

Wales and the American Dream

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By

Robert Llewellyn Tyler

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Unwaith eto, i fy Mam a fy Nhad

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PREFACE

The Welsh comprised a distinct and highly visible ethno-linguistic community in many areas of the United States during the late decades of the nineteenth century and the early decades of the twentieth. Through a consideration of settlement patterns, residential propinquity, the establishment of cultural and religious institutions, language retention and levels of exogamy, this book provides a micro study of four identifiable Welsh communities over a set period of time. The nature, strength and long-term viability of these Welsh communities are analysed as are the ways in which they changed, a process which saw the Welsh become Welsh-Americans and, ultimately, Americans. This book also tests the assumption that the Welsh were prime illustrations of the 'American Dream' by analysing one facet of that dream, socio-economic success. To what extent did the Welsh as a group occupy a privileged position in the occupational hierarchy, and were they able to move rapidly upwards from this position?

The United States Federal Census reports, which from 1850 list the place of birth of each person resident in the country and from 1880 the place of birth of each resident's parents, are central to this study. Correctly identifying the numbers of Welsh people present in communities in the United States is, however, not simply a matter of consulting the reports of these decennial censuses. Individuals were occasionally not accorded a place of birth or were recorded as 'born at sea'. Furthermore, persons recorded as being born in one country in one census are sometimes recorded as being born in another in a previous or subsequent census. For example, close examination of the original census schedules for Sharon, Pennsylvania shows that several individuals categorized as English in 1900 were listed as Welsh in censuses taken at both earlier and later dates.

In addition, individuals were sometimes recorded more than once. The 1920 census report for San Francisco twice lists a Robert J. Jones who was born in Wales in 1883 and was recorded working as a draftsman in a terra cotta works. Obviously the same man, Jones appears residing as a lodger in the city's 32nd district at both Leavenworth Street and Bush Street. The only difference in the details is Jones' native language, once recorded as Welsh and once as English (US Census San Francisco 1920, Roll T625_138, Pages 5A, 6A). Collators of census enumerations were also

prone to error, with confusion caused by individuals listed as being born in south or north Wales or even New South Wales, Australia.

Further to this, being born in Wales, or in any other country for that matter, was by no means a guarantee that an individual regarded him or herself as part of the national community of that country. Numerous men and women born in Wales to Irish parents were clearly part of the Irish community in the United States, as indicated by their religious and linguistic background and frequently reinforced by choice of marriage partner, a phenomenon which merits and receives attention. The genealogical service, Ancestry, is an excellent tool for taking the researcher to individuals at the micro-level, but the collators for Ancestry were, naturally, prone to making the same errors as those of the original census. There is, simply, no substitute for close scrutiny of the census schedules and in this the researcher is aided by the relatively small size of the settlements involved in this study.

Much of the material used in this book was originally written in the Welsh language. All quotations from sources in Welsh have been included in full and all translations, unless otherwise indicated, are my own. In translating from the Welsh I have endeavoured to adhere, as closely as possible, to the original meaning, which has occasionally resulted in the use of stilted and clumsy English. Some of the research contained in this book has previously appeared in articles published in *Missouri Historical Review*, *Vermont History* and *Kansas History: A Journal of the Central Plains*.

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INTRODUCTION

On December 24, 1891, in the Welsh-American newspaper, *Y Drych* (*The Mirror*), an obituary appeared for one John E. Williams who had died suddenly while attending a school board meeting in the great American steel city of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.¹ Williams had been born about 1840 in Tredegar, Wales and arrived in the USA with his parents as a young child. He had served in the Union army during the Civil War and subsequently settled in Pittsburgh's 23rd Ward where, with his wife Harriet, he raised five children. The census of 1870 records Williams as living with his mother, sister and two brothers, with whom he worked in a rolling mill.² The census of 1880 lists him as a retail grocer living with his family and two servants.³ According to *Y Drych*, Williams was a man of exceptional talent and a true Welsh patriot. He held flawless religious beliefs, was an active member of the Welsh Baptists and a deacon of that church. His adopted country was also close to his heart, and he served as a City Councillor and as a member of the School Board. He was well versed in the machinations of the business world and during the twenty years prior to his death, he had amassed the sum of \$250,000. Further, *Y Drych* noted, 'Yr oedd ganddo ddau fasnachdy helaeth, gwaith priddfeini eang, chwarel geryg helaeth, degau o anedd-dai, a llawer o erwau o eiddo tirol, oll o fewn terfynau y ddinas.'⁴ (He had two extensive business premises, an expansive brickworks, an extensive stone quarry, dozens of dwelling houses, and many acres of land all within the boundaries of the city.)

