in those churches to force Presbyterian clergymen to sign a statement that they adhered to the basic Reformed doctrinal formulations: the Westminster Confession of Faith, and the Larger and Shorter Catechisms. Supporters of such a measure hoped that subscription was the answer to guaranteeing doctrinal conformity to Calvinistic teachings. English—and Welsh—Presbyterians, who were dissenters from the established Church of England in their homeland, generally reacted negatively to any sort of subscription to a creed or a written constitution. Scottish ministers were members of a national church, established by law (the Church of Scotland), and although Presbyterianism was not the established church in Ireland, Ulster had been settled mainly by Scots. Ulster Presbyterians used the Church of Scotland as their model in a way that English and Welsh Presbyterians never had done. Many Scots and Ulster Scots took credal subscription as part of their “religious identity,”²⁹ and the face of American Presbyterianism was in the first stages of being changed beyond recognition by a massive influx of Ulster settlers.³⁰

Evans was not ignorant of the classical Reformed statements of faith; indeed, he received a thorough grounding, in the Shorter Catechism at least, during his brief formal education in Wales. Apart from that, he would have been made fully conversant with the Westminster standards during his year at Yale.³¹ Yet whatever his familiarity with the Westminster symbols, Evans was soon at loggerheads with their use as tests of ministerial orthodoxy.

The first record of subscription within American Presbyterianism occurred in 1724 when, at a meeting of Evans's own Presbytery of

²⁹ Westerkamp, *Triumph of the Laity*, 146. For the subscription conflict, see also pp. 148-55; Leonard J. Trinterud, *The Forming of an American Tradition* (Philadelphia, 1949), 38-52; Boyd S. Schlenther, *The Presbytery as Organ of Church Life and Government in Colonial American Presbyterianism, 1706-1788* (Wakefield, England, 1987), 156-69.

³⁰ Jedidiah Andrews to Benjamin Colman, April 30, 1722, typescript copy (PHS).

³¹ William Evans placed great stress on his pupils and congregations being fully conversant with the Shorter Catechism. He even translated it into Welsh and published the translation in 1707. *Dictionary of Welsh Biography*, 256. For the reference to Yale, see Warch, *School*, 192.

New Castle, William McMillan signed the statement: "I do own the Westminster Confession of faith as the Confession of my faith."³² John Thomson, an Ulsterman of the Presbytery of New Castle, was determined to see this provision for subscription extended to the entire denomination. He presented to the 1727 synod an overture proposing that the Westminster symbols be adopted as the official standards of American Presbyterianism. Upon this, Evans and three other ministers entered a "paper of Protest." Although the contents of the protest were not recorded, it is clear from subsequent developments that the two Welshmen, Evans and Malachi Jones, together with two men of New England background, were objecting to the imposition of the credal standards. In fact, all four now withdrew from the jurisdiction of the synod.³³ Evans remained out, and when Thomson secured the approval of the Presbytery of New Castle to present his overture formally to the 1728 synod, the presbytery was able to take the action unanimously, for Evans had withdrawn his membership from all the church's judicatories.³⁴

When the synod finally adopted the standards in 1729, those seeking the action showed restraint. The minutes of the 1729 synod clearly stated that "the Synod do not claim or pretend to any Authority of imposing our faith upon other men's Consciences." Moreover, a basic part of the plan was that any minister could state his "scruples" regarding the confession and catechisms. The fact that none of the synod's members evidenced scruples and that the standards were therefore adopted unanimously brought Evans out of his three-year ecclesiastical isolation. At the 1730 synod he reappeared, to declare "his hearty Concern for his withdraw[al], and desired to be received in [as] a Member again." He "declared his adopting the Westminster Confession of faith and Catechisms agreeable to the last years adopting

³² "Minutes of the Presbytery of New Castle," p. 89. Two years later two other candidates were licensed by this presbytery after they had "Subscribed the Westmi[n]ster confession of faith as ye confess. of their faiths . . . [and] promised subjection to this Presby." Ibid., p. 112.

³³ Klett, ed., *Minutes*, 96, 100. Of the two ministers originally from New England, one had participated in the 1721 protest, the other having joined the synod since.

³⁴ "Minutes of the Presbytery of New Castle," p. 137. Evans is not listed in the names of the membership of the synod in 1729.

Act," and was "received in as a Member again."³⁵ Indeed, until the last three or four years of his life, Evans attended almost every subsequent meeting of the synod.

But the conflict was not over. Evans's Presbytery of New Castle—the prime mover in introducing the Westminster standards—now desired to go beyond the 1729 synodical adopting act. The synod had stated that its members should indicate their personal acceptance "either by subscribing" or by "a verbal Declaration of their assent thereto, as such Minister or Candidate shall think best." Yet a fortnight before the 1730 synod, the Presbytery of New Castle entered on their minute-book a written subscription. Evans was the only minister of this presbytery not to subscribe; nor did he ever go beyond his verbal acceptance before the synod two weeks later. That was the significance of his having told the synod that he "declared his adopting . . . agreeable to the last years adopting Act." In other words, he was rejecting the strong pressure exerted by New Castle for its members to subscribe.