Six years later, *The Cambrian: A Magazine for Welsh Americans* gave a biographical sketch of Henry P. Davies. Davies, born in 1838, also in Tredegar, had arrived in the United States with his first wife Sarah in 1859 and commenced work in the copper mills of Baltimore where he joined the Welsh Union Church and became an active chorister.⁵ Following the Civil War, he found work in the coalfields of eastern Pennsylvania, establishing himself in the Welsh stronghold of Hyde Park in the city of Scranton. On the census of 1870 he is listed as living with Sarah and their three children and working as a miner.⁶ On the census of 1880 he is recorded as living with his wife and seven children but now working as a mining boss.⁷ He later achieved the position of inside foreman with the Lackawanna and Western Railroad Company and became involved in the area's 'social, industrial and religious matters'. Davies became the leading member in

Scranton's Philosophical Society and a stalwart of the First Welsh Baptist Church in which he served as a deacon, chorister and chief superintendent of the Sunday school. He was an exponent of congregational music and a frequent competitor in the Eisteddfod, the great Welsh festival of competition in music and literature.⁸ He was also an active member of the Independent Order of True Ivorites, a mutual benefit society founded in Wales in 1836 to sponsor social and cultural activities.⁹

Williams and Davies represent the most respected aspects of Welsh-American culture and reflect much of the writing on the Welsh overseas which has been heavily influenced by the positive characterisation of the group by the Welsh themselves. This phenomenon can be related to the emergence in mid nineteenth century Wales of what Merfyn Jones has referred to as 'a series of definitions of Welshness' which forged an identity 'based on an assumed and proclaimed homogeneity'.¹⁰ Prys Morgan and others have argued that from the 1840s onwards, under the leadership of 'nonconformist journalists, preachers, and radical politicians', the very image of Wales was transformed. As Morgan put it:

The Welsh saw themselves as the most virtuous and hard-working people in Europe, in farm, mine and factory, the most God-fearing, the best at observing the sabbath, the most temperate with regard to drink, the most deeply devoted to educational improvement and to things of the mind...¹¹

Assertions of this nature were certainly endemic in commentaries regarding Welsh communities overseas during this period and, while such filiopietistic comments were not confined to the Welsh, the leadership of that community appears to have been particularly concerned with the propagation of a favourable image.¹²

As far away as Australia in 1887, the widely travelled Reverend Dr Bevan could state at a gathering of his countrymen, 'In America, no class earned more the respect of their fellow citizens than the residents in the Welsh settlements. The Welsh men there were famed for their virtue, religion, and many good qualities, and they made orderly and good citizens of a great republic.' For Dr Bevan, the Welsh 'were essentially an intellectual people' and 'the most evangelical people on the face of the earth'. He further assured his audience that 'Wales was not a land of theft and violence' nor 'a land of drunkenness and immorality'.¹³ Similarly, in the words of one nineteenth-century American observer, the Welsh in the United States were 'intensely industrious, provident, studious, religious, ambitious, musical, persistent, independent, gregarious, affectionate, grateful and spontaneous'.¹⁴ These individuals were not alone in their perceptions, and literature concerning the Welsh migratory experience in

the United States is suffused with assumptions regarding the positive attributes of the Welsh and invariably stresses their contribution to the new homeland.¹⁵ In every area settled by Welsh immigrants, community leaders purposefully and successfully promoted a public image of their countrymen which portrayed them as models of American citizenship by virtue of their perceived national characteristics and their contemporary standards of social behaviour. Central to this image was the idea that the Welsh aspired to socio-economic upward mobility; that they were possessed of an innate ability to achieve, maintain and improve upon their social and economic position in a relatively short space of time.¹⁶

Williams and Davies personified much of what contemporary Welsh leaders advocated as the desirable attributes of Welshness. They were Welsh-speaking, religious, culturally active, family men who were involved in all the most favourable activities of their communities. In addition, they were socio-economically successful and although Davies did not achieve the material wealth of Williams, he surpassed his contemporary in musical achievement, a field much prized among the Welsh both at home and abroad. These two gentlemen not only reflected the rich cultural life of Welsh migrants in the USA, both secular and religious, but also epitomised the images of socio-economic success and advancement so strongly pushed by leaders of Welsh communities in Wales and overseas. The central concern of this book is the extent to which Williams and Davies were truly representative of the Welsh communities that sprang up across the USA during what has been described as the ‘Golden Age’ of Welsh immigration.¹⁷

Notes

¹ *Y Drych* was a weekly Welsh-American newspaper which served the Welsh community in North America from 1851 until it was merged with another Welsh-American publication *Ninnau* in 2003. For a history of *Y Drych*, see Aled Jones and Bill Jones, *Welsh Reflections: Y Drych and America 1851-2001* (Ceredigion: Gomer Press, 2001) and Edward George Hartmann, *Americans from Wales* (Boston: Christopher Publishing House, 1967), 128-129.

² US Census Pittsburgh 1870, Roll M593_1298, Page 230B.

³ *Ibid.*, 1880, Roll 1094, Page 11A.

⁴ *Y Drych*, December 24, 1891.

⁵ *The Cambrian: A Magazine for Welsh Americans*, March 1897, 105-107. During the years 1880 to 1919, *The Cambrian* was one of the most popular magazines read by Welsh-Americans.

⁶ US Census Lackawanna, Luzerne 1870, Roll M593_1366, Page 152A.

⁷ *Ibid.*, Plymouth, Luzerne 1880, Roll 1150, Page 369B.

⁸ For an outline of the activities of Scranton's Philosophical Society see W. D. Jones, *Wales in America, Scranton and the Welsh 1860-1920* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1993), 95-97, 114. For an excellent description of the eisteddfod, its significance and presence in the United States see, Hartmann, *Americans from Wales*, 139-155.

⁹ The origins of the Ivorites and their presence in the United States are to be found in Hartmann, *Americans from Wales*, 159-160.

¹⁰ Merfyn Jones, 'Beyond Identity? The Reconstruction of the Welsh', *Journal of British Studies* 31, 4 (October, 1992): 338-339.

¹¹ Prys Morgan, 'Keeping the Legends Alive', in *Wales the Imagined Nation: Essays in Cultural and National Identity*, ed. T. Curtis (Bridgend: Poetry Wales Press, 1986), 19-41.

¹² W. D. Jones has addressed this phenomenon, as it applied to the USA, in *Wales in America*, and in Australia in 'Welsh Identities in Ballarat, Australia, During the Late Nineteenth Century', *Welsh History Review* 20, 2 (December 2000).

¹³ Ballarat Star, March 5, 1887. The good Reverend Doctor also described the Welsh as 'broad in the shoulder, large in the head, and generally a little short in the leg'.

¹⁴ *Scranton Republican*, February 6, 1897. Quoted in Rowland T. Berthoff, *Republic of the Dispossessed: The Exceptional Old-European Consensus in America* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1997), 128.

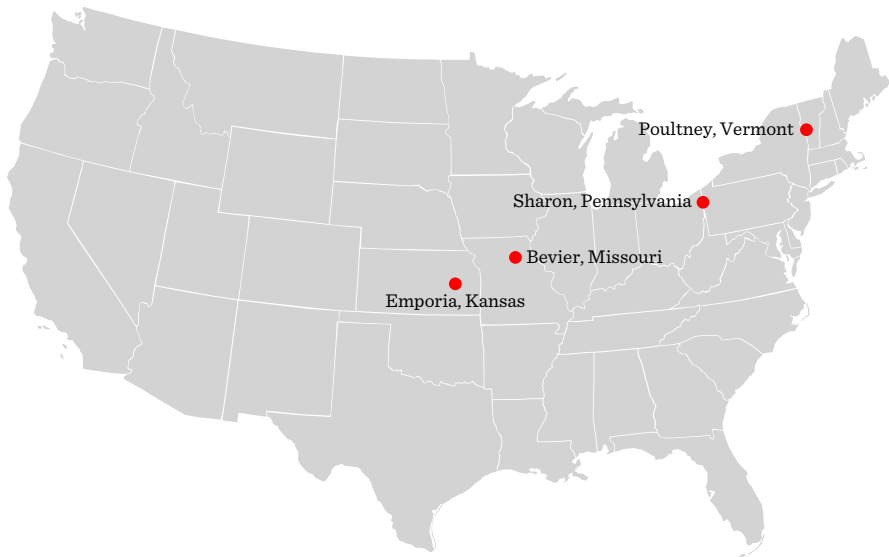
¹⁵ For example, Ebenezer Edwards, *Facts about Welsh Factors. Welshmen as Factors in the Formation and Development of the United States Republic* (Utica: T. J. Griffiths, 1899) and F. J. Harries, *Welshmen and the United States* (Pontypridd: Glamorgan County Times, 1927).