The chasm between Evans and his presbytery was made unmistakable when the synod, upon readmitting him as a member, ordered that for his "Ease" he was henceforth to be a member of the Presbytery of Philadelphia. This very unusual transfer was for Evans's ease of mind, not his physical convenience.³⁶ During the preceding decade the Presbytery of New Castle had virtually been taken over by Ulster settlers and Ulster and Scots clergymen. Of the twelve ministers of the Presbytery of New Castle who subscribed, seven were from Ulster and four from Scotland.³⁷ Although, in 1717, Evans had been appointed one of the first preachers occasionally to supply the new Ulster settlers on the eastern side of the Susquehanna River, the

³⁵ Klett, ed., *Minutes*, 103-4, 108 (quotations from 103, 108). Of the others who had withdrawn from the synod with Evans in 1727, Jones had died before the 1729 meeting, while one of the two New England men had been readmitted in 1728, and the other never attended another meeting of the synod, though he lived until 1760. When the act was passed in 1729 adopting the Westminster standards, only one member of the synod hesitated: David Elmer, a classmate of Evans at Yale in 1713. Elmer subscribed in 1730. *Ibid.*, 102, 104, 107, 112.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 104, 108, from which the quotations are taken.

³⁷ "Minutes of the Presbytery of New Castle," last page.

Welshman was far removed in his churchmanship from the robust—not to say rigid—Presbyterianism of many of these newcomers.³⁸

The place of the Westminster standards in the American church continued to exercise Evans's mind, to the extent that in 1732 Benjamin Franklin published Evans's *A HELP for Parents and Heads of Families, to instruct those under their Care, in the first Principles of Religion: Being a short plain Catechism, grounded upon God's Word, and agreeable to the Westminster Assembly's excellent Catechisms*.³⁹ Although Evans endorsed the Westminster catechisms, he seemingly felt that those documents left something to be desired, at least as far as the training of children was concerned. He believed that he could produce a more useful "help."⁴⁰

In 1732 Franklin printed 400 copies of Evans's *The Minister of Christ, and the Duties of his Flock*, a sermon Evans had preached at the ordination of Richard Treat in 1731. This lengthy oration clearly

³⁸ For Evans's appointment to preach to the Ulstermen in July 1717, see *ibid.*, p. 4. For a description of these new Ulster settlements, see Guy S. Klett, *Presbyterians in Colonial Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia, 1937), 60-65.

³⁹ "By David Evans, a Labourer in the Gospel at Tredyffryn in Pensilvania. Printed and sold by B. Franklin, Price 9d." Advertisement in the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, March 30, 1732. No copy of this edition of 400 copies appears to have survived. A number apparently were sent to Franklin's partner, Thomas Whitmarsh in Charles Town: it was advertised in the *South Carolina Gazette* on May 20 and Nov. 4. C. William Miller, *Benjamin Franklin's Philadelphia Printing, 1728-1766* (Philadelphia, 1974), item 51. See also "The Rev. David Evans's Catechism," *Journal of the Presbyterian Historical Society* 2 (1903), 111-15. Eight years later Franklin published a second edition under the slightly amended title: *A Short, Plain Help for Parents and Heads of Families, To feed their Babes with the sincere Milk of God's Word. Being a Short, Plain Catechism, Grounded upon God's Word, and agreeable to the Westminster Assembly's excellent Catechisms*. "By David Evans, A poor Labourer in the Gospel at Tredyffryn in Pensilvania." See "Checklist of B. Franklin Imprints," *Journal of the Franklin Institute* 246 (July-Dec. 1948), 353. Historians have been unaware of this second edition or of the fact that a copy has survived. See, for example, Leonard J. Trinterud, comp., *A Bibliography of American Presbyterianism during the Colonial Period* (Philadelphia, 1968), item 171. The unique copy of the second edition (1740) is held by the Franklin Institute, Philadelphia, but unfortunately it is in such a poor condition that it is not possible for it to be consulted. It measures 5.5 × 3.3 inches and contains forty-six pages, with the last leaf (at least) missing. Franklin sent 100 copies to his sister-in-law, Ann Franklin, in Newport, Rhode Island, and another fifty to Charles Harrison in Boston. Miller, *Franklin's Printing*, item 188.

⁴⁰ The production of new catechisms for the instruction of the young was not exceptional. Even the founder of the original American presbytery had published one. Boyd S. Schlenker, *The Life and Writings of Francis Makemie* (Philadelphia, 1971), 33.

reveals Evans's high view of his calling. He challenged those who "prattle against human Learning in a Minister of Christ, yet we are sure that Learning and Religion ever did, and do, fall or flourish together." In the Old Testament, the prophets had had their "Schools and Colleges" and, in what was no doubt a personal reference, Evans added, "tho' our Saviour called poor illiterate men, to be his Disciples and Apostles, yet he kept them in his School a while, before he sent them to preach." Christ expected his ministers "to learn Languages . . . before he would suffer or venture them to be publick Ministers in his Church. . . . Which . . . may fully convince all, except the conceited, or deluded Ignorants, that it is the Will of Christ, that his Ministers should be Men of Learning." Moreover, a minister must be "a holy Man above the common Sort of Christians." Evans issued to the congregation the prophetic warning that "you must expect that the Devil and his Instruments, will be ten times more malicious and busy, to raise evil and false Reports" about their minister than about ordinary laymen.⁴¹ Less than two years later, the Presbytery of Philadelphia was forced to deal with a member of Treat's church who was threatening his "Ruine as a Minist[er] by endeavouring to get him Shaken out of the boat."⁴² It would also foretell Evans's own experience.⁴³

Indeed, at the local level, Evans constantly faced strife with his Welsh parishioners. Just as had happened in Pencader, Delaware, so now, he wrote, "the source of the bad feelings followed me to Tre-dyffryn and devised skilful, clever, devious ways to cause upset and

⁴¹ David Evans, *The Minister of Christ, and the Duties of his Flock* (Philadelphia, 1732), quotations from 9-10, 14, 68. The sermon was printed at Treat's expense. For details of the printing, see Miller, *Franklin's Printing*, item 50. It was advertised in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* on Sept. 26, 1732.