¹⁶ For a consideration of occupational mobility in an Australian context during the same time period, see Robert Llewellyn Tyler, 'Occupational Mobility and Culture Maintenance: the Welsh in a Nineteenth Century Australian Gold Town', *Immigrants and Minorities* 24, 3 (2006): 277-299. See also W. D. Jones, *Wales in America* and Ronald L. Lewis, *Welsh Americans: A History of Assimilation in the Coalfields* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008).

¹⁷ W. D. Jones, *Wales in America*, xvi.

CHAPTER ONE

SETTLEMENT



1. Map showing US settlements by Lokal Profil

Alan Conway described the Welsh in the United States as constituting ‘little more than a corporal’s guard’, and any study of nineteenth century emigration from Wales must first acknowledge that Welsh emigrants have always been few in number.¹ This was due not only to the small size of the Welsh population, which did not register as more than one million until the 1841 UK census, but also to the rate of emigration from Wales, which was significantly lower than that in either England, Scotland or Ireland.² Nevertheless, in recent years the Welsh in the United States have received increasing attention from historians and, quite understandably, these historians have focused on the greatest concentrations of Welsh settlement: the mining and metallurgical districts of New York, Ohio and,

ultimately, Pennsylvania.³ Nevertheless, the Welsh were to be found, to varying degrees, throughout the USA, and studies of the smaller isolated, settlements that drew Welsh immigrants in significant numbers can frequently yield valuable results regarding the nature of such communities and the ways in which they changed.⁴

Missouri Coal

If Pennsylvania, with 35,435 Welsh-born in 1900, and Ohio and New York with 11,481 and 7,304, were the states exerting the greatest pull on Welsh immigrants in the second half of the nineteenth century, Missouri with its 1,613 in 1900 has, unsurprisingly, yet to draw significant attention from researchers of Welsh immigration history. Nevertheless, although relatively few Welsh immigrants were drawn to Missouri (Table 1.1), settlement patterns within the state made their presence in certain areas more noticeable.



2. Bevier 1881. Courtesy of Macon County Historical Society.

	1870	1880	1890	1900	1910	1920
Born in Wales	1,493	2,009	1,862	1,613	1,219	903
Total Population	1,721,295	2,168,380	2,679,184	3,106,665	3,293,335	3,404,055

As early as 1870, census returns indicate a concentration of Welsh migrants within Missouri itself, with between a quarter and a half of the state's Welsh-born to be found in Macon County alone (Table 1.2). While those born in Wales comprised only a tiny percentage of the state's population in 1870, within the county of Macon they made up a more significant 2.6 per cent.

	1870	1880	1890	1900	1910	1920
Born in Wales	600	652	623	503	303	173
Total Population	23,230	26,222	30,575	33,018	30,868	27,518

Within Macon, the Welsh were further concentrated. The major reliance upon coal mining in Wales and the fact that many Welsh immigrants arrived upon American shores forearmed with skills in that industry, meant that Bevier, a small town that emerged and grew following the discovery of coal, exerted a singular pull.⁵ Indeed, in 1870 the 290 Welsh-born in Bevier comprised 18.9 per cent of the total population and in 1872 the Reverend R. D. Thomas, in his fascinating description of Welsh communities in the US, estimated the total Welsh population, including American-born children, as standing at 525.⁶ The US census of 1880 reveals that, in addition to the 352 Welsh-born living in Bevier, the township also contained 258 American-born children with both parents Welsh, a total of 610. This constituted 28.6 per cent of the town's population.⁷ For the first three decades of its existence, therefore, around a third of the population of Bevier was Welsh by nativity or immediate ancestry. (Unfortunately, figures for the 1890 census at the township level are unavailable due to the destruction of much of the census in a fire.)