⁴² "Minutes of the Presbytery of Philadelphia," p. 2 (PHS).

⁴³ Franklin may have published *The Minister of Christ*, but Evans came to regret it. During the mid-1730s Franklin had an open feud with the Presbyterian church, and in one of his own pamphlets quoted ironically from Evans's sermon: "The Rev. Mr. David Evans . . . in his Sermon at the Ordination of Mr. Treat, says . . . That it is a Wonder to see any truly gracious, considerate wise Man in the Gospel Ministry. . . . I am really inclin'd to be of his Opinion; especially, if he confines his Observations to the Presbyterian Ministers of this Part of the World." Benjamin Franklin, *A Defence of the Rev. Mr. Hemphill's Observations* (Philadelphia, 1735), printed in L.W. Labaree, et al., eds., *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin* (27 vols. to date, New Haven, 1959-), 2: 126. See also L.W. Labaree, ed., *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin* (New Haven, 1964), 167-68.

strife." He "fought many a bitter and sad battle . . . with trouble makers until at last the unending arguments weakened my strength and all my senses."⁴⁴ These conflicts reached his presbytery in 1739, when one of his congregation leveled unrecorded charges against him. The following spring, Evans was charged by members of his congregation with teaching unspecified unorthodox principles. Moreover, it emerged that Evans, in a spurt of renewed Congregationalism or a bout of authoritarianism, had arbitrarily removed all the elders and deacons from office in the Tredyffryn church. Most interesting, the congregation called on the presbytery to instruct Evans to preach more to them in Welsh. The presbytery ruled that the charge of heterodoxy was unfounded, but they censured him for his arbitrary dealings with his local church officers. With his position considered totally untenable, the presbytery judged that it would be best for "Mr. Evans and ye sd. People [to] be discharged from each other."⁴⁵ About the language complaint, they maintained a discreet silence.

The following month, May 1740, the presbytery received a call from Pilesgrove, New Jersey, for Evans to settle there. For his farewell sermon at Tredyffryn, Evans entered the pulpit and preached this, his full sermon: "Goats I found you, and goats I leave you."⁴⁶ So Evans left, as he said, "the bitter wrangling" of my "own countrymen," the Welsh, and "crossed the Delaware by boat to Pilesgrove in pleasant New Jersey to preach Jesus Christ to the English."⁴⁷

His move makes it clear that Evans did not necessarily consider himself a "Welsh" minister. That fact had been evident for a number of years, for Evans preached almost exclusively in English to his Welsh parishioners. Moreover, anyone who was serious about keeping Welsh strong as a vehicle for theological teaching would have made some effort to publish religious works in that language.⁴⁸ Yet Evans

⁴⁴ Evans: Poem, quotations from 37, 38.

⁴⁵ "Minutes of the Presbytery of Philadelphia," pp. 80, 83, 85-87 (quotations from pp. 86, 87).

⁴⁶ Harries, "Church in Tredyffryn," 279.

⁴⁷ Evans: Poem, quotations from 39, 40, 43.

⁴⁸ The Anglicans found this a serious drawback in Pennsylvania. It was reported in 1734 that "for the want of Good Books in their own Language," forty Welsh families had drifted into Quakerism. Quoted in Sally Schwartz, *"A Mixed Multitude": The Struggle for Toleration in Colonial Pennsylvania* (New York, 1987), 109.

had published only in English,⁴⁹ and nothing in those publications contained any allusion to Wales or any concession to "Welshness." Surely, if any man in colonial America at that time could have been expected to take the leadership in nurturing a continuing sense of Welsh identity, it was Evans. Why else would the Welsh congregations have waited so patiently while the presbytery had put him through his ecclesiastical and educational paces? But he failed to live up to Welsh expectations. All this doubtless was a major source of contention in his pastorate at Tredyffryn. Evans's removal gives a clear insight into ethnic deterioration. Problems both spiritual and personal, together with more basic difficulties of ethnic identity, hastened the fragmentation of the Pennsylvania Welsh enclaves. One of the only Welsh-speaking clergymen in the colonies, and certainly the most important, had been driven away.

Beneath the surface of his conflicts at Tredyffryn was a further cause of unrest, for Evans had been caught up in the early tremors of the Great Awakening,⁵⁰ the revival movement which, in the Middle colonies, would split Presbyterianism into two denominations. At its 1738 meeting, the Presbyterian synod approved an overture prohibiting the intrusion of ministers into other ministers' churches. The same synod also approved the setting up of a new presbytery, the Presbytery of New Brunswick, which became the base of operations for the revivalist party.⁵¹ Running concurrently with Evans's troubles at Tredyffryn, his own Presbytery of Philadelphia was grappling with the problems of intrusion, especially in the case of John Rowland,

⁴⁹ In 1748 Evans produced his last publication, the "Substance of some Sermons" preached at Tredyffryn in 1734 and Pilesgrove in 1745. Again, these preachments, printed as *Law and Gospel: or, Man wholly Ruined by the Law, and Recovered only by the Gospel* (Philadelphia, 1748), reveal no ethnic dimension. Its fifty pages are merely attacks on various religious unorthodoxies (from Pelagians to Papists), together with lamentations about the increase in profane activities. The sermons give a great deal of exhortation on what people should and should not be—but no useful application showing them any ways in which personal reformation might be accomplished. See, especially, pp. 10, 17, 26, 36. The pamphlet was advertised in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* on June 9, 1748, for sale at 9d. See Miller, *Franklin's Printing*, item 438.

⁵⁰ Historians of the Great Awakening make clear that a basic element of that movement was the laity's challenge to clerical authority. See, for example, Westerkamp, *Triumph of the Laity*, especially chapter 7.

⁵¹ Klett, ed., *Minutes*, 153, 154.

who had been educated at William Tennent's "Log College," a training school for evangelical ministers. After having been refused permission by the Presbytery of Philadelphia to minister among its congregations until he had been examined by a committee of the synod,⁵² Rowland was ordained (autumn, 1739) "to the ministry of the Word in general" by the new Presbytery of New Brunswick.⁵³ He soon began intruding into various congregations—at the same time that the first complaints were being laid against Evans by members of Tredyffryn. Then, only months after Evans had left the church vacant, Tredyffryn applied to its presbytery, Philadelphia, to be moved to the Presbytery of New Brunswick. When Philadelphia refused, the representatives of Tredyffryn entered "a protest agt. the Pry. & their Proceedings."⁵⁴ The congregation then split between revivalist and anti-revivalist factions, and a see-saw struggle continued for several years. Rowland actually followed Evans for a time as minister at Tredyffryn, and the dispute reached such a pitch that the Old Side anti-revivalist faction rallied its forces, locked the doors of the church against Rowland, and forced him to withdraw with his New Side supporters to build another church five miles away.⁵⁵

Evans's high view of the minister's place in church and society helps explain his strong opposition to the revivalists. The church, he had said in his sermon at Treat's ordination in 1731, must appoint only men whom they can "trust and hope to be truly gracious and holy men." But they must leave "the Searching of their Hearts unto God and themselves"—which was the traditional Calvinist position. Moreover, Evans warned of "a Spirit of Pride, and spiritual Wantonness, whereby some are, and will be, so diseased with itching Ears, as to loath their own Ministers, and to wander about to hear others, whom they dream to be better than their own Pastor which Christ hath sent and given them." People's "spiritual Lusts and Wantonness may indeed be better tickled and fed, in gadding up and down to hear others, but your Souls will not be better edified in true Faith

⁵² "Minutes of the Presbytery of Philadelphia," p. 57.

⁵³ "Minutes of the Presbytery of New Brunswick," in George Ingram, "History of the Presbytery of New Brunswick," *Journal of the Presbyterian Historical Society* 6 (1912), 346.

⁵⁴ "Minutes of the Presbytery of Philadelphia," p. 98.

⁵⁵ Klett, *Presbyterians*, 132, from an account written in 1742.

and real Holiness. . . . you will be far more likely to get Good" from "your own Minister . . . than by another."⁵⁶

Evans vehemently opposed the Great Awakening. He was appointed in 1742 as one of a nine-member committee to represent the synod in consultations with the now separate New Side revivalist body, but attempts for reconciliation proved "vain and fruitless."⁵⁷ He openly attacked the leading Presbyterian revivalist, Gilbert Tennent, in a letter published in a Philadelphia newspaper in 1742. That year had seen a prodigious outpouring of printed matter both for and against the revival. In one of these publications, Tennent had claimed that only regenerate ministers must be employed by the church to educate gracious youths in private institutions, such as his father's Log College. Harvard and Yale were useless. Tennent did not fear that his father's students would be unable to pass ministerial examinations, he was quick to add, but he suggested that unconverted ministers were incapable of judging the converted in any matters, even academic. Evans considered these statements full of "Nonsense & Absurdity." To Evans, "the main Matter and Substance" of the debate within the Presbyterian church centered in its demand for a learned ministry.⁵⁸ It is revealing that he could write of the "big famous University" from which he had graduated.⁵⁹ (Yale had had three graduates in the year Evans received his B.A., and one of his

⁵⁶ Evans, *Minister of Christ*, 16, 59, 60, 61, from which the quotations are taken. It is ironic that Treat became a follower of the Awakening. His church at Abington was split, and Treat departed for the Presbytery of New Brunswick. "Minutes of the Presbytery of Philadelphia," pp. 105-6, 110. When the synod wrote to Yale College in 1746, it named Treat as one of the "Ringleaders of our Divisions and the Destroyers of good Learning and Gospel order among us." Klett, ed., *Minutes*, 213.

⁵⁷ Klett, ed., *Minutes*, 176, 177 (quotation from 177).

⁵⁸ *Pennsylvania Gazette*, Dec. 8, 1742. In 1740 an anonymous pamphlet called *The Querists* was printed in Philadelphia, citing and challenging several extracts from the writings of George Whitefield, one of the Awakening's leaders. The militant revivalist Samuel Blair attributed *The Querists* to Evans.

As the passions of the revival movement in Pennsylvania began to cool, it was possible for riven Presbyterians to reunite. They did so in 1758. Yet it was an uneasy reunion, with the question of higher education nearly leading to another schism, in the early 1770s—only prevented by the approaching Revolution. Elizabeth A. Ingersoll (Nybakken), "Francis Alison: American *Philosophe*" (Ph.D. diss., University of Delaware, 1974), 459, 470, 514-31.

⁵⁹ Evans: Poem, quotation from 50.

two fellow graduates would be described by the later head of Yale, Ezra Stiles, as a "lunatic."⁶⁰ Evans took pride in his degree, one not from any log college. For a meagerly educated Welsh lad who had so laboriously and so late climbed the educational tree, academic pride of position was especially difficult to resist.