	1870	1880	1900	1910	1920
Welsh-born	290	352	310	178	101
Welsh stock	NA	258	311	235	145
Total Welsh	NA	610	621	413	246
Total Population	1,531	2,135	4,477	4,726	3,807
Percentage Welsh	NA	28.6%	13.9%	8.7%	6.5%

Bevier was laid out in 1858 by John Duff on land originally the property of a Mr Louis Gilstrap. With the arrival of the railroad, Mr. Gilstrap sold out to a Mr. Bevier for whose son, Col. E. S. Bevier, a lawyer employed by the railroad company, the town was named. In 1862-3, the Hannibal and St. Joseph railroad company became involved in the coal mining operations around Bevier, which had commenced in 1860, and sank a shaft near the depot, where the first steam engine in the district was used to raise coal. In 1866-7, the Centerville Coal and Mining Company was organized, which included all the mines then in operation at Bevier. From this time, Bevier grew rapidly.⁸

Despite conflict between union and coal companies throughout the 1870s and 1880s, the town thrived and a description of Bevier, provided in 1888, reveals the existence of a prosperous community.

The entire town is built up on the one absorbing industry of coal mining, which is carried to splendid proportions by the several operators engaged in the business. The town has eight churches, flourishing Odd Follows, Knights of Pythias, Select Knights, and A. O. U. W. lodges, a post of the Grand Army, a score of business houses, fine public schools, and a large general trade stimulated by the heavy coal production.⁹

On March 16, 1889 the town of Bevier was reorganized into a city and April of the same year saw the election of the first mayor. The mining industry, upon which the town depended, continued to grow and by 1902 the area had nineteen mines and employed 1,169 miners.¹⁰ Production peaked in 1907 when a massive 1,032,143 tons were mined.¹¹ Bevier had endured, and an account in 1910 viewed the city in a most positive light.

Bevier has moved forward smoothly and steadily.... Other mines will be opened in the years to come and there is no reason why Bevier should not furnish the men to do the work in the future as in the past, and as Bevier must be the distributing point for the coal from the vast coal field to the

south, the city must in the prosperous years continue to grow even greater than before.¹²

Unsurprisingly, therefore, Bevier proved to be an attractive prospect to those seeking work in the burgeoning industry and attracted migrants from a variety of nationalities and ethnicities in the decades following 1880. From Table 1.4, however, it is clear that from the early years of Bevier's development the Welsh were the only group to maintain a major, long-term presence. Immigrants from Wales and their children remained the largest ethnic group in the area for decades, and it was not until the beginning of the twentieth century that that position was challenged.

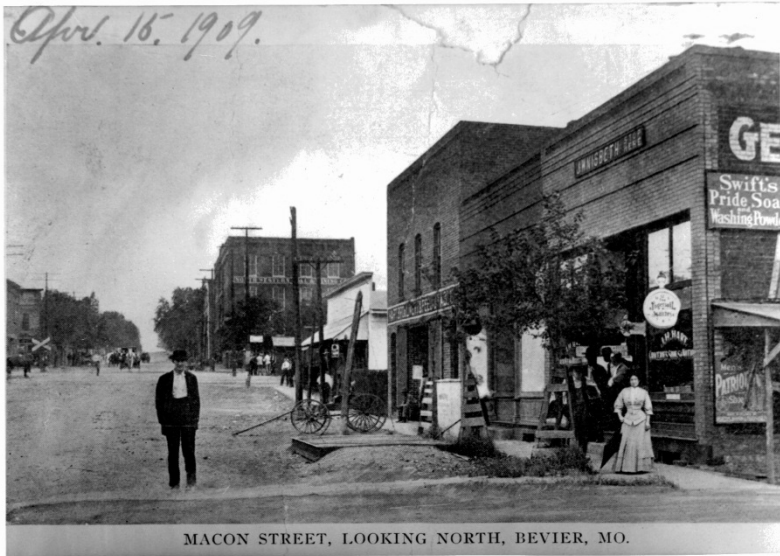
Country of Birth	1870	1880	1890	1900	1910	1920
Wales	290	352	NA	310	178	101
England	113	98	NA	144	91	55
Ireland	39	37	NA	32	19	9
Scotland	5	10	NA	25	5	9
Germany	9	10	NA	112	135	79
Italy	0	0	NA	58	416	283
African Americans	26	51	NA	394	166	111
Total Population	1,531	2,135	2,917	4,477	4,726	3,807

Certainly their American hosts were well aware of their presence:

One of the leading industries of Bevier township in this county, as everybody in this part of the state knows, is coal mining.... The discovery of the coal and the continuous and successful development of the industry have been largely due to persons of Welsh nativity or ancestry, who have themselves been connected with the same line of work in Wales, or their parents have, and who have been, therefore, well qualified for the skillful and profitable operation of the mines.¹³

Welsh people were found throughout this small and relatively isolated settlement and were very much part of the town's public face.¹⁴ Indeed, from the outset, the Welsh were to be found plying their trades in a number of the town's businesses. While it is impossible to be certain that all these men were self-employed, Bevier was the home to a number of

Welsh-born blacksmiths such as Joseph R. Evans and John H. Jones.¹⁵ The services of a carpenter could be found in the persons of Daniel R. Hughes and Richard R. Jones and new shoes could be made to order by cobbler Lewis Williams or bought from Benjamin Howells, a boot and shoe merchant.¹⁶ New clothes could be purchased from tailor Reese M. Evans, and customers seeking service in their own language while shopping for provisions were spoiled for choice by the presence of dry goods and grocery merchants David D. Richards, Griffith G. Watts and William J. Reese.¹⁷ Spiritual sustenance could be obtained from preacher M. B. Hughes, while those seeking sustenance of a more temporal nature could find succor at the tobacco store of Thomas Williams or through the good service of saloon keeper Morgan A. Davies.¹⁸ Despite this it was the coal industry that had drawn the Welsh to Bevier, and it was upon that industry that the Welsh community depended.



3. Bevier 1909. Courtesy of Macon County Historical Society.

Pennsylvania Steel

As noted, Pennsylvania's 35,435 Welsh-born individuals, constituting 38 per cent of the total recorded Welsh-born living in the USA in 1900, was by some distance the home to the greatest number of Welsh-born

immigrants. Within the state, some 5,245 Welsh-born persons lived in Allegheny County centred on Pittsburgh, and a further 16,286 resided in the two adjacent counties of Lackawanna and Luzerne centred, respectively, on the towns of Scranton and Wilkes-Barre. Other smaller settlements in Pennsylvania also attracted significant numbers of Welsh migrants. One such township was Sharon, located in Mercer County in the north west of the state.



4. Sharon 1901. By T. M. Fowler.

R. D. Thomas wrote favourably of the town during his visit in the early 1870s, ‘Tref fechan hardd, ar lan y Shenango River, mewn gwastededd cul, ffrwythlon, rhwng y bryniau prydferth... yw Sharon.’¹⁹ (Sharon is a lovely little town on the banks of the Shenango River, on a narrow and fruitful plain between beautiful hills.) The first settlement was established, at what was to become Sharon, in 1795, when Benjamin Bentley came from Washington County, Pennsylvania, and explored the region along the Shenango River. Coal had begun to be mined near the town in 1835, and in 1840 an iron rolling mill was built. Nevertheless, Sharon grew very slowly, and by 1840 it had only 400 inhabitants, in 1850, 541, and in 1860, 900. Further growth was stimulated in the early 1840s by the building of a canal and, following the completion of the first railroad through the town in 1863, the coal and iron business developed and Sharon became established as an iron and steel centre. The population of Sharon increased rapidly thereafter. In 1870 it was 4,221, in 1880, 5,684 and in 1900, 8,916.²⁰

During the early years, Sharon attracted migrants primarily from the countries of the United Kingdom, with those from Wales constituting one of the largest foreign groups (Table 1.5).

	1880	1900	1920
Wales	436	273	285
England	301	381	378
Ireland	452	307	217
Scotland	83	103	101
Germany	126	179	141
Italy	1	74	484
Hungary	0	341	608
Austria	0	21	986
Russia	0	57	262
Total Sharon	5,684	8,916	21,747

Thomas noted that the Welsh had begun to settle the area as early as 1851, drawn from Pittsburgh and elsewhere to work in the newly-established iron works, but that until the 1870s their presence was numerically small and reliant on the fluctuating fortunes of the district's primary industry.²¹ Nevertheless, a long-term Welsh community did emerge. At its peak in 1880, the 436 Welsh-born, combined with the 269 USA-born with both parents Welsh, totalled 705 individuals: 12.4 per cent of the town's population (Table 1.6). It should be noted that the 1900 census underestimates the number of Welsh-born. A close perusal shows that several individuals were categorized as English when they were listed as Welsh in earlier and later census reports. (Due to name changes at marriage and the paucity of Welsh surnames in general, the extent to which this was the case is impossible to establish.)