Totally unlike the controversy over subscription, the revivalist movement did not flow in ethnically dug channels. Contrary to the long-held, yet increasingly refuted, claims of Leonard J. Trinterud, no ethnic group displayed a preference for or against the Awakening. Of the five Presbyterian ministers in America whose background was Welsh, three opposed and two supported the revivals. Ministers from all other British churches divided similarly over the issue.⁶¹

Apparently, the upheavals of the Awakening did not pursue Evans to Pilesgrove, West New Jersey. There, in Salem County, he had become the pastor to a mixed group of English, German, French, Irish, but mainly Dutch congregants who had settled in New Jersey from the area of Kingston, New York.⁶² Here was a people who, despite their greatly varied backgrounds—perhaps because of their differences—had learned to live and worship together in a unity never apparent in Evans's Welsh pastorates. Moreover, whatever their

⁶⁰ The "lunatic" was Samuel Smith, who became a tutor. The other Yale graduate of the class of 1713 was Daniel Elmer, who became a Congregationalist minister in Massachusetts but later, in 1728, became minister at Fairfield, New Jersey, thus joining Evans as a member of the Presbyterian synod. Dexter, *Biographical Sketches*, 110-11, 113-14. Elmer had hesitated in subscribing to the synod's new set of doctrinal standards. See above, note 35.

⁶¹ John Rowland, whose ordination by the Presbytery of New Brunswick was the fuse for the explosion that shattered the unity of American Presbyterianism and whose "intrusion" wrecked havoc at Tredeffryn, was himself a native of Wales. Frederick L. Weis, *The Colonial Clergy of the Middle Colonies* (1956; reprint ed., Baltimore, 1978), 136. When the synod split in 1741, twenty-six men were anti-revivalist, twenty-eight pro-revivalist. A breakdown according to their ethnic backgrounds reveals that only those whose roots were in New England showed a decided inclination towards one side or the other. Of fifteen New England men in the synod, eleven supported the revivals, four opposed. On the other hand, of twenty-nine from Ulster, there was nearly an even division: thirteen in favor, sixteen opposed. Westerkamp, *Triumph of the Laity*, 204. See also Elizabeth I. Nybakken, "New Light on the Old Side: Irish Influences on Colonial Presbyterianism," *Journal of American History* 68 (1981-1982), 813-32, especially 815-16. For Trinterud's arguments, see *The Forming*, 53-121.

⁶² In fact, money had been solicited in the past from Dutch New Yorkers to support the Pilesgrove congregation. See "A Petition in the behalf of Jonathan Dubois," printed in Webster, *A History of the Presbyterian Church*, 350.

differences, the Pilesgrove people shared one basic thing in common: the English language. And after eight years in this ministry, Evans could record that "God has brought me much success . . . and though Tredyffryn and its strife almost extinguished all my talent yet, here, God has . . . chained up the father of all strife so that he has not been able to stir up trouble here as he did formerly amongst my own countrymen."⁶³

Yet great personal disaster lay in wait. Evans and his wife Ann had three sons and three daughters, but the girls all died very young, along with one of the sons in childhood.⁶⁴ The surviving sons, Samuel and Joel, both graduated from Evans's old college,⁶⁵ but personal tragedy followed them. The younger son, Joel, having graduated in 1740, died before he could be ordained. Samuel was ordained in

⁶³ Evans: Poem, quotations from 41, 42, 43.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 46-48. All that Evans tells us of his wife is that they had married at the start of his ministry and that she had been a faithful comforter to him in his troubles. We learn that her Christian name was Ann from the Will and Inventory of David Evans, Salem County, item 1007Q (New Jersey State Archives, Trenton).

⁶⁵ Dexter, *Biographical Sketches*, 621, 623-24, 638, 647. Evans took great pride in his sons' education. In fact, he had been preparing them for their higher education for some years, to the extent that he had spent long hours while he was at Tredyffryn laboriously writing out for them compendiums of higher knowledge. These very unusual documents tell us much about education at Yale in its formative years. In a quaint but very clear hand he produced four notebooks of instruction totalling 342 pages, written entirely in Latin. It is a somewhat stylized, ecclesiastical Latin, but it clearly sets out the essential structure of classical knowledge as it was imparted in Yale's early years. Each of the four volumes carries such inscriptions in Latin as: "Your indulgent father is concerned with your spiritual life as long as he lives"; or "For the use of his sons, and others, whoever these things intrusted to writing will please."

Of the four, "Technometria" lays out the seven traditional Arts: logic, grammar, rhetoric, geometry, arithmetic, physics, and theology. His other three writings are elaborations of logic, rhetoric, and physics. All these notebooks are in the David Evans Manuscripts (PHS). See also Elwyn A. Smith, *The Presbyterian Ministry in American Culture* (Philadelphia, 1962), 69-70. For a full description of the curriculum at Yale during this period, see Warch, *School*, chapters 8 and 9.

It is reasonable to infer that Evans tutored boys other than his sons, from the inscription on the front leaf of the first notebook: "Ex Libris Jonathanis Dubois." Jonathan Dubois, born 1727, was the son of one of Evans's parishioners at Pilesgrove and went on to be educated at Francis Alison's academy at New London, Pennsylvania, and later to be ordained in the Dutch Reformed church. Weis, *Colonial Clergy*, 43-44. Evans went so far as to draw up a petition to secure financial assistance from Dubois's friends and relations in New York colony for the young man's education at Alison's school. "A Petition," printed in Webster, *History of the Presbyterian Church*, 350.