As the table indicates, although the Welsh as a proportion of the population declined as Sharon grew, their numbers remained significant for decades. In a rapidly expanding settlement containing a variety of ethnic groups, Welsh ethno-linguistic identity in the area could have been greatly strengthened by the establishment of long-term enclaves. From the decennial census returns it is clear, however, that the Welsh in Sharon were not concentrated into any specific locations, but were scattered throughout the urban area. This was in stark contrast to other ethnic groups, notably the Irish during the earlier period and the central and eastern Europeans later, who were found living together in close

proximity. While such ethnic enclaves were not entirely homogeneous, they would have provided focal points for community activities and created networks for social interaction. This, of course, would have had major implications for acculturation and culture maintenance.

	1870	1880	1900	1910	1920	1930
Welsh-born	206	436	273	304	285	235
Welsh stock	NA	269	291	307	277	261
Total Welsh	NA	705	564	611	562	496
Total Population	4,221	5,684	8,916	15,270	21,247	25,908
Percentage Welsh	NA	12.4%	6.3%	4.0%	2.6%	1.9%

An additional factor with a bearing on assimilation was that Welsh people were few and far between in Sharon's mercantile life. Edward Jones with his younger brother Evan and his stepson John Lowe ran a small tailoring business.²² Meat could be purchased from butcher William Richards and groceries from James Wilkes.²³ There were a number of blacksmiths such as John Deveraux, Jonathan Evans, William Gething and David Howell, but again it is unclear whether these men were self-employed or plying their trades within the iron and steel works.²⁴ Two Welsh brothers, Thomas A. and William Thomas, were listed as store clerks in the census of 1880, and *Y Drych* of May 20, 1886 reports them opening a store of their own. Beyond these few individuals, however, Welsh people in the town would have had to have conducted their everyday business through the medium of English and in the company of Americans or other immigrants.²⁵ Religious services obtained via the Welsh language were not, however, in short supply and were available from the pulpits of ministers Thomas Jenkins, John Parker James Williams and Thomas Thomas.²⁶ Nevertheless, the failure in Sharon to establish commercial networks among Welsh immigrants was in stark contrast to other communities at the time and would have had major implications for culture maintenance and language retention. There were other issues which differentiate the Welsh community in Sharon to those in the other areas. Most notable was the fact that a large proportion of the Welsh-born in Sharon were not of Welsh origin, in that they were the children of parents who had migrated to Wales from elsewhere. This vital issue will be discussed later.

Vermont Slate

The old slate-quarrying town of Poultney is situated on the western border of Rutland County in Vermont. It was chartered by Benning Wentworth on September 21, 1761 and the town was organized on March 8, 1775.²⁷ The industries of Poultney, prior to 1800, were few in number and the town's population grew slowly, numbering 1,121 in 1790, 1,950 in 1810, 1,909 in 1830, and 2,329 by 1850. The first slate quarry was opened in 1851 by Daniel and S. E. Hooker about three miles north of Poultney village and the industry grew rapidly, assisted by the arrival of the railroad in the same year. By 1860, Poultney could boast sixteen slate companies employing some 450 workers and, in the words of contemporary observers, by 1886 the prospects of the town were good:

Since 1875, it is said, the slate business of Poultney has more than doubled in volume, and has also greatly increased in profits. It is comparatively in its infancy yet, however, and if properly developed, will be a source of great wealth to the town.²⁸

Naturally, the town drew migrants from across the Atlantic, initially from the countries of the United Kingdom and later from central and eastern Europe. Throughout, however, it was from Wales that the largest number of foreign-born hailed. Indeed, at their numerical peak in 1910, the total Welsh-born of 479 when added to US-born children with both parents Welsh, 382, totalled 861 individuals and made up 23.6 per cent of the town's population (Table 1.7).

	1880	1900	1910	1920	1930
Welsh-born	151	411	479	258	225
Welsh stock	118	298	382	265	241
Total Welsh	269	709	861	523	466
Total Population	2,717	3,108	3,644	2,868	3,215
Percentage Welsh	9.7%	22.8%	23.6%	18.2%	14.5%

No other national group approached the Welsh in numbers during this period, and Poultney did not experience the large influx of central, southern and eastern Europeans that characterized other towns in the slate valley.²⁹ Indeed, excepting the Irish, who numbered 222 in 1880 and 135