1742, to serve Evans's old Tredeffryn congregation.⁶⁶ Considering him to be a promising young minister, the 1745 Old Side anti-revivalist synod appointed Samuel, together with some of their most eminent men, to draft a statement against the revivalists. Yet by 1747 it was being recorded that his congregation was in a "destitute condition." By the following year Samuel Evans's name was omitted from the synod's roll, and in 1751 that body stated that "We Disown him as a Member of this Synod," noting that he had "Acted Disorderly in Dis[s]olving the Pastoral Relation between himself & his People." Moreover, he had traveled to England "Again & Again" and "in other things Acted from time to time in a way Unsuitable to his Character as a Gosp[el] Minister."⁶⁷ In fact, Samuel had completely disappeared, deserting his wife and three children, and had journeyed to England to seek ordination in the Church of England—in which he was unsuccessful.⁶⁸

The synodical judgment disowning Samuel Evans was recorded at the same meeting in which it was noted that his father had died. It may reasonably be supposed that the synod had held back their harsh condemnation because of concern for the elder Evans's feelings. David Evans revealed his despair over these events in an autobiographical "poem," written in 1747, the year the synod had noted that Samuel had precipitately left Tredeffryn. Evans wrote that Samuel had ministered at Tredeffryn for six "weary" years and suffered "many more bitter tribulations than I endured in all my days." Samuel had received from that people "black worries" so that "he wasted away and Mel-

⁶⁶ "Minutes of the Presbytery of Philadelphia," pp. 93, 94, 96-97, 100, 104, 108. The synod recorded in May 1743 that "Mr. Joel Evans Probationer" had died "since our last." Klett, ed., *Minutes*, 180.

⁶⁷ Klett, ed., *Minutes*, 207, 216, 226 (quotations from 216, 226).

⁶⁸ For Samuel's efforts to secure Anglican ordination, for which there are no official records, see Weis, *Colonial Clergy*, 49; Harries, "Church in Tredeffryn," 280. There is no further firm evidence regarding him. Sadly, the "Minutes of the Presbytery of Philadelphia" are missing for several years from 1747 onwards. They would likely have quite a tale to tell about Samuel Evans and the people of Tredeffryn. In 1781 the head of Yale, Ezra Stiles, placed a star against Samuel Evans's name, indicating that he was dead. Dexter, *Biographical Sketches*, 623-24. Weis, *Colonial Clergy*, 49, places the death "ca. 1766." One of Samuel's children, Israel, graduated from the College of New Jersey, at Princeton, in 1772, and went on to become a noted chaplain to the Continental Army during the Revolution. *Ibid.*

ancholy overcame him." In Evans's view, then, his son had gone mad and had departed to England "to seek refuge in peace." "Where is he now? What is his condition? We know nothing of his hurt or pain. And if he is still alive. Oh Heavenly Father keep him in thy Hand in the ways of grace."⁶⁹

The devastating end to his son's ministerial career played the crucial role in Evans's death. A man of broken spirit, he stopped attending meetings of the synod just at the time when Samuel had withdrawn from Tredyffryn. The father withdrew into writing his "poem," further emphasizing his retreat by composing it in his original tongue, the language of the people from whom he had sought retreat among the "English."

On the other hand, it is quite possible that Evans chose to write his poem in Welsh as a form of "code." Its contents were so personal and painful that he would feel it necessary to ensure confidentiality. His wife's ethnic background is not known, but even if Ann could speak Welsh, she certainly could not read it, being illiterate. Thus Evans could consider his writing "safe," a securely encoded lament. Moreover, though the poem was written in Welsh, it uses an anachronistic Welsh, which shows that Evans's command of the written language, at least, was much inferior to his command of English. The style of this poem is that of the Welsh of the seventeenth century. To a large extent, the Welsh language in Pennsylvania had stalled in a sort of linguistic "time warp."⁷⁰ The poem is pitiful in every sense and clearly reveals Evans's lachrymose feelings—as well as the decided gap between his feelings and his abilities. His true feelings he had neither the poise to conceal nor the talent to express adeptly. Death rescued him from despair sometime before February 21, 1751, just weeks short of his seventieth birthday.

Still hoping that his last remaining child would return, Evans's will left a sum of money "unto my beloved Son Samuel." Among

⁶⁹ Evans: Poem, quotations from 53, 54, 55, 56. Regarding the Poem, see above, note 10.

⁷⁰ Davies, "Y Parch David Evans," 85. His wife's illiteracy is revealed by her having to sign her mark rather than her signature at the probate of her husband's will. See the Will and Inventory of David Evans. No doubt the Welsh Evans used and that was common among Welsh speakers in mid-eighteenth-century Pennsylvania would have been considered quaint to someone from Wales.

the £400 worth of "goods & Chattels" was a slave, "the Negro wench," valued at £25. And discovered in his study after his death was a box of carpenter's tools and three pairs of sheep shears.⁷¹ Here were poignant reminders of the beginnings "of my pilgrimage and my journey . . . in a weary, troubled restless world."⁷² David Evans had found some money to buy books, but he had found no peace. His sole surviving child had returned home to England to search for that peace, continuing in reverse his father's troubled pilgrimage.

Back at Tredyffryn, where Evans first had cast his lot forty years earlier, the congregation was left in a "destitute condition." The presbytery and synod continued for a number of years to struggle to find a way to supply the congregation and the other now minute numbers of Welsh-speakers in their charge. The synod considered that "the Circumstances of that People are Singular"—due to their language. Amazingly, in desperation the synod in 1758 did what they had totally refused to do in 1710: they ordained a native of Wales, "tho' he has not the Measure of School Learning usual[l]y requir'd, and which they Judge to be ordinarily requisite." Evans would have been horrified. This appears to be the only instance when the Presbyterians so lowered their educational standards during the entire colonial period. The minister, John Griffith, served as a kind of itinerant pastor to the dwindling Welsh-speakers in the synod until his death about twelve years later.⁷³ The last remaining Welsh Presbyterians soon melted completely into their English surroundings.

One of the most important points to observe regarding David Evans's experience is that the overwhelming English-speaking majority in Pennsylvania made no effort to assimilate minority groups like the Welsh against their wills. Although the early Welsh settlers were unhappy with William Penn, little antagonism in general existed between colonial Welshmen and Englishmen. A number of the Welsh already spoke English when they arrived. When the county lines

⁷¹ Will and Inventory of David Evans. The will was written on July 25, 1749.

⁷² Evans: Poem, 58.

⁷³ Klett, ed., *Minutes*, 216, 218, 221, 344, 481 (quotations from 216, 344). In 1750 and 1751 the synod had ordered Timothy Griffith, who could preach in Welsh, to conduct services at Tredyffryn "as frequently As Possible." Ibid., 223, 226 (quotation from 223).

were drawn in 1689, an action which removed the Welsh Tract as a separate unit within Pennsylvania, the Quaker quarterly meetings were structured along these new civil demarcations. Despite this, Welsh Quakers were allowed to remain a separate religious meeting, based solely on their language, cutting across county lines. However, although testimony in their religious services was often spoken in Welsh, from the outset even the most predominantly Welsh meetings kept their minutes only in English.⁷⁴

In addition to Welsh Quakers and Presbyterians, Welsh Anglicans settled in the province. The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (S.P.G.) made strenuous efforts to provide Welsh-speaking Anglican ministers, but it was impossible to maintain more than one at a time in the colony. It was reported to the S.P.G. early in the eighteenth century that the Welsh were particularly prone to being "unhappily perverted" to Quakerism when no Anglican clergyman who spoke their language was stationed in Pennsylvania.⁷⁵ As for the Baptists, as early as 1712 a minister wrote home to Wales that he "fear[ed] but few are likely to keep up the true Protestant religion or their language." He concluded: "The English is swallowing up their language, though assisted by religion."⁷⁶

The English was "swallowing up" by default rather than by design. As Sally Schwartz, a recent historian of ethnic groupings in colonial Pennsylvania, has noted: "There was little prejudice against settlers who could not speak English, and little pressure was placed upon them to adopt" English.⁷⁷ The adoption of English just happened—

⁷⁴ Dodd, "The Background," 125. Likewise, in Wales itself, formal records of all Quaker meetings, together with certificates of removal and almost all letters written from Welsh Quakers to one another, were in English. J. Gwynn Williams, "The Quakers of Merioneth during the Seventeenth Century," *Journal of the Merioneth Historical and Record Society* 8 (1977-1980), 321.

⁷⁵ Evan Evans, "Memorial of the state of the church in Pen[n]sylvania, 1707," Dreer Collection (Historical Society of Pennsylvania). Following a number of years without a Welsh-speaking minister, the Anglicans in Pennsylvania received such a man from the S.P.G. in 1733. Griffith Hughes was stationed at Radnor, but he remained only three years, leaving (without the prior approval of the S.P.G.) to serve an English-speaking church in Barbados. Benjamin F. Owen, ed., "Letters of the Rev. Griffith Hughes, of St. David's Church, Radnor, Penna., 1733-1736," *PMHB* 24 (1900), 139-48.

⁷⁶ Abel Morgan to the church at Blaenewgent, Wales, April 12, 1712, in Horatio G. Jones, "The Rev. Abel Morgan," *PMHB* 6 (1882), 306.

⁷⁷ Schwartz, "Mixed Multitude," 78.

and with the Welsh happened quickly. Welsh leaders may have preferred their people to preserve their native language, but they made no sustained or strident efforts to discourage the use of English and the natural movement through bilingualism to English monolingualism. In fact, the most dedicated efforts to support Welsh appear to have come not from the Welsh themselves, but from the English colonists—witness the willingness of the American Presbyterian synod to lower its jealously guarded educational requirements during the 1750s just for the purpose of having a Welsh-speaking minister.

After the political integrity of the Welsh Tract was destroyed in 1689, those who wished to do so continued to use their own language and follow their own cultural patterns without interference from provincial authorities. But from that point forward the Welsh were clearly on the defensive. A steady movement westward and southward out of the Welsh Tract area, especially after the early 1720s, seriously weakened self-conscious ethnic settlements. And, as if in reaction to this process, a sudden outburst of cultural activity came from the remaining Welsh in the settlements around Philadelphia. After the publication in 1721 of Ellis Pugh's *A Salutation to the Britons*, a second book in Welsh was printed in Philadelphia nine years later: Abel Morgan's *Alphabetical Concordance of the Scriptures*. Also in 1730, Franklin published a Welsh translation of Benjamin Wallin's *The Manner of Baptism with Water*. This minor linguistic literary resurgence was accompanied by the founding of the Welsh Society in Philadelphia in the late 1720s, for the purpose of honoring St. David. This was largely an Anglican affair, for non-Anglican Welshmen of the time had little sympathy for saints, even David. The impetus for the Welsh Society came from St. David's Church in Radnor in 1729, when church members marched, with leeks in their hats, in procession to Christ Church, Philadelphia, to hear a sermon preached in "the Ancient British Language" by their own clergyman at Radnor.⁷⁸

Ironically, this modest burst of cultural self-consciousness during the 1720s and 1730s pointed to the essential weakness of the Welsh language and culture in Pennsylvania, rather than to their increasing strength. As Sally Schwartz says: "By the middle of the eighteenth

⁷⁸ Dodd, "The Background," 127.

century . . . Welsh had fallen almost completely into disuse"—just as had Swedish, perhaps the best colonial linguistic parallel to Welsh. Schwartz concludes that, whatever the hard feelings it caused at the time, "Penn's refusal to allow the ethnic enclave desired by the early Welsh [settlers] . . . in the long run probably contributed to mutual toleration as individuals acquired neighbors of different backgrounds and beliefs," and she suggests that "Perhaps because of continual interaction with 'outsiders,' firm stereotypes tended not to develop."⁷⁹ For the Welsh, "interaction" with outsiders increasingly meant embracing marriage partners beyond their already depleted ranks.

As Welsh, Swedes, and other minority language groups became anglicized, the trend toward social and cultural homogeneity appeared certain to dominate the future. In the selection of a church, for example, "language and other ethnic differences gradually became less formidable obstacles." Richard Pointer argues that "Young people from these ethnic groups were the first to take advantage of the enlargement of their religious options. By the mid-eighteenth century, their familiarity with the English language made them free to join any one of a wide spectrum of religious groups."⁸⁰

Like other small non-English groups in the Middle colonies, the Welsh found it impossible to maintain a separate identity. The numerical base for that identity was too small. The Welsh experience paralleled that of the Huguenots in that, as Jon Butler suggests, the Huguenot immigrants' paucity of numbers "provided no cushion for failure, and too few resources remained to renew efforts to salvage . . . cohesion as Huguenot loyalties decayed."⁸¹ But in stark contrast to the Welsh, these French Protestants realized this inescapable truth from the outset and deftly and quickly perceived that they would succeed most readily by actively assimilating into Anglo-American culture. There were few incomers from Wales, and as far as is known, no colonial American "converts to Welshness." Thus when such a vital figure as an ordained Welsh-speaking minister had washed

⁷⁹ Schwartz, "Mixed Multitude," 293, 300.

⁸⁰ Richard Pointer, *Protestant Pluralism and the New York Experience* (Bloomington, 1988), 33-34. As one German settler wrote to his children, "it would be a shame for you if you should be ignorant of the English tongue." Quoted in Schwartz, "Mixed Multitude," 79.

⁸¹ Jon Butler, *The Huguenots in America* (Cambridge, 1983), 210.

his hands of them, the gaps were exceedingly difficult to fill. Ned Landsman wisely observes that ethnicity "should be considered more a question of identity and of affiliation than of origin."⁸² David Evans was a Welshman from Wales who gradually—and painfully—became an Englishman in America.

Unlike the lowland Scots settlers, who came from a region of Great Britain more urbanized and trade-oriented, the Welsh were overwhelmingly agrarian in background and outlook. The Scots were also far more assertive "ethnically," for they had had their own national parliament until as recently as 1707 and continued to enjoy their own established legal and ecclesiastical systems in Scotland. Wales, on the other hand, had been an integral part of the English nation, legally and ecclesiastically, for centuries. Their only cultural defense was the maintenance of their language: that language *was* their culture. Their culture was not their religion, for they were seriously fragmented into Presbyterians, Anglicans, Quakers, and Baptists. That divided religious identity worked against cultural cohesiveness.⁸³ Thus the Welsh were at a greater disadvantage than the much more religiously unified Presbyterian Scots. The lowland Scots in central New Jersey, for instance, grew in strength through far greater resources and numbers than the Welsh could ever have dreamed of mustering. But, as important, there was the ironic fact that the Scots were able to maintain their own sense of identity much more effectively because they were not lumbered with the necessity of attempting to perpetuate a separate language.⁸⁴

The Welsh were the only settlers from the British Isles in early America who had an interest in maintaining a separate linguistic

⁸² Ned Landsman, *Scotland and its First American Colony, 1683-1765* (Princeton, 1985), 260.

⁸³ Probably less than half of the Welsh immigrants to Pennsylvania during the first generation of settlement were Quakers. Williams, "The Quakers of Merioneth," 333. The religiously divided Welsh were in sharp contrast to the Dutch in the Middle colonies, whose ethnic decline was not only linguistic, but also ecclesiastical. See Randall Balmer, *A Perfect Babel of Confusion: Dutch Religion and English Culture in the Middle Colonies* (New York, 1989), especially 79-81, 141-44, 156.

⁸⁴ For a discussion of lowland Scots settlers' "ethnicity," see Landsman, *Scotland and its First American Colony*, chapter 9.

purity. But some Welsh gave up the cultural struggle. That was the direction David Evans himself took. He found some degree of personal peace and fulfillment only when he went to dwell with, as he said, "the English." Yet he seems not to have been totally able to forget his roots. It is easy to understand Evans's own cultural ambivalence. His pilgrimage serves as an illustration of a man torn between two worlds and two cultures, basically unhappy in both—a man who never found rest "on my troubled pilgrimage,"⁸⁵ either in old world or in new. The Welsh communities in colonial Pennsylvania were torn between adopting English in order to participate fully in America and fearing to embrace English lest they be lost in America. The transformation of David Evans's self-identity from Welsh to English, from exclusiveness to inclusiveness, is a parable of the Welsh experience in early America. By the end of the colonial period, Welsh identity in Pennsylvania—as well as elsewhere in America—was virtually extinct.

*University of Wales,
Aberystwyth*

BOYD STANLEY SCHLENTHER

⁸⁵ Evans: Poem, 45